An investigation into localised policy-making during a period of rapid educational reform in England

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Abstract

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Title: An investigation into localised policy-making during a period of rapid educational reform in England

The research reports on an ethnographic study undertaken at Kingswood, a secondary school in the North West of England, during a period of rapid reform within educational policy-making in England. The research project sets out to offer an empirical account of localised policy-making and a conceptual analysis as to how and why different social actors within and connected to the school are positioned and position-take in response to the schools' localised development trajectory. In order to do this, the study operationalises Bourdieu's thinking tools of field, capital and habitus as a means of theorising the complex relationship between structure and agency in the processes of localised policy-making.

In order to present a detailed analysis of the positioning and position-taking I develop and deploy the conceptualisation of the neoliberal policy complex. I use this to describe and understand how the political and economic fields of production penetrate localised decision-making in which the connected agendas of performativity and accountability frame much of the localised policy processes at the research site. The neoliberal policy complex is defined by an on-going and increased commitment to legislative interventions, not least through an approach to the modernisation of public service in which autonomy and diversification are hailed as hallmarks for success.

Drawing on data collected in a year long embedded study, from interviews and, observations with 18 students, five parents, 21 teachers, and seven school leaders, and documentary analysis, it is argued that within this neoliberal policy complex, the field of power is located as a centralising force in structuring the policy-making development and enactments at the local level. In order to achieve distinction within the schooling field and thus be acknowledged as legitimate within the neoliberal policy complex, Kingswood's localised development trajectory reveals how the discourses of neoliberalism have been internalised by the social actors within the study, to produce subjective positioning which reveals a commitment to the neoliberal doxa. Within this theorisation certain knowledges, capitals and ways of doing and thinking are privileged and presented as common sense. At Kingswood, the conversion to an academy in April 2012 and the attendant re-organisation of the school provision into a Multi-Academy Trust, which has on site a 'professional' and a 'studio' school, are presented as a necessary construction for the school's future, and the employability skills that will be subsequently embedded within the curriculum are framed as a common sense development of the purposes of education.

The study concludes that such position-taking ultimately reveals how the centralising and hierarchical notions of power work to produce a narrative of

misrecognition with regards to how the school must develop localised policy-making in order to remain a viable and legitimate entity in the schooling field.

The research makes a contribution to the field of policy scholarship by applying Bourdieu's thinking tools to the empirical findings from a range of social actors in and connected to the school in order to construct an understanding of the relationships between power and positionality in localised policy-making in neoliberal times.

Declaration of Original Contribution

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

Copyright Statement

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Abbreviations

AFL	**Assessment for Learning**
CTC	**City Technology Colleges**
EAL	**English as an Additional Language**
ERA	**Education Reform Act (1988)**
DCSF	**Department for Children, Schools and Families**
DfES	**Department for Education and Skills**
DfE	**Department for Education**
FSM	**Free School Meals**
GMS	**Grant Maintained Status**
HOSA	**Head of Student Achievement**
LEA	**Local Education Authority**
LMS	**Local Management of Schools**
NQT	**Newly Qualified Teacher**
Ofsted	**Office for Standards in Education**
SES	**Social Economic Status**
SLT	**School Leadership Team**
SSP	**Specialist Schools Programme**
VLE	**Virtual Learning Environment**

Dedicated to the memories of Peg Hedley (Nana) and Dr Jess Lister

Two inspirational women who taught me to believe in myself, and whom I miss very much

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The research project reported in this thesis examines how a range of actors at Kingswood (anonymous name), an 11-18 secondary school in the North West of England, position themselves and are positioned through the development of localised policy processes. Using ethnographically informed methods, data was collected within the academic year of 2011-2012 during which time the school converted to an academy. As a result, the thesis provides in-depth accounts as to how school leaders, teachers, students and to a lesser extent, their parents were positioned and position-took in the production and enactment of policy processes at a local level during a period of rapid educational reform in England.

Following Bourdieu (1977, 1989, 1990a, 1990b), the research project offers a theorising of practice, of the social relations and (objective) structures that are revealed in daily interactions and through which policy processes are developed, enacted and imagined by different actors in the school. The aim is to provide an empirical account of localised policy-making, and to explain how and why certain policy processes are engaged with, prioritised and (re)articulated, and the ways in which such processes are influenced by political, economic and cultural conditions developed as part of a modernising policy discourse and framed at both national and international levels. The research questions that will be used to structure the study are:

1. *What is localised policy-making, and how do agency and structure interplay within such processes*?

2. *How do different actors within the school position themselves or consider they are positioned in relation to the development and enactment of localised policy processes*?

3. *How do external policy demands interplay with and structure the development and enactments of localised policy processes, and what effect does this have on the positioning of different actors in the school?*

These are important questions because they enable the examination of localised policy-making not only to focus on particular policy 'innovations' but also to examine the role of policy actors within an unfolding and dynamic context, revealing how such a relationship can be viewed as "policy-as-practice" (Gerrard and Farrell, 2013, p. 3). In order to investigate the issues underlying these questions, I utilise Bourdieu's (1990b) thinking tools[1] with which to theorise the logics of practice in play in the field of localised educational policy-making. The "neoliberal doxa" of the modernising reform agenda that has dominated policy discourse in education in England since before 1988 has had pervasive effects on social and professional practices within schools (Blackmore, 2010, p. 103). Yet there is little research that probes the extent to which actors in specific contexts collectively and individually reveal association with, control over, rejection of, or marginalisation from particular elements of these powerful discourses in the social practices and processes of localised policy development and enactments.

Bourdieu's commitment to an empirical and theoretical sociology of social relations as a means of overcoming the dualism between subjectivism and objectivism, between the individual and society, is an approach that underpins the analyses of the effect of internal and external policy discourses on the social relations at the school. This is in order to "attempt to understand how 'objective', supra-individual social reality (cultural and institutional social structure) and the internalised 'subjective' mental worlds of individuals as cultural beings and social actors are inextricably bound up together, each being a contributor to - and indeed aspect of - the other" (Jenkins, 1992, pp. 19-20). Whilst Bourdieu did not write specifically on education policy, his conceptual tools and methodological modes of inquiry are widely used to explore "cross-field effects" (Rawolle and Lingard, 2008, p. 729) of globalised policies on localised educational practices (Henry *et al.,* 2001; Rizvi and Lingard, 2010).

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[1] Increasingly it is becoming accepted practice to italicise Bourdieu's thinking tools; however, due to the size of this thesis and the frequency of the deployment of these tools, I have made the decision to keep them in line with the style of the rest of the writing.

Within this thesis the impact of political, economic and ideological structures on how localised policy processes have been developed to shape both agency and practice are conceptualised as occurring within a neoliberal policy complex. By this I mean how the increased marketisation of education, particularly through the codification of autonomy, diversity and competition, impacts upon the way schools develop and enact localised policy-making in specific sites. This conceptualisation will be outlined in Chapter 2 in more detail, and subsequently deployed throughout the thesis as means of developing an epistemological position which encompasses a way of looking at the complex relationship between structure and agency in localised policy-making in "neoliberal times" (McInerney, 2007, p. 257)

1.2 Thinking about localised educational policy

Following Grace (1995), I locate the study within a policy scholarship framework. Within this framework, policy is regarded as a process rather than a product, and thus needs to be taken off its "pedestal" and subjected to scrutiny at the micro, localised level whilst simultaneously contextualised against the backdrop of the broader brushstrokes of national agenda setting (Ozga, 2000, p. 2). There has been a strong tradition in policy scholarship arguing for the need for educational researchers to undertake critical analysis of policy-making at the micro as well as the macro level because, as Ozga (2000), drawing on Dewey (1916), posits, such undertakings contribute to a "democratic project in education, which in turn contributes to democracy as the creation of an informed, active citizenry, supported… by an informed, activated system of public education" (p. 2). Therefore, it is imperative that research analysing policy processes locates itself within a framework which recognises that such processes operate within specific social, cultural, political and economic conditions.

For Grace (1995), work on policy must engage with how these deeper structures contribute to contradictions because outside of this "there can be no fundamental appreciation of these problems and no effective policy resolution of them, unless they are properly contextualised by detailed scholarship" (p. 3). In this vein, I consider the significance that my own detailed analysis of the policy processes at Kingswood can potentially have in contributing to a greater understanding of the rippling effects of local and national policy on all the lives living and working within

the school and the communities it serves. At a time when the nature of UK government educational reform in England bears more resemblance to a tidal wave than a ripple, the task of investigating the effects on how schools develop and enact local policy processes in relation to the 'bigger picture' (Ozga, 1990) becomes more urgent, especially at a time when traditionally democratic processes are being interrupted and fragmented as a result of these reforms (Apple, 2004; Gunter, 2010; West and Bailey, 2013).

Ozga (2000; Ozga and Jones, 2006), Lingard and Rizvi (2010) and Gewirtz (1997, 2002), amongst others, draw attention to the shifting nature of the 'allocation of values' within educational policy discourses and how globalisation has impacted national educational reform agendas. As a result of these on-going shifts, since 1988 policy discourses in England have moved away from a social democratic consensus developed in the post-war period and have been replaced instead by economising agendas in which concepts such as efficiency, performativity and accountability are framed as essential drivers of educational reform necessary to compete in the global economy. Such a process has resulted in a situation in which these drivers have been re-articulated as the values underpinning the purposes of education by policy-makers (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010, pp. 72-3). It is the hierarchical nature of how such values have become entrenched within the policy discourses, forming the basis of national agenda setting with regards to educational reform that led to the conceptualisation of the neoliberal policy complex.

Within the neoliberal policy complex, policy processes on a local level are deeply affected by the re-articulation of values. Whilst professional practices and social relations have by no means been abandoned by a commitment to the purposes of education being tied to democratic values, complex contestation and negotiations pervade the landscape of localised policy-making, in which leaders, teachers, parents and students struggle to balance competing and contradictory tensions which drive school reform as a result of the dominance of this discourse of marketisation. Ozga (2000) posits part of the responsibility of policy scholars is to raise important questions as to why such policy discourses are shrouded in economising terms, and to acknowledge that under such conditions, certain voices and perspectives are subordinated, marginalised and silenced.

1.3 Thinking with Bourdieu

The purpose of the thesis is to contribute to the field of policy scholarship in such a way that gives a platform to such voices and perspectives. The ethnographic nature of the study has gifted me the opportunity to fully explore the perspectives of not just a group of elites but to talk to and observe a whole range of actors, whose daily relations and interactions with the structures and processes within the school serve to illuminate important issues as to the impact of neoliberalism on the subjectivities of learners and professionals alike.

Therefore, drawing on Bourdieu (1977, 1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1999), I conceptualise the field of educational policy as a 'game in play' in which different institutions participate in various forms of capital exchange, in which the neoliberal doxa of accountability and performativity pervade the embodied practices of professionals, revealing a professional illusio, that is an interest by agents who are thus "invested, taken in and by the game" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 116). The illusio is not singular and Bourdieu posits that pluralisms exist that are peculiar to specific social, cultural and historical conditions within any given field:

> There is an interest, but there are *interests,* variable with time and place, almost infinitely so: there are as many interests as there are fields, as historically constituted areas of activity with their specific institutions and their own laws of functioning. The existence of a specialised and relatively autonomous field is correlative with the existence of specific states and interests: via the inseparable economic and psychological investments that they arouse in agents endowed with a certain habitus, the field and its stakes. (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 87)

Within this analysis the school represents a field in which struggles occur on a local level in the interpretation and delivery of (as well as resistance to) (economically and ideologically informed) policy from the perspectives of a sample of children, parents, teachers and school leaders. This allows a mapping of the "objective structures of the relations between the positions occupied by the agents [and the] institutions who compete for the legitimate form of specific authority of which this field is the site" (Wacquant, 1989, p. 40). Together with the staking of different species of capital, actors reveal habitus through how they are positioned and position themselves within the field of power, described by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) as "the relations of force that obtain between the social positions that guarantee their occupants a quantum of social force, or of capital, such that they are able to enter in

to the struggles over the monopoly of power, of which struggles over the definition of the legitimate form of power are a crucial dimension" (p. 230).

This conceptual framework enables an analysis of how within practice there are 'structured structures', in which position-taking may be revealed as a result of previously developed sets of dispositions, and 'structuring structures' in which position-taking is generative and "regulated" through field conditions (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 53). Within this thesis such field conditions are relatable to the extent to which the neoliberal policy complex regulates and legitimises certain practices, and thus position–taking, within localised responses to national reform agendas. Within the neoliberal policy complex such position-taking embodies the perceived necessity to achieve distinction in the field, which, will be argued, reveals a doxa of misrecognition with regards to how the game is rigged to (re)produce educational advantage and disadvantage between schools and individual students. To date very little empirical work has been done on localised school policy-making as a field, especially research that explores the perspectives and positioning of students within such processes (Gunter and Forrester, 2010, p. 64).

Using an empirically informed methodology focusing on the interactions between social (and professional) practices operating within the objective structures of the policy processes and developments in the school, it is possible to construct a portrait of a local and specific context whilst locating these perspectives within wider discourses that take account of the influence of externally formed social, cultural and political conditions within the neoliberal policy complex on the development of localised practices and relations.

1.4 Rationale

The necessity for this study is located in the interplay between a research relationship between the school and the University of Manchester, supported by the ESRC CASE studentship (ES/i004505/1), and the wider unfolding and rapidly changing policy and research contexts (Hollins, Gunter and Thomson, 2006; McGinity, 2012; McGinity and Gunter, 2012; Thomson and Gunter, 2006, 2007, 2011). The development of this thesis is part of this research tradition and builds upon the relationships formed through the development of collaborative research agendas over a number of years. The policy context in which the school was

operating changed at a rapid pace, therefore resulting in the production of data that located issues of localised policy-making about teaching and learning within a complex process involving how and why different actors in the school are positioned and position themselves as a result of the schools' localised responses to rapid reform processes.

The institutional structuring in response to external influences is concomitant to the ways in which learners are positioned and teaching and learning is framed within the schools' formal and informal policy processes. As a result, the rationale behind the development and design of the research process is interlinked with the shifting nature of the policy discourses in English educational reform in the transition between the 20th and 21st centuries. The field of educational policy in England since 1988 has been shaped by successive governments' commitment to educational reform in which the neoliberal agenda of increased marketisation through choice, diversity and autonomy of schooling provision has taken centre stage as a panacea for driving up standards within the education system (Apple, 2004; Edwards and Whitty, 1997; Hartley, 2008; Walford, 2005).

Within this policy context, schools in England have witnessed a harnessing of increased centralised regulation in the form of the standards agenda, alongside a reduction in the powers of local authorities and thus greater autonomy for schools in their fiscal and organisational structures (Sammons, 2008). The Academies Act (2010) passed by the Conservative-led Coalition further cemented the neoliberal doxa in the trajectory of national policy discourses which value efficiency, accountability and competition in the development of educational reform. Localised responses to such reforms have ranged from protest and rejection (Pearse, 2012) to dogged acceptance (Ball *et al.*, 2012a) and in some cases full-scale embracement (Gunter and McGinity, 2014). Yet very little is known about how and why schools engage with, prioritise, resist or reject elements of these policy discourses. During the course of the research, Kingswood High School applied for and successfully converted to academy status as a result of the 2010 Act. In so doing the school has utilised the accompanying autonomy and undergone extensive structural reorganisation, developing provision of a 'Professional School' and a 'Studio School' in collaboration with a number of businesses in order to embed an employability agenda within the curriculum. The research for this thesis occurred during this time of rapid transition and as a result the multifarious reasons driving the decisions behind these extensive structural reorganisations, and the subsequent positioning of

different actors within the field of the school, has provided a unique opportunity to theorise how and why a school may engage with, prioritise, resist or reject these dominating policy discourses in a way that is currently underrepresented in the field of policy scholarship.

Whilst the rationale has been developed in line with the external policy field as well as a result of the school being an institution nominally committed to externally funded research, my own professional identity has played an important role in the development and design of the research project. Prior to becoming a doctoral researcher, I worked as an education officer in the special needs departments of two inner-city local authorities in London. In these roles I worked as a representative of the local authority supporting both schools and parents in the policy processes relating to the statementing and reviewing of children identified with special educational needs. As a review officer, I visited a plethora of schools and witnessed the complexities inherent between policy and practice, and in particular the ways in which structural processes interacted with social, cultural and economic conditions which positioned parents from a range of socio-economic backgrounds in different ways and which in turn highlighted inequality in the distributional outcomes of policy processes (Ball *et al*., 2012a). Through these professional experiences, I became both interested in and frustrated by the gulf between policies that purported to support parental involvement in their child's education and practices that appeared to prevent the actual realisation of these stated policy aims.

As a result, during this time I undertook a Masters in Inclusive Education at the Institute of Education and developed a research project that investigated the spaces between policy and practice regarding parental perceptions and experiences of local authority decision-making (McGinity, 2009). It was the process of undertaking this study that crystallised my interest in and commitment to policy scholarship as a field that could offer a viable framework in which to challenge assumptive values regarding structural relations implicit within the development and "distributional outcomes of [public] policy" (Ball, 1993b, p. 10). The uses of micro-level investigations of policy processes are significant within the field of policy scholarship because they provide an opportunity to connect localised experiences and perceptions with a structural analysis of macro-level processes that takes into account the political, cultural and economic conditions in which the language of policy is developed and in which we live out our daily lives (Ozga, 1990, p. 359). Adopting a standpoint in which I, like Ozga (2000), view policy as a 'contested

terrain' undertaking an ethnographically informed study that sets out to explore how actors are positioned and position themselves in relation to policy processes allows me to shine light into spaces that are often obscured by shadows, particularly with regards to young people, whose experiences and perceptions of such processes are often overlooked within the field of policy scholarship.

1.5 Structure

The next chapter (2) will provide a review of research that has been conducted in the field of policy scholarship with regards to how schools handle policy in a rapidly reforming context. In this chapter I develop Gewirtz's (2002, p. 7) conceptualisation of the "post-welfarist education policy complex" into the neoliberal policy complex as a means to interrogate and understand the increasingly globalised political, ideological and economic frameworks that informed localised policy processes at the research site. As such, this chapter will consider research that has been undertaken on the impact of the "permanent revolution" upon schools as a result of the neoliberal modernising agenda (Hall and Gunter, 2009, p. 765). In particular, research literature will be drawn upon in order to illustrate how and in what ways the field of educational policy is structured by schools' necessity to accumulate symbolic capital as offered through legitimate action as defined by an increasingly centralised and regulating bureaucracy (Blackmore, 2010; Gewirtz, 2002; Ladwig, 2011; Thomson, 2005).

Such legitimating actions have had significant impact upon professional identities and curriculum development as a result of the accompanying standards and accountability framework, both of which play significant roles in the shaping of systems and structures (specifically, teaching and learning) at the local level. This chapter will argue that more case specific empirical studies are required in order to understand the localised impacts of the neoliberal policy complex on differentially positioned actors within schools and local communities. In acknowledging the importance of specificity of context for schools operating within policy discourses, the rest of the chapter will provide a contextualising portrait of Kingswood and specifically, how the school has engaged with centrally framed policy discourses, in an on-going re-structuring of its organisational purposes.

Chapter 3 will provide an account of the methodological approach used, in which I provide a reflexive analysis of the development and enactment of the research as an ethnographically informed process. The research itself is concerned with epistemological questions regarding "different ways of knowing and understanding" policy processes and practices from a range of actors within Kingswood (Grenfell *et al*., 1998, p. 152). Implicit within this assumptive position is that the research undertaken for this study is a construction of multiple viewpoints from a number of different individual participants, all of which raise important reflexive questions about the relationships between subjectivity and objectivity, power and knowledge, with both these factors connected to the fundamental issue of the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Following Bourdieu's (and Wacquant, 1992, p. 224) advice to "think relationally", Chapter 3 will set out a generative interpretation of his thinking tools and how I have conceptualised them through my empirical relationships and constructions, and how these conceptualisations are linked to my sense of self, my own doxic experiences, and thus revealed through my researcher habitus within the field. As Kenway and Mcleod (2004) posit, "the relationship between field and habitus, and correspondingly between 'position' (within the field) and 'disposition', is central to Bourdieu's understanding of reflexivity" (p. 528). Bourdieu's and Wacquant (1992) commitment to a reflexive sociology leads me to ensure that I reflect upon my positionality throughout the epistemological and ontological construction of the research process, because "for the sociologist more than any other thinker, to leave one's thoughts in a state of unthought (*impense)* is to condemn oneself to be nothing more than the *instrument* of that which one claims to think" (p. 238).

The structured social spaces in which policy processes and practices are played out, the context of Kingswood as a field, are introduced in Chapter 2, elaborated upon in Chapter 3 and empirically weighted in Chapter 4. Chapter 4 considers how the field of the school positions and requires position-taking from a number of the student participants within the study, in relation to policy processes relating to target and ability setting and behaviour and uniform policies. Within this analysis, data produced from interviews, observations and focus groups with a sample of students at the school from Years 8, 9 and 10 (18 in total) will be drawn upon in order to explore how these young people position themselves and perceive they are positioned in the field of the school in relation to a number of localised policy processes and practices. The data suggests that, on the surface at least, there is "tacit recognition of the value of the stakes in the game", amongst the students, a

specific illusio defined by the neoliberal doxa, in which academic performativity and economic productivity are defined as the sought-after capital within the field (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 42).

Chapter 5 uses the data produced from in-depth interviews with staff members, school leaders and the Chair of Governors, along with documentary data analysis of school-based policy processes, firstly, to explain how policy processes are engaged with through a theorising of professional practices in relation to teaching and learning. Secondly, the chapter will draw on the main themes identified in the policy review in Chapter 2 as to how policy processes, practices and enactments in schools are affected by the "permanent revolution" of the neoliberal policy complex in which the concepts of autonomy, accountability and performativity have increasingly shaped the ways teachers position themselves and are positioned within policy processes on a local level. In so doing the chapter will explore the relationships between the doxa of professional practices and policy processes with wider considerations within literatures pertaining to the modernisation of and transformations within public sector reform upon the education system (Coffield *et al.*, 2007).

Nowhere is the "tacit recognition of the value of the stakes in the game" more apparent than in the professional dispositions revealed through the head teacher's habitus within the decision-making process regarding the school's organisational structure as a result of the Academies Act 2010 (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 42). Therefore, Chapter 6 will advance the argument that the capital exchanges that schools participate in within the field of educational policy are driven by a logic of practice which is framed through and by the neoliberal policy complex. The data produced at Kingswood reveals the commitment of key leadership figures within the school to 'playing the game' by taking 'legitimate' action in response to dominate policy discourses, particularly those rationalised as a result of human capital discourses, positioned as the reason for increased privatisation of the education system (Hatcher, 2008; Gove, 2011).

The extent to which such legitimate actions have contributed to the structuring of how the school develops localised policy processes is evidenced first by the school's decision to apply for Specialist School status in 2002 and more recently by the decision to convert to an academy in 2012 in order to develop the concept of a 'Professional School', followed by their 2013 proposal to become a Multi Academy

Trust (MAT) in order to develop a Studio School on site to be better able to deliver a range of vocational, technical and academic pathways to the students.

In studying how the school leadership team has framed these significant changes at the school level as required symbolic capital for the school to 'survive' within the field of education policy, important and urgent questions are able to be raised regarding a number of issues pertaining to the positioning of different actors within the symbolic economy of the school itself, as well as with regards to the school's role in defining the values and purposes of education within the neoliberal policy complex. In recognition of these questions, I argue this framework has led to misrecognition by the school leaders that in 'playing the game' in responding to such policy discourses as legitimate action, they are securing the school's, and therefore the students', place within the field of education without critically engaging with what is actually at stake in the game, which is the fragmenting of discourses around democratic action and equality of opportunity. Thomson argues that such misrecognition:

> […] is the failure to see not only that the game is historically rigged, but also how the struggle to do better actually reproduces and keeps intact the capital that are being struggled over. The actual contest for the prizes in the field, driven by the desire in individual agents, keeps the field and its competitive and inequitable nature intact. The combined doxa of raising standards and of devolution of governance operates in much the same way. The doxa of devolution corresponds to the doxa of and the desire for autonomy; it creates a drive in agents that makes them operate according to the rules of the game as they stand. It works to make agents not only manage the field, but also compete over what is at stake – not to change the rules of the game or the knowledges, dispositions and strategies that constitute its winning formulae and its contribution to the wider mission of the state and the field of power. (Thomson, 2010, p. 16)

This analysis of misrecognition within the field of the school will form the basis of Chapter 7, in which the arguments developed thus far in the thesis will be synthesised in order to address the research questions set out at the start of this chapter, and to offer a theorising of how and why the positioning and position-taking of different actors in the school contributes to "the wider mission of the state and the field of power" in the development of localised policy processes along neoliberal lines (Thomson, 2010, p. 16).

The final chapter (8) builds upon the analyses developed in Chapter 7 to explicitly state the empirical, methodological and conceptual contribution to knowledge

developed within the thesis, as well as set out directions for future research. The following chapter sets out the policy context in which localised policy processes have been developed at Kingswood.

Chapter 2: Situating the case: Policy and research in neoliberal times

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to explore the policy context in which the development of localised policy-making at Kingswood has taken place. In order to appreciate the dynamics of policy work at the school, it is necessary to locate the study in a wider context that takes account of the reforming landscape within which schools have to operate. Contextualising in this way will support the development of an analysis which reveals how different actors within the school are being positioned, and consequently, position-take, in response to the development of localised policies which are deeply embedded within neoliberal approaches to the modernisation of public services (Ranson, 2003; Coffield *et al*., 2007; Shaw, 2007; Oakley, 2011).

The study takes a critical standpoint in analysing the impact of the neoliberal policy complex on how schools "do" policy (Ball *et al.*, 2012a, p. 1) and how the development of national policy agendas have positioned actors is differential ways, often as deliverers and receivers of polices that are framed elsewhere (Gunter, 2011). In order to understand that through the logic of practice such processes reveal the complex web of relations between structure and agency at the local level, the study adopts a policy scholarship approach which links localised responses with wider socio-historical and political contextual analysis.

Therefore, the first section of this chapter briefly outlines the policy scholarship approach taken within this thesis (Grace, 1995). Following on from this, Section 2.3 provides an explanation of the conceptualisation of the neoliberal policy complex. As laid out in Chapter 1, the study operationalises Bourdieu's thinking tools, and so Section 2.4 is an exposition of how field theory has informed the development of this conceptualisation of the neoliberal policy complex. Subsequently Section 2.5 critically analyses the development of the neoliberal policy complex, by mapping the policy terrain of educational reform post-1988, with particular attention paid to the

"sanctified language of educational standards" (Glatter, 2012, p. 560) and the move to greater autonomy for schools as part of a modernising discourse (Butt and Gunter, 2007; Levacic, 2008).

Section 2.6 considers how research has been used to study localised policy-making, and demonstrates that there is a need for more site-specific, ethnographically informed studies that consider positionality of different actors in the school in order to develop a wider understanding of how the neoliberal policy complex works as both a "structured structure" and a "structuring structure" in producing and restricting agentic positioning and position-taking from a range of participants (Bourdieu, 1990a). The chapter concludes with a brief storied account of Kingswood as the site of research, in order to provide a backdrop to the empirical work that follows in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

2.1.2 A policy scholarship approach

The purpose of this study is to explore the ways in which the neoliberal policy complex interacts with structure and agency in order to draw an understanding of the power relations at play in the development and enactment of policy processes at the local level. In order to do so, I follow Grace (1995) in acknowledging that policy processes are implicitly and explicitly steered by values and assumptions that are relatable to the social, political and economic structures in any given societal context. This approach to 'policy scholarship' is distinct from policy analysis as an evaluative, or positivist, methodology, which divorces the study of policy from the social, political and economic relations of which it is a product (Grace, 1995). Therefore, Grace (1995) draws an important distinction between policy science and policy scholarship:

> A policy science approach tends to exclude consideration of wider contextual relations by its sharply focused concern with the specifics ... This approach is seductive in its concreteness, its apparently value-free and objective stance, and its obvious relation to policy formation … what tends to be excluded … is the relation of surface social phenomena to the deep structure of historical, cultural, political, ideological and value issues. Many contemporary problems, or crises in education are, in themselves, the surface manifestations of deeper historical, structural and ideological contradictions in educational policy. There can be no fundamental appreciation of these problems and no effective policy resolution of them, unless they are properly contextualised by detailed scholarship. (Grace, 1995, p. 3)

Following Grace (1995, p. 3), this study is concerned with "the deeper historical, structural and ideological contradictions in educational policy". The interest lies in studying the impact "on" rather than "for" policy (Ozga, 2000, p. 97) and in recognising that the local specificity of Kingswood as the site of research offers an opportunity to respond to Apple's (1996) call for work that both recognises the contingent in the local but does not do so at the expense of structures:

> There is a world of difference (and no pun intended here) between emphasising the local, the contingent, and non-correspondence and ignoring any determinacy or any structural relationships among practices. Too often important questions surrounding the state and social formation are simply evacuated and the difficult problem of simultaneously thinking about both the specificity of different practices and the forms of articulated unity they constitute is assumed out of existence as if nothing existed in structured ways. (Apple, 1996, p. 141)

The analysis of policy as both 'structured' and 'structuring' thus forms a significant part of this thesis, and as a result, the deployment of Bourdieu's thinking tools enable the "objective" relations between these two positions to be explored from a variety of actor perspectives, in a way that acknowledges national and local policy processes as part of a dynamic process (Wacquant, 1989, p. 40). Within the critical policy scholarship tradition, such dynamism is often understood in relation to how power and positioning intersect to produce logics of practice, through which hierarchies between actors are visible. How these relationships are played out within the localised setting, and the extent to which they are part of wider structures of power relations within the neoliberal policy complex, is a significant preoccupation within the thesis. The next section draws on relevant literatures from the field of political science and educational policy scholars in order to outline in detail how I conceptualise the neoliberal policy complex.

2.3 Explaining the neoliberal policy complex

Throughout this thesis I deploy the term neoliberal policy complex as a conceptual tool in order to develop an understanding and a critique of the increasingly globalised political and ideological frameworks that informed localised policy processes at the research site. The purpose of this conceptualisation is not to provide a definitive framework which tidily explains away the manner in which the political and economic tenets of neoliberalism have impacted upon how schools 'do'

policy; rather, it is intended to provide a scaffold for thinking through the complexities of policy development and enactment in neoliberal times (Apple, 2001; Lingard, Rawolle and Taylor, 2005; Ozga, Seddon and Popkewitz, 2006; Thomson, 2006; Gunter, 2009; Ball *et al.*, 2012a).

This is a purposive conceptualisation that emerged as my writing and thinking developed and I sought a way of understanding the extent to which the rationality of market relationships were being used within the educational policy environment, and the consequences of such modalities upon the positionality of schools, and the social actors within them. Following Bourdieu (1977), the development of the conceptualisation allowed me to think about the ways in which neoliberal political and economic structures contribute to shaping agency and ultimately practice at the local level.

In brief I understand the term neoliberalism to "denote new forms of a political-economic governance premised on the extension of market relationships" (Larner, 2000, p. 5). In relation to education, policies developed in relation to and as a result of the 1988 Education Reform Act (hereafter referred to as ERA) have been analysed at length by educational researchers as emblematic of the creeping dominance of market forces within educational structures and processes (Ball, 1990, 2009; Ball, Bowe and Gewirtz, 1996; Harris and Ranson, 2005; Barker, 2008; Whitty, 2008; Hoskins, 2012; Wright, 2012). As Larner (2000) points out however, neoliberalism embodies more than just a legislative or policy position, it also encompasses ideological frameworks within which such agendas are to be executed. As such, neoliberalism goes hand in glove with processes of governmentality which display "preference for a minimalist state" through means such as de-regulation and privatisation in the restructuring of traditional welfare state provisions (Larner, 2000, p. 5).

Shamir (2008) asserts that the neoliberal governance model, as a modality of power, allows for "self-regulative practices that are based on principles of 'diversification' and 'increased competition' as an alternative to the old model of top-down, one size fits all, coercive regulation" (p. 7). As such, from water and the railways to schools and the NHS, the encroachment of private enterprise into the development and delivery of public services in England has been embedded within the political rhetoric of both the New Left and the New Right (Chitty, 1997; Whitty and Power, 2000; Gewirtz, 2002; Pollitt, 2007; Ball and Youdell, 2009).

Embodied within such rhetoric is the construction of a post-welfare state citizenry, in which the citizen-as-consumer is presented as having a right and a responsibility to engage with an increasingly privatised public service landscape through the exercising of choice, which in turn is sold as a means of individual empowerment (Coffield *et al*., 2007). The ideology of neoliberalism as a form of "pro-market governance" has contributed to the construction of the neoliberal project as an "adaptive form of regulatory practice" (Peck, 2010, p. xi). In this sense, legislative frameworks such as the 1988 ERA represent the complex, indeed paradoxical, ways in which neoliberal governance can simultaneously promote both de-regulation along market lines, and centralised regulation as the government removed powers from local education authorities and placed them directly into the hands of the Secretary of State for Education (Ball, 2011; Hatcher, 2012).

One of the most enduring legacies of the 1988 ERA was the introduction of site-based management (Local Management of Schools, or LMS) which effectively shored up the marketisation of education by granting 'autonomy' to head teachers and governors through the delegation of budgets from local authority control (Sinclair *et al*., 1995; Ball, 1997). Through this process the school "as a small business" unit was established, although such language was rarely deployed (Smyth and Gunter, 2009, p. 190). Even so, managerialism entered the syntax of school leadership and organisation, and as a result, autonomy in this period shifted from being 'licensed' to being 'regulated', as schools were increasingly restricted by centrally controlled performativity and accountability mechanisms echoing the market-orientated approach of neoliberalism (Dale, 1989; Gewirtz, 2002; Whitty, 2006).

Through the introduction of LMS, the concept of school autonomy became anchored to the principles of financial autonomy, liberating schools from the unwieldy, inefficient cogs of locally administered bureaucratic mechanisms. The increasingly centralised regulation coupled with the intensification of financial autonomy served to promote the idea that schools were both organised and administered through inefficient means. Thus, the neoliberal policy complex is characterised by an approach to governance in which the principles of civic welfarism (in its broadest sense, a commitment to distributive justice through a process of collectivism administered through local democratic mechanisms) have been replaced by the more individualistic values and discourses of the market, set out by Gewirtz (2002,

p. 3) to be "choice, competition, efficiency, effectiveness, performativity and productivity". The ideological backbone of neoliberalism is embodied through the hegemonic employment of these key features within the discourse and values underpinning the development of public policy (Wright, 2012).

In this respect the organisational practices and subsequent localised policy processes within schools have been shaped through the ideological agendas and subsequent legislative interventions of neoliberalism (Moore, George and Halpin, 2002). Agency within such localised practices and processes has shifted away from a model of action based on collectivist civic welfarism towards a model of entrepreneurial agency, in which concepts such as autonomy have been aligned with effective and efficient (predominately fiscal) management within a competitive, diverse yet centrally regulated marketplace. It is this reading of the interactions between structure and agency suggested through the data presented in this thesis that led to the development of the conceptualisation of a neoliberal policy complex as a way of understanding what was happening in the schooling field.

It is important to note that whilst the development of the term neoliberal policy complex has helped to understand the structured and structuring processes which contribute to the shaping of practice and agency at the local level, the adoption of such a term within this critique is not without its paradoxes. The term neoliberal has its roots in the neoclassical tradition within economics, and it is only latterly that the notion has become synonymous with a "wide variety of innovations in public management to patterns and processes found in and across diverse political spaces and territories around the globe" (Dean, 2014, p. 150). Thus, the adoption of the term in educational circles in order to critique the very structures and processes developed as a result of neoliberalism is not without tension. However, this paradox further illustrates the restrictive nature of neoliberalism upon thinking through the relationships between macro political, economic and ideological structures and localised policy-making. Therefore, the term developed within this thesis, that is, neoliberal policy *complex*, is intentionally constructed as a means of acknowledging this tension.

The conceptualisation has a complex dimension for three further reasons. In the first instance, the development of educational policy along neoliberal lines has been (re)configured over time, as "new technologies of control" have entered into the field of public policy (Ball, 1997, p. 259). As a result, whilst significant legislative

interventions have undoubtedly shaped the development and enactment of localised educational policy processes, there has been no definable blueprint; rather, there has been a series of complex, interconnected and overlaid strategies that have served to strengthen certain features of neoliberalism within educational reform (Newman, 2001). The 'failures' within the field of educational policy shore up this position, particularly pertinent examples being the lack of take-up of City Technology Colleges (CTCs).

Where CTCs embodied the ideological drive to remove certain functions from local authorities and place them into the hands of school leaders along with business sponsors (the autonomy discussed above), thus effectively introducing independent state schools into the policy terrain, by 1998, only 15 such schools were in existence (Whitty, Power and Halpin, 1998, p. 18). In pure policy terms, CTCs were arguably a 'failure' (Adnett and Davies, 2010); however, as Walford (2000) argues, the significance of the initiative, that is, the introduction of a model of provision in which autonomy is conceptualised as independent from local authority control, has had a long-lasting effect within the field of educational policy. So firstly, the complex is such as, whilst there is no blueprint, the legacy of certain 'failures' (as well as successes) can have a longevity which acts as a "shape-shifter" within the field (Beckett, 2011, p. xx).

Secondly, in relation to this, the complex is such because the imbricated nature of policy development means that overlay occurs over time and space (Ball, 2009). Courtney (2013) conceptualises such developments in terms of a geological process of policy faults and folds, in which older polices are thrust through the newer sediments to form a complex policy landscape across which former initiatives and legislations co-exist with new interventions, in a terrain that features codified transfigurations of both political and moral authority developed through ad hoc approaches to national policy agendas. The existence of competing and sometimes contradictory policy initiatives within the field contributes to a terrain in which tensions are entrenched within the daily professional practices of teachers and learners, and through which localised policy enactments are subsequently developed (Gewirtz, 2002). Shamir conceptualises neoliberalism:

> […] as a complex, often incoherent, unstable and even contradictory set of practices […] which […] collapses the epistemological distinction between economy and society. No longer satisfied with conceiving the rationality of the market as a distinct and limited form of social action, it instead posits the

rationality of the market as the organizational principle for state and society as a whole. (Shamir, 2008, pp. 3-6)

Within the case study school, the re-organisation of the curriculum around an employability agenda as a result of conversion to academy status reflects the centrality of human capital arguments and market discourse within the enactment of localised policy processes, and as such, can be understood through the deployment of the concept of a neoliberal policy complex. A powerful example within the policy complex is the way in which the 1988 ERA decentralised schools into a competitive quasi-market but centralised the curriculum because the neoliberal right wing wanted moral authority returned to the curriculum (Thatcher, 1987; Knight, 1990; Ball, 2008). Therefore, 1988 was a compromise between a neoliberal agenda of wanting to roll back the state and the moral authoritarianism of neo-conservatism in wanting the state to (re)impose a moral distinction upon what was taught in schools (McCulloch, 1994; Ball, 2008).

Thirdly, the conceptualisation of a neoliberal policy complex helps in understanding how alliances between powerful interest groups and individuals have been and continue to be formed as a means of achieving policy agendas embodying some of the central tenets of neoliberalism (Hursh, 2000; Apple, 2004; Woods, Woods and Gunter, 2007; Ball, 2009; Gunter, 2011; Lipman, 2011; Ball, 2012). For example, from 1986 and the introduction of CTCs through to the Academies Act of 2010 powerful businesses, philanthropists and faith groups have been invited to 'sponsor' schools through the opting out process, which in turn has seen the rise of such sponsors involved in the development of educational structures and processes (Hatcher, 2006). In these instances independence from local authority maintenance is conceived within an alternative model through which governing bodies are re-formed to include, for example, representatives from businesses, and through which such representatives establish a powerful voice in the development of localised school policies and processes. A 'neoliberal imaginary' is at work in these processes, in which autonomy, efficiency and productivity are positioned as one of the same side of the coin in developing school models that subsequently will deliver on results and the raising of standards (Ball, 2012). Particularly relevant for this current study is this element of the neoliberal policy complex. As the way has been paved for the greater involvement of local business representatives on the governing body through the creation of Kingswood Academy, such alliances have bestowed further legitimacy upon the school's re-organisation around an

employability agenda. Therefore, the response is to embed further human capital arguments into the raison d'être for greater autonomy for schools; as Rizvi posits, the conception of 'employability' is about lifelong learning which reflects:

> […] a social imaginary about how the world of work and social relations is becoming transformed by globalization, and how, in such a world, the function of education must be re-conceptualized, to meet the needs of the global economy characterized as informational, knowledge-based, post-industrial and service-orientated. Such an economy demands not only the development of 'post-Fordist' regimes of labour management but also systems of education that produce new kind of workers who are motivated by concerns of industrial productivity and are 'self-regulating' and 'self-capitalizing'. (Rose, 1989 cited in Rizvi, 2007, p. 114)

The conceptualisation of a neoliberal policy complex will thus be deployed throughout the remainder of the thesis as a way of understanding the structured and structuring forces shaping agentic positioning and position-taking in the schooling field more generally and in the field of Kingswood more specifically. As a result, the following section draws on Bourdieu's toolkit in order to explicate how field theory forms the basis of the conceptualisation of a neoliberal policy complex to better understand the relationships between structure and agency at the research site.

2.4 Field theory and the neoliberal policy complex

Drawing on Bourdieu (1977, 1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1992) the neoliberal policy complex is conceptualised as a field, which, in analytic terms:

> […] may be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (situs) in the structure of distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake at the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc). (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 97)

Bourdieu (1990a; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) thus suggests that a field is a bounded social space that exists in relation to other fields: for example, the field of politics, the field of the economy and the field of the media. A hierarchy of power and status differentiates each field, and such differentiation influences inhabitants to think and act in certain ways. There are multiple fields within society which breach and influence each other; for example, the field of education policy is breached by

the fields of politics and the economy, whilst simultaneously breaching the schooling field more generally and the field of the school more specifically (Thomson, 2005).

Bourdieu (1990a) often refers to the activities within any given field as a 'game in play'. The analogy of a game is useful in helping to conceptualise how players move within and between fields through their interactions with the structures that govern their daily lives. Such movements are reflective of how individuals as well as collectives such as institutions engage with the game at play, by revealing how they participate in a process of capital exchange. Bourdieu argues that what defined the games at play were various species of capital, for example, economic, cultural, social and symbolic, and how the game is played is dependent on individuals or institutions staking and using these capitals in order to advance or protect their positions within the occupied fields. Bourdieu expounds:

> A species of capital is what is efficacious in a given field, both as a weapon and as a stake of struggle, that which allows its possessors to wield power, or influence, and thus to exist, in the field under consideration, instead of being considered a negligible quantity. (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 98)

How and why individuals and institutions stake and use these various species of capital, Bourdieu (1990a) posits, is reflective of and revealed through sets of dispositions, that is, ways of thinking, doing and being that have been established over time, drawn from and developed by previous experiences of interacting within the field(s). So, whilst there are structures in place regarding how individuals engage in practice within any given field, there is also a place for agency, which is an understanding that positioning and position-taking occurs as a result of 'structured structures' as well as 'structuring structures', a generative set of dispositions that offers a theorising for both individual and collective subjectivities, what Bourdieu (1990a, 1990b) terms habitus. In defining these networks of relations between structured and structuring positions, Bourdieu posited:

> … the field as a structure of objective relations between positions of force undergirds and guides the strategies whereby the occupants of these positions seek, individually or collectively, to safeguard or improve their position ... The strategies of agents depend on their position in the field, that is, in the distribution of the specific capital, and on the perception that they have on the field depending on the point of view they take *on* the field as a view taken from a point *in* the field. (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 101)

Thus, individual and shared habitus reveals how professionals and students engage with the capital at stake within the field of the neoliberal policy complex through their

social practices and positioning. This has implications for this study in regard to how I understand the structured and structuring influence of the neoliberal policy complex over how students, teachers and school leaders position-take and are positioned in relation to localised policies, and how these various actions speak to issues regarding equity and equality in schooling processes. What is important to note here is that schools (and the individuals who work within them) are involved in a process of capital exchange that is shaped by the neoliberal tenets of "choice, competition, efficiency, effectiveness, performativity and productivity" (Gewirtz, 2002, p. 3). The field of education policy has created an environment in which such tenets represent the symbolic capital that schools, teachers and students engage with when they talk about how testing, inspection, data and targets (for example) are part of their daily lives. The staking for such symbolic capital reveals how there are field "interests" that have been developed as a result for the need to engage with and play the game. Within the neoliberal policy complex, the game involves protecting the interests of the individual student and the field of the school by playing the game 'effectively', that is, by accumulating capital that both legitimates and advances positions within the competitive market place.

Within this analysis the school is a field in which struggles occur on a local level in the interpretation and delivery of (as well as resistance to) (economically and ideologically informed) policy from the perspectives of a sample of children, parents, teachers and school leaders. This allows a mapping of the "objective structures of the relations between the positions occupied by the agents [and the] institutions who compete for the legitimate form of specific authority of which this field is the site" (Wacquant, 1989, p. 40). Through the staking of different capitals, the habitus reveals the ways in which actors are positioned and position themselves within the field of power, described by Bourdieu and Wacquant as:

> The relations of force that obtain between the social positions that guarantee their occupants a quantum of social force, or of capital, such that they are able to enter in to the struggles over the monopoly of power, of which struggles over the definition of the legitimate form of power are a crucial dimension. (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 230)

Thus, using an empirically informed methodology focusing on the interactions between social (and professional) practices operating within the objective structures of the policy processes and developments in the school, it is possible to construct a portrait of a local and specific context whilst locating these perspectives within wider discourses that take account of the influence of externally formed social, cultural

and political conditions on the development of localised practices and relations. This section has outlined how Bourdieu's thinking tools have enabled me to conceptualise the wider implications that the development of a neoliberal policy complex has had on the schooling field, as a way of locating the analysis that follows in the remainder of the thesis.

The following section maps the development of educational reform within the neoliberal policy complex and how its development has an important bearing on localised policy-making as well as on the positioning of different social actors within the research site.

2.5 Mapping the policy context: The doxa of the neoliberal policy complex

In order to locate the study within existing literature, I have found Gewirtz's (2002) contributions within *The Managerial School* very useful in conceptualising the broader and historical, socio-political frameworks that the school is operating within. Gewirtz (2002) argues that the 1988 ERA signalled the ushering in of a new era of tighter regulation of schooling from the state, and in particular, that such regulation reflects the commitment of successive governments' of the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s to and consolidation of marketised approaches to educational reform. To distinguish between the pre- and post-1988 "settlements", Gewirtz (2002) conceptualises the former as an era in educational policy characterised by welfarist commitments to a social democratic consensus built upon distributive justice (p. 1). The latter is described by Gewirtz (2002) as "post-welfarist" and signifies the shift in the discourses and values embedded within centralised policy-making along more neoliberal lines.

As such, Gewirtz's (2002, p. 3) conceptualisation of the "post-welfarist educational policy complex" (PWEPC) is symbolic of the values and discourses embodied within neoliberalist approaches to public policy reform. Gewirtz's (2002) adoption of the phrase PWEPC works well within her argument, as the drawing of lines between the pre- and post-welfarist positions enables a tightly delivered thesis that encapsulates the significance of the shifting modes of governance between the end of the Second

World War and the end of Margaret Thatcher's premiership[2]. The shift between the welfare and post-welfare policy complex saw the emergence of neo-conservative discourses, firstly from the Conservative government and latterly from New Labour, in which the social democratic values embedded within the welfarist settlement were attacked (along with the professionals deemed responsible: teachers and local education authority personnel) and in which many of the 'social problems' were framed to be a result of over-dependency upon welfarism, leading to fiscal inefficiency and poor quality services (Whitty, 2008).

As a result of such attacks, the Education Acts of 1980 and 1986 both provided legislation that aimed to reduce local education authorities' "monopoly" over educational provision, in the first instance by developing the 'Assisted Places Scheme' that enabled 'bright' children from families with low socio-economic status to attend private schools (Whitty, Power and Halpin, 1998, p. 18). The latter Act reformed the governance structures of locally maintained schools to decrease the number of LEA representatives and to encourage the appointment of parents and local business interests onto school governing bodies as well as introduce City Technology Colleges (CTCs) (Whitty, Power and Halpin, 1998; Gunter, 2010). So although the fragmentation of the post-war social democratic settlement had begun in the early 1980s under Thatcher's newly formed Conservative government, Gewirtz (2002) argues that it was the raft of policy initiatives embodied within the 1988 ERA that truly marked the legislative battle lines in which the Conservative government codified the post-welfare policy complex by accelerating the development of policies which articulated the shifting value systems being embedded within public service delivery, values which were embodied by economic liberalism. These emphasised the role and responsibility of the individual as a consumer by offering choice and diversity of provision, and by legislating for greater autonomy for schools outside of local authority control.[3]

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[2] During this time a post-war consensus was developed along social-democratic lines, which saw an increased role for the state in developing distributive public policies; in education the significant shifts occurred in the expansion of secondary schooling and the introduction of the comprehensive system.

[3] As previously mentioned, this was initiated through the introduction of site-based management (LMS) and the introduction of grant-maintained school status (GMS). Alongside these shifts, in order to address the perceived nefarious control of professionals over the localised running of schools, the ERA also demarcated centralised control over the curriculum.

Thus, the analysis offered within this thesis draws heavily on Gewirtz's (2002) conceptualisation of the PWECP, which itself provides the foundations for the development of my conceptualisation of the neoliberal policy complex, as a useful scaffold for thinking about the post-2010 context in which autonomy has been further codified through the legislative intervention of the Academies Act.

There are a number of studies which illustrate how marketisation of educational reform through a modernising agenda committed to the tenets of economic liberalism has been increasingly embedded within the discourses used at both macro (national policy) and micro (localised school) levels to describe what schools do and how they do it (Angus, 2004, 2012; Fielding, 2006; Klees, 2008; Department for Education, 2010; Levin, 2010; Thomson *et al*, 2010; Morris, 2012). The term neoliberal enables consistency with regards to the analysis of the structures and processes within which Kingswood Academy operates because the research has revealed that neoliberal discourses are deeply entrenched within both the localised language and values of institutional policy-making as well as the subjectivities of the actors by and for whom the policies have been developed.

In order to make sense of the relationship between the micro level and the macro level with regards to how such discourses permeate the development and enactment of policy processes at an individual site, and how such processes interact with existing structures that have been developed as a result of the shifting boundaries within the neoliberal policy complex, I have operationalised Bourdieu's thinking tools as described in Section 2.4. By adopting the conceptualisation of a neoliberal policy complex to locate the school within a wider socio-political and economic framework, I draw on the work of Blackmore (2010, p. 103), in which she identifies a "neoliberal doxa". This study is concerned with how localised policy-making positions actors and requires actors to position-take as a result of the neoliberal policy complex. The dominant values and discourses that define the complex have been embodied into the practices of many of the actors I spoke to during the course of the research. Blackmore's (2010) use of Bourdieu's conceptualisation of the doxa helps to develop a theoretical underpinning as to how and why the neoliberal policy complex has been such a dominant and powerful force in regulating localised responses to national policy agendas. Blackmore argues that:

> Out of a need for legitimacy nationally and internationally and as a result of neo-liberal policy orthodoxies, the focus of attention of the performative state has shifted from teaching to learning, from administration to leadership, from structures to individuals and from process to outcomes. (Blackmore, 2010, p. 101)

The neoliberal influence on the structures and processes combine with individual and institutional position-taking to produce a logic of practice in which increasingly neoliberal discourses have permeated into the subjectivities of both teachers and learners, reiterated and reproduced by the development and enactments of localised policy processes along these lines (Gewirtz, 2002). The doxic nature of such positioning and position-taking can be understood as below:

> Within each field, certain knowledges and capitals are privileged, providing a common sense or orthodoxy that Bourdieu calls doxa. A focus on the social practices that re/produce habitus offers explanations of purposeful and intelligent behaviour that takes into account the constraints of structure, rules and relationships, how doxa works, but still leaves space for agency. (Blackmore, 2010, p. 102)

Thus, the doxa within the neoliberal policy complex, that is, the neoliberal doxa, reflects the privileging of policy discourses which embed the tenets of choice, competition, efficiency, effectiveness, performativity and productivity within the logics of practice of localised policy-making (Gewirtz, 2002, p. 3; Thomson, 2005, 2010). This point will be furnished with empirical examples throughout the thesis; however, what is necessary here is to clearly signpost and locate what is meant by the terminology operationalised throughout the thesis when discussing both the neoliberal policy complex and the neoliberal doxa. The doxa thus reflects the legitimated permeation of the neoliberal policy complex, embodied within the 1980, 1986 and 1988 Education Reform Acts and developed by the 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2010 and 2011 Education Acts into the 'taken-for-granted' value systems that underpin localised policy processes, and their attendant practices (Bourdieu, 1977).

The relevance of conceptualising the way policy orthodoxies shape professional practice and personal position-taking through such a theoretical paradigm is provided by Gewirtz's statement that:

> There seems to be little appreciation that these discourses have embedded within them a set of values about what education is, and is for, and that they function as powerful disciplinary mechanisms for transforming manager and teacher subjectivities and the culture and values of schooling. (Gewirtz, 2002, p. 21)

Gewirtz (2002) argues that a process of acculturation along neoliberal lines has taken place in schools and classrooms in the decades following the ERA and that such legitimated discourses have contributed to a re-allocation of values (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010). That such shifts have occurred is acknowledged by a large number of academics within the field offering a wide range of research projects and literature reviews that shore up this position (Chitty, 1989; Ball, 1997, 2007; Troyna and Vincent, 1995; Woods, Bagley and Glatter, 1998; Whitty, Power and Halpin, 1998; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Newman, 2001; Tomlinson, 2005; Wright, 2012) as well as being embodied by a number of post-ERA policies by successive governments: for example, DfES 2005 *Higher Standards for all* and the 2010 Academies Act.

In light of this substantial body of empirical work and policy evidence, identifying the relationship between the "disciplinary framework" embodied within the neoliberal policy complex, and the 'drift' in the cultures and values of schooling (Gewirtz, 2002, p. 19) as part of a doxic experience, helps to make sense of why there appears to be relatively little resistance to policies which have, arguably, been designed to fragment any sort of system coherence that existed and was meted out by local authorities supporting individual schools working in partnership with other schools (Moore, George and Halpin, 2002).

I will return to this point in Chapters 6 and 7. What is of note here is that the neoliberal doxa operates at a system wide level, and has been (re)produced as a result of the modernising agenda in which schools having to operate within marketised conditions adopt the discourses of this agenda as a way of explaining why certain policies have been engaged with at the local level. The policy games that are engaged with through the development of localised structures and processes are reflective of these dominating discourses, the doxa works to further legitimate the localised policy activities of schools by rewarding those that engage with the rules of the game as they have been developed and regulated by and through governmental policy work (Thomson, 2005, 2010).

To stress the wide reaching influence of the neoliberal policy complex upon the policy work that is done in schools is not to forget or ignore the research that has uncovered institutional and political spaces in which such pervasive discourses have been subverted or rejected by individual and groups of professionals, parents,

students and community members (Woods, 1990; McFadden, 1995; Ozga, 1999; Hatcher, 2006; Levinson, Sutton and Winstead, 2009). Research has evidenced that groups of schools are co-opting to work collaboratively with each other and with local authorities in order to address local needs by developing an approach to system coherence between provisions, which illustrates that the competitive nature of the policy game embodied by the neoliberal policy complex is far from being fully realised in all instances (Benn and Chitty, 1996; Ranson *et al*., 1997; Ainscow, 1999; Fielding, 2000, 2001a; Hargreaves, 2003; Nicolaidou and Ainscow, 2005; Ainscow and West, 2006; Ainscow and Howes, 2007).

However, such examples are being increasingly dwarfed by evidence which points to schools either voluntarily opting out of local authority maintenance through the process of academisation, or being forced to convert as a result of the current Conservative-led Coalition's partnership with Ofsted. This partnership empowers central government to follow up Ofsted's recommendations for under-performing schools to be removed from local authority control and handed to a sponsor or a group of sponsors to run (Beckett, 2007; Gunter, 2011; Miller, 2011; Brundrett, 2012; Facer, Thorpe and Shaw, 2012; Fisher, 2012; Gillard, 2012; Hatcher, 2012; Jones, 2012; Gunter and McGinity, 2014). Such examples point to the legitimating force within the field of power, emanating from central government, with regards to how schools are locally re-structuring in order to respond to the acceleration of diversification and competition within the system.

Whilst it is incredibly important to attend to the possible charge of over-deterministic position-taking with regards to the influence of the neoliberal policy complex on the landscape of educational provision nationally, and how this manifests through policy processes at the local level, it would be naïve to present the stories within this thesis as outside of what is happening elsewhere, and to underestimate the force field of the modernising agenda embodied within the neoliberal policy complex influencing how successful schools such as Kingswood are codifying the autonomy available through recent legislation by re-structuring local provision and curriculum. The fact that existing schools are facing increased competition for pupil numbers through the development of the Conservative-led Coalition's 'Free School' policy, in which groups such as parents and teachers, charities, faith groups, universities, social enterprises, existing independent schools and academy sponsors are able to apply to access state budgets to open new schools, provides further evidence of the emphasis placed upon competition and independent models of provision by the

government (Allen and Burgess, 2010; Hatcher, 2011). Such legitimating strategies point to the increased pressure that the local, 'ordinary' school (Maguire *et al*., 2011) is under to achieve distinction within this shifting landscape.

This section has used Gewirtz's (2002) conceptualisation of the PWEPC as a foundation for the development of the neoliberal policy complex as a framework for mapping the educational policy terrain in England since 1988, specifically in order to highlight how the production of legitimate and legitimating policy agendas, linked to the explicit themes of choice, competition, efficiency, effectiveness, performativity and productivity, can be understood as part of a doxic narrative which contributes to structuring the logics of practice underlying how schools respond to centrally determined policy initiatives. Such a mapping exercise further indicates the usefulness of understanding the structured and structuring influences of the neoliberal policy complex on the field of educational policy. The following section will argue that the drive for greater autonomy must be seen as an essential element in the privatisation of public services as part of the modernising project, framed by the neoliberal policy complex, and one which speaks directly to the impact of the 2010 Academies Act, which foregrounded the key localised reforms at the research site which provided the backdrop for this study.

2.6 The development of autonomy within the neoliberal policy complex

One of the most dominant strains within the neoliberal policy complex as developed by successive Conservative and New Labour governments is the legitimation of increased autonomy, embodied within legislation passed in the 1990s, 2000s and now this second decade of the millennium (Harvey, 2005; Walford, 2007; Curtis, 2008; Christensen and Laegreid, 2011; Beckett, 2011; Wright, 2012). As Glatter (2012) cogently argues, "autonomy is a subtle and relative concept, varying in nature and degree by context, activity (such as curriculum, assessment, resource management) and level" (p. 565). Despite this critique that points to the subtle complexities of the concept of autonomy when applied to school contexts, the term has proven to be a "preoccupation" in English educational policy, synonymous with the fragmentation of the post-welfarist settlement (Glatter, 2012, p. 559).

Autonomy has thus served as a policy driver which links increased standards with greater independence from the state; it has become an enduring by-word for the legitimation of developing opportunities for provision to operate outside of the parameters of LEA 'control'. Paradoxically, the commitment to autonomy since the 1980s has emerged during a time of increased centralisation and regulation within English educational policy (Arnot, 1991; Ranson, 1995; Simkins, 2000; Adnett and Davies, 2002; Whitty, 2008; Ozga, 2009; Gunter, 2011). Despite this paradox the concept of autonomy has become deeply associative with the idea of the 'self managing school' (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988, 2008). This particular construct is framed by the notion of the "decentralising of decision-making", particularly around the allocation of resources (Caldwell and Spinks, 2008, p. 258), and is reflected in policy by the introduction of LMS, GMs, CTCs, Specialist Schools, as well as latterly Academies and Free Schools.

The defining feature of this patchwork of provisions is that the legislation has provided the conditions in which schools have become increasingly modelled as businesses (Hatcher, 2006, 2008, 2011). The neoliberal policy complex has pioneered reforms that have introduced autonomy as a means to divert resources away from maintaining authorities directly into the hands of the school. Such legislation enhanced the capacity of schools to opt out of local authority maintenance in order to become autonomous institutions, with a particular focus on fiscal autonomy, but which meant schools were also operating outside of the traditional and democratic structures developed by the LEAs.

As mentioned above CTCs and GM were the earliest examples of this. In 1993 the Education Act set up the possibility of schools becoming 'Specialist' in particular curriculum areas, such as sports, technology or science, which meant that local admissions could be demarcated along certain selection criteria, agreed on at the local level, that pertained to their specialist category and for which schools received additional and direct funding agreements from central government. This programme was adopted and expanded under New Labour, and the number of schools with Specialist Status increased from 200 in 1997, to 1000 in 2002, and by 2010 nearly all secondary schools had at least one specialism (Lupton and Obolenskaya, 2013). In 2000 New Labour introduced City Academies into the already crowded policy complex, in which inner city schools operating in challenging circumstances and placed in the category of 'Special Measures' by the school inspectorate were closed

and re-opened as academies, sponsored by business, church organisations, or wealthy philanthropists (Ball, 2007).

The 2010 Academies Act consolidated further the role of autonomy in the provision of state education when the Conservative-led Coalition introduced legislation that expanded New Labour's City Academies programme by allowing "successful" schools to opt out of state control and become either convertor, stand alone academies or to opt into a federation or chain of existing schools run by a sponsor, as well as introducing the aforementioned Free Schools programme (Academies Act, 2010). The legislative framing of increasing school autonomy from local control is thus a cornerstone of the neoliberal policy complex and one which has become an orthodoxy for the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats and New Labour in terms of how to engage with system wide improvement (DCSF, 2005, 2007; Department for Education, 2010).

That there has been no "academy effect" (PricewaterhouseCooper, 2005) identified has not dissuaded the political elite that such policies should not be pursued, and points to deeper, ideological reasoning as to why such policies have been developed with such enthusiasm and verve. Such reasoning, it could be posited, relates back to the arguments offered by Clarke and Newman (1997), and taken up by Gewirtz (2002), that the new 'managerialism', which saw the re-defining of the relationship between the state and the citizen along devolved, consumerist and individualistic lines, was developed in order to address the perceived failure of the state in delivering services which were economically efficient and productive, a failure perceived as representative of a bureaucratically cumbersome, unwieldy and overtly left wing local administration (Gewirtz, 2002).[4]

Therefore, individual and institutional autonomy has been embedded within the value systems and the legislative frameworks that have contributed to the fragmentation of the role of local authorities in supporting and developing system coherence. Schools been placed within what Gewirtz (2002) terms the "disciplinary framework", in "which state policies and dominant discourses impose a highly constraining disciplinary framework on schools and local school systems" (p. 19). The research in Chapters 5 and 6 will illuminate how professionals within the school

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[4] This approach to the development of public policy is also evidenced by shifts in policies relating to housing, health and social services, in which devolved provision is cited as a way to both improve service delivery and consumer demand and expectation (Pollitt, 2007).

engage with the discourse of autonomy, in terms of the decision to convert to a stand-alone academy and the model of provision developed as a result. However, what is of significance here is that the logics of practice in which schools operate at the local level are part of the disciplinary framework that has placed autonomy as a key driver for success, and importantly, a legitimating action that aligns professional practices within the school with the political and ideological discourses presented by key policy actors in the central field of power.

Understanding how autonomy is framed within the neoliberal policy complex has implications for the aims and research questions underpinning this project, because in seeking to describe, understand and explain localised policymaking at Kingswood at a time of centralised reform, it is necessary to locate how the school has positioned itself in response to a concept so deeply entrenched in both the political and ideological rhetoric of the neoliberal policy complex. The following section interrogates the implications of policy interventions linked to the discourse of autonomy upon issues of social justice and equality of opportunity within the education system in England.

2.7 Diversification, equity and access

Gewirtz (2002) argues that the consequences of the "disciplinary framework" within which schools have to operate "include an increased subjugation of teachers, a closer alignment of schooling with capitalist values and the exacerbation of inequalities of provision along class lines" (p. 19). One of the on-going concerns with the drive for greater autonomy and increased diversification within the education system by educational researchers and activists is the impact that these policies may have on children who come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Gewirtz *et al*., 1995; Lauder *et al*., 1999; Ozga, 2000; Apple, 2001; Thomson, 2002; Glatter, 2004; Power *et al*., 2003; Harris and Ranson, 2005; Raffo *et al*., 2007; Power and Frandji, 2010; Angus, 2012).

Under the Conservative governments of Margaret Thatcher and John Major (1979-1997), the codification of school autonomy within the neoliberal policy complex was framed alongside a raft of divisive social and economic policies, policies that reflected the New Right's political and ideological positioning that individual responsibility was a remedy for socio-economic disadvantage, along with a rejection

of the belief that structural causes contributed to inequalities within society, which subsequently required state intervention to address (Thrupp and Tomlinson, 2005, p. 550). As such, policies such as the Assisted Places Scheme embodied this position-taking by codifying the privatisation agenda into the neoliberal policy complex by championing the provision on offer within the independent sector as superior to state funded provision. Research identified that whilst the scheme was popular it did not "attract large numbers of children from inner city or manual working class backgrounds" (Fitz, Edwards and Whitty, 1986, p. 169). So whilst successive Conservative governments in the 1980s and early 1990s introduced policies into the policy complex which purported to extend the most 'successful' provision for children from low income backgrounds, there was an absence in the discourse relating to equity of access and outcome (Ozga, 2000; Gewirtz, 2002; Raffo, 2010; Gunter, 2011).

The Specialist Schools Policy entered the policy complex in 1993, also under a Conservative administration, and was also designed to give schools direct access to funding and greater control of admissions in relation to the specialist subjects for which they could apply. Both of these policies were part of the Conservative drive to reduce the power of local authorities within the neoliberal policy complex (Brighouse, 2002; Adnett and Davis, 2002), and whilst the Assisted Places Scheme was subsequently scrapped by New Labour, they adopted and extended the Specialist Schools Programme as an embodiment of the principles of choice and diversity that were the hallmarks of the 'Third Way' approach to educational reform. This decision was reflective of their part in developing the neoliberal policy complex, which contributed to the on-going dismantlement of local authority input in localised provision and the emphasis on autonomy for improving the system (Exley, 2013).

New Labour's 'Third Way' reflected a modernising agenda in which the relationship between public and private, the citizen and the state, were further re-defined in order to fit with the conditions of an increasingly competitive global economy (Newman, 2001, p. 40). What was distinctive about this agenda was that investment in education was cited as being of singular importance in helping to achieve this goal. Whilst the Conservative party had passed the game changing legislation that fuelled the drive towards school autonomy and competition and diversity between provision, investment in education had dwindled considerably in real terms, and had left many schools in the maintained sector seriously under-resourced (Gillard, 2011). New Labour's policies in education, therefore, set out to re-address this, and

education spending as a percentage of GDP grew from 4.5 percent in 1996/7 to 6.2 percent in 2010/11 (Heath *et al*., 2013). Part of this investment was ring fenced for the City Academies programme (DCSF, 2000), and between 2000 and 2005 there were 87 such provisions (DfE, 2013a). Compared to the Conservatives CTC programme, this represented a large number and illustrates the Third Way approach to modernising the public sector by creating more opportunities within traditional public sector spaces for private sector investment into the diversification of schooling (Curtis *et al*., 2008; Curtis, 2009; Hoskins, 2012).

Taylor (2005) and Curtis (2009) identify that the main difference between the Conservative approach to choice and diversity and that of New Labour was the emphasis on diversity of provision in raising standards for all children, but particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, research has shown that in fact such an approach actually strengthened the position of middle class parents and failed to address the gap in attainment between the most advantaged and disadvantaged students (Ball, 2003; Reay, 2008; Power *et al*., 2002; Whitty, 2008). Although New Labour did roll back some of the more extreme elements of the choice and diversity policies of the Conservatives, such as the Assisted Places Scheme (Power, Whitty and Edwards, 1999; Thomson, 2005), the codification of autonomy, choice and diversity for the few rather than the many within the neoliberal policy complex was ultimately strengthened by New Labour's modernising reform agenda (Fielding, 2001a; Gewirtz, 2001; Paterson, 2003; Gillborn, 2008; Reay, 2008; Whitty, 2009).

Whilst there is no space within this thesis to draw an analysis of the impact that these policies had in terms of the social justice concerns that did at least to some extent draw a line between the Conservatives' and New Labour's approaches to modernisation along new liberal lines, what is of note is that whilst investment into areas of disadvantage were made, the emphasis on the individual as consumer, leading to increased autonomy, choice and diversity of provision through the fragmentation of traditional and democratic structures and increased centralised regulation, was codified into the neoliberal policy complex in a way that long term and real commitment to inclusion and equity were not (Thomson, 2005; PMSU, 2006). This is of significance for the current study because the re-construction of educational provision at Kingswood enables important questions to be asked regarding the positionality of young people within such processes.

2.7.2 Diversification, standards and performativity

A much more embedded legacy within the neoliberal education policy complex introduced by the Conservatives and accelerated as a result of New Labour's modernising reforms was the codification of the standards and performativity agendas (Ball, 2003a; Harris and Ranson, 2005; Raffo and Gunter, 2008; Ball, 2010; Ball *et al*., 2011). Ball (2003) argues that three "policy technologies" were central within the codification of the modernising reform agenda aimed at breaking down the traditional state centred approach to educational provision, "market, managerialism, and performativity" (p. 215). In line with Gewirtz (2002), and Clarke and Newman (1998), Ball (2003) locates his argument that the first two of these technologies reflected the replacement of professional and administrational bureaucracy with managerialist approaches to the running of public sector services within a framework of increased commitment to the principles of economic liberalism through the use of markets as a means of aligning the public sector more closely with the private sector. Ball defines the third policy technology identified, performativity, as below:

> Performativity is a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic). The performances (of individual subjects or organizations) serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of 'quality', or 'moments' of promotion or inspection. As such they stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organization within a field of judgement. The issue of who controls the field of judgement is crucial. (Ball, 2003, p. 216)

Encapsulated within this arm of the neoliberal policy complex are a myriad of mechanisms that have been designed in order to regulate the activities of teachers' work and students' learning at the local level, in order to generate a system in which such activities can be measured, compared, contrasted, praised, lambasted and ultimately controlled (Ranson, 2003; Campbell *et al*., 2007; Barker, 2008; Fitzgerald, 2008; Comber and Nixon, 2009; Gunter and Thomson, 2009; Ozga, 2009; Hartley, 2009; Gunter and Forrester, 2010; Grenfell, 2010; Hartley, 2010; McGinity and Gunter, 2012; Maguire *et al*., 2013). Such mechanisms fit comfortably within the conditions that have been created through the neoliberal policy complex, as data

collected as a result of this policy technology can be used to shore up the marketised approach embedded within the diversification of the education system.

One of the most established modes of this technology is embodied by the league tables, which entered the neoliberal policy complex as part of the 1988 ERA, the capacities of which were subsequently enhanced throughout the New Labour administrations as additional elements were added in order to provide as much data as possible to parents, who were positioned as consumers within the choice and diversity agenda (Ball, 1999; West and Pennell, 2002). The testing and inspection regime, and the development of a national curriculum, are also modes of performativity that were codified as a result of the 1988 ERA and which have subsequently contributed to the concomitant standards agenda, in which students, teachers and schools are measured on their ability to deliver on pre-determined results through the use of floor targets leading to the production of data as to how they have collectively performed, particularly in relation to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) (Ozga, 2009; Ball *et al*., 2012b).

Research into the impact of these agendas on localised school policy-making will be identified and analysed in more detail in the sections below, and furnished with empirical examples from my own research in Chapters 4, 5 and 6; however, here it is important to note that the performativity agenda as a codified branch of the neoliberal policy complex is shrouded in consecutive governments' commitment to creating new forms of accountability as an approach which legitimates increased central regulation in the name of raising standards (Newman, 2001, p. 83). Ball *et al*. posit that:

> The discourse of 'standards' works to articulate a particular version and vision of what schooling is and should be – more, higher, better! Such a discourse exists at an abstract level but it has the ability to arrange and rearrange, form and re-form, position and identify whatsoever and whomsoever exists within its field. (Ball *et al*., 2012b, p. 514)

This version of schooling has become so entrenched within the daily lives of both teachers and students that much of the discourse has been absorbed into their individual and collective subjectivities (at both the personal and the institutional level) to the extent that the standards agenda frames how actors talk about their activities and their purposes within the schooling field as well as shaping localised policy activities around this discourse (Reay and William, 1999; Gillborn and

Youdell, 2000; Ozga, 2000; Ball, 2003; Maguire, 2005; Beck, 2008; Reay, 2008; Braun *et al*., 2011; Wright, 2012).

As a result of the focus on the standards and performativity agenda, the linking of classroom activities with top down regulation has shaped the logics of practice for teaching and learning at the local level (Sachs, 2003; Hardy and Lingard, 2008; Angus, 2012). The central place of regulatory practices in attempting to address system wide improvement, which has become so ingrained within how schools need to think about and 'do' policy (Ball *et al*., 2012a), is linked to the 'audit culture' embedded within the neoliberal policy complex (Thomson, 2008; Gunter and Thomson, 2009; Ball *et al*., 2012b). Michael Barber defined this culture as "Deliverology" (Barber, 2007), in which an expectation was embedded within the performativity policy technology that the public sector worker, in this case the teacher, 'delivers' the governmental policy objective of raising standards through the use of floor targets and data (Barber, 2007; Gunter and Forrester, 2010; Ball *et al*., 2012b). Whilst the terminology adopted by Barber (2007) has not been picked up by the Conservative-led Coalition, there is a continuation, and indeed an acceleration, of linking the policy work of the Secretary of State for Education directly into the daily practices of teaching and learning within the classroom (Young, 2011).

What this approach to policy development does is to highlight how the discourses established by the New Right from the early 1980s onwards around the attack on 'progressive' education as a result of the stranglehold leftist teachers and educational administrators had over large elements of the education system have become codified within the neoliberal policy complex to create a situation in which teachers have become increasingly de-professionalised, their activities have become more centrally regulated, while discourses of autonomy, choice and diversity are used to further legitimate such policy activities (Barton *et al*., 1994; Ozga, 1995; Furlong *et al*., 2000; Whitty, 2006; Day *et al*., 2000; Beck, 2008; Gewirtz *et al*., 2009; Ozga, 2009; Ball, 2003; Angus, 2012). Ball *et al*. state that:

> One of the peculiar features of current education policy in England is the extent to which some types of policy must be seen to be done, that is, reported as done and accounted for. There is a low trust policy environment in which accountability work and the reporting of performances can take up increasing amounts of time and divert time and effort away from that which is reported on. (Ball *et al.*, 2012a, p. 56)

This point resonates with Gewirtz's (2002) development of the term 'disciplinary framework' to argue that such centrally regulated activities have led to an environment in which teachers and teachers' work have been increasingly subjugated (p. 20). The low trust policy environment discussed by Ball *et al*. (2012a) is a reflection of the extent to which the de-professionalisation of teachers has become part and parcel of the neoliberal policy complex.[5] One of the consistent elements embodied within the policy discourses of both the New Right and the New Left is that as central regulation is tightened, so the spaces for alternative responses at the local level are squeezed out (Apple, 2004). The legitimating functions (that is specifically the accountability and performativity frameworks) within the neoliberal policy complex have become so powerful and dominant that it is essential that studies looking into localised policy-making explore whether such activities along autonomous lines have been eclipsed in favour of policy development which works to legitimate and strengthen the school's position within the market place by responding to the regulatory demands handed down from central government.

Before moving into the subsequent section that locates the current study in the literature regarding localised policy-making, the following bullet points briefly summarise the arguments made thus far:

- The conceptualisation of a neoliberal policy complex has been developed through the use of Bourdieu's thinking tools, in order to frame understanding as to how neoliberal political and economic structures contribute to shaping agency and practice at the local level.

- The neoliberal policy complex represents the framework for a shift in values from a commitment to distributive justice through collectivist and democratic mechanisms to a market orientated approach to public policy reform.

- Within this framework there has been a move from agency as a collective enterprise to entrepreneurial agency executed within a centrally regulated marketplace.

- Complex policy development is apparent in the lack of a blueprint: the co-existence of new and old legislative interventions into the field and the paving of the way for alliances between powerful interest groups in both developing and responding to neoliberal policy agendas.

- Through attacks on LEAs and the legislative intervention of the 1988 ERA, expectation was shifted to the citizen as consumer through choice and

[5] Under Michael Gove (building on the workforce reforms of New Labour) such position-taking has been accelerated by the policy caveat within the 2010 Academies Act that teachers working in state funded independent schools do not have to have qualified teacher status (Department for Education, 2010, 2013).

diversity of provision, and on school autonomy by becoming self-managing business units.

- The domination of the discourses and values centring on choice, competition, efficiency, effectiveness, performativity and productivity contribute to a disciplinary framework which (re)produces and legitimates the orthodoxies embodied within the neoliberal policy complex.

- Within this disciplinary framework, autonomy is framed as a key driver of success in aligning professional practice with the political and ideological discourses presented by key policy actors in the central field of power.

- Consecutive governments have codified autonomy, choice and diversity in a way that commitments to social justice concerns were not.

- As a result the standards agenda has been absorbed into both the individual and collective subjectivities at both the personal and institutional level, contributing to how localised policy-making is both framed and engaged with at the local level.

The following section of this chapter will consider how studies into localised policy-making have constructed understanding with regards to the positionality of different stakeholders within the education system.

2.8 Localised Policy-making

Outlined above was an analysis of the broader socio-political context within which Kingswood operates. The importance of developing a "bigger picture" analysis of the structural framework in which local educational policy-making takes place has been promulgated as an essential characteristic of policy scholarship activity by Ozga (1990, p. 3) and Grace (1995) amongst others. The argument that was put forth by Ozga in 1990 posited that pre-1988 educational research was too pluralistic in approach, which was problematic because of a lack of work that focussed on the coherence of educational policy as politically and economically structured. A number of studies emerged in the 1990s and into the millennium which addressed this perceived lack of macro analyses, and educational researchers produced a body of significant scholarship which located the policy work of schools within wider debates relating to the globalising influence of the economy and the ideological dominance of the New Right as a way of understanding the broader contexts in which schools operated (Dale, 1989; Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992; Grace, 1995; Whitty, Power and Halpin, 1998; Ozga, 2000; Gewirtz, 2002).

Therefore, it is expected, and indeed necessary, that studies such as this one locate the unique empiricism of the data set into a wider socio-historical framework in order to map the impact of politically and economically derived policies onto the landscape of localised policy-making. Despite the importance of this approach it is also important not to eclipse the role that micro-analyses of localised policy processes play within this paradigm.

Power (1995) criticised Ozga's (1990) stance, arguing that if educational research were to go too far into providing macro analyses of the functionality of the state on the development of educational policy, studies would run the risk of obliterating the need for empirical work that uncovered local processes within these broader contexts (Power, 1995, p. 78). This is an important point, because what policy scholarship acknowledges is that there is a relationship between the macro level (state) and the micro level (institution) which is dynamic, and whilst schools operate within the same economic and political environment at any given time, they also develop localised responses to policies which are context specific, influenced in one sense by their own histories and geography and in another by the social relations of the individuals who work and learn together within the school, at any given time (Ball *et al*., 2012a; Maguire *et al*., 2011).

Therefore, it is imperative that the complexity of schools as social organisations are taken seriously by policy scholars in order to produce studies that locate the 'this-ness' of an individual site as both unique but also part of a larger and patterned process of external policy development which takes place at a local, national and international level (Thomson, 2000). As Ball states:

> Schools are complex, contradictory, sometimes incoherent organisations, like many others. They are assembled over time to form a bricolage of memories, commitments, routines, bright ideas and policy effects. They are changed, influenced and interfered with regularly, and increasingly. They drift, decay and regenerate. Furthermore, as 'values' organisations they interweave affective, ideological and instrumental engagement — although a good deal of this is conveniently ignored or set aside in much of the contemporary work on school organisations. (Ball, 1997, p. 318)

Ball's (1997) point is a good one, and speaks to the issues that Power (1995) had with regards to Ozga's (1990) call for more macro analyses within educational research. That schools as stand-alone organisations are complex and contradictory social "assemblages" (Ball *et al*., 2011, p. 637) which require detailed, micro-analysis if any sense-making is to be done with regards to how individual institutions

fit into the bigger picture of a schooling system which has been subject to increased diversification as a result of the neoliberal policy complex. In fact since 1988, and Ozga's (1990) call for macro analyses of the role of state production on educational policy, the drive towards increased centralised and regulated control of the work being done in schools, along with the plethora of policies which have been designed to increase pluralism and thus competition between schools, has led to a landscape of educational provision in which there is arguably more need than ever before for studies of how schools are responding to this policy environment through the development and enactment of localised policy processes. This is because the field of educational research has seen a number of (significant) broad and systematic analyses that have done an excellent job at offering theoretical positionings of the impact of managerialism and marketisation on educational policy, but this has arguably happened at the expense of specific case studies (Woods and Bagley, 1996; Gewirtz, 2002; Lingard *et al*., 2005).

Whilst there is a strong tradition of research that points to the importance of "taking more seriously" the specificity of the contexts within which schools operate (Thrupp and Lupton, 2006), particularly when examining the impact that context has on social justice issues such as educational access and equality of opportunity, there are less examples of specific case studies which offer in-depth analyses as to how schools are operationalising the changes in legislative frameworks into localised policy processes and how such enactments both position and require position-taking by both professionals and learners within these specific cases. Arguably this is because such cases are prone to criticism from within the field of social sciences, taking into account the increased pressure within academia to show "cross-field" effects of social policy on schooling provision, and as such, focus more on larger, broader studies which can demonstrate the worth of educational research in its broadest sense (Rawolle and Lingard, 2008, p. 738). Yet if there were more studies offering robust empirical analyses of localised policy-making, it would be possible to develop a typology of school position-taking within the neoliberal policy complex which could identify the impact of the local, national and global influences on the development of localised structures and processes from a system wide perspective.

2.8.2 Studies into localised policy-making: positionality of leaders, teachers and students

More recently a number of studies have explored how schools in England have and continue to engage with the neoliberal policy complex through the development and enactment of localised policy processes (Braun *et al*., 2010; Rizvi and Lingard, 2010; Maguire *et al*., 2011; Ball *et al*., 2012; McGinity and Gunter, 2012; Gerrard and Farrell, 2013). How schools handle policy in a rapidly reforming context is an important question to ask of research because it allows an investigation into the impact of dominant and powerful discourses upon localised agenda setting in order to understand better the relationships between structure and agency, internal and external demands, central and peripheral concerns. As the thesis continues, each empirically weighted Chapter (4, 5 and 6) will detail and locate the data and analysis within a wider context of relevant research; the outline below is intended to offer a broad picture of the main ways in which the impact of localised policy processes on stakeholder positionality have been researched.

There are a number of studies that have explored how policy processes both position and require position-taking from different stakeholders in schools. For the most part, these studies are split into research with a specific set of stakeholders and usually with a focus upon elites in schools, teachers or students. Therefore, with regards to elites, research has uncovered the myriad of ways that school leaders position themselves and consider they are positioned by policy processes, from the design and development as a result of external demands to the localised delivery and enactment of such policies (Ball, 2009; Grace, 1995; Gunter and Forrester, 2009, 2010; Gunter, 2009; Bell and Stevenson, 2006; Thomson, 2001 2010; Lingard *et al*., 2001.

These studies take a socio-political critical standpoint in examining how the professional practices of leadership have been shaped by the demands and influences of the neoliberal policy complex, particularly revealing the extent to which the managerial state has breached the field of leading and leadership to produce a logic of practice which reveals the pressures to be transformational in the delivery of policy products (Gunter, 2009). Gunter (2009) identifies four main positions that the literatures take with regards to educational leadership, these being critical, humanistic, instrumental and scientific, and espouses the importance of work which

pushes for a framework of understanding developed along critical lines in order to question the validity of the values that underpin the trend towards transformational leadership in the instrumental and scientific schools of research.

Such position-taking within the literature is significant because it points to an important influence of the neoliberal policy complex that the "celebration and liberation of school leaders have been one of the loci of educational reform over the past 20 years" (Ball, 2011, p. 50). The 'autonomy' imbided within the managerialist and transformational positioning of school leaders within this policy complex has impacted on localised policy-making, as increasingly head teachers and other senior leaders in schools are expected to be 'entrepreneurial' and lead competitive institutions as business managers (Moore *et al*., 2002; Hatcher, 2008; Gunter and Forrester, 2010; Ball, 2011; Higham, 2013; Gunter and McGinity, 2014). Thus, as will be illustrated in Chapter 6 in particular, the way in which school leaders engage with and enact policy at the local level are imbibed with a shifting of values that locate the role of school leaders as deliverers of policy agendas which prioritise and indeed reward distinctive policy activities in line with the neoliberal policy complex.

Thus, research that critically engages with the role of leaders within localised policy processes point out how the field of power has been fixed outside of the school gates, and illustrate how localised policy-making has in many instances been hijacked by a top down performativity and productivity agenda, which has witnessed the exiting from interventionist policies designed to enable and support school leaders to mediate the negative effects created through such a complex, particularly around equality of access and opportunity for all (Lingard *et al*., 2003). Gewirtz and Cribb (2008, p. 39) elaborate on this point by arguing that critical research into policy needs to engage with the fact that the value systems underpinning how policy is being developed and enacted have marginalised and excluded certain learners at both a local and a system wide level, and that research that looks into these impacts needs to be more "ethically reflexive" in order to help to transform policy and practice. They argue that:

> […] in relation to the question of policy responses to diverse student identities and inequalities we need to be able to characterise and explain the differentiated ways in which education policies and practices do or do not recognise, support or undermine diverse cultural identities and do or do not reproduce various kinds of educational and social inequality. (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2008, p. 39)

These are important questions that research into localised policy-making can both ask and address, but in order to do so effectively, policy scholarship must attend to the need to include the voices of students within the research process. This is because not only does research need to explore how the policy processes position students in ways which raise concern about equality of opportunity and access, but research also needs to pay closer attention to how students themselves position-take in response to the development and enactment of policies framed as part of the neoliberal policy complex. Whilst school leaders have been subject to over 20 years of educational reforms which have progressively positioned their roles within the 'management' of schools as deliverers of agendas aimed at increasing productivity and performativity through accountability mechanisms, students and teachers have also been positioned along these lines too (Fielding, 2004a, 2004b, 2006a, 2006b; Ball, 2003). Therefore, the discourses of performativity and productivity has concomitantly shaped the logic of practice and pervaded the lexicons of the classroom.

Before addressing the research into how students themselves position and position-take in response to localised policy processes, it is important to flag up the place that research into teachers and teachers' work has in the development of understanding how policies simultaneously position and require position-taking from the professionals at the coal face of the deliverology chain (Barber, 2007). Research into teachers' roles within the policy process has been extensive. Literatures have focussed (but not exclusively) on the relationship between pedagogy and policy (Comber and Nixon, 2009; Hipkins, Reid and Bull, 2010), and teachers' work and accountability (Angus, 2012; Sachs, 2003; Ball, 2003; Ball *et al*., 2011; Ball *et al*., 2012a; Gewirtz, 2002; Bell and Stevenson, 2006). What has been illustrated through these research projects is the extent to which teachers' work has become increasingly aligned with the neoliberal policy complex, and that such an alignment has significantly contributed to a decreasing amount of autonomy over and professional trust in the work that teachers do. For example, Gewirtz (1997) has illustrated through her research that there are system-wide similarities as to how teachers have responded to the reconstruction of their work, and that such similarities point to the need to take into account neo-Marxist emphases on the impact of structures on the working lives of teachers, whilst also acknowledging that difference exists, which is both contingent and localised:

It is argued that policies represent responses to structural problems of the state and that they have some generalised effects across the school system. But, at the same time, local variations in the internal regimes of control in schools are recognised. In the exposition, the emphasis is upon exploring some of the discernible patterns but there are also indications of the different ways in which teachers are responding to the attempted imposition of a new teaching culture. The influence and inter-weaving of social, economic, demographic, subject sub-cultural and biographical factors are acknowledged. (Gewirtz, 1997, p. 218)

Thus, Gewirtz's (1997; 2002) work points to the relevance of taking a policy scholarship approach to investigating localised policy-making and processes, which encourages an analysis that reveals the inherent complexities between structure and agency. The system wide similarities found by Gewirtz (2002) in her research have been echoed in the findings of other educational researchers (Ozga, 1995; Furlong *et al*., 2000; Whitty, 2006; Day *et al*., 2007; Beck, 2008; Gewirtz *et al*., 2009; Ozga, 2009; Angus, 2012). These analyses illustrate that the constraining and disciplinary frameworks within which teachers are expected to operate are associative of a policy complex which values productivity and performativity as measures of successful practices over professional subjectivities related to trust and autonomy (Ball, 1993). Research which explores how teachers position-take and are positioned therefore speaks to Gewirtz's (1997, 2002) point that it is necessary to investigate teachers' localised and immediate environments as well as locate this within a wider policy context.   In a similar vein, it is also an imperative that the voices and experiences of students are taken seriously in studies of localised policy processes.

Research by Reay (1995, 1999, 2004, 2006) has powerfully illustrated, often through the employment of Bourdieu's thinking tools, how students in primary schools embody the languages and discourses of the neoliberal policy complex and how these children position-take and are positioned as a result of the localised development and enactment of policy processes designed to sort, select and sift them into categories of learners. Reay (1995, 1998, 2004, 2006) argues that the dominance of neoliberalism on *children's* subjectivities has widely been ignored by educational researchers, and that such work is necessary in order to better understand how advantage and disadvantage play out within the education system through the use of class analysis, but also to locate how the young people themselves understand and make sense of such dominant policy processes in their day to day experiences of learning in educational settings. To hear of how processes of positioning and position-taking occur as a result of localised policy-

making from the perspectives of young people can contribute significantly to developing a broader understanding of the way in which the neoliberal policy complex works at (re)producing a logic of practice which places value on choice, competition, efficiency, effectiveness, performativity and productivity for children as well as teachers and leaders (Gewirtz, 2002, p. 3).

Other studies which have investigated the positioning of children and young people within the process of localised policy development and enactment include work by Michael Fielding (2001a, 2001b, 2004a, 2004b, 2006a), who has championed the approach to student voice in educational research as an imperative of empowerment for transformative change at both the local and the national level. Fielding (2001a) argues that research needs to strive to engage with the voices of students on the issue of policy because they are the "very people who are the objects of policy change and for whom the actual experience of its implementation constitutes the new reality which is fervently desired" (p. 144). Chapter 4, therefore, is an empirically weighted attempt to engage with this requirement of policy scholarship, by engaging with research such as that done by Fielding (2001a, 2001b, 2004a, 2004b, 2006), as well as Gillbourn and Youdell (2000), on how policy processes wrapped up within the standards agenda both position and require position-taking by students, which illustrates the powerful way in which the neoliberal policy complex works to create learner subjectivities within its own mould.

What is of significance here is that whilst studies undertaken by Fielding (2001a, 2001b,), Reay (1995, 1998 2004, 2006), Gunter and Thomson (2006) and Thomson (2001, 2010) are significant and necessary, there still exists a significant gap in systematic research projects (notable in Ball *et al*., 2012a) that critically engage with the voices and experiences of students in the process of localised policy development and enactment. As such, this thesis attempts to address this gap by offering an analysis of how some students at Kingswood consider they have been positioned and position-take in response to localised policy processes. When taken with the analysis offered in Chapters 5 (teachers) and 6 (school leadership), the study as a whole aims to provide a theorising of how these actors' stories work together or indeed in opposition to each other, and most importantly in response to the structural context provided by the neoliberal policy complex.

So far this chapter has set up the neoliberal policy complex as a framework for thinking through the socio-political context of the field of educational policy-making

at the macro level. I have positioned as key factors autonomy and the standards agenda as central in understanding the structured structures that contribute to the development of a logic of practice in which 'successful' schools are expected to operate. In doing so, I have operationalised Bourdieu's thinking tools to establish a theoretical base for understanding the relationship between structure and agency in how the different participants in the study positioned themselves in response to dominant policy pressures. I have gone on to identify the significance of undertaking studies in localised policy-making in order to understand the 'micro-politics' at play in the development and enactment of localised policy processes (Hoyle, 1999).

The following and final section identifies how Kingswood as a site of research has enabled me to explore localised policy-making at a time of rapid and rampant modernisation. First and foremost, the historical relationship between Kingswood as a 'researching' school and the University of Manchester will be acknowledged and set up as a significant dimension in enabling such a project to take place. Following on from this, the localised context of Kingswood town will be constructed in order to illustrate how thinking through how localised policy processes in a specific institutional site may speak to the communities they serve. This section will also consider the implications of researching 'ordinary schools' at a time of rapid reform (Maguire *et al.*, 2011).

2.9 Kingswood as the site of research

The school of Kingswood and the University of Manchester have a research relationship that spans over a decade in which a number of collaborations have been produced with a range of intended functions and outcomes, not least in the development of Kingswood as a 'researching school' (Hollins, Gunter and Thomson, 2006). The development and production of this research project must be explicitly situated within this context in order to present an accurate portrayal of the relational processes of which this research project was a part. In this sense the organisational boundary crossing that took place as a result of both this research project and the work that preceded it represents an important dimension of the school's institutional identity, which has a significant part to play in contextualising the current research project's design and subsequent findings.

Gunter and Thomson (Hollins *et al*., 2006, p. 141) established the research relationship with Kingswood as part of an "evaluation project" that was commissioned by the now defunct Innovation Unit at the then DfES. This was primarily in order to report upon the change programme that the school was undertaking as a result of the school's localised reforms in response to the Specialist Schools programme. Alongside this function, the researchers were particularly interested in engaging with students, teachers and school leaders in both the design and production of research. This was in order to produce an account of how, despite the external pressures derived from the neoliberal policy complex, the school was undertaking localised agenda setting in order to work for, and determine curriculum innovation (Hollins *et al*., 2006). This approach built on the premise that an active and collaborative research relationship would both facilitate an evaluative perspective on this change process as well as offer up opportunity to "support the creation and sustenance of a research culture at the school" (Hollins *et al*., 2006, p. 143).

The development of a researching culture at the school was established as a means to produce an externally funded report and as a potential avenue to contribute to both the reflection and development of localised agenda setting at the school. It was this latter aim that was of particular interest to both the university and the school as the ever tightening circle of the standards agenda continually threatened to stifle opportunity for localised, evidence based, collaboratively developed innovative practices and processes. This relationship gave legitimacy to the idea that whilst schools may have little choice but to respond to the clarion calls of ministers in Westminster to strive for 'excellence', it is also possible to work in consort with, for example, university based educational professionals to take a longer-term view of school development and to see such processes as situated and contingent – specifically and significantly relational to the geographical, historical and social context of the school, and that those that live and work within that community have much to offer to such processes. The work undertaken by Gunter and Thomson (2004, 2009) supported this viewpoint and contributed to a school environment in which research as an activity to enable authentic engagement with strategic development plans across a range of issues within the school was encouraged.

As such, the school had been co-constructed as an institution in which research was valued as an educational practice in itself and this was the dimension of Kingswood

that formed the essential foundation for the research relationship that followed between the school and myself, and which enabled me to undertake an investigation into localised policy-making. The following extract identifies how central the development of a research culture at the school was in terms of supporting the research that was undertaken for this thesis:

> A key feature is how the agenda is negotiated and agreed within the school and between the school and university, and how reading and debate is central to enabling the emerging ideas from staff and students to be interplayed with published evidence and methodological rigour. Working with staff and students in a range of meetings during the year on the findings from our report […] has shown responsiveness to the data and analysis, with an emerging sense of the need to support the next phase of the project. So the potential for action and for the school to do new things through research is evident in both everyday practice and their developmental agendas. (McGinity and Gunter, 2012, p. 241)

Thus, the work undertaken by Gunter and Thomson (2004) and Thomson and Gunter, 2006) is an essential component in understanding how the research for this project was both conceived and received, and the expectations that through investigating localised policy–making, further claims could be made regarding the usefulness of school-university research partnerships in contributing to important discussions regarding decision-making and agenda-setting processes.

As the project unfolded and the pressures to engage with high profile policy objectives (framed as legitimate through the codification of the Academies Act 2010) increased, the desire to develop the school's agenda on the basis of localised research appeared to dwindle. This aspect of the research process is considered in the subsequent findings and analysis, particularly in Chapters 6 and 7. What is of note here is that whilst the culture of research at Kingswood persisted in some respects (particularly through the number of staff undertaking postgraduate research based qualifications, at both Master's and Doctoral level), the impact of the intensification of the neoliberal policy complex had implications for the extent to which the school were able to continue to prioritise agenda setting on the basis of localised research processes, and the conversion to an academy in April 2012 and subsequent internal reforms can be viewed within this perspective.

In brief, the subsequent internal reforms referred to here, relate to how the school has used the accompanying autonomy codified within the Academies Act 2010 in order to firstly develop the concept of the 'Professional School' and to latterly open a

Multi Academy Trust (MAT) in which the Professional School would sit alongside a Studio School, with each provision offering pathways for students in the last year of Key Stage 3 and into Key Stage 4, delineated along academic and vocational/technical lines. This development will be discussed throughout the thesis; what is important to note here is that rapid changes were underway at the research site during the period of data collection which had implications for evidence based agenda setting, and provides another dimension as to why Kingswood is an important site of research.

The school had engaged with the processes of research as a way of enabling authentic participation and reflection from a range of social actors within the institution. This was an important part of the legacy this current research is building upon, and in particular the significance of the range of intake within the school further contributes to Kingswood as an important site for research. This is because the school sits within a seemingly affluent dormitory town, is the only secondary school in the town and draws its intake from the middle classes of Kingswood, along with a significant minority of students from the social housing estate on the edge of Kingswood, a marginalised community with significant levels of deprivation. Students also travel some distance from the neighbouring metropolitan borough which operates the 11+ and as such, a significant proportion of students have either failed this examination and the parents have rejected the choices of the non-grammars closer their homes, or have actively sought a comprehensive education away from the tiered system that the 11+ generates and supports. This aspect of Kingswood's identity is important because the communities the school serves are diverse and belie the initial impression it is easy to have of the school when first visited, nestled as it is within this Georgian market town with boutique shops and expensive housing.

As a result, the school as a site of research becomes very interesting, as the dynamics created by vocal and geographically 'present' middle class parents, with significant numbers of children living in 'pockets of poverty' and others living a distance away, having been products of a divisive education system, provides an environment which allows the research to consider how advantage and disadvantage was engaged with during processes of localised policy-making and enactment, and how such positionings relate back to how power is played out within such processes. This is an important contribution of the research, as there is little work which considers how young people from different backgrounds may be

positioned in localised policy processes, and the extent to which such positioning contributes to the development of school structures which have the potential to further marginalise those already at a disadvantage.

In this sense the work of Maguire and colleagues (2011) is significant here; they argue for the need for research to be undertaken in the 'ordinary school', yet present such a distinction as difficult to define in such 'performative' times (Maguire *et al*., 2011). Maguire and colleagues (2011) illustrate the difficulties in "the complexities and contradictions involved in the search for and the identification of the ordinary school" and in particular highlight how these schools constructed themselves in a range of mediums as being "distinctive", or on their way to "becoming outstanding" (p. 2). Kingswood has a history of achieving well in relation to both the standards agenda (in league tables and performance in the national testing regimes) and the accountability agenda (through Ofsted ratings). In this sense the school enjoys a relatively "strong market position" (Gewirtz, 2002, p. 73) within the neoliberal policy complex.

What is of note here is that whilst Kingswood's history of involvement with the university as a means of developing a culture of research, and the rich and diverse intake of students that they attract, as well as the 'success' they enjoy in relation to standards and accountability mechanisms, does not ultimately detract from making a case that indeed, whilst striving to be distinctive, Kingswood itself is an ordinary school expecting to operate as an extraordinary one, and as such, reveals itself to be an important site of research, as many schools in England find themselves in similar positions, as a result of the neoliberal policy complex.

As will be discussed in the latter chapters of this thesis, the development of the school's trajectory reflected this race to be something that was unique, that offered something in the restructuring as a result of academisation, which was simultaneously distinctive and normative, and which spoke directly to the main tenets of the neoliberal policy complex. As such, Kingswood provides an excellent site through which the neoliberal policy complex can be studied in relation to localised policy-making, positioning and position-taking.

2.10 Summary

In this chapter I have argued that the field of educational policy is an arena that is politically charged, and that policy processes are value laden, often reflective of dominant and powerful discourses stemming from competing interest groups with a particular emphasis upon the economising potential of creating and maintaining a highly diverse, centrally regulated education system (Taylor *et al.*, 1997; Rizvi and Lingard, 2010).

Within these value-laden complex processes, issues of teacher professionalism (teacher's work), curriculum, organisational purposes of schooling, governance arrangements, and advantage and disadvantage are articulated and re-articulated in the public arena (in the media, for example), as well as through the discursive practices and social interactions that contribute to the development of localised policy-making.

As a result of these policy processes and products, schools and students are positioned in particular ways but there is a distinct lack of research that utilises ethnographic approaches to investigate the relationships between policy development at a national level and the generation, enactment, resistance and re-articulation of such processes at a local level from the point of view of a range of actors. Specific case studies are required in order to allow for theorisation of the local, immediate and day-to-day impacts of the neoliberal policy complex on policy formation. Such an approach to policy scholarship contributes to equipping researchers with the empirical examples necessary in order to make claims about how and why schools are both being positioned by the policy complex and are seeking to construct their own path within it.

The following chapter provides a rationale for this study, along with the methodological approach that underpins the empirical research that forms the basis of Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Chapter 3: Research design

3.1   Introduction

The research reported in this thesis is preoccupied with investigating the perspectives and experiences of a range of social actors with regards to the ways in which they position-take and consider how localised policies require them to position-take in a specific research site. Using an ethnographically informed approach the research is interested in exploring how actors in a specific context collectively and individually reveal association with, control over, rejection of, or marginalisation from particular elements of powerful discourses in the social practices and processes of localised policy development and enactments. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to outline the rationale behind the development of this study as ethnographically informed and to provide a detailed account of the methodological and conceptual approach employed in the collection of the data, which forms the basis of the analysis for the subsequent chapters.

Exploring the perceived positioning of a variety of actors imbued with varying levels of power presents significant issues regarding the relationship between the researcher and the researched, and the stories being retold in this thesis are only one dimension of a much bigger and complex picture of social relations and practices unfolding daily in a dynamic setting. The stories told here leave out as much as, if not more than, they include. They have been selected to serve an epistemological and ontological purpose. As a result, the latter part of this chapter will critique the inquiry, locating such analysis in response to Bourdieu's (1990a) call for researchers to undertake a 'reflexive sociology', and this imperative provides a framework to ensure that the complex issue of ethics and power relations are appropriately considered with regards to my particular framing of the social world of the school. This critique will thus contribute to the development of my use of Bourdieu's thinking tools in developing the conceptual tool of the neoliberal policy complex, by explicating how, through the use of theory and data, analyses can be drawn of the processes and structures at the research site, and of how localised

policies position and require position-taking from different actors within the field of power.

The chapter will start by outlining the rationale for the research project; following on from this, the chapter explains the reason for developing an ethnographic approach within the research. Subsequently the remainder of the chapter outlines how and why I developed the research questions, and explain the sampling of the research participants as well as the development of the data collection tools. In line with the development of a reflexive sociology as promoted by Bourdieu, the last section considers issues relating to reliability, validity, power and ethics in the process of the research.

3.2 Designing the research

This section of the chapter will outline the rationale behind the research project, from the inception of my appointment to the ESRC Case Studentship in 2010 through to the undertaking of a baseline report to identify an area for further research, which subsequently forms the basis of the research within this thesis. An important element of the development of the research project is aligned to the long-standing research partnership that exists between Kingswood and the University of Manchester, which was introduced in the previous chapter and will be briefly revisited here in order to provide a contextual mapping of the relations that both shaped and enabled the empirical investigation of localised policy processes to be undertaken.

3.2.1 The development of a research relationship

Kingswood High School established itself as an effective player in the field of educational policy-making when in 2002 the school applied for Specialist School status, but did so in a way that was deemed as 'innovative' by central government (Hollins *et al*., 2006). As a result of this nomenclature, the school also underwent a process of significant restructuring in which the head teacher and the leadership team introduced a number of changes to the pedagogical and organisational structures within the school. Significant changes adopted by the school included the introduction of a project-based, cross-curricular learning module for students in

Years 7 and 8, as well as a broad choice agenda for students in Year 9 to 'specialise' in curriculum areas that they were particularly interested in, as well as the collaborative development of a 'Learning Policy' (McGinity and Gunter, 2011).

The changes at the school spoke to the personalisation of the public services agenda as developed by New Labour (Leadbetter, 2004; Milliband, 2004). The localised enactment of the personalisation agenda as part of the Specialist School application reflected the central tenets of the New Labour commitment to the place that personalisation could have in the modernisation of public services, a discourse that, whilst limited in the realisation of policy developments under New Labour, further indicated the commitment to the discourse of choice and competition within the lexicon of the neoliberal policy complex (Johnson, 2004). Kingswood's implementation of curriculum reform around some of the core principles behind the personalisation agenda along with 'successful' results and the entry into the Specialist Schools programme led the school to the attention of and subsequent grant from the Innovation Unit at the then named DfES in 2004. This saw the inception of a decade-long research partnership nominally committed to collaborative agenda setting with the University of Manchester. As a result of this relationship and the successful application to the ESRC for a CASE studentship, I was appointed as an 'embedded researcher' at the school (McGinity and Salokangas, 2014).

The school was committed to the process of external research as a means of developing a collaborative agenda, which would contribute to the school's evidence-based policy development (Hollins, 2014). From the inception of the ESRC CASE studentship, discussions with the head teacher revealed an interest in the research identifying and exploring the development and interactions of differing 'learning cultures' within the school, as a result of localised policy-making. This was in response to a leadership concern that underachievement was consistently occurring amongst some children that the school had identified as rejecting the conception of the schools' 'formal' learning culture (McGinity and Gunter, 2011).

However, as will be revealed through the course of the thesis, whilst the school was interested in the research relationship as a means of contributing to agenda setting at the local level with regards to the development of a 'learning culture', the changes that were taking place with regards to the academy conversion and the development of the Professional School concept offered an opportunity to explore how such

responses to the field of education policy were positioning actors at the local level, and how the school's response to the development of a research culture, and the use of primary research within process, represented an acceptance of the policy rhetoric associated with academisation.

Therefore, the research developed in such a way that the focus, whilst remaining on localised policy-making, became primarily interested in how the school had used previously accumulated symbolic capital in the field of education policy in order to construct a future that spoke to some of the key aspects of the neoliberal policy complex, rather than based on its history of evidence based policy-making as a result of a localised research tradition (McGinity, 2014a). This is of significance because, despite having been nominally committed to research as a means for knowledge production regarding localised agenda setting, the decision to convert to an academy had been taken, despite acknowledgement of the lack of evidence of an academy effect (PricewaterhouseCooper, 2008). This tension revealed the inherent complexities facing schools operating within the field of education policy at a time of rapid neoliberal reform, and as such, provided an important focus for the thesis. It was due to the ethnographic nature of the data collection processes that I was able to develop the research along these lines, as the time spent in school gave me a valuable insight into the ways in which the school's organisational purposes were being framed at the local level.

3.2.2 The organisation of the ESRC CASE Studentship

The purpose of this section is to briefly outline how the ESRC CASE Studentship was organised, in order to inform the reader of how the three years unfolded. I entered the research site in September 2010 with the expressed intention of undertaking a baseline report in order to ascertain and review the school's development plans since the work of Gunter and Thomson (2006), and to understand the school's commitment to "improvement through research" (McGinity and Gunter, 2012, p. 228). The data collection for this baseline project was completed in January 2011, and a report was produced for the school the following month (McGinity and Gunter, 2011). The remainder of the academic year 2010-2011 was spent preparing for and passing the upgrade panel at the University as well as setting up the research design, the research instruments (interview and

observation schedules) and undergoing the ethics review process (involving the development of detailed participant information sheets, and informed consent forms, examples of which can be found in the Appendices) in order to prepare for re-entry into the research site in September 2011.

Subsequently, in the second year of the CASE Studentship, between September 2011 and July 2012 I spent a total of 70 days in the school conducting interviews, focus groups, and observations, which will be outlined in more detail below. During this period I spent time transcribing interview data and field notes and began the work of coding and analysing my data, as this was an iterative process in which further interviews were sought after a period of rudimentary analysis had taken place.

The third year of the CASE Studentship was spent analysing the data further (described in more detail in Section 3.6), and with writing the project up – this aspect continued into a fourth, unfunded year and during which time I was appointed as a Lecturer in Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Manchester. The following section engages with the literatures relating to ethnographies in school settings in order to locate this study within an established tradition of educational research.

3.2.3 Developing an ethnographic approach to the research design.

Ethnographies in school settings have an established history in the sociology of education (Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970; Willis, 1977; Corrigan, 1979; Ball, 1981; Beynon, 1983; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983; Giampapa, 2011; Ball *et al*., 2012a). Such approaches have allowed researchers to act as participant observers, in order to develop portraits and critiques of the social systems within schools by developing 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973). Ethnographies as such have taken many forms after work by different educational researchers, from those who entered the research site legitimated through a formal membership of the organisation by undertaking teaching responsibilities (Hargreaves, 1967; Ball, 1981) to those like Corrigan (1979) who deliberately avoided such responsibilities and instead aligned himself with a group of boys in order to better explore their experiences of formal and informal schooling processes.

On entering Kingswood in the initial weeks of the academic year of 2010 to conduct the baseline study (Gunter and McGinity, 2011), and through the process of using direct and indirect observations, undertaking interviews and partaking in conversations and interactions across a range of situations, the dynamic and complex nature of developing a representation of the school as a social system was revealed. By using a methodological approach that was informed by ethnographic practices, I considered that I would be in a better position to attempt to garner the perspectives and experiences of a range of actors working in the school. This stance is in recognition and supports Frankham and MacRae's assertion that:

> We can only begin to understand why people behave as they do, and the stories they tell, if we see these actions and words as entangled with many other 'worlds' and words that we likely cannot see or hear, but that we need to gain insight to. The past and the future are seen as connected to the present as people re/present themselves to others (and to themselves) and, as conscious actors these stories will change according to context. (Frankham and MacRae, 2011, p. 35)

The baseline study (McGinity and Gunter, 2011) was thus an important learning curve in acknowledging that, whilst immersing myself in the school environment would allow me to observe different dimensions of the social practices in relation to policy processes within the school, the final report was a constructed (re)presentation of what I had learnt through the data collection, and the acknowledgement of such was an important element of the research process, which would inform the development of the research project for the thesis.

Throughout the research I have shared findings with the staff, students and governors at Kingswood through feedback sessions at school parliament meetings and at staff meetings (McGinity and Gunter, 2011; McGinity and Gunter, 2013), as well as being published (McGinity and Gunter, 2012; McGinity, 2012a; 2014a; Gunter and McGinity, 2014, 2015) and presenting at national and international conferences (McGinity, 2011, 2012b, 2014b).

The on-going dissemination of the findings of the research is an important part of locating the research within the school-university partnership tradition, in which outcomes of research undertaken were to be of use to the school in future agenda setting (Hollins *et al.*, 2006; McGinity and Gunter, 2012). This was as well as serving a broader purpose in contributing to the discourse of educational research as a means of capturing the complexities of social practices in schools during times of

rapid educational reform (Ball, 1981, 1997; Thomson, 2002; Thomson *et al*., 2010; Ball *et al*., 2012a).

The significance of acknowledging educational research as having wider implications for the societies in which schools operate is a fundamental tenet of the policy scholarship approach in the sociology of education, in which 'the bigger' picture is revealed through association with and critique of historical and current structures and processes (Ozga, 2000). Like Ranson, I see such endeavours as providing possibilities for thinking differently about how things are done at both the micro- and macro-level:

> Learning, and the institutions which support it, become indispensable to the purposes of cultural renewal and economic regeneration. Interpreting the significance of learning in this way suggests the importance of educational research for the future of our society. Only by improving our understanding of the processes and institutions of learning can society understand how to support individuals, organizations and communities through the transition. (Ranson, 1998, p. 48)

Therefore, the development of my research as a result of the dissemination of the initial findings in a variety of formats to a wide range of audiences was crucial in establishing the iterative nature of the research process, in that the analysis informed the presentations, and the feedback from these sessions further informed the analysis and ultimately the design of the project reported on in this thesis.

In their illuminating research regarding the establishment of an Australian National Curriculum, Gerrard and Farrell (2013) argue that it is only through examining the everyday processes involved in policy production at the local level that educational reform practices can be rendered with meaning, that "understanding the ways in which policies are ultimately taken up at the school site also involves examining the creation of the institutional cultures that secure the conditions for policy creation and enactment in the first instance" (p. 3). In this respect the research developed in tandem with the requirements of the school. Taking account of the concerns that the head teacher had, I situated myself and the research as having a responsibility to take seriously these issues whilst developing a research project that widened the scope out to avoid pre-determining conceptualisations about a 'learning culture' which excluded and marginalised a section of the student population.

In line with the ethnographic methodology that had influenced my approach during the baseline study (McGinity and Gunter, 2011), I felt that the research would tell a

more authentic story if meanings were constructed by drawing a portrait of the school through the eyes of the participants, whose discursive rendering of their positioning within the structures and processes resulting from localised policy-making may differ considerably from those of the head teacher. As such, I have tried to maintain the centrality of the voices of the participants within the presentation of my findings and analysis. In this sense I would be in a position to use Bourdieu's thinking tools in order to construct a (re)presentation of the social world of the school which is acknowledged through its methodological and theoretical applications as a site of struggle, a site which was inter-related with external influences from the neoliberal policy complex and in which each actor was imbued with differing levels of power, which in turn would affect their positioning, and their perspectives of their positioning within the field. In defining these networks of relations between positions, Bourdieu (and Wacquant) posited:

> These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (situs) in the structure of distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake at the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc). (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 97)

As a result of the baseline study (McGinity and Gunter, 2011), I was presented with an opportunity to get to know the school by adopting an ethnographically informed approach to the data collection process and to reflect upon my role in developing a research project that was both of interest and potential use for Kingswood and that spoke to a wider audience in making sense of how localised school policy processes resulted in differential positioning and position-taking by a range of actors in the school. These were issues that needed to be captured within the construction of the research questions.

3.2.4 Developing the research questions

The aim of the study is to construct "an historical snapshot of an institution in the process of change" (Ball, 1981, p. xviii). As such, the research questions were developed with an aim to both provide an empirical account of localised policy-making, and to explain how and why certain policy processes are engaged with, prioritised, resisted, and re-articulated, and the ways in which such processes are

influenced by political, economic and cultural conditions which have been developed as part of the neoliberal policy complex.

In order to investigate these issues, the first question aimed to enable me to understand how localised policy making is constructed within the field of the school and how this construction influences and interacts with the development and enactment of localised policies from differing perspectives. As a result, the following question was formed:

1. *What is localised policy-making and how do agency and structure interplay within such processes*?

Like Ball (1981, p. xvii) my study "seeks in part to describe and understand the social system of the school in terms of the actors' interpretations of the situation. But analytically, the study addresses the task of placing the classroom perceptions and interactions of teachers and pupils within a wider social context". Therefore, in recognition of the complex and dynamic nature of the school context, the next question was developed in order to firmly locate the actors involved with the production and enactments of such polices within the centre of the research.

2. *How do different actors within the school position themselves, or consider they are positioned in relation to the development and enactment of localised policy processes*?

Together these two questions enable the research to explore the interactions of the social relations and (objective) structures in which the processes of localised policy-making are played out and experienced by different actors. These questions enable an analysis of how such relations may create instances in which more powerful players in the field misrecognise the effects on the positioning of some actors as a result of policy production processes. In order to contextualise this analysis within a broader context which acknowledges the role of political, cultural and economic conditions which inform and influence the logics of practice within the field, a third question was developed that aimed to explore the meta-relations, in which localised policies are being developed.

3. *How do external policy demands impact the development of localised policy processes and what effect does this have on the positioning of different actors in the school?*

These three questions enable the study to focus upon localised policy-making by examining both the role of policy actors within the unfolding and dynamic context of the school as well as examining the objective structures within which such roles are played out, whilst linking these processes with the 'bigger picture' which both recognises that policies are practices and such practices are deeply connected to a wider context in which educational practices are aligned with the neoliberal doxa of the modernising reform agenda (Ozga, 2000).

3.3   The thesis project

Thus far, this chapter has identified the research design undertaken for the project by providing a rationale based on the research relationship between the school and the University of Manchester which contextualised my appointment to the three year CASE Studentship. I have provided an explanation of the temporal organisation of the three years, and explained how I undertook a baseline study in order to establish a relationship and identify areas for the thesis project. I have located my approach within the ethnographic tradition in educational research, and have outlined the three research questions the thesis has set out to address.

This section will now present the nuts and the bolts of the project, firstly by providing an outline of the different actors that participated in the data collection process, followed by an exposition of the data collection process with each of the groups of actors involved. Table 1 below provides an overview of the actors involved with the research project.

Table 1: Overview of Participant Interaction

Actors	Data collection method
Students (Years 8,9 and 10)	(a) Individual interviews with 14 students twice and 4 students once (b) 2 Focus group interviews with 12 students (6 in each) (c) Observations with 15 students twice, and 2

	students once.
Parent	Interviews with 5 parents
Teaching staff	a) Interviews with 16 teachers b) Observations of 3 learning centre meetings
Support staff	Interviews with 4 support staff
School leaders	a) Interviews with 7 school leaders b) Observations of 1 leadership team meeting
Governors	a) Interviews with 2 school governors b) Observation of 1 governor's meeting

The following sections will outline in detail how the data collection of each of the groups of participants unfolded.

3.3.1 Sampling and Interviewing with Students

As a result of the work undertaken for the baseline study (McGinity and Gunter, 2011), I had already started to build up relationships with a number of staff whose roles at the school were to provide me with support in identifying a sample of students that might participate in the research. At this point I knew that I wanted a range of ages, and so identified Years 8, 9 and 10 as being most appropriate for the study, as the children would be established at the school but would not be involved in the last year of compulsory schooling when they would be preparing for a high number of final external examinations. From the issues that had been discussed by the head teacher with regards to his concerns about some students' potential feelings of marginalisation from the school community, I decided that the research needed to include a cross section of the student population in order to try and have a representation of the views of young people who may not necessarily partake in such formal processes as the school council or parliament, for example.

As described in Chapter 2, the school has a diverse intake of students from a range of socio-economic and geographical backgrounds, and as such, I felt it would be important to identify a group of students that reflected this diversity. The data from the baseline study (McGinity and Gunter, 2011) had suggested that the members of the school leadership team considered that a student's levels of achievement and expressed behaviours could be used as a reflective indicator for the extent to which

a student may feel included within or marginalised from the structures and processes within the school. Although this assertion was unsubstantiated, it did prompt me to endeavour to incorporate children with a range of achievement levels and behaviours levels as identified by the school's data and tracking system. Of course, the system itself is a part of the structures that I would eventually be critiquing; however, I was also in a position of needing a starting point somewhere in identifying students, and as the school maintains a sophisticated and detailed tracking system, it seemed a sensible place to begin. In order to decide on the approach for selecting the group of students to take part, Robson's definition of "purposive sampling" seemed most apt to my circumstances:

> The principle of selection in purposive sampling is the researcher's judgement as to typicality or interest. A sample is built up which enables the researcher to satisfy her special needs in the project. (Robson, 1993, pp. 141-142)

Therefore, I approached the three Heads of Student Achievement (HOSAs) overseeing Years 8, 9 and 10 and requested a meeting to help develop a sample. We met on 4 October 2011 and I explained that I was looking for a purposive sample of students in each year group to include a range of genders, recorded achievement and behaviour levels, and postcodes. I also asked for some to be registered for Free School Meals (FSM). Although a crude analysis of socio-economic status, FSM is an established for researchers interested in exploring the effects of structural inequalities on educational outcomes (Gorard, 2005; Gillies *et al*., 2010; Thrupp and Lupton, 2011). As a result of this meeting, each HOSA emailed a list of 12 students from their cohort, whom they considered represented a cross section that fitted with my criteria, making a total of 36 students.

A letter was subsequently drafted to the parents which formally introduced me and my role at the school, which I included in the letter I sent to each of the 36 families to ask for consent for their child to participate in the study, the purpose of which was to help legitimate my request as part of a research project that the school endorsed. This letter clearly explained that their child's education would not be adversely affected if they chose to participate or if they chose to opt out. Out of these 36 I received affirmative responses from eight parents of students in Year 8, six parents of students in Year 9 and six parents of students in Year 10, making a total of 20.

As part of the ethical procedures that I was following, on arrival to the first interview, I explained to each of the students what the project was about and gave them an information sheet which had been developed in line with the UN Conventions for the Rights of the Child (1995) and the UK Human Rights Act (2000), in which researchers are expected to seek informed consent from the young people themselves (an example is included in Appendix B). As a result two students decided they did not wish to partake in the project, which left me with 18 students in total. Table 2 details the contact that I had with each of these students over the academic year 2011-2012, a detailed summary of which can be found in Appendix A.

Table 2: Student Participants

Year	Name	Interviews	Observations	Focus Group	Duration
8	Harriet	X 2	X2	No	3 hrs 20mins
8	**Jack**	**X2**	**X2**	**Yes**	**4 hrs 30mins**
8	Anna	X2	X2	Yes	3 hrs 40mins
8	**Katie**	**X2**	**X2**	**No**	**3 hrs**
8	**Lauren**	**X2**	**X2**	**Yes**	**4 hrs 7mins**
8	Kimberley	X2	X2	Yes	3 hrs 50mins
8	Shanice	X2	X2	Yes	4 hrs 5mins
8	**Ted**	**X2**	**X2**	**Yes**	**4 hrs**
9	Fergus	X2	X2	Yes	3 hrs 57mins
9	Nick	X2	X2	No	3 hrs
9	William	X1	X2	No	2 hrs 28mins
9	Mandy	X1	-	-	-
9	Rachel	X1	X1	Yes	2 hrs 35mins
9	Olivia	X2	X2	Yes	3 hrs 51mins
10	Max	X2	X2	Yes	3 hrs 50mins
10	Lucy	X1	X2	No	2 hrs 41mins
10	**Paul**	**X2**	**X1**	**No**	**1 hr 53mins**
10	**Daisy**	**X1**	**-**	**Yes**	**1 hr 32mins**
10	Isobel	X1	-	-	-
10	Hannah	X2	X2	Yes	3 hrs 54mins
				Total	60hrs 22mins[6]

Prior to the interview commencing with each student, I talked them through the Participant Information Sheet which explained the nature of their involvement, as well as through the assent form I had designed (Warren, 2002). I explained that the information they shared with me would be treated with utmost confidentiality and

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[6] The students' names that are in bold are those whose stories the data presented in Chapter 4 focuses upon in most detail – the reason for which is expounded in Section 3.3.1.3.

that only if they disclosed some information that made me concerned about their welfare or safety would I need to stop the interview and seek advice from an appropriate member of staff who could help in such a situation. I explained I would not use data that I considered could make them identifiable to anyone at the school and that I would assign each of them with a pseudonym to protect their identity. I also sought his or her permission to digitally record the interview, and confirmed that only I would listen to these audio files and explained that once I had transcribed their interviews the documents would be on an encrypted computer and that I would delete the original audio files (in line with the University Research Ethics Committee guidelines). I explained that they did not have to answer the questions that I asked them and that they could request for the interview to stop at anytime and withdraw their participation without having to give me a reason (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2012). I also produced a Student Information Sheet, which I did not have to use, but which had a list of contact details for organisations, whose work with young people experiencing a range of issues I planned to use if any of the students disclosed sensitive information. Once I was happy that the students understood their rights and my responsibilities towards them, I commenced the semi-structured interviews with the aid of an interview schedule (Appendix C).

3.3.1.2 Student interview schedules

All interviews were accompanied by an interview schedule with open-ended questions in order to provide a guiding structure to the interview process, a crib sheet of issues that I wanted to cover in the conversation, rather than a definitive and rigid schedule that had to be followed (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). Therefore, the interview schedules (or interview guide as described by Patton, 1990) that I developed asked the students about a range of topics to do with their experiences of schooling and perspectives on a range of schooling structures and processes, but remained flexible, depending on how the conversation developed, and allowed the participant to speak as openly as they wished (Denscombe, 1998, 2010).

As a result, each semi-structured interview provided the opportunity to have a conversation with the student, in order to "derive interpretations" (Warren, 2002, p. 83), the purpose of the in depth interview being an "interest in understanding the lived experiences of other people and the meaning they make of that experience"

(Seidman, 2006, p. 9). However, as researcher I did ultimately "define and control" the interview situation, setting the agenda in order that the interview covered the main areas I had identified as necessary (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009, p. 3). The issue of unequal power relations within the research relationship is considered in Section 3.7 below.

The schedule for the second interview was created using an iterative framework in which analysis from the initial interviews was drawn upon in order to ask the students further questions regarding their first responses in order to clarify and validate their positions (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002).

3.3.1.3 Student focus group schedules

I held two focus groups in July 2012 with 12 students in total, one with Years 9 and 10 (with 6 students) and one with Year 8 (with 6 students). The decision to hold student focus groups towards the end of the data collection process was in order to provide an opportunity for the students to talk with their peers about some of the issues and perspectives that had been shared during the one to one interviews. By providing a safe environment in which to share their opinions about schooling structures and processes, the intention was to further illuminate the issues that the students considered to be significant from a group perspective, which would aid in developing an analysis of the ways in which the young people felt they were positioned and positioned their sense of self in policy processes at the school (Kamberlis and Dimitriadis, 2013).

In this respect I was drawn to the collective nature of the focus group method in social research, in which opportunities to speak would be afforded to the students as a group, in which there was potential for the students to talk to each other about their experiences (Liamputtong, 2011). In order to give a sense of structure (Morgan, 2002), I had drawn upon the work of Thomson (2001) and Clough (2002) and produced two fictional vignettes (Appendix H) that drew on my initial analysis of some of the generic perspectives the students had shared in their one to one interviews, in order to provide a starting point for discussion. I also had developed a schedule, which listed a number of probes drawing on this analysis (Patton, 1990). In both the focus groups, the students started a discussion amongst themselves

about their involvement in the project, which afforded a space for me to gently probe them about their shared or different experiences without the need of the vignettes. As this unfolded it appeared to me that introducing the vignettes could potentially threaten to disrupt the flow of conversation, and this was a risk I did not want to take after the amount of time and logistics it had taken to organise the group to meet.

As a result of this approach, I collected a large amount of data from the student participants, and it was through the process of analysing and coding this data in consort with the data collected from the other groups of participants, as outlined in Table 1, that the decision to focus on the positions of six of the students (Ted, Lauren, Jack, Katie, Daisy and Paul) in more detail arose. This was because I considered that the stories these students told illuminated some important aspects of how localised policy processes work to position and require position-taking in response to the neoliberal policy complex. Of these students, I spoke to the parents of three (Ted, Jack and Katie), which afforded the opportunity to situate their positioning in relation to their family backgrounds, which enabled a focus on the role of their parents in how the young people positioned themselves in response to schooling structures and processes.

3.3.2 Sampling and interviewing with parents

As the study is also concerned with how students and their families consider they are positioned or position themselves as a result of policy processes at the school, I wanted to interview a group of parents in order to ascertain their views about their own and their child's positioning at the school.

In December 2011 I wrote to each of the participating student's families to ask for parental or carer volunteers to participate in a one to one interview. I had received only one response by mid January and decided to write again and as a result of this I received agreement from five further individual parents, all of whom were women. Of these six I was able to meet with five, as one mother after initially agreeing to take part decided to withdraw her participation. Table 3 outlines the contact I had with these five parents.

Table 3: Parent Participants

Name	Child	Occupation	Location	Duration
Christine	Katie (Y8)	Unemployed	Home	50 mins
Peggy	Jack (Y8)	Housewife	School	56 mins
Sarah	Ted (Y8)	Part time administrator for husbands business	School	54 mins
Julie	Harriet (Y8)	Hairdresser	Home	59 mins
Helena	Nick (Year 9)	Housewife	Home	1 hr 7 mins
			Total	**5 hrs 17 mins**

I talked through the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form (examples of which can be found in Appendix D) with the parents and sought their permission to digitally record the interviews, again ensuring that they understood they could refuse to answer any question and that they could withdraw at any point without having to give me a reason (BERA Ethical Guideline, 2012; Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). I also ensured confidentiality regarding information they shared with me and explained that I would assign them pseudonyms if I were to use data from them in any format.

As I wanted to give the parents the option of undertaking interviews in a location in which they felt comfortable, I offered to meet at home or at school. There is an acknowledgement within the methodological literatures on researching with families that parents are more likely to open up if they feel safe, comfortable and relaxed (MacDonald, 2008). As such, I was grateful to be invited into their homes; however, I was careful to follow the School of Education's guidance notes for investigators conducting interviews off campus and working alone and had in place a procedure with Helen Gunter in which I emailed the name, address and contact details of the parent. I then rang her to confirm that I had arrived at their homes and again when the interview had finished, which ensured that the safeguarding procedures were followed.

3.3.2.1. Parent interview schedules

The interviews with the parents took place after I had met with their children once; therefore, I drew on some of the initial analysis I had undertaken with this data to inform the development of the interview schedules I used as a crib. Drawing on Bourdieu's work within 'The Logic of Practice' (1990b), I developed a two part schedule in which I firstly asked the parents open-ended questions about their biographies with regards to their own educational experiences in order to contextualise their positioning to schooling processes, structures and practices, before approaching the second part of the schedule in which I asked them to discuss their perspectives and opinions about their child's educational experiences at Kingswood. The purpose of which was to focus on both "meaning and experience" related to their own and their child's education (King and Horrocks, 2010, p. 26).

As I analysed the data I had collected in consort with the data collected from the children, it became clear that I would use the data from the parents to help to contextualise student position-taking in relation to their family background, rather than present the parental data on its own. This was a difficult methodological decision, however, and was made in recognition of the space limitations within a thesis that was attempting to draw on a wide range of perspectives using a large amount of qualitative data. I was keen that the student's voices were represented, but I also considered it paramount that this applied to the data collected from teachers, and school leaders.

3.3.3 Sampling and interviewing with teachers

I approached via email all the teachers in the English, Maths and Science learning centres in order to request interviews (a total of 22). I decided on this approach because there were 76 teaching staff at the school during the period of data collection, and to approach them all indiscriminately would, I considered, pose an issue of deciding whom to include and not to include. This purposive sampling technique (Robson, 1993) would enable teaching staff to partake who were members of the 'core subjects' within the national curriculum and as such, central to the teaching and learning objectives within the school's organisational structures.

From these 22 emails, I received responses from 14 teachers, and was able to organise interviews with 10 (the 4 staff that volunteered but were not interviewed was as a result of internal and external timetabling pressures during the summer term which prevented us from meeting). After these initial interviews, I considered that I wanted to broaden the scope and number of subjects and teachers within the sample and decided to approach the Humanities and Social Science learning centre and Creative learning centre teaching staff. I chose these curriculum areas purposively because of the former's inclusion in and the latter's exclusion from the English Baccalaureate as a newly introduced, externally developed measuring tool for Key Stage 4 attainment. From spending time in the school, I knew that the inclusion of this measurement tool within the league tables was having an immediate effect upon how teachers felt they were being positioned within the school with regards to policy processes regarding curriculum restructuring, and so it seemed a pertinent choice of subjects to include within the sample considering the aim of the research project.

I interviewed five members of staff from these Learning Centres, along with one member of staff who was a PE teacher. At this point I considered that I had a good-sized sample of teaching staff and decided not to involve any more learning centres. In total I interviewed 16 teachers with a range of experience, roles and responsibilities. Table 4 below outlines the contact I had with these members of staff.

Table 4: Teacher Participants

Name	Position [7]	Interview(s)	Duration
Andrew Maxwell	Subject	X1	34mins
Sarah Kermode	Subject, Literacy Co.	X1	46mins
Jerry Highland	Subject KS3 Co.	X1	33mins
Adam Lee	Subject HOSA	X1	48mins
Katherine Lock	Subject Ass. Dir.	X1	30mins
Sam Murray	Subject Co. Student Learning	X1	24mins
Alison Goodyear	Head of Subject & HOSA	X1	1 hr 8mins
Kathleen O'Hare	Subject Ass. Dir.	X1	39mins
Charles Wickes	Head of Subject & HOSA	X1	52mins

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[7] I decided to remove the names of the teachers' subjects, as for some, they were the sole teacher of their subject and as such, if I included this information I felt I would not be able to deliver on my promise of anonymity to all.

Janet Utley	Subject	X1	29mins
Mary Childs	Subject NQT	X1	26mins
Donald Northold	Head of Subject	X1	29mins
Patricia Turner	Subject	X1	23mins
Kitty Stokes	Subject	X1	29mins
Ron Taylor	Head of Subject	X1	35mins
Graham Saunders	Curriculum Leader for Subject	X1	43mins
		Total	**10 hrs 20mins**

The teachers were emailed the Participant Information Sheet, which detailed the nature of their participation prior to the interview, and I had copies available at the interview. I also talked them through the consent forms, requesting permission to digitally record the interview as well as ensuring they understood they had the right to refuse to answer any question and to withdraw participation at any point without reason (Bell, 2005; Wellington, 2000). The participants were ensured confidentiality, were told that I would assign them with a pseudonym and that I would not publish any data that would make them identifiable. Once these procedures had been followed we commenced the semi-structured interview.

3.3.3.1 Interview schedules

The interview schedules (Appendix E) with the teaching staff were developed in order to cover a wide range of issues which related to localised policy-making within the school and how the teacher's positioned themselves and felt they were positioned in relation to these structures and processes. Goodson (1999, p. 122) argues that, "to promote stories and narratives, without analysis of structures and systems, shows how the best of intentions can unwittingly complement the moves to uncouple the teacher from the wider picture." In this statement Goodson is referring to the dichotomous situation of the narrowing and technicised nature of teachers' work through the radical restructuring of the 1990s, and to accompanying interest in reflective research of teachers' voices and stories. Goodson (1999) is right to indicate that such narratives must be located in relation to the broader "maps of influence and power" and this remains true as the continuation of the restructuring of teachers' work through externally derived policies remains an important focus for research (p. 122). Therefore, the interviews with the teachers explored a wide range of areas, intended to reflect on both the internal and external influencing factors on

how they considered they were positioned and position-took in response to localised policy processes.

Due to the way in which many teaching staff held a number of roles and responsibilities, I regularly deviated from this interview schedule in the process of interviews as staff had wide ranging experiences to share which inevitably took the interview into a variety of directions depending on the teacher's role and experience within the school. This flexible approach allowed me to gather a "multitude of subjects' views" (Kvale, 1996, p. 7), which helped to illuminate the myriad of forms in which policy processes were developed and enacted in the school, and highlighted the complex and dynamic nature of tracking such policy processes in a large and busy school environment, along with issues relating to identity and power relations within such processes. In line with Kvale (1996, p. 20) these interviews were characterised by "a methodological awareness of question forms, a focus on the dynamics of interaction between interviewer and interviewee, and a critical attention to what is said". The analysis of the mining of this data will be discussed in Section 3.6. The following section outlines the sampling and interviewing of a range of support staff at the school, in recognition that a multitude of professionals work in schools and can offer valuable and alternative perspectives on the development and enactment of localised policy processes.

3.3.4 Sampling and interviewing support staff

Alongside teaching staff I also identified four members of the Student Services team to interview. These included the Heads of the Service at both the lower and upper school, and two Student Support Officers at the upper school. These members of staff were identified in order to provide perspectives from members of staff who were not directly involved in teaching and learning in the classroom but whose roles were integral in contributing to the school's structures and processes with regards to policy development and enactments. I had wanted to interview the Support Officer at the lower school, but due to unforeseen circumstances with regards to the nature of his job, two scheduled interviews were cancelled. Table 5 summarises the contact I had with these staff members.

Table 5: Support Staff Participants

Name	Position	Interview(s)	Duration
Tom Henderson	Head of Pastoral	X1	1 hr 2mins
Fin Appleby	Pastoral Support	X1	22mins
Tina Cross	Pastoral Support	X1	34mins
Rose Turner	Head of Pastoral	X1	1 hr 8mins
		Total	**3 hrs 10mins**

The same procedures were followed with regards to consent, participation information and confidentiality that were adopted for the interviews with the teaching staff (Bell, 2005; BERA, 2012).

3.3.4.1 Interview schedules

I developed an interview schedule for the Student Support Service staff that was broadly reflective of the schedule developed for the teaching staff. Additional questions pertaining specifically to their roles within the pastoral structure of the school were included in order to gain a sense as to how their roles within these structures interacted with processes of localised policy-making.

3.3.5 Sampling and interviewing school leaders

I interviewed five members of the School Leadership team, out of a possible ten. I had interviewed three members of the leadership team for the baseline study (McGinity and Gunter, 2011) and so decided to approach staff with whom I had not spoken previously. I approached Vince Cushing and Kevin Todd because of their roles with regards to the curriculum areas for which they were responsible. I approached Amanda Greene, Terry Landen and Anthony Law because of the roles they held with regards to whole school development. This combination allowed me to investigate the development of policy processes from the structural positioning of school leaders at both a learning centre and whole school level. Table 6 below outlines the contact I had with these members of staff.

Table 6: School Leader Participants

Name	Position	Interview(s)	Duration
Amanda Greene	LC Director	X1	35mins
Terry Landen	LC Director	X1	46mins
Vince Cushing	LC Director	X1	38mins
Kevin Todd	LC Director	X1	59mins
Anthony Law	LC Director	X1	1hr 21mins
		Total	**4hrs 32mins**

Again, the same procedures were followed with regards to consent, participant information and confidentiality that were adopted for the teaching and support staff members (Bell, 2005; BERA, 2012). As with the teaching staff, whilst I have indicated the broad roles for which each of these members of staff were responsible, I have chosen against explicitly stating their roles in order to maintain my promise of anonymity.

3.3.5.1 Interview schedules

The interview schedules for the school leaders took a similar form to those developed for the teaching and pastoral support staff (see Appendix E), and in a similar way the courses of the interviews took off in a number of directions depending on the school leader's role and experience within the school. In line with Campbell, Gold and Lunt (2003, p. 203), I was keen that these interviews would probe the "nature and influence" of these schools' leaders' values in order to provide elicitation as to the relationship between structure and agency in the development of localised policy-making and how such values aligned or deviated from the positions revealed by the deputy head and the head teacher. This was important because I was keen to understand how the logics of practice at the top level of the hierarchy related to the subsequent position-taking in response to localised policy-making by members of staff downward through the chain. These members of staff presented their positions candidly, and intense and honest discussion regarding the structural

changes occurring at the school took place during these interviews. I considered that whilst there was potential for issues of power imbalance between myself as an 'outsider' and them as school leaders, I was treated with candour and equality throughout, which in turn provided me with a rich data set in which I felt confident in presenting the views and positioning of these members of staff as they had been shared.

3.3.5.2 Interviewing the head and the deputy head

Table 7 outlines the formal contact I had with Head Teacher David Toye and Deputy Head Gareth Abrahams throughout the academic year 2011-2012. Their positions within the school structure meant that multiple interviews were not only inevitable but vital to the iterative process of developing the research project in order that school-based issues were identified and taken into consideration at the development phase of the project. As well as this, multiple interviews offered me an opportunity to keep abreast of the school's development plans, as the school was undergoing a period of rapid reform, and David and Gareth provided me with vital information regarding this trajectory which was not available elsewhere. Table 7 outlines the contact I had with David and Gareth.

Table 7: Head and deputy head interviews

Name	Position	Interview(s)	Duration
David Toye	Head Teacher	X4	4 hrs 35mins
Gareth Abrahams	Head of School (Deputy Head)	X3	4 hrs 21mins
		Total	**8 hrs 56mins**

Due to the nature of David and Gareth's roles within the school, I explained that it would be very difficult for me to offer them confidentiality regarding the data I collected from them. Therefore, we agreed that I would contact them with any work in which I quoted them at length and which was designed for widespread dissemination within the school (McGinity, 2013, for example). Regarding data for the thesis both were happy that the information I gathered from them could be used in the thesis without prior consent but any data that I planned to use in open source

publications needed to be checked with them first. Once these parameters had been agreed, we commenced with a series of semi-structured interviews.

3.3.5.3 Interview schedules

The interview schedules for David and Gareth were developed as part of an iterative process which involved analysing their transcripts after each interview in order to inform and develop the schedules for subsequent interviews. In each interview I drew on my analysis in order to ask them questions that were designed to fill in any gaps I considered existed within the data, as well as ask them to update me with further developments at the school. This proved to be particularly necessary as the school underwent a period of rapid reform throughout the duration of the data collection process, and these interviews provided me with invaluable opportunities to find out what the changes were as well as ascertain the processes at play in decision making around these transformations. As with the other staff interviews, the conversation would often deviate from the schedule, travelling along a track led by David and Gareth which enabled me to gain insight into aspects of their positions which may have been missed if a strict adherence to the schedule had been followed.

3.3.6 Sampling and interviewing the governing body

The final interviews I undertook were with the Chair of Governors and a parent governor. I approached the Chair of Governors because of his integral role in strategising with the leadership team regarding whole school development plans which inevitably contributed to shaping policy processes within the school. When I arranged the interview the Chair informed me that he was meeting with one of the parent governors that afternoon and so offered that I undertook a joint interview with them both, which presented a chance for "opportunistic sampling" (Ritchie, Lewis and Elan, 2003). Table 8 outlines the contact I had with the Chair and the parent governor.

Table 8: Governor Participants

Name	Position	Interview(s)	Duration
Peter Lewis	Chair of Governors	X1	1hrs 6mins
Cassandra Watson	Parent Governor	X1	1 hr 6mins
		Total	**1 hr 6 mins**

Again, I followed the same procedures adopted at the start of the interviews for the teaching, pastoral and leadership teams regarding participant information and consent (Bell, 2005). However, I explained that I could not offer complete confidentiality regarding the data shared with me from the Chair of Governors as by the nature of his role he was identifiable. As with David and Gareth, Peter was happy for me to use the data collected from him in the thesis but requested permission for me to use data from our interviews in documents designed for widespread dissemination in the school and community or in open sourced publication; once agreed we were able to commence with the semi-structured interviews.

3.3.6.1. Interview schedules

The interview schedules for the governors were developed to take into account their unique positions as externally located stakeholders with high levels of knowledge and experience with regards to the structures and processes within the school. Therefore, these interview schedules were constructed in order to glean as much detail as possible with regards to whole school development from this perspective (Appendix F). As both governors interviewed were local to Kingswood, I also used the opportunity to include a number of questions relating to their opinions regarding the school's relationship and positioning within the community. As with other interviews, the schedule followed a sequence of themes to be covered along with a set of suggested questions, "yet at the same time there [was] an openness to changes of sequence and forms of questions in order to follow up the answers given and the stories told by the subjects" (Kvale, 1996, p. 1240).

In total I spent 70 days in the school with a total of 105 hours 22 minutes of formal interviews and observations and many more hours of informal and indirect contact.

Table 9 totals the amount of time I spent interviewing with members of staff and the governors.

Table 9: Overview of Staff Interviews

	Overall total	34 Interviews	40 hrs 23mins

3.4 Observations

An important part of the research process was the time I spent in school, undertaking observations as associated with the methodological approaches adopted by ethnographic researchers (Angrosino, 2005; Sanger, 2002). During the time I was in the school environment I undertook a number of formally scheduled observations, which I detail below. As well as these structured observations, I also observed a number of processes at play through the daily interactions I had with members of staff and students, along the bustling corridors, in the relative calm of the staff room and in shared spaces such as the canteen. My research diary provides accounts of such interactions, and the data presented in the thesis will clearly identify those observations and interactions that took place outside of the formal data collection process; a discussion about the ethical implications of such data collection will be discussed below in Section 3.7.

3.4.1 Student observations

Table 10 indicates the amount of observations I undertook of the student participants.

Table 10: Student Observations

Year	Name	Observations	Duration
8	Harriet	X2	1 hr 40 mins
8	Jack	X2	1 hr 40 mins
8	Anna	X2	1 hr 40 mins
8	Katie	X2	1 hr 40 mins
8	Lauren	X2	1 hr 40 mins
8	Kimberley	X2	1 hr 40 mins
8	Shanice	X2	1 hr 40 mins
8	Ted	X2	1 hr 40 mins

9	Fergus	X2	1 hr 40 mins
9	Nick	X2	1 hr 40 mins
9	William	X2	1 hr 40 mins
9	Rachel	X1	1 hr 40 mins
9	Olivia	X2	1 hr 40 mins
10	Max	X2	1 hr 40 mins
10	Lucy	X2	1 hr 40 mins
10	Paul	X1	50 mins
10	Daisy	-	
10	Hannah	X2	1 hr 40 mins

The purpose of undertaking these observations was twofold. In the first instance the opportunity to observe the students in their lessons afforded a chance for me to contextualise them in a teaching and learning environment; in the second instance it also offered an opportunity to observe interactions between staff and students regarding the development and enactment of policy processes within different teaching and learning environments across the school, which was essential in developing an understanding of how policy processes were enacted within the dynamic context of the classroom, outside of the formal structures in which they were usually developed. As such, these observations enabled me to focus on "patterns of social interaction and the perspectives and strategies of the actors involved in particular settings" (Hammersley, 2012, p. 76). I constructed an observation schedule, which can be found in Appendix G. This schedule performed a useful function in providing broad areas to make notes of relating to the enactment of policy processes and practices within the classroom (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2001).

3.4.2 Meeting observations

During the period of data collection, I observed a number of meetings that are detailed in Table 11. The purpose of such observations was to garner perspectives on how different areas of the school functioned with regards to the development of policy processes as well as with regards to the general interactions that took place amongst staff in relation to such developments. This data was to further inform my construction of an analysis of how the school undertook processes relating to policy and the ways in which members of staff positioned themselves with regards to this process.

Table 11: Meeting observations

Meeting Observed	Number of participants	Date	Duration
Science LC	X9	14 May 2012	45 mins
Maths LC	X7	18 June 2012	45 mins
English LC	X9	21 November 2011	45 mins
School Parliament	X13	12 October 2011	30 mins
Staff Briefing	-	14 November 2011	10 mins
Staff Briefing	-	27 February 2011	10 mins
Governors Meeting	X15	4 June 2012	1 hr 20 mins

Following Robson (2002, p. 329), these meeting observations were both "structured" in that I had a specific schedule with "observational categories" which covered areas such as the key purposes of the meeting, policies discussed, teaching and learning issues discussed, etc., but also reflected aspects of "informal observation", as I also made notes on anything that was said that I found of particular interest, in order to attempt to capture the "complexity and completeness" of the interactions taking place (Robson, 2002, p. 319). Observing meetings enabled me to see the structural processes at the school from a new angle, and were helpful in terms of gaining a better overview as to how teaching staff interacted in these "structured structures" which informed localised policy-making (Bourdieu, 1990b).

3.5 Policy documentation

In addition to interviews and observations, I also analysed a number of local and national documentation, collated from a range of sources. Following Prior (2012, p. 427), the use of documentary analysis was an important aspect of the study, as such textual documentation exists in relation to the contexts in which it has been produced; it does not exist in "entirely separate realms". Table 12 below details the school documentation that I sourced for analysis, Table 13 the national policy documentation and Acts of Parliament sourced and Table 14 documentation from the national press and non-governmental organisations.

Table 12: School documentation

Name of document	Source
Staff Handbook (Policies relating to Homework, Achievement, Community, Resources, Student Support, Safeguarding, Curriculum, Governors, Inclusion, Personnel)	School Intranet
Ofsted Report 2011	www.ofsted.gov.uk
Application for Association of 'Named Educational Trust'	School Intranet
Operation of Behaviour Management Policy	School Intranet
Whole School Development Plan 2011-2012	School Intranet
Whole School Development Plan 2012-2013	School Intranet

Table 13: National Policy Documentation

Name of Document
Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2000. 'Blunkett sets out radical new agenda for inner city school diversity and improvement'. [press notice] 15 March 2000.
Department for Education and Skills, 2001. *Schools: building on success: raising standards, promoting diversity, achieving results*. White Paper.
Department for Education and Skills, 2004. *'A Study of the Specialist Schools Programme, Research Report 587'*. Coventry: Department for Education and Skills.
Milliband, D., 2004. 'Personalised Learning: Building a New Relationship with Schools'. Speech to the North of England Education Conference.
Department for Education and Skills, 2005. *Higher Standards Better Schools for All* (Cm. 6677). Norwich: The Stationary Office.
Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), 2005. *'Specialist Schools: A Second Evaluation, February'*.
Department for Education and Skills, 2006. *School reform: A survey of recent international experience*. London: Department for Education and Skills.
Department for Education, 2010. *The importance of teaching*: *The Schools White Paper*. White Paper.
Academies Act 2010
The Education Act 2011
Department for Education, 2012. 'Latest News on Academy statistics'. [press notice]
Gove, M., 2012. Speech on Academies given to Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College. 4 January 2012. London
Department for Education, 2013a. *More than 2,600 schools now open as academies, with a further 500 set to join them soon*. [press release]
Department for Education, 2013b. *School uniform: Guidance for governing bodies, school leaders, school staff and local authorities*. London: Department for Education.

Table 14: Press and NGO Documentation

Name of Document	Source
Joseph Rowntree Foundation: Experiences of	http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/2123.pdf

poverty and educational disadvantage (2007)	
Joseph Rowntree Foundation: Tackling Low educational achievement (2007)	http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/tackling-low-educational-achievement
Government launches inquiry into academy funds allegations. *The Guardian*, 28 November 2008	http://www.theguardian.com/education/2008/nov/28/academies-school-funding-charity-mismanagement
'While selection in admissions persists, school rankings will never be fair'. *The Guardian, 13 May 2013.*	http://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/may/13/selection-school-admissions-rankings-proposals
Stephen Twigg will not rush to judge on Education Policy'. *Education Guardian, 24 October 2011.*	http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2011/oct/24/stephen-twigg-free-schools-education-policy
Cameron promises 'grammar streaming' in schools. *Education Guardian, 18 June 2007.*	http://www.theguardian.com/education/2007/jun/18/schools.grammarschools
Headteacher quits Downhills Primary School amid row with Michael Gove'. *Education Guardian, 11 February 2012.*	http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2012/feb/11/headteacher-downhill-quits-row-gove

Overall I collected a vast array of data drawing on a range of methods and materials. Due to the ethnographic nature of the study, it was necessary to use an iterative approach to the analysis of the data, which I will explain and describe in more detail below.

3.6 Analysis and understandings

The analysis of the data began almost as immediately as I entered the field. Following the time I had spent in school undertaking the research for the baseline study (McGinity and Gunter, 2011), I had subsequently developed a set of flexible research tools, such as the interview and observation schedules, which were to be tested in the field through the act of undertaking the research with my participants

(Robson, 2002). I had been guided in developing these tools by the research questions I had constructed, which aimed to investigate the positionality of different actors within the school and community setting in relation to the structures and processes in play regarding the development and enactments of localised policy-making. Therefore, the analysis of the data was a cyclical and iterative process, reflecting Kvale's (1996, p. 205) stance that "analysis is not an isolated stage", in which each time I conducted an interview with a student, parent or member of staff through their responses I found myself discovering new angles to consider in my questioning, which inevitably fed into subsequent interviews and as such, formed a preliminary analysis that occurred in the field, a common occurrence in ethnographically informed fieldwork (Delamont, 2002, p. 152).

Due to the length of the data collection period, I transcribed the interview data as quickly as my schedule allowed in order that I could collate field notes and observations together with the recorded word, which I then read and re-read in order to start to develop a set of themes and categorisations. In this respect the process of transcription was more than "a simple clerical exercise, transcription in itself is an interpretative process" (Kvale, 1996, p. 160). From these initial analyses I then used NVivo to code the themes and categorisations which created a process in which further themes and categorisations were generated, sometimes by merging existing themes and sometimes by creating a new set of sub-themes. As this process continued with the emergence of more and more data, I found that I moved away from using NVivo to undertake the analysis as I found the software unwieldy and interruptive to the organisational arrangement of my thoughts and data as they both grew in quantity (Robson, p. 2002). Instead I preferred to transpose the codes into Word documents, which I then used to deposit data through a process of using the cut and paste function in the Microsoft Office software.

Through this method of analyses the composite data collected via observation, interviews and focus groups combined in order to provide a 'thick description' (Hammersley, 2008). This approach allowed me to search for similarities and differences to be identified amongst the various research groups (students, parents, teachers, support staff, school leaders and governors) and thus enabled me to identify the emergence of relationships and patterns that occurred within and across the groups in order to map the various ways in which research participants positioned their sense of self and considered they were positioned by the structures and processes related to the development and enactments of policy. Silverman

(2005) highlights the potential analytical difficulties of single interviews that seek to establish a respondent's perception of a specific event of experience. He questions "how far is it appropriate to think that people attach a single meaning to their experiences?" (Silverman, 2005, p. 45). He goes onto to ask if "interview responses [should] be treated as giving direct access to experience or as actively constructed narratives?" (2005, p. 45). During the process of analysis I was keenly aware that I was working with data that provided a range of perspectives and positionalities; however, I was able to identify several common themes that ran throughout the accounts, which in turn enabled me to produce interpretations that I felt were reflective of wider issues regarding policy processes at the research site.

3.6.1 Thinking and theorising with Bourdieu

As discussed in Chapter 2, the conceptual and methodological work that underpins the analyses presented in this thesis has been drawn through an engagement with Bourdieu's thinking tools. The analysis that I undertook, as described above, did not occur in a vacuum, my thinking and positioning in response to the data was sculpted by my multiple readings of Bourdieu over the three years in which the project was funded. As a result, the themes that I started to identify within the data were closely inter-related with the way in which I interpreted and operationalised Bourdieu's thinking tools, which in turn helped me to construct my conceptualisation of the neoliberal policy complex and the impact of this upon the way in which positioning and position-taking was occurring at the research site. This approach is in line with Bourdieu's (and Wacquant: 1992) call for an approach to social research in which theorising is integral to the data, in which he argues that "research without theory is blind and theory without research is empty" (p. 162).

I approached such an epistemological enquiry of my data with caution, due to criticisms levelled at Bourdieu by some who posit his is a sociology that bows to deterministic interpretations of social life which focus on the reproductive nature of social systems rather than the individual and collective capacity for transformation through action (Connell, 1983; Jenkins, 1992, p. 110). Thomson (2008) counteracts such charges by arguing that by using the metaphor of a game in much of his sociology Bourdieu's interest in social spaces as sites of struggles implies by its epistemological nature a capacity for individuals to act as agents with the potential

for disrupting the socially structured status quo. Thomson argues that Bourdieu considers:

> How social agents can experience change in fields when there is disjunction between their *habitus* and the current conditions of the field [...] [he] theorised fields as antagonistic, as sites of struggle. The game that is played in fields has no ultimate winner, it is an unending game, and this always implies the potential for change at any time. (Thomson, 2008, p. 79)

However, following Thomson (2008), I felt empowered to think through the data with the use of Bourdieu's thinking tools, because the data I was engaging with produced within me an understanding that the positionality I was witnessing from the range of actors within the research project did indeed reveal the way in which the game in play was a 'struggle', in that there was no straightforward and easy interpretation of the complex ways in which students, teachers and school leaders talked about the impact of the policy context in which they were operating upon their professional and personal subjectivities. The multiple and complex ways in which such positionality were revealed espoused evidence that processes of localised policy development and enactment revealed actors' association with and accumulation of different forms of capital staked, which contributed to the way in which actors were positioned within the field, betraying a network of unequally distributed power relations, both at a local and national level.

Thus, the construction of themes and categorisations mined from the data were framed through an understanding of and commitment to this methodological and conceptual view on how positioning could be theorised as a form of capital exchange, with which different social actors engaged in their interactions with both the development and enactment of localised policy-making. In this sense I was drawn to Bourdieu's conceptualisation of the centrality of capital as:

> [...] what is efficacious in a given field, both as a weapon and as a stake of struggle, that which allows its possessors to wield power, or influence, and thus <u>to exist</u>, in the field under consideration, instead of being considered a negligible quantity. (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 9)

In this way, Bourdieu's thinking tools equipped me to think through issues of how power relations played a central role in the development and enactment of localised policy-making, subsequently playing a significant role in how positioning and position-taking must be viewed within this epistemological paradigm. In understanding this, my codes and categorisations were re-visited several times, in

order to interrogate the relationship between structure and agency, which in turn strengthened my commitment to the development of the conceptualisation of the neoliberal policy complex as a means to theorise positionality further.

By drawing on Bourdieu's conception of a logics of practice, a framework for thinking through how the social relations at the school were both produced by, and a product of, the field conditions in which they were located, helped me to situate the different ways in which the positioning and position-taking of different actors occurred. In developing the conceptual analysis of the neoliberal policy complex, I was able to construct an understanding as to the extent to which the agency of the different actors were structured by external influences within the field of power: in this case, the impact of the neoliberal discourses reflected within the fields of politics and the economy. This position, in turn enabled me to engage with Bourdieu's notions of a doxa misrecognition, which identifies that through the process of capital exchange, in wielding power that the accumulation of capital permits, and using such capital to develop localised policy-making to achieve distinction within the field, there is misrecognition by those within the hierarchy of power that such processes (re)produce structured inequalities, and within the neoliberal policy complex this is done through the policy interventions intended to strengthen the role of autonomy and diversity within the landscape of educational provision in England.

Viewing the data through this paradigm facilitated the organisation of the large amount of data collected, in that I was able to identify processes of localised policy-making that made sense when located within such a theoretical and epistemological position. In this regard the operationalisation of the thinking tools offered by Bourdieu form the basis of engaging in a process of reflexive sociology, in which the construction of understanding is deeply associative with the methodological, empirical and conceptual approach within the thesis.

This analysis of the school's position within the neoliberal policy complex will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6; however, it is relevant to note here that using this iterative process of simultaneously thinking with theory and data and after receiving positive feedback from the academic community of this analysis at a number of national and international conferences, I began to feel confident that the generation of theory from the data was working and had developed into a robust and viable analytical framework (McGinity, 2012b).

3.6.2 Triangulation

Whilst the process of working through a cyclical approach to analysis and presentation of my work to an audience contributed to validating my analyses of the data, I also undertook a number of methods to gain technical triangulation in the field. I triangulated my findings by comparing and contrasting the responses that I received from the different groups of participants, whilst taking into account the situational contexts in which the data was being generated (Robson, 2002). I took the opportunity in the second interviews with the students to revisit their responses from the initial round of interviews alongside observations I had collected from sitting in their lessons and from the interviews with staff. With staff I drew upon some of the issues that the students had raised to consider if such positions were acknowledged to be issues for students that staff were aware existed in the formal structures and processes of policy development and enactment. Likewise, I drew on this data when developing the interview schedules for the second, third and fourth interviews with the head and deputy and for the interview with the school governors. I was able to further triangulate the data I was accumulating by interrogating the official documentation that was available to me from the school intranet and compare and contrast what these official texts had to say about the development and enactment of policy processes with the respondent's stories and experiences (Delamont, 2002, p. 160; Prior, 2012).

3.6.3 Reliability and reflexivity

Such stories and experiences were constructed by the participant's perceived position within the social structures in which their daily interactions played out. Many of the actors, particularly the students, were inured to the hierarchical structures that formed the contextual backdrop against which the process of position-taking was occurring and in which the research was taking place (Roberts and Sanders, 2005). As a result, during the research process the representation of the social field of the school was subject to infinite interpretational modes that make the construction of a singular and reliable account an impossible and futile goal.

The "multiple perspectives" (Bourdieu *et al*., 1999, p. 3) that abound amongst social actors in relation to the structures and processes that dominate the social fields in which they exist instead provide a rich and diverse landscape of possibilities in re-telling their stories in such a way that resonates with aspects of reality for the actors involved if not *the* reality that the actors may have re-constructed themselves (Anderson, 1989, p. 253). In this sense reliability within the data is limited to the methodological rigour that I adopted throughout the research process in relating the collection of data to the research aims of the project, the application of Bourdieu's thinking tools in thinking with theory and the technical triangulation undertaken as described above.

The ways in which the participant's stories have been re-told within this thesis are products of my own construction of the social world and are deeply influenced by my own position-taking in relation to the social structures in which the research process took place. The methodological, epistemological and ontological decisions I have made at each stage of the research process can to some extent be related to what Bourdieu terms my 'embodied dispositions', which are shaped by my own location in the social field (Kenway and McLeod, 2004, p. 528). Therefore, it is necessary for ethnographers to adopt a reflexive position regarding the influence of their identity upon the research process in order to illustrate meaningful engagement with the potential limitations of their interpretative stances (Anderson, 1989; Delamont, 2002; Roberts and Sanders, 2005; Giampapa, 2011).

My reflexive account firstly acknowledges my identity as a white, middle class, female Londoner whose experiences of formal schooling structures and processes were successful, in the sense that following Thomson (2002) I had a "virtual schoolbag" full of the "right symbolic capital" in which my "fund of knowledge" matched and thus was legitimated by the curricular organisation and social practices of the school (pp. 7-9). I also come from a politically active left-wing family and as such, whilst I carried my minor success with me throughout the education system, my parents made sure that my brother and I knew that there were reasons why we were 'successful' at our local comprehensive school that were nothing to do with what we may have first thought of as our innate talents but rather a lot to do with luck, that we were born into a family whose accumulated social, cultural, economic and linguistic capital ensured a privileged place in the social structures of society, in which many children's experiences were restricted by structural inequalities of which we had no idea.

I believe that these experiences contribute to my 'embodied dispositions' and that these dispositions led me to undertaking a research project that was interested in exploring the structures and processes within the education system, which differentially positioned individuals in relation to the enactment and development of policies which often misrecognise the role that such processes play in (re)producing inequalities within the system. By the same token, these dispositions lead to me have an interpretative stance that is deeply critical of the neoliberal doxa that dominates the trajectory of policy development at a national and global level and which has systematically re-articulated the values and purposes of schooling around economising agendas at the expense of socially responsible and just approaches to addressing structural inequalities (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010).

My reflexive account of these influences upon my analysis of the data reveals elements about my own habitus that may expose my position-taking to criticism regarding my ability to see what the data may be suggesting outside of these personal and political standpoints. However, in line with Bauman (2000, p. 89), who argues that a "non-committal sociology is an impossibility", I believe research is a political act we undertake to disrupt, de-stabilise and question the validity of assumptions that inform social mechanisms within our society, and as such, consider that my reflexive honesty of my position-taking with regards to these issues in fact contribute to strengthening the arguments drawn from the data collected from my research participants. The next section will consider the significance of adopting reflexive practices in relation to understanding the ethical implications in undertaking research in social situations.

3.7   Access, ethics and power

Due to the nature of the historical relationship between the school and the university and the school's participation in the bid for the ESRC CASE Studentship, access to the school as the site of research had been negotiated and agreed upon prior to taking up my position on the CASE Studentship. This arrangement meant that from the inception of the research project I did not have to spend time negotiating entry into the school; in fact, I was invited to the staff induction day at the start of the

academic year 2010, in which the head teacher introduced me to the whole school staff.

I was issued with a staff badge and email address, which further legitimated my presence along the busy corridors. However, this did not mean that my identity as a researcher was fixed or static, but was rather in a "state of active existence" (Bradbury and Gunter, 2006, p. 489). I fluctuated in that first term between feelings of being simultaneously an insider and an outsider and these emotions continued throughout the following year in which the main data collection took place (McGinity, 2012a). Latterly, I realised, through the first round of interviews with some members of staff for the baseline study, that the initial introduction on that first day in 2010 had aligned me in their eyes firmly in the camp of the head teacher. One member of staff asked me at the end of an interview who I was working for, where this data was going and for what purpose. She explained:

> Some staff have been wondering what it is you exactly looking for. If you are working for [the head] in collecting information for him on our views to do with changes taking place here at the moment. (1:1, Baseline Study, Member of Staff, November 2010)

Although I was in a privileged position regarding access to the research site, my role as researcher appeared to be questioned by some members of staff regarding my professional relationship with the head teacher and that this may in fact impact upon how trustworthy I was for some staff in terms of asking them to reflect upon aspects of school life. In the above interview I experienced what Usher *et al*. (2000, p. 162) describe as an "ethical moment". My response to the teachers' legitimate concerns required me to be honest about my role at the school, and whilst I saw myself as independent from the head teacher, I also recognised that part of the purpose of undertaking research at the school was, at least initially, to feedback to the school leadership team my analysis of the findings in order to inform future agenda setting.

I answered the teacher as best as I could; however, on reflection I have wondered if my response was unsatisfactory for the teacher, because as the research project continued I only received one response from subsequent requests for interviews from the department of which she was a member. This is of course conjecture, but during the interview with the other member of staff from the same department I had a similar experience in which they raised similar concerns. My notes from my research diary written after that interview reflect:

The bell rang and we ran out of time. I said that there were still a few more questions I would like to ask and she offered to meet again if there was time before the end of term. She then told me staff were wary of talking to me and were concerned about where this information was going and that I might be working for [the head], testing out what they thought about the changes, in an underhand way. I did my best to assuage these concerns but this could also possibly explain why I had such a low up take of interviews from members of the department, if this is their general perception of my role at the school this year. (Research Diary, 22 May 2012)

These experiences highlighted for me the crucial role that reflexivity plays in the research process. After the second interview I had a crisis of confidence regarding what it was I that I was doing when talking to these people and asking them to answer potentially exposing questions regarding their personal and professional identities and practices. I wanted to ensure that my research practices were not only rigorous and ethical but also honest. It felt to an extent that these teachers were (quite fairly) questioning the ethical and transparent nature of my research and as a result this led to some soul searching.

Guillemin and Gillam posit that in order to be an ethical researcher one must practice reflexivity throughout the research process:

As we have stated, reflexivity does not prescribe specific types of responses to research situations; rather, it is a sensitizing notion that can enable ethical practice to occur in the complexity and richness of social research. (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004, p. 278)

These experiences also reveal the extant power relations that exist within the process of research, and the complexities of being a researcher in a school at a particular point in time, in this case during a period of rapid reform of the structural organisation of the school. These issues throw up interesting questions regarding the ethics of social research. Whilst I had been through the university based ethics committee and had received approval for the research project, the act of undertaking the data collection in the school with the participants did mean that there were points in time when I was confronted with ethical implications that were quite different to the potential issues that were raised by the ethics review board within the confines of the university (Rowley, 2014).

I was able to navigate my way through these conversations, but the process of having them did make me think about the way my research was being understood

and framed by the participants, which in turn reminded me of how social research is a complex and dynamic process and that the responsibility lies with the researcher in ensuring that both rigour and integrity are retained throughout.

Such positioning entails an understanding of the power dynamics within the research process, and that these shift between researcher and researched; for instance, when I interviewed the head teacher I felt very aware of his position within the organisation, as well as his role in my appointment. These were real issues, which were also picked up on by staff, as discussed above. When I interviewed the teachers, I was also aware of their professional positioning in the school and I was very keen that my line of questioning did not make them feel uncomfortable whilst at the same time was probing enough to uncover how they felt about the structures and processes relating to localised policy development and enactment. This was a "delicate dance" (Giampapa, 2011, p. 141), yet the power dynamics seemed fairly balanced; these were volunteer staff members, and so by the nature of the research design, seemingly were at least nominally invested in the use of research as a way of exploring the organisational purposes as were being developed at the school.

This felt less the case for the student participants. Although I had given the students an opportunity to opt out, which two did, it did feel that the power was firmly located with me as the adult in the room; I was often referred to as 'Miss' although I asked them to call me Ruth, and this small action on their behalf revealed the subtle ways in which I was aligned in their eyes, with the adults in the school, and as such, as a person with considerably more 'power' than them. Having said this, the majority of the students were very open with me, one of the challenges being to make them feel as comfortable as possible whilst ensuring they knew they did not have to answer anything that made them feel uncomfortable. It is difficult to know how successful I was with this; I did, however, feel that relationships developed in a way which was mutually respectful. As the year progressed, nearly all the students in the project would stop and say hello to me when we passed in the corridor, a small but not insignificant action that made me feel like I had been accepted by the students, despite feeling uncertain how they actually positioned me within the structures of the school.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has outlined the research design of the study, and has considered some of the reflexive issues that arose in the course of the fieldwork in relation to ethics and power. The following three chapters draw on the data in order to offer an analysis of the ways in which the research participants considered they were positioned and position-took in relation to the development and enactment of localised policy processes. Throughout each of these chapters the neoliberal policy complex is referred to as a significant presence in the construction and production of identities within localised policy-making, and Chapter 7 offers an overview as to how this complex has contributed in structuring agentic positioning at the research site. The first of these chapters, Chapter 4, focuses on data produced with the student participants.

Chapter 4: Student positionality and localised policy processes

4.1. Introduction

This chapter is concerned with theorising student, and to a lesser extent parent, position-taking in relation to localised policy processes through the attendant everyday practices that occur at Kingswood Academy. The purpose of this is to illustrate through the use of data, theory and literature the ways in which the neoliberal policy complex works to produce localised conditions in which young people position their sense of self and construct their learner identities in relation to powerful discourses concerned with academic performativity and economic productivity, which as framed at the governmental level, dominate the conceptualisation and realisation of the purposes and outcomes of schooling processes (Whitty *et al*., 1998; Ball, 2003d; Apple, 2004; Gewirtz and Cribb, 2008; Gillies, 2008; Blackmore, 2010; Angus, 2012; Wrigley, 2012).

Such discourses are embedded within "policy produced practices" (Thomson *et al*., 2010, p. 653), which position young people in differential ways, which research has shown are often patterned by class, gender and race (Reay, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2006; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Gewirtz, 2002; Perry, 2002; Ball, 2003c; Skeggs, 2004; Gilborn, 2005; Tomlinson, 2005; Reay *et al*., 2007). Whilst Kingswood Academy has, to some extent, engaged with approaches to policy developments that attempt to alleviate the extant structural inequalities that produce such differentiation amongst students, I will argue that the domination of the neoliberal policy complex in shaping localised policy processes and practices has become such a powerful aspect of the schooling field, that the symbolic capital at stake in 'playing the game' overshadows the creation of meaningful and alternative spaces of resistance for some of the children and their families (Bourdieu, 1990a).

The first section of the chapter begins by identifying the dominant symbolic capital at stake in the schooling field as framed by the standards and accountability agenda and shored up by the 'disciplinary framework' of the 'A-C economy', which translates through the development and enactment of localised policy processes and social

practices relating to attainment, particularly through the associative technologies of assessment procedures (target setting) and organisational approaches (ability setting) (Gewirtz, 2002; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000).

This is followed by a section which uses data to illustrate how the school conceptualises achievement through localised policies and practices and how such processes intersect to position the children in relation to target setting and ability setting, and how the children subsequently position-take in response to such positioning. Here I argue that despite having negative effects, as revealed through the students' learner identities, there is limited institutional space for them to reject these dominant and 'legitimate' policy processes; rather, they 'play the game' in recognition of the necessity to accumulate the required capital to 'get on with the game' (Bourdieu, 1990a). The final section draws on data in relation to how some students consider they are positioned by the enactment of localised behaviour and uniform policies.

The analysis within the chapter explores the complexity of how structured structures and structuring structures inter-relate through the development of localised policy-making to produce logics of practice that differentially positions students within the neoliberal policy complex, and as such, offers a framework for addressing Research Question 2 ("*How do different actors within the school position themselves or consider they are positioned in relation to the development and enactment of localised policy processes*?").

4.2 Attainment and institutional position-taking in the field

The policy complex developed as a result of the neoliberal approach to educational reform has embedded a set of values in which efficiency, effectiveness and accountability are the hallmark of 'successful' schooling processes (Angus, 2004, 2012; Barker, 2008; Gunter and Forrester, 2010). In this neoliberal policy complex 'success' has increasingly been defined through the narrow parameters of the 'standards agenda', as evidenced by policy documents such as *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All*' and in relation to successive governments' commitment to the annual publication of the national league tables (DfES, 2006). As a result, the standards agenda is tightly connected to academic attainment through assessment

models which are currently defined as the amount of A*-C grades students achieve as a result of an on-going testing regime accumulating with the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in their (currently) final year of compulsory education.

For over thirty years educational policy in England has structured the schooling system around a hegemonic commitment to attainment through assessment as reflected by the standards agenda, which is measured as a barometer of both individual and institutional success. Therefore, what are deemed of value within the schooling field are grades. But only certain kinds of grades, those that carry with them a legitimating power which results in the positioning of individual institutions within the schooling field. As the field operates on the basis of a neoliberal framework of choice and competition, the positioning of the institution within the field is thus strengthened or weakened as externally published results go up and down (Reay, 2008).

For schools such as Kingswood, operating as the only publicly funded secondary school within the immediate locale, but relying on intake from a wide geographical spread to survive whilst competing with a number of other institutions, such positioning within the field forms a significant aspect of their marketing strategy. Academic achievement (i.e. attainment) is central to what they do and how they do it, and they have so far successfully managed to maintain their position in the field by focussing their efforts on identifying and prioritising attainment as a central plank within their localised policy strategies. This position-taking is illustrated by a document written by the head teacher David Toye and posted to the school website in April 2012 as a result of the school's conversion to academy status and the development of the Professional School concept, in which he informs parents that:

> Despite the change of status Kingswood Academy remains, of course, a place of education ... The Academy will continue to focus on ensuring its students gain the best possible results in academic courses of study. Only this way can we make sure they are able to progress to careers or universities of their choice. Beyond the academic the 'Professional School' part of the curriculum also helps them develop the skills and qualities needed to succeed in all sectors of employment, giving them a head start over their peers. (David Toye, School Website – details anonymised, April 2012)

This document contains within it the explicit rendering of the neoliberal policy complex, in which the purposes of schooling processes are shown to be equated to

the accumulation of the acquired grades that will make possible the future success of the students at the school. Thus the legitimated capital at stake within the field of the school is symbolic; it is the accumulation of the "best possible results in academic courses of study" that will favourably position the students within both the educational and employment fields.

The collective significance of the accumulation of this symbolic capital is framed to show that it is specifically the *academic* courses of study that will prove to be the most valuable in current and future exchanges. This emphasis on the importance of the academic is also reflective of the Conservative-led Coalition government's increasing emphasis upon 'traditional academic' subjects, encapsulated by the announcement in 2011 that the league tables were to have an additional performativity measure by which schools would be judged (DfE, 2010). The English Baccalaureate signalled the inclusion of the percentage of students achieving 5 A*-C GCSE grades in English, Maths and Science, Humanities and/or Languages, all deemed to be of 'rigorous' academic standing (DfE, 2013). Therefore, although the school offers a broad range of curricula and extra-curricular areas and activities for their students, the centralising message on the website is that academic attainment is coveted as the most desirable form of capital at stake within the field, and this position-taking appears to closely align Kingswood Academy's organisational and institutional purposes to the neoliberal policy complex.

In *The Managerial School* Sharon Gewirtz (2002) problematises the analyses of the educational policy sociologists Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) in their book *Reforming Education, Changing Schools* in which the authors argue that at the local level:

> Practitioners will be influenced by the discursive context within which policies emerge. Some will have an eye to personal or localised advantage, material or otherwise, which may stem from particular readings of policy texts. But to reiterate, the meanings of texts are rarely unequivocal. Novel or creative readings can sometimes bring their own rewards. New possibilities can arise when national policies interact with local initiatives. (Bowe *et al*., 1992, p. 23)

In this text Bowe *et al*. (1992) effectively argue that the development of localised policy processes represent a space in which teachers and school leaders can and do re-interpret national policy initiatives in response to the local context, thus disrupting both the "limits and possibilities of the state to reach into the daily lives of schools" (p. 85). Gewirtz's (2002) response is to argue that by focusing upon the

discursive potential available to schools in their localised interpretation and implementation of policy, Bowe *et al*. are failing to reveal the extent to:

> […] which state policies and dominant discourses impose a highly constraining disciplinary framework on schools and local school systems. The material and ideological consequences of that disciplinary framework … include an increased subjugation of teachers, a closer alignment of schooling with capitalist values and the exacerbation of inequalities of provision along class lines. (Bowe *et al*., 1992, p. 19)

Gewirtz's (2002) position is that the capacity of schools to work in ways that contest and challenge the neoliberal policy complex in their interpretations of policy initiatives from the centre is significantly restricted by the legitimating power such policies have by operating within a disciplinary framework to which schools are compelled to adhere because of the need to protect their positions within the schooling field.

As a result, the outward positioning of Kingswood's institutional values and aims around academic attainment as a prerequisite for economic success can be understood within these restrictive terms. It would be neglectful, to say the least, if Kingswood were not to develop a strand of organisational purpose that did not address the benefit for young people from receiving an education that gave them the symbolic capital to operate successfully in the world of employment and higher education; however, the over-arching emphasis upon attainment through academic success, and the centrality of policy technologies within the school that shore up this position, are manifold within the daily social practices of the school, and it was the dissection of these practices that formed the basis of much discussion around position-taking in relation to localised policy processes with the student participants in the research.

4.2.1 Attainment policy as text

The majority of the school's policy documents are contained within the 'Staff Handbook'. This document covers all aspects of the school's organisational structures and processes, and is accessed via the intranet portal. The first section (out of ten) of this document is entitled 'Whole School' and covers the broad brushstrokes of organisational structures such as the composition and

responsibilities of the leadership team, the learning centres and the governing body: a framework outlining the core values and purposes of communication strategies as well as the strategy for improvement.

The second section of the document is called 'Achievement' and outlines the policies and procedures that have been developed in relation to this. Although the school uses the term 'Achievement', what this actually refers to within the context of the Handbook is academic attainment, which aligns more closely with the discourses used as part of the standards agenda at the national level. Arguably, the location of this section in the staff handbook is further attestation of the significance the school places upon attainment in terms of the values and aims of the school.

The contents of the first part of the section are entitled "*Ability testing, Target Setting and Student Tracking*". The key issues relating to attainment are framed in such a way as to indicate the centrality of these processes within both policy and practice. These sections are concisely written; each of the key areas that the policy relates to achievement are rendered in such a way as to present the assessment technologies and organisational approaches associated with such practices as "common sense notions and normative ideas" (Ball *et al*., 2012a, p. 130). The document designates its core purposes as:

> To outline the processes used for ability testing, the use of data and target setting and to demonstrate how they form a coherent package. (Staff Handbook, Section 2, p. 4)

There is no space created within the textual policy in which to question the potential positioning of such practices upon the student body; rather, the policy reads as a 'how to' guide in which expectations of social practices within the classroom are concisely and coherently packaged. The lack of such space within the policy and thus within the school environment is indicative of another dimension of the power of the 'disciplinary framework' within which schools and teachers end up operating (Gewirtz, 2002).

The purpose of these policy technologies is to sort and select the students by differentially positioning them in the teaching and learning environment based on their academic abilities. Araújo (2007) argues that the practice of sorting and selecting students by ability was embedded within the education system as a result of the 1944 Education Act, and that the development of the comprehensive project

in the 1970s was characterised by the internal selection processes through the use of streaming by ability. Ball, Bowe and Gewirtz (1996) and Reay (1998) argue that such practices within comprehensive education throughout the 1980s and 1990s were seen as a necessity in ensuring the on-going support of middle class parents, whose children, research has shown, are often the biggest beneficiaries (Benn and Chitty, 1996; Vincent, 2001).

Whilst there is broad agreement from the research that the practice of ability testing in order to sort children into learning cohorts does much to reinforce social disadvantage through formal schooling processes (Youdell and Gillborn, 2000) and appears to have mixed results in raising attainment (Ireson and Hallam, 1999), schools continue to embed such practices into the fabric of localised policy, and have done so for decades. These practices have been endorsed and encouraged (although never legislated) by successive governments' educational policies, in which selection by ability within the state sector has fiercely retained a corner within the neoliberal policy complex.

Many policies relating to selection that were developed during the 18 year Conservative rule were powerfully rearticulated into a 'modernising' agenda by Tony Blair's 1997 New Labour administration, in which the party came out in support of ability grouping in schools as an approach to improve standards:

> In education, we reject both the idea of a return to the 11-plus and the monolithic comprehensive schools that take no account of children's differing abilities. Instead we favour all-in schooling which identifies the distinct abilities of individual pupils and organises them in classes to maximise their progress in individual subjects. In this way we modernise the comprehensive principle, learning from the experience of its 30 years of application. (Labour Party, 1997, p. 3)

When in opposition the Conservative Party were also unequivocal in their support of "grammar streaming" in comprehensive schools (Cameron as quoted in Mullholland, 2007) and the Department for Education website currently states that "when setting is done well it can be an effective way to personalise teaching and learning to the differing needs of groups of pupils" (DfE, 2012). The position taken by both New Labour and the Conservative-led Coalition in relation to ability-setting practices within schools contribute to the development of the neoliberal doxa, in which such approaches to organising young people has been deeply ingrained within schooling processes, where the assumptive relationship between academic achievement and

economic productivity is successfully enveloped into localised policies which result in differential positioning of young people in relation to social class, gender and ethnicity.

Whilst these approaches have been developed widely and have been encouraged by successive governments, these practices are absent from national policy diktat. As such, in theory, schools have spaces in which to do things differently, to respond to research that illustrates the negative effect that ability grouping can have on the educational outcomes of children identified as average or below average, and use localised responses to address the extant structural inequalities that such identification serves to reproduce (Boaler, William and Brown, 2000; Ireson *et al*., 2002; Zevenbergen, 2003, 2005). However, as Gewirtz (2002) posits, because of the 'disciplinary framework' in which schools operate as a result of the neoliberal policy complex, it would appear such possibilities have been squeezed out at Kingswood in favour of policies and practices which serve to ensure the institution's position within the schooling field, characterised by competition and accountability, measured through the narrow perimeters of an "A-C economy" (Gillborn and Youdell, 2000).

4.3 Student position-taking in the field: target and ability setting

Gillborn and Youdell's (2000) analysis of the 'A-C economy' powerfully illustrates the rationalising effects that the "enactments" of the performance and standards agenda has on school based practices such as target setting and setting by ability, in which young people are positioned differentially and accordance is thus given to those who represent the biggest chance of achieving within this symbolic economy of grade distribution (Ball *et al*., 2012a, p. 81).

Kingswood's policy document outlining the expected processes regarding ability testing and target setting as a benchmark for attainment illustrates that such performativity measures work to produce the logics of practice within the field. On arrival at the school the new cohort of Year 7s undergo a "battery" of tests, including Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs), reading and spelling tests, and English and Maths tests, which are thus supplemented by data Kingswood receives from students' primary schools regarding student performance in the Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) sat at the end of Year 6, as well as data collected by the Fisher Family Trust

(FFT). From this onslaught of figures, the school then works out the percentage "chance" that a student has of achieving: a) 5 A*- C GCSE's within the combination of subjects that represent the English Baccalaureate; b) 5 A* - C grades including English and Maths; c) 5 A* - C grades not including English and Maths; and d) 5 A* - G (Staff Handbook, Section 2, pp. 4-6). These calculations are made by November in the first term of Year 7, and are reviewed by the school at the start of Year 11. The logic of practice within the field is thus dominated by the notion that ability is both "general and fixed" by the ascription of abilities and predicted outcomes to students in Year 7 (Gillborn and Youdell, 2000, p. 56).

At *Beachside Comprehensive*, Ball (1981) found that children were sorted and selected into 'banding' streams on entry at the school, based upon the professional opinion of their primary head teachers, that social class had been demonstrated as an influential factor in these recommendations, and that once in particular bands there was little movement between them and thus limited capacity for children in lower streams to achieve success academically. 30 years later and the fact that Kingswood has a far more regulatory system in place to sort and select the children is indicative of the influence of the standards agenda upon localised school policies and processes. The fact that such processes relating to the A–C economy are more formally embedded is, I would argue, suggestive of the power of the neoliberal policy complex on the social and professional practices within the schooling field.

The objective relations produced within the field as a result of the A-C economy within policy processes at the local level leads students to be differentially positioned on entry at the school. The ubiquity of such practices further enhances the value and legitimation of this symbolic economy within the schooling field and serves to contribute to a hierarchy of power relations. This hierarchy is built upon the premise that those students that accumulate the symbolic capital of successful target grades are automatically aligned with the institutional and organisational purposes of the school, which in turn positions such students in hierarchical structures in which those with the best 'chance' of achieving the top grades are placed in sets which are numerically weighted, with 1 being the 'top' and 4 being the 'bottom'. Such positioning leads to position-taking, as students in the research project revealed how their learner habitus is both effected by and a product of such performativity policies (Reay, 1995). As a result, the "'objective', supra-individual social reality (cultural and institutional social structure) and the internalised 'subjective' mental worlds of individuals as cultural beings and social actors are

inextricably bound up together, each being a contributor to - and indeed aspect - of the other" (Jenkins, 1992).

During the research process I talked with the student participants at length about the policies of ability and target setting. Most of the time this was as a result of how the children themselves responded to the question *How do you think are you doing at school*?, which led them to respond in such ways that they linked progress with practices relating to the policies of ability and target setting. For example, in the following exchange between Jack, a Year 8 student:

And how do you think you're doing at school?

Ok. Not like amazingly good. I know loads of people in the top sets and like sometimes I get a bit jealous of them, cos I'm not in the top set, obviously not.

But do you feel like you try hard?

I sometimes try hard, like yesterday in French I got told by the teacher that I was doing, like, really well.

And did that make you feel good?

Yeah, and I got a 6c yesterday, in English, and I was like, I was speechless, to be honest.

And that made you really happy? Did you tell your mum and dad?

No! I forgot to tell them!

And so do you feel like your teachers tell you what your grades are?

I looked at the sheet and it said end of Year 7 levels and I was not pleased with that I was a 4a. And then I saw 6c I was like, oh my god.

For your own self do you feel like you work quite hard and you're pleased with the work that you do and progress you make?

Well mostly. Mostly in English, yeah. Cos I got that grade. But in primary school I got Gifted and Talented for English and swimming…

But that hasn't happened here?

No I haven't had anything for Gifted and Talented … I used to think that you know you have 3a and 4a, yeah, I used to think that it was carrying on years… so I was sort of thinking I was in Year 6 and so…but I've heard some people in the top set get 6b and 6a so it's that…

Would you like to move into a different set or are you not really bothered?

I find the work ok where I am, but if I was in the top set I'd kind of like it cos I'd feel like I'm pretty smart. (1:1, Jack, Year 8, 20 October 2011)

Jack reveals that his learner habitus is implicitly tied to an understanding that certain grades and sets hold a symbolic value and he has been long enough in the schooling field that he has internalised an understanding that such discourses are an implicit dimension of schooling processes, and as such they have become part of the doxic experience for Jack. There is no formal alternative discourse available to Jack to talk about how he is doing at school because the social reality of the institutional structure is that this is how the discourse is framed and the hierarchical nature representative in such structures and processes reinforce this position, such practices and processes are not challenged or questioned within the official institutional spaces which Jack occupies.

Furthermore, it is through these mechanisms that Jack relates his own sense of worth as a learner. Bourdieu (1977, p. 164) posits, "a reflexive return to the principles of the operations of objectification, practices or discourses, is prevented by the very reinforcement which these productions continuously draw from a world of objectifications produced in accordance with the same subjective principles". The ubiquity of the doxic experience with regards to target and ability setting in the field was revealed in a number of the research situations. For example, another Year 8 child, Lauren, explained to me how target grades work:

> We have our target grades, and for example in English, every time Miss marks our book we have to put the comments that she put in the grid, at the front of our book, to show that we've read them and that we understand what we've got to learn and it's like a checklist cos if you think that you've done well enough, you'll tick it to show that you've achieved it, so it's quite nice cos it you get, even though you get, like commented on, it's nice cos it makes you want to achieve it and it's a target for you, cos there's no point in learning if you haven't got a target to go off. (1:1, Lauren, Year 8, 10 November 2011)

For Lauren the point in learning is dictated as to whether the task is offset against a target. Lauren's learner habitus is also very tied up in the discourse of achievement as a numerical indicator; this is the way in which the field is designed to operate, and for Lauren, a student who regularly achieved her targets, such processes represent the modus operandi of her schooling experience. This is reinforced by the teaching practices adopted by her teacher in top set humanities:

> *Are you happy about where you are at school, like how you are doing?*

Yeah, cos like in a lesson, sometimes in a lesson like in humanities, we have Ms Jackson and what she'll do is at the end of every piece that we've done, she won't mark it unless we've finished it and she'll give us a target grade for everything that we do and she's just showing us how to get As and Bs and Cs instead of having a 5a or something, it's more interesting cos its progressing, we're progressing our scores and stuff like that which is quite nice. Every lesson she'll say, right Lauren, what's your grade and its nice cos we share whatever we do with the class which is nice cos we get to show what we've learnt and how we learnt it. (1:1, Lauren, Year 8, 10 November 2011)

A Year 10 student, Daisy, also aligned her learner identity squarely within the discourse of target setting and results:

Are you aware of how you are doing?

I need to get a couple of results to come back, but so far I think I am doing ok. There's a few subjects that I'm kind of falling behind in, that I'm trying to keep up with, but it's difficult when you've got so much to do.

So on the whole things are going pretty well?

Yeah, in school they just make sure you know what your target is, and it's like ok!

How do they do that?

You get stickers on your book, or you just get told, and they're in your LAP result.

So they are there for you to see.

Especially since Ofsted have been in this year, they've been kind of pushing quite a lot to make sure that everybody knows what their targets are because I think that was one of the weak points last time, nobody really knew what they were heading towards. (1:1, Daisy, Year 10, 22 November 2011)

Daisy's response brings forth the power that externally derived performativity and accountability mechanisms have in reinforcing the capital at stake within the schooling field, which in turn serves to reproduce the influence of the A–C economy across the field. The following exchange led by Daisy in the focus group illustrates the hierarchical nature of the structures that exist at Kingswood as a result of the performativity policies that are enacted and how such hierarchical positionings are subsequently internalised by the students:

And what do you think about setting?

Daisy: I think it's a good thing because it takes the pressure off people. If you are in a group with people who are of the same ability…you can imagine it

about someone…I don't know if I would be ashamed but I would be a bit embarrassed about (being in a low set) I don't know if it's because its one, two, three, four. (Focus group, Years 9 and 10, 17 July 2012)

The power of the policy of setting by ability to position students in ways that are internalised negatively was also illustrated during the focus group with the Year 8 students:

Ted: in some schools they do everything in their forms, like every lesson

What do you think about that?

Ted: St Charles used to do it but I don't think they do it anymore but I think we should change like that, because I am in set 4 for some subjects

Shanice: most

Ted: whatever, but, I feel really stupid when I am sat on the bridge *(interlinking corridor between two of the school buildings at the lower school site)* and set 1 are sat on one side and us, set 4 on the other I feel like I'm a bit stupid.

Shanice: I don't really care what set I'm in

Ted: in Year 7 I used to wait at the top of the classroom because I didn't want to stand on the bridge because I felt like an idiot. (Focus group, Year 8, 16 July 2012)

These findings mirror findings from research undertaken by Reay (2006) in which she found that, as Ted expressed above, the "hierarchical organisation of pupils" as a result of ability setting made some young people feel "stupid" as a result (p. 298).

Whilst it is paramount that researchers avoid "reductionist and essentialist assumptions" in the analytical process because "identities are neither fixed nor one-dimensional. Rather, they are fluid, contingent, plural and hybrid" (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2008, pp. 139 - 141), it is, however, still possible to theorise how learners' habitus are revealed by the position-taking that occurs as a result of policies that serve to reinforce the neoliberal framework of performativity and accountability within day to day practices. Jenkins explains that:

[…] the habitus disposes actors to do certain things, it provides a basis for the generation of practices. Practices are produced in and by the encounter between habitus and its dispositions, on the one hand, and the constraints, demands, and opportunities of the social field or market to which the habitus is appropriate or within which the actor is moving, on the other. (Jenkins, 1992, p. 78)

Jenkins (1992, p. 86) goes onto summarise Bourdieu's argument that "the habituses of the agents within the field must be analysed along with the trajectories or strategies which are produced in the interaction between habitus and the constraints and opportunities which are determined by the structure of the field". Thus, in the examples above, Ted, Jack, Lauren and Daisy reveal how target and ability setting is structured within the institutional space as a "specific form of social practice" (Crossley, 2003). This social practice is both a structured structure and a structuring structure - the learner habitus of the students reveal how their positioning and position-taking are "structured" by the field in which target and ability setting is part of their educational experience, and is 'structuring' in that these experiences help to shape the students' present and future practices in relation to target and ability setting.

Bourdieu talks about how the habitus contains a set of dispositions which "generate perceptions, appreciations and practices" within any given context (Maton, 2008, p. 51). Bourdieu said of disposition:

> It expresses first the result of an organising action, with a meaning close to that of words such as structure; it also designates a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body) and, in particular, a predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination. (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 214)

So, although learner identity is indeed "fluid, contingent, plural and hybrid" (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2008, pp. 139-141), it is also revealed as being structured through the 'structured structures' and 'structuring structures' in which the process of teaching and learning takes place. Bourdieu linked the conceptualisation of structured structures and structuring structures with his theory of re-production (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1996). Learner subjectivities, such as those embodied by Ted when he talks about feeling stupid standing on the bridge because his set is lower than those of the other class on the bridge, are also subject to a process of re-production, through which such position-taking may be subject to social practices which further re-produce these feelings, and as such, contribute to further position-taking in response, as I found with Ted.

Ted and I met twice on a one to one basis, once in the focus group and I observed him in two lessons; I also interviewed his mother. During these research moments I gleaned that Ted's learner habitus was indeed fluid, and that he of course exhibits

agency in the daily interactions that occur as part of the teaching and learning process. For instance, differences can be observed by noting the way he behaved well and commanded a lot of respect in PE, his favourite subject at which he attains very highly, as opposed to in his project based learning lesson, in which he spent much time engaging in low level disruptive behaviour or disengaging from tasks completely. Another example can be found in the way his mum described him "getting straight out of bed in the morning" because he enjoyed school, despite a run of engaging in poor behaviour, for which he had received internal exclusions as sanctions. However, it was during the observation of his project based learning lesson that I witnessed the way in which, as discussed in Chapter 2, the structure of the field also powerfully contributes to reproducing the hierarchical nature of the neoliberal doxa through the internalisation of policy processes such as ability setting, and the way this practice not only constrains opportunities for some students but reveals active position-taking in relation to those students by teachers (Ball, 1981, p. 30):

> I briefly talk to the teacher at the beginning of the lesson – the class are doing 'journeys' – He explains that Jack is in a group where they bicker as if at primary school – and Ted is quite dis-engaged. The teacher describes them as being a "bottom set" who are "not worth considering for the level 1 qualification in projects, if you know what I mean". (Research diary notes, 23 February 2012)

For Ball (1993b), it is "axiomatic that there is agency and there is constraint in relation to policy — this is not a sum-zero game. Policy analysis requires not an understanding that is based on constraint **or** agency but on the changing relationships between constraint **and** agency. Furthermore, such an analysis must achieve insight into both overall and localised outcomes of policy" (p. 14, his emphases). For Thomson *et al*. (2010), it is vital that "policy sociologists look… to the micro-level of transactions in order to reveal the power geometries of contemporary policy at work" (p. 654). I will return in the following section to Ted's learner habitus to reveal further how he positions himself and considers he is positioned through the structuring of the field in response to localised policy processes and enactments; however, the data presented has illustrated how agency and constraint operate through micro-level transactions equated with the A-C economy to highlight how different students acknowledge the symbolic capital at stake in the field and how they may consider they are positioned and how they subsequently may position themselves in relation to it.

4.4. Reproduction, class and setting

In his study of *Beachside Comprehensive*, Ball (1981) tested the relationship between social class and the practice of banding by ability within the school through observing micro-level transactions and found that children from manual, working class homes were over-represented in the lower bands. Throughout his career Ball (1993, 2003b, 2003c, 2003d, 2006) has continued to demonstrate that the schooling system differentiates between the social classes and that such differentiation serves to maintain the distinctions between disadvantage and advantage within the education system.

Bourdieu's (1973) work on illustrating how the education system contributes to the "reproduction of the structure of power relationships and symbolic relationships between classes, by contributing to the reproduction of the structure of the distribution of cultural capital among the classes" provides a framework within which such epistemological position-taking can occur (p. 71). The last data set that is analysed in this section of the chapter contributes to this epistemological position-taking in illustrating how such practices further contribute to the restrictive capacities that exist for young people to challenge and resist such powerful mechanisms because of their legitimising position within the schooling field as a result of the neoliberal policy complex.

The following exchange took place during the Year 8 focus group. All three children in the exchange, Lauren, Ted and Shanice, are from working class backgrounds.

> Lauren: In humanities I am in set 1 and everybody knows things that I don't know and I feel sometimes a bit stupid because I think should I know these things because I am in a top set. But the teacher seems to assume that you know all of this stuff but sometimes people who went to my primary school, it wasn't a very good primary school, but people from Bramwell they know all these things and we don't know what's going on so that's going to put us down in our learning because we don't know what they are talking about so how are we supposed to learn when they expect us to already know what they already know. But then in set 4 at the same time we have totally different, our teacher teaches us everything we need to know before he gives a test he teaches everything that he thinks we need to know.
>
> *So you think sometimes where you went to primary school will matter?*
>
> Lauren: sometimes cos pupils from Bramwell, mainly, they're like, most people from Bramwell are in top sets and that might just be a coincidence

but it seems that they know, that because they had a better primary education they know more so they have a better chance of being in top sets.

Shanice: that's so true! Everyone from Bramwell is in an upper set! I'm not saying Bramwell's a posh school but it's one of those ones where you get quite a good education, like everyone in primary school has different ways of learning, so everyone from Bramwell is in the top sets and everyone from the other schools are in the lower sets and now that we are here we shouldn't get treated differently, say you are in a lower set and you could be in a higher set…[inaudible].

Ted; you don't have to be well educated to go to Bramwell

Shanice: yeah I know but, are you from Bramwell?

Ted: yeah

Gets quite noisy with this revelation…

Ted: yeah but it's like I'm in MySpace outside the classroom where people just got to go outside the classroom with an assistant teacher to learn a little bit more because people like me and other people from this school found it hard in lessons, they got to go outside with an AT to learn.

Shanice: I didn't mean it like that; just quite a lot of people in top sets obviously had a better education

Ted: Not everyone from Bramwell. (Focus group, Year 8, 16 July 2012)

This conversation powerfully illustrates the ways in which localised policy processes and practices such as target setting and setting by ability invites students to position themselves in such ways that result in feeling devalued and powerless in the face of structural constraints, such as where one went to primary school, which appear, from this extract at least, to be perceived as restricting access to the top sets. Bramwell Primary School is situated in the affluent part of Kingswood that predominately serves an established middle class cohort of children. Although the students themselves did not talk about 'class', the positioning of Bramwell Primary School as offering a 'better education' which would result in knowing more and being placed in higher sets is a discussion which fundamentally relates to class structures in which certain knowledges and ways of knowing are inherently more valued in the education system than others (Thomson, 2000).

Ted is keen to point out to Lauren and Shanice that although he attended Bramwell he actually spent a fair amount of time learning in a one to one situation with an assistant teacher, much like the time he spends on his own in MySpace, the independent learning unit at Kingswood where he goes to "do extra English" instead

of attending French lessons. Ted reveals that within his primary school environment he was sorted and selected out of the classroom and on having transitioned to Kingswood he has been placed in lower sets for most of his subjects as well, which makes him "feel like an idiot", embodied by his reluctance to stand on the bridge when waiting to enter a class. However, despite these negative experiences of localised policies, Ted also reveals that his learner habitus is very much aligned with the discourse of achievement through attainment that dominates discussion about schooling processes:

> Ted: We had to look at two poems and tell the differences between them.
>
> *Did you enjoy that?*
>
> Ted: ye-ah, but that's where I got a low score, a 4c
>
> *What would you like to have got?*
>
> Ted: At least in the 5s. (1:1, Ted, Year 8, 10 November 2011)

The articulation from these students throughout our one to one interviews, reinforced through observing the framing of their lesson objectives by their teachers, was that despite having the capacity to engender feelings of marginalisation and low self esteem, policy processes and enactments related to the A–C economy were valued as the legitimate means with which to position-take within the field. Despite going through periods of disruptive behaviour (discussed in more detail below) and describing feelings of rejection and marginalisation, Ted is firmly invested in attempting to accumulate the desired capital at stake within the field. As with Jack, there is no other discourse that presents itself to Ted within the formal institutional spaces that he occupies. Whilst his behaviour at times could be interpreted as a indicative of the marginalisation he experiences as a result of formal schooling processes, his doxic experience is such that he buys into the very policies that he also appears to reject; he plays the game as it is the only legitimate game available, by the rules of which he is so well inculcated. Bourdieu (1973, p. 84) argues that such is the effectiveness of the education system in masking "more thoroughly than any other legitimation mechanism…the arbitrary nature of the actual demarcation of its public, thereby imposing more subtly the legitimacy of its products and of its hierarchies". The following section will draw on uniform and behaviour policies to further highlight how localised policy processes are perceived to position and thus require position taking from some of the students in the research.

4.5 Student position taking in the field: Uniform and behaviour policies

This section will build on the arguments that the social practices at the school in the form of policy processes and enactments position the students in ways that are reflective of the neoliberal policy complex in which the purposes and outcomes of schooling are closely aligned with academic performativity and economic productivity. The way in which some of the students position-take and are positioned by the enactments of both behaviour and uniform policies (in which sanctions or misdemeanours relating to one or the other are textually rendered into an over-arching document for both) will be explored as a way of revealing the powerful ways in which such policies embody the disciplinary framework that students operate within at the local level, from which parallels can be drawn with the disciplinary framework that schools are expected to operate within at a national level (Gewirtz, 2002).

Such disciplinary frameworks encompass dominant discourses in which adherence to such policies are an arm of how 'successful' a student may be deemed to be within the context of the school, and how this 'success' is related to the neoliberal doxa and the re-articulation of the values and purposes of schooling as part of the modernising reform agenda since 1988. Policies relating to behaviour and uniform are in many ways linked with but subordinate to the policies related to the standards agenda (Ball *et al*., 2011). The purposes of the behaviour policy, and that of the uniform policy within it, are to support an environment where learning and success can take place with minimal disruption or distraction.

As discussed by Ball *et al*. (2011), behaviour policies (that encompass uniform policies as well as many other policy imperatives) are subordinate to the standards agenda in English schools. The authors (Ball *et al*. 2011, p. 1) argue that policies are "synthetic" and can be open to interpretation yet also point to the dominance of the behaviour for learning discourse that has been adopted by schools over the last few years, in parallel to the Assessment for Learning (AfL) discourse that has also become omnipresent in the way in which schools frame assessment practices and technologies. At Kingswood the behaviour policy is incorporated within the Staff Handbook (as were the Achievement policies), but whereas the latter was located in the second section, the former is located in the ninth section – a small but not

insignificant reflection of Ball *et al*.'s (2011) argument that such policies are subordinated to the standards agenda. The policy states:

> It is very important that we ensure consistency and standards throughout the school. Classroom teachers have a responsibility to ensure positive reinforcement for good behaviour. However, we also all need to set clear expectations of what is and what is not acceptable behaviour and to follow the agreed plan for dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
>
> Kingswood Academy has a code of conduct. This is intended to promote the behaviour we wish to encourage, should be displayed prominently in every classroom and referred to by teachers regularly.
>
> Unacceptable behaviour is categorised in levels 1, 2 or 3, increasing in severity or occurrence. Classroom teachers have a responsibility to ensure procedures for dealing with level 1 incidents, middle leaders for dealing with level 2 incidents and SLT level 3 incidents. Student Services may have involvement at either level 2 or 3 to assist Learning Centres and the SLT with positive behaviour management. (Operation of the Behaviour Management Policy, p. 2)

The use of the term 'standards' reflects the dominance and ubiquity of this term within and across schooling structures and processes, a catch all which refers to an expected level of quality or attainment, whether in relation to grades, dress or conduct. Kingswood's Code of Conduct is to be "displayed prominently in every classroom" although four staff who were interviewed spoke of how "we don't have any problems with our kids behaviourally" (Amanda Greene). In particular Tom Henderson, one of the Student Support officers said of the culture within the school:

> I think the critical mass is very positive, and is around achievement, is around having nice positive relationships; interactions between staff and students are generally really positive and pleasant. I think if I compare that from my old school, it was weighing under a constraint of behavioural issues, so achievement was more or less measured in terms of bums on seats and minimum disruption whereas achievement here is measured in decimals of grades, it obviously shows we are not weighing under the strain of behaviour. I think there is a vein of low-level disruption in some lessons but we challenge that, but maybe it's ok in a sense of how good is good enough? I think we would always like there to be less low level disruption but actually if that's as far as it goes maybe we can live with that to an extent as long as it doesn't slide into other things. (1:1, Tom Henderson, Head of Student Support, Year Group, 11 May 2012)

The fact that behaviour is not positioned as a particular issue by Tom and other staff members (including both the deputy and the head teacher) arguably gives the school more space to focus on delivering on attainment and achievement as the core purposes for teaching and learning. Despite this positioning it is the story I

heard from the Year 10 student Paul through which I want to explore how policies relating to behaviour and (as a subsidiary of this) uniform were experienced by him in order to show how such policies operate as a disciplinary framework which may position some students in ways that strongly link the expectations encompassed within the Code of Conduct with the standards agenda.

Paul lives on the social housing estate on the edge of Kingswood with his dad who was unemployed at the time of research and two of his siblings. His mum lives nearby and works behind the bar at a local pub, and he visits her twice a week. During the year of the data collection it seemed that there were a number of issues that Paul had in conforming to the expected norms regarding the school's code of conduct, which led to being given a number of internal exclusions ('being put in isolation') as well as two 'suspensions' (which is the school term for 'fixed term exclusions'). Paul's attendance was relatively low during the year of data collection, with a percentage mark of 25% unauthorised absences. Paul's erratic attendance made his participation in the research project difficult - for example, it took three attempts to interview him in the first term - and I found that he was absent from school for the first two scheduled observations. When we finally were in a lesson together, he was sent out after the first 20 minutes for disruptive behaviour and he did not attend the focus group for Years 9 and 10 at the end of the year. Paul appeared to have a reputation at the school; I heard his name mentioned by staff in the staff room a number of times, and once a member of staff describing him as a "different kettle of fish" to his younger brother. The data and tracking system identifies that throughout the school year he received a high number of 'demerits' (sanctions for poor behaviour).

Paul's positioning in relation to the majority of schooling processes was negative. Whilst he appeared to reject a number of practices within the school, such as the expected completion of homework (he told me that he doesn't do it because generally he "can't be bothered with it"), and thus seemed resigned to accepting the punitive measures enforced by the school as a result of the policy, there was an instance in the interview in which Paul shared an experience which he considered indicated that some of the practices and processes related to localised policy (in this case the wearing of correct uniform) were "pointless" and reflected a sense of injustice in the way that he was positioned as a result:

Well some of the rules they have are absolutely pointless. Like this year, well, it was last year I had the problem. I had my school shoes and because, I kind of like wrecked them a bit and I put my trainers on for about a week just while me dad got me my new ones and they give me a card saying if you don't have your shoes tomorrow you'll get put in isolation. So I was like ok then.

Did you explain?

…. Yeah I told 'em, but they put me in isolation and I sat there for, well I was there for at least three days and I just thought I'm not learning anything in isolation, I ain't got no teacher, it's just on a corridor. And just because I've got no shoes, you can stop me learning. And they sent me home eventually. And I had to stay off for, like, I think it was a week and a half or something?

Until you got the shoes?

Yeah, well I did get them in the end; I got them about a week after it happened

But you were still at home after it happened?

Yeah… I say to the teachers, I know it's wrong to say it but, you don't get anything across if you don't ask questions so…

That's fair enough point. So do you feel like sometimes you are getting into trouble for things you don't think you should be getting into trouble about?

Yeah

So can you tell me what the processes are – because you were put in isolation but wouldn't you normally just be given a detention or something?

No they put you straight in isolation.

Would they put everyone straight in isolation do you think?

Yeah. Well. My friend Sean he had Timberland boots which are all black…and he had them on for about 2 months and he got given that card I got, saying he's in isolation, he never got put in isolation for it…so him and a few others haven't, but most of us have. (1:1, Paul, Year 10, 24 November 2011)

Paul's positioning in this story must be taken with a certain degree of caution. Whilst it was very important within the research space that Paul was able to explain to me how he felt about being put into isolation regarding the issue with the school shoes, this is the only side of the story that is presented here. So, whilst his perspective on what happened is of great importance, I am unable to triangulate his perceptions of what happened with those of the teachers involved. The fact that Paul was put into isolation immediately as a result of his non-conformity with the code of conduct

regarding school uniform does not fit with the behaviour policy, which outlines the criteria for internal exclusion:

- Possible reasons for being placed in the Isolation Room
  - a last resort before the ultimate sanction of fixed-term exclusion
  - a serious misdemeanour which requires a sanction, but exclusion is deemed to be inappropriate
- There will normally have been a programme of intervention with a student or the offence is a serious breach of the school's discipline policy
- Allowing the child to remain in class would be detrimental to the education or welfare of the student and/or other students

In general, removal to the Isolation Room should be for an offence that doesn't trivialise the use of such a sanction. (Behaviour Policy, p. 18)

It might be fair to presume that Paul's breach of the policy was part of a more sustained intervention regarding his behaviour at school as a whole. He went on to tell me that he had been suspended for throwing a stone at a wall, and that this was "fair enough because it was stupid and could have hurt someone". Thus his positioning in response to this story shows how Paul acknowledges the importance of learning in the school environment and that to issue a punishment, which took him out of the learning environment, was "pointless" because he saw the misdemeanour as relatively unimportant, as opposed to the stone-throwing incident, which he conceded was more serious. Therefore, in relation to the textual policy, for Paul the use of the isolation room for his 'offence' with his shoes did trivialise the sanction. Even if Paul's behaviour had been consistently difficult and as such had escalated the situation to a Level 3 response (involving the SLT), and if the incorrect wearing of the shoes had been in effect a last straw, it is significant to think *why* something as seemingly trivial as shoes (especially when taken into consideration that Paul's father was unemployed at the time) was held up to be of such importance. Again, cautiously, I offer up an analysis which locates Paul's non-conformity of wearing the 'right' uniform with the emphasis upon standards and attainment at Kingswood.

On an FAQ on the school's website regarding uniform changes as a result of the conversion to academy the document states:

As a trend over the last few years, many schools have adopted a more formal uniform for youngsters as this type of uniform has become more closely associated with high standards of learning and attainment. We have recognised parental opinions that have been expressed to us in recent

years. The decision to change uniform is also associated with becoming a 'Professional School'.

'The Professional School' sees Kingswood Academy involved in a prestigious project with the Department for Education and partnered with [an international bank, an international Airport and a Law College] [*sic*], amongst others. 'The Professional School', directly teaching 'Employability Skills' and 'Professional Behaviour' (applied across a wide range of careers) in addition to all that we do academically, may be rolled out as a model for schools nationally. We feel that appropriate dress contributes to the development of skills, attitudes and behaviour associated with professionalism.

The first phase of the development of 'The Professional School' starts in September 2012 and this concurs with the start of our new uniform. One of the aspects we wish to inculcate in students is self-regulation. (Kingswood Academy website, anonymised, 2012)

To what extent Paul 'fits' with the image that is being fostered through the enactment of localised policy processes in the development of the Professional School concept is a difficult and uncomfortable question to ask. Part of the way Kingswood was re-imagining the image of the school as a result of the transitioning to an academy was through the changes to a uniform which involves blazers and suits and thus is perceived as more 'professional' than the previous uniform of open neck polo shirts and pullovers. Student Support Officer Tom Henderson mused that the re-imagining of the school's image through the development of the uniform and behaviour policies was to give an outward signal to the more affluent within the local community that Kingswood was a viable alternative to the independent schools in the area:

It's a difficult dynamic in Kingswood because you are talking about a working class minority, surrounded by a middle affluent class and we are competing with the notion, there are a lot of people here paying for their children to go to private school and I think part of the idea of sprucing up the uniform and bringing in prestige and using the name [of the corporate consultancy firm supporting the restructuring of the curriculum] and things is very much to appeal to that audience in Kingswood and actually say, look, this is a credible alternative to private education for your high flying child. It has definite merit. I think it would be great for the school to attract more of the kids who are right on our doorstep whose parents at the moment are paying thousands of pounds every year for private school. But it doesn't solve the issues at the other end of the spectrum at the moment. (1:1, Tom Henderson, Head of Student Support, 11 May 2012)

Thus regardless of Paul's behaviour record, the linking of this with the incorrect wearing of uniform leading to an internal and external exclusion may be seen as part of a bigger picture of "institutional needs" (Ball *et al.*, 2011, p. 8) relating to

place and space, which in turn relate back to the standards and performativity agenda within the neoliberal policy complex. Ball *et al.* cogently argue that:

> […] we must recognize policy as a composite of (1) regulation and imperatives, (2) principles and (3) multi-level and collective efforts of interpretation and translation (creative enactment) and that policies are enacted in material conditions, with varying resources, in relation to particular 'problems' that are constructed nationally and locally. They are also set against existing commitments, values and forms of experience. They are made up from a wide variety of source materials and ideas and involve a variety of actors in the process of their production. In this way policies are almost always localized and customized. (Ball *et al.*, 2012a, p. 11)

During the year of data collection Kingswood converted to an academy and around this a number of changes were evident in the localised policy processes and enactments related to behaviour and uniform. The school was constructing a future in which 'problems' were being defined in the competitive terms of the neoliberal policy complex as how to extend and expand the school's appeal to a broader market, particularly in relation to the affluent members of the community in the immediate locale with school age children. Paul's complaint that he won't learn "anything in isolation" is an astute one, because it picks up on the fact that within the schooling field policies relating to behaviour and uniform are part of the disciplinary framework that serves to regulate how 'success' is being constructed, and that is through adherence. The school wants to project a successful image, a professional image, and behaviour exhibited by Paul does not meet such criteria, that the sanctions he receives have a negative impact on his own learner subjectivities and access to learning is subordinate to the need of the school to present a viable and credible image, in which such misdemeanours are not tolerated.

I asked Paul why he thought he had to come to school, and his response illustrates the complexities of learner subjectivities within the neoliberal policy complex:

> Yeah, I understand that you have to get GCSEs so you get a job and stuff, but I just think, what's the need for it?
>
> *Do you? So what would be a better alternative?*
>
> Well, I don't know really, because some jobs, you learn now and you get training for them. And most of them, like if you're gonna be, like I want to be in the army, and you need qualifications to get into what I want to do and you get most of your training done there so I think why do you need them for it? When you're going to get trained on it anyway.
>
> *So what sort of thing is it that you'd like to do in the army?*

I want to go in as an Officer.

So you go to a special place for that? What age?

Well I've got a brochure for it that I ordered the other day, yeah it's a 6th form college that you can go to

In [name of city]?

No you stay there for most of the year and its, I forgotten where it is but I think it's in [name of county] or something…and you go in there and there's two sides of it, if you go to the army side of it you do that and then it can put you straight into – do you know [names a military academy in the South of England]?

Yes

The officers training, they put you straight into that.

So does it say what you need to have?

To get into [military academy] you need 2 A levels, and 5 different GCSEs and to get into [military 6th form college] you have to have I think 5 GCSEs with English maths and science.

So I know you are saying that you get training there, but if they are saying you need GCSE's first…

…I know, I understand that… (1:1, Paul, Year 10, 24 November 2011)

In one respect Paul demonstrates a lack of interest in schooling as a process, yet he also has an ambition which he acknowledges requires him to play the game and get the grades necessary to go on to do the training he wants to do. He acknowledges where his behaviour may be out of line, but also states that there are times when he is singled out and given punishments that he perceives exceed his breaches of the behavioural policy and which interrupt his access to learning. I will return to this point below, but it is interesting to note that whilst Paul has an ambition in a field that is deeply ingrained as 'professional', he rejects aspects of the disciplinary framework developed as part of localised policy processes, and does not 'fit' with the image the school is keen to project in relation to the 'Professional School'. His positioning reveals the complexities of trying to understand how and why students may position-take in response to how they perceive they are positioned as a result of localised enactments of policy processes.

Interestingly, during the Year 9 and 10 focus group the students talked about how the change in the uniform policy was connected to the conversion to an academy,

which in turn was related to the image the school wanted to project to the local community:

> Daisy: I don't think people in Kingswood like us!
>
> Max: you're not allowed in shops, we're not allowed in [name of supermarket], unless you've got a parent with you. But if you are wearing your uniform you can get banned
>
> Olivia: cos people don't trust everyone cos of something one person does.
>
> Daisy: I can understand why they would do that, it's sort of like, you see one person do it in the uniform and you think what must it be like.
>
> *So do people make assumptions about the school?*
>
> General agreement
>
> *So you don't think people have a bad assumption of the school per se it's just some kids in the uniform messing around?*
>
> Max: I think cos it's a posh area too.
>
> *Do you think the new uniforms will make a difference?*
>
> Hannah: no cos people are going to behave the same way it doesn't matter what uniform you have on. (Focus group, Years 9 and 10, 17 July 2012)

In contrast to the 'official' statement made by the school that links attitude and behaviour and standards and professionalism to uniform, the students do not see this; they consider that they are positioned negatively in the community spaces they occupy whilst wearing their uniforms but reject the notion that wearing smarter clothes will affect the public image of the school, or will have an impact on the behaviour of some students at the school. In terms of the behaviour and uniform policies, they act as another form of symbolic capital in the field of the school, and in the field of the community. The symbolic capital in this sense is to demonstrate that the students at the school are 'professional' and the very term conjures up associations, which are class based, and which also link to conceptions of both economic productivity and academic performativity. The symbolic capital at stake in the field of the school relates both of these conceptions back to the standards agenda, whilst simultaneously aligning the school's position to the advice given on the DfE website relating to uniform, behaviour and standards:

> A school uniform plays a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of a school and setting an appropriate tone. Most schools in England have a uniform or dress code, and other rules on appearance.

> The Department strongly encourages schools to have a uniform as it can instil pride; support positive behaviour and discipline; encourage identity with, and support for, school ethos; ensure pupils of all races and backgrounds feel welcome; protect children from social pressures to dress in a particular way; and nurture cohesion and promote good relations between different groups of pupils.

> Above all, many schools believe that school uniform supports effective teaching and learning. (DfE, 2013b)

The capital at stake is legitimated from within the centralising framework of the DfE, and despite the claim that "many schools believe that school uniform supports effective teaching and learning", there does not appear to be any research, outside of anecdotal rhetoric, available to support this statement. In fact, stories such as those told by Paul actually highlight how such policies can contribute to students missing out on learning through the sanctions that may be placed upon persistent offenders by removing students from the class through the use of internal exclusions.

During my interviews with two of the Year 8 students, Ted and Katie, they both discussed how they engaged with behaviours which breached the school's code of conduct, but, like Paul, how they also considered that teachers were less lenient with them than they would be with other students who engaged with similar low level disruptive behaviour. Both students had been put on behaviour report once already during the first term of the year of data collection, in line with the level 2 of the behaviour policy, and Ted had received a period of internal and external exclusion (level 3). When I spoke to Ted in our first interview he explained to me that he had been put in isolation:

> *And how do you think things are generally going in terms of how school is going?*
> I'm having a bad, like, I'm having a bad time at the moment. I'm in isolation.
> *So what does that mean?*
> It's like you get sent out of class for a week or so.
> *Oh right, so one things happened and they say you can't come back in to class?*
> Yeah. I been in it for a week and a half now.
> *So are they going to let you back in?*

I think so, they're letting me choose two subjects so that's what I'll get to do but one's going to be PE and I don't know the other yet. But that's it. But my mum went psycho because I was only meant to be in it for a week and now I've been in it for nearly 2, and I've done nothing wrong, while I've been in isolation, so I should be going back into class.

So what happened to make you go in isolation?

Just like distracting and chatting and stuff.

Was it because it's been happening quite a bit? It wasn't just one big thing that happened?

Yeah.

How do you feel about it?

It's not really fair, cos I'm not the only one who causes this, there's others and they just get away with it and I don't.

So do you think you have a reputation?

Yes. (1:1, Ted, Year 8, 10 November 2011)

Ted was clear with me that whilst he realised that his behaviour was disruptive he considered that the enactments of the behaviour policy were not consistent amongst all students, and that because he had a reputation for being disruptive teachers were quick to pick him up on this, which would often then escalate the situation to the point where he would be removed from the learning context. Like Ted, Katie explained to me that she "gets treated different to everyone else" when she misbehaves. Later in the school year when I held the focus group for Year 8, the following exchange between Jack and Ted took place in which Jack validated Ted's positioning:

Jack: the teachers can sometimes be annoying cos if you do something once they'll hate you for a year.

You think it's held against you?

Yeah (a few of them say)

Do you think you get stereotyped?

Ted: sometimes if you do something bad but the next time you have the lesson and someone else does something bad they automatically look at you and think it's you.

Jack: yeah I know – you (Ted) used to get blamed for everything!

Ted: I know (Focus group, Year 8, 16 July 2012)

When I spoke to Ted's mum about how he was at school she said that he was a "devil" when he first came to Kingswood and his behaviour meant he was often in trouble with the teachers even though she tried to advise him on how to react in situations:

> […] somebody will throw a rubber at him and I say to him to ignore it and leave it but no, Ted will have to pick the rubber up and throw it back and he's the one seen doing that. And then. So I say to him just ignore it and do what you are supposed to do…but I think it's in the subjects that he's not keen on. (1:1, Peggy (Ted's mum), 7 March 2012)

Whilst undoubtedly Ted was engaging in behaviours that required different levels of interventions from the teaching staff, there was an agreement amongst Ted, Jack and Ted's mum that it seemed that Ted was positioned as a trouble maker by staff and this positioning led to greater sanctions being placed on Ted than that which another student may have been given in similar circumstances. Ted's mum was very supportive of both Ted and the school, when talking to me about an upcoming Tutor Review day she said:

> […] I keep nagging at Ted because its tutor day next week but he won't make me an appointment, I've put notes in his pocket and I've written notes on his hand and he's not made the appointment. … I think he's probably scared that he's not behaved and they might tell me that, I don't know.
>
> *Would you call up if he still hasn't done it?*
>
> Yes I will, I've given plenty of opportunity but I will call at the end of the week. I don't want the school to think that I'm not interested or dedicated to his education. (1:1, Peggy, 7 March 2012)

Peggy said to me that she thought of their family as "proud working class", and both Paul and Katie, although were not asked to self-define, came from families that would probably fit the criteria of being working class. Both Peggy and Christine (Katie's mum) showed how they were dedicated to their children's education, they showed interest in their progress and attended parents evening and tutor days (even when Ted and Katie did their best to prevent the information about such events getting home – for example Christine said to me that "Katie didn't even want me to go to parents evening because she was so worried that she was going to get such a bad report, its only because like all the mums told me it was parents evening and she hadn't told me!"). Ted and Katie themselves showed interest in school, demonstrated by their reluctance for their parents to think they were misbehaving. Paul was less enthused by the process although did say he enjoyed parts of it. How

the social class of these students, and their parents, contributes to how they feel they are positioned or how they position-take in response to localised polices such as those of behaviour or uniform is very difficult to say. What is revealed is how complicated such a question is in relation to how different actors within a field may position-take or be positioned by practices and processes which are structured in ways which are designed to deliver within the framework of a standards agenda, in which the discourses of success are framed around values relating to academic performativity and economic productivity.

Ted, Paul and Katie have relatively low levels of accumulated symbolic capital within the field of the school, yet all three displayed innate understanding, or a "tacit recognition" (Wacquant, 1989, p. 42) that such capitals, in terms of grades, and not getting into trouble, were necessary in order to "get on in life' (Katie). Whilst rejecting aspects of the school's expectations, all three showed that they understood the game in play, that they were required to accumulate the 'right' grades, and behave in the 'right' way in order to be 'successful'. The question remains whether it is because they were attaining at a level that was seen to be lower than the school expected, and the school represents a structured social space in which success is measured through the accumulation of certain capitals with value in the neoliberal policy complex, that led them to engage in low level disruptive behaviours as a means of alienating themselves from these processes or whether the very structures and processes within the school relating to target and ability setting served to marginalise the students which thus contributed to their positioning in response to localised behaviour policy. It could be argued that it is a combination of these positions, layered with the further complexity relating to how teachers subsequently perceived and treated them in the learning environment.

Ball *et al*. (2011, p. 11) argue that policies are "composites" of "regulations" and "principles", and the stories here illustrate that enactments of policies, such as those relating to behaviour and uniform, targets and ability setting, hold deep significance for young people in the way that they imagine they are positioned within the field of the school and thus how they may position-take as a result.

Such stories go beyond an analytical reading of policy-as-text or policy-as-discourse and require a discussion which takes into account both the voices of the young people themselves as well as the structures within the field of the school and the wider social, political and economic structures operating within the neoliberal policy

complex. So, whilst the composition of the textual policy indeed relates to a set of regulations and principles, they also represent the framework for the development of institutional structures that are explicitly left open for individual teacher and learning centre interpretation, which implicitly contributes to a logic of practice through which uneven or inconsistent enactments may take place, which may sometimes result in (unconsciously or consciously) classed (or gendered or raced) responses.

In a review of literature relating to effects of social mix in schools, Thrupp (1995) identified three discourses offered regarding how working class children may position or position-take within the schooling field. Firstly, Thrupp (1995) posited that Ball (1981) and Lacey (1970) in their ethnographies argued that students were marginalised or engaged with what the school was trying to do as a result of the sorting and selecting processes in place within the schools. Secondly, he posited that Willis (1977) argued that children from working class backgrounds often 'failed' because of cultural characteristics of the students themselves. And thirdly, Thrupp (1995) identified the position taken by Brown (1987) and Jones (1991) that the "majority of working class 'ordinary kids' fit into neither of these categories. Rather they comply with the school and go along with its processes for instrumental reasons: as a means to working class ends" (Thrupp, 1995, p. 198). I would argue that for students such as Ted, Katie and Paul, all three of these interpretations speak to how the students are positioned and position-take in response to a neoliberal policy complex, which when locally enacted, reveals how dominant discourses of academic performativity and economic productivity structure the logics of practice within the field of localised policy processes in the school, and are packaged as the 'means to the end' for all children within the schooling field.

The capitals at stake are aligned with the legitimated capitals as defined outside of the field of the school, symbolic capitals which have been embodied within the neoliberal policy complex as developed since 1988 and which strongly (re)produce middle class advantage in schooling processes (Ball, 2003; Exley, 2013; Gewirtz, 2001; Gillies, 2005; Reay, 2001, 2008; Vincent and Ball, 2007; Whitty, 2003). In such a policy complex, Kingswood has engaged in responding to the local context by constructing the school's development trajectory along lines which value academic attainment, as a means for economic productivity which they hope will legitimate, maintain and secure their place within the local education market in a seemingly affluent middle class market town.

Within this policy context Paul, Katie and Ted exhibit agency in how they position-take in response to localised policies, yet they also demonstrated feelings of marginalisation and a sense of injustice in how certain policies are structured in the way they perceive they are positioned within the field of the school. This injustice arguably may come from feeling dis-empowered within a system in which the students had not accumulated the right sort of symbolic capital, which in turn distanced them from the organisational and institutional purposes of the school as embodied within and legitimated by localised polices and processes reflective of the neoliberal doxa.

4.6 Summary

This chapter set out to explore how students at Kingswood Academy identified how and why they were positioned, and position-took, in response to localised policy processes relating to target and ability setting, and behaviour and uniform policies. Students are expected to engage with the logics of practice in the field of the school because the school has set itself up to compete within the schooling field by prioritising localised policy and processes in which academic performativity and economic productivity hold the symbolic capital necessary to 'get on' and be successful in playing the game.

The field of the school is defined by the capital at stake in line with the neoliberal policy complex as has been constructed by central government since 1988. The experiences shared by the students in relation to how they consider they are positioned or position-take in relation to ability and target setting policies, or behaviour and uniform policies, are important because not enough policy scholarship considers the voices of students in relation to such processes and practices. The findings suggest that some students are positioned by localised policy processes in such ways that illustrate the complexity of how practices are "produced in and by the encounter between habitus and its dispositions, on the one hand, and the constraints, demands, and opportunities of the social field or market to which the habitus is appropriate or within which the actor is moving, on the other" (Jenkins, 1992, p. 78). The field boundaries of the school are being adjusted within a 'contested terrain', as the neoliberal policy complex is extended and accelerated as new polices enter the field on a regular basis and this effects how both the school

develops and enacts localised policy processes, and how different students are positioned by such development and enactments.

The alternative spaces for the students to reject, resist or rearticulate the powerful discourses of performativity, productivity and regulation are limited; as the data indicates, there seemed to be very few alternatives to the symbolic capital at stake in the schooling field as defined by the neoliberal doxa. That these limitations are related to processes of misrecognition by a range of actors in the school will be considered in Chapter 7, once data from the teaching staff and the leadership have been explored in Chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter 5: Teachers' positioning and position-taking within localised policy processes

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the development of an 'institutional narrative' of Kingswood is produced by drawing upon data, theory and literature with regards to how teachers (with a wide range of roles and responsibilities within the hierarchy of the school) consider they are positioned and position-take in relation to a range of localised policy processes (Ball *et al*., 2012a, p. 23). The purpose of this is to illustrate how, within a rapidly reforming neoliberal policy complex, discourses of performativity, accountability and autonomy pervade both localised policy-making and teachers' positioning and position-taking as a result. Therefore, this chapter will provide analysis that contributes to addressing research questions 1 (*What is localised policymaking and how do agency and structure interplay within such processes?*) and 2 (*How do different actors within the school position themselves or consider they are positioned in relation to the development and enactment of localised policy processes*?), specifically from the perspective of the staff participants within this study.

In particular, the conversion to an academy in terms of the development of the 'Professional School' was discussed at length with most teachers in the study. The data illustrates that the professional cultures that have been developed at Kingswood, in part as a result of the way the school has been structured into a group of semi-autonomous learning centres, and the reported high levels of professional trust meted out across the school to teachers in relation to pedagogical practices, have contributed to a staff that talked about outwardly of supporting significant organisational restructuring. In line with the previous chapter and in order to try to make sense of the complexities of such positioning and position-taking, and the dynamic and shifting nature of policy processes within such a context, the social world of the school is understood in terms of a field, and the learning centres to which staff are associated as sub-fields, which form an important element of the

power relations within the school and as such the institutional narrative to which the positioning of these staff members contributes.

The following section outlines the logic of practice in the field with regards to teacher positionings in relation to localised policy developments. Through drawing a portrait of the organisational structures, and thus the sub-fields within Kingswood, this section illustrates how teachers are involved with policy developments at the school in order to identify how these processes are linked with localised professional cultures. The specificity of context is argued to play a significant role in how teachers are able to exercise 'licensed autonomy' within these sub-fields regarding the enactment of localised policy processes, despite having to operate within a national framework of performativity and accountability measures (Whitty, 2006, p. 2).

Building on from this, the chapter goes on to illustrate that despite the existence of such institutional spaces for the teachers to exercise licensed autonomy within the sub-fields of their learning centres, there also exists a tacit recognition from the participants that major organisational reform has come from the top down, specifically from the head teacher, in response to the national policy agenda in which 'successful' schools such as Kingswood are required to play the 'game' in order to maintain their symbolic positioning within the neoliberal policy complex.

In relation to this the data suggests that attached to the support for the conversion to academy status and the attendant development of the Professional School concept, there is evidence of "contingent pragmatism" (Moore, 2002, 2004) amongst members of staff which shows support for policy enactments which legitimate the school within the field of education more widely. Such positioning points to ways in which both 'structured structures' and 'structuring structures' interconnect to produce a set of social relations in which certain values and specific interests are supported as a result of the logic of the field in order to secure an advantageous position through the accumulation of capital (Grenfell, 2008). The collective (formal and outward) position of the staff at Kingswood thus reinforces the dominance of the neoliberal policy complex, in which the school has to ensure the accumulation of acknowledged capital in order not only to survive, but to thrive, within the quasi-market place.

5.2 Teachers, 'deliverology' and the national 'standards agenda'

The use of targets as part of the performativity framework linked to the standards agenda holds a significant amount of symbolic capital in the schooling field. In Chapter 4 the data illustrated that students communicate truths they understand about this, but this also had a significant impact on how teachers' professional work has developed over the last three decades, as the use of floor targets and data has embodied the centralising regulatory tactics of successive governments (Butt and Gunter, 2007).

The focus upon the development and delivery of policy technologies designed to strengthen accountability of teachers' and schools' work has contributed to a "low trust policy environment", which has resulted in teachers and schools focussing energy into regulatory performativity activities, which has led to a certain degree of de-professionalism amongst teachers as they increasingly use data to evidence successful 'delivery' of floor targets (Ball *et al*., 2011, p. 629). Teachers have been increasingly positioned within the schooling field as 'technicians' (Lieberman, 1992; Ball, 2003; Whitty, 2006; Coffield, 2012), deliverers of the national standards agenda through performativity mechanisms that are designed to establish a logic of practice in which efficiency, effectiveness and productivity are hallmarks of success in the classroom (Butt and Gunter, 2007; Fitzgerald, 2008; Gewirtz *et al*., 2009). Butt and Gunter (2007) argue that as the remodelling of the teacher workforce along such lines continued unabated, professional practice has been increasingly aligned with the "organisational requirements" of "deliverology", and distanced from the "nature of teaching and pedagogy" (p. 228). The terrain in which teachers teach has become data driven, with time taken to ensure that forms are filled and boxes are ticked, which illustrates how neoliberal influenced policy interventions have been instrumental in the re-allocation of values with regards to the purposes of education (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010).

This point will be picked up again in more detail in Chapter 7, in which a synthesis of the data collected in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 reveals how the purposes of education are being reconstructed at a local level in response to the rapidly reforming context of the neoliberal policy complex. What is important to note here is that Kingswood has developed a significant strand of their organisational purposes in response to the

standards and performativity agenda through the development of a "sophisticated" data and tracking system, aimed to measure student (teacher) performance (Gareth Abrahams, Deputy Head). During our second interview Gareth demonstrated the centrality of data as a means of monitoring the school's effectiveness in meeting floor targets within the field of the school:

> My experience actually in my previous job was actually if you provide people with easy access to quality data, because the vast majority of us are professionals and we want our kids to do well people just run with that data in various ways. (1:1, Gareth Abrahams, Deputy Head, 12 December 2011)

Gareth's position here is very clear: professionalism, which is linked to wanting the students to attain, must also be linked to easy access to quality data. One of Gareth's most predominant positions within the school is overseeing the data and tracking system, yet during the year of field work the development of localised policy in the area of data tracking had become so detailed and thus the amount of data being produced so unwieldy that:

> […] this year we have a new director of tracking intervention…cos we got to the stage where I can't monitor everything that's happening that should be happening because it's so sophisticated. (1:1, Gareth Abrahams, Deputy Head, 11 July 2012)

Gareth positions teachers' work as fundamentally linked to the development and 'effective' use of the localised data-tracking system and he highlighted the way in which such information was now being used at the school as a way of monitoring how effectively individual teachers and learning centres were using the system:

> The other big thing is the use of the data by learning centres. Last year, the beginning of last year, was the first time that learning centres had been provided with a detailed analysis of how their subjects are doing in terms of percentage A*-C, A*-G, what the vulnerable groups are doing and we've never had that depth of information. And the first time you get that of course it is very overwhelming so some have managed it better than others ... Despite the LAP analysis, or the LAP having been in place for probably approaching 9-10 years (it's before my time) we know and have known for some time that we have a problem with the quality of the data from some subject's areas and some teachers. It's very easy to go through it and go click, click, click and not give it the amount of thought that we're saying you should be giving. (1:1, Gareth Abrahams, Deputy Head, 12 December 2011)

Thus, the logic of practice in the field of the school aligns with the logic of practice as has been centrally developed within the schooling field as a result of the

neoliberal policy complex; targets and data embody the symbolic capital necessary for the school to accumulate to keep ahead in the game (Ozga, 2009).

This localised strategising was legitimated by Ofsted when in 2006 the inspectorate reported that data and assessment technologies in the school were weak; Gareth had been employed the previous year with a remit that was explicitly connected to improving and developing localised school policy processes around data tracking and intervention. As a result this investment of time was rewarded by the 2011 Ofsted inspection, which specifically praised the school's use and development of data-tracking and assessment technologies (Ofsted Report, 2011). In interviews, 18 out of 21 members of the teaching staff referred to data when discussing their pedagogical practices, and the following extract illustrates how the use of data was integral to many in their daily practices and interactions around the field of the school:

> Wherever a teacher emails me or mentions an incidence with a student or mention in passing that so and so has kind of gone off the boil a bit as you get all the time in conversations on the corridor, its being able to have conversations with individual teachers just saying can you make sure its logged on PARS? Can you give the achievement concern mark? Because I think we'd have a much clearer picture and more evidence to go on if every member of staff used it. I don't think it's every member of staff being lazy, it's just taking the time and the technology is relatively new to the school, so it's teachers getting in the habit of using it. (1:1, Charles Wicke, Head of Student Achievement, 8 May 2012)

The positioning of teachers within the discourse of performativity through the delivery of floor targets has become embodied into the professional practices of many of the teaching staff at Kingswood, to the extent that informal discussions regarding aspects of teaching and learning are regularly linked to the performativity mechanisms developed at the school. Charles Wickes demonstrates this by connecting the use of data on PARS as a means to supplying "evidence" to drive professional practice. Anthony Law illustrated this positionality with the following game analogy:

> [Football club name] have invested very heavily this year in data chips in players boots so that they know when they've made tackles, when they've made crosses, when they've done this, that and the next thing. And they would argue that if you look at their home record, i.e. when they are in their stadium and they can use the data, when they look at their home record for their results after half time, virtually every game they are losing before half term they then go on to win after half time, because they have enough rich data to be able to work out what to do and I think similarly in school for an

awful long period of time we have operated kind of data blind. We've not sat there and thought who is it we need to shift to …and how do we make those shifts? And it was one of the things under the last Labour government that, one of their major emphasises in the last 4 years was that kind of day-to-day data agenda. About tracking, tracking, tracking. And it was partly wanting to see a result from the sheer investment they were pooling in education, and it was partly because it was the right thing to do. You know, and they had the great big screens back at Milbank with every school plotted data wise and what was moving and FSM and EAL and everything else and that kind of real raw data tracking I think is crucial. (1:1, Anthony Law, Director of Learning Centre, 11 July 2012)

There is a narrative of "shared assumptions" running through both Anthony and Charles' accounts in which the "professional and pedagogic regulation" implicit within the performativity strand of the standards agenda is a necessary aspect of the schooling field (Ozga, 2009, p. 151). The impact of this has witnessed the development of a value consensus about educational goals amongst policy makers, and educators alike (Ozga, 2009, p. 153). Such position-taking shores up Ball *et al*.'s (2012b) argument that:

> The discourse of 'standards' works to articulate a particular version and vision of what schooling is and should be – more, higher, better! Such a discourse exists at an abstract level but it has the ability to arrange and rearrange, form and re-form, position and identify whatsoever and whomsoever exists within its field and it has a 'heavy and fearsome materiality' (Probyn 1993, 167) [...] This discourse is 'operationalised' – that is 'enacted' within institutions: as 'new relations between institutions, new procedures and so forth; "inculcated" as new ways of being – new identities; and indeed "materialised" as new ways of organising space and time' (Fairclough 2005, 2). (Ball *et al*., 2012b, p. 514)

The organisation of space and time at Kingswood has shown that whilst the 'inculcation' of performativity measures through the delivery of floor standards and the use of data is widespread amongst practitioners, social practices within the field of the school have also been developed which appear to position teachers as co-producers of localised policy processes as a means of ameliorating some of the aspects of the standards agenda that contribute to the de-professionalism of teaching. In order to understand how the teachers in the study were positioned and felt policy processes positioned them, it is necessary to situate the context in which their daily practices take place, to map the "objective structures of the relations between the positions occupied by the agents [and the] institutions who compete for the legitimate form of specific authority of which this field is the site" (Wacquant, 1989, p. 40).

5.3. School structures and policy processes

Ball *et al*. (2011, p. 625) argue that often work which sets out to analyse the 'genre' of policy interpretation does so by positioning actors, with the exception of school leaders, as equal participants within the policy process. Ball and colleagues (2011, 2012a) argue that such a reductive analysis ignores the spaces that are created within schools for differentiated policy responses by individuals and collectives, and as such, obscures or distorts how schools do policy, and specifically how different actors within schools are positioned and position themselves in response to such processes. Therefore, the rest of this chapter addresses some of these criticisms by illustrating and analysing both individual and collective position-taking in response to policy processes at the local level.

This is not to suggest that the accounts presented here are exhaustive, nor is it to suggest that the following examples reflect the positioning and position-taking proclivities of all the staff within the school. Rather, the chapter aims to highlight how the development, translation and enactments of policy processes within the school are differently imagined and articulated by different staff members, and thus to indicate the complex "webs of social relations and relations of power that produce and circumscribe policy and practices in schools" (Ball *et al*., 2012a, p. 43) and to highlight how such relations are both effected by professional cultures locally as well as products of the dominant discourses of performativity and accountability at a national level.

Teaching staff are each located within a learning centre at the school. There are ten learning centres in total, which cover all subject areas within the curriculum. Within each learning centre there is a Director, who has a dual role in being a part of the School Leadership Team (SLT), in which they also have a whole school responsibility, such as 'Teaching For Learning', 'Learning Development' or 'Personnel'. As well as these concomitant roles, the Directors also have a 60% teaching responsibility. The school have planned for this workload by investing in administrative support for these leaders, along with developing other areas, such as the Student Support Service and Heads of Student Achievement, which reduce the pressures of behaviour management and tracking and attainment and allows for these staff members to work with their learning centres to develop localised policy based upon classroom practice.

This structure is further supported by the high number of staff who hold dual roles, in that they may have a position at the learning centre level, such as Assistant Director of a learning centre, or Key Stage Lead within the learning centre, as well as a whole school responsibility, such as Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator, Literacy Co-ordinator or Head of Co-ordinated Learning. Through these structures teachers' roles in the development of policy are closely linked to their positions within their learning centres, which reflects an approach from the top of the school hierarchy that individuals will bring with them a range of experiences, expertise and positions that combined may contribute to the process of policy development by drawing on the realities of classroom practices, as well as strengthen the 'buy in' of certain policies by teachers through greater involvement with the process.

One of the Directors spoke of the schools approach as an explicit strategy that acknowledges the importance of linking policy with everyday practice:

> I think policy is best done through process and you have to have, as a person responsible, a vision as to what it is you want and that has to be a starting point for the group of relevant stakeholders where you can identify some core principles and purposes of what you want to achieve. You have to have a breadth of perspective about the means and you have to listen. The act of policy writing is quite dry, after that consultation…you then go through another phrase saying is this close to capturing what we felt and then suggestions, omissions and then publication and application. One thing I feel since I've moved over to leadership is that I hate policies to some extent. Policies that are, you open it up on a PDF and its 12 pages, it has to be 12 pages long because of the complexity of issues it covers but in the real world who is going to sit down and digest this document in a average school day and you have to have a compromise between usability, I think a policy should be used, it should contain detail but it's got to be off the shelf digestible, like an App. If it isn't instantly accessible it's not going to be fulfilling its purpose… a central school policy has to be a baseline, almost like a schema, but individual learning centres can then respond to and interpret it….in most cases there is the attempt to grant autonomy. You tread a fine line don't you, between draconian leadership, and a more kind of, collaborative approach that is prepared to accept and realise that there are potentially multiple ways to do something and stifling people into one mind set is reductive. (1:1, Kevin Todd, Director of Learning Centre, 22 May 2012)

In this extract from our interview, Kevin Todd points to the way in which learning centres are given autonomy in the development, interpretation, translation and enactment of whole school policy in recognition that each learning centre has a distinctive set of "subject cultures" (Spillane, Reiser and Reimer, 2002), which in turn relate to specific logics of practice within the classroom depending on the subject, the teacher, the students, the time of day, etc. This position acknowledges

that the sense-making process of policy development at the school level may differ considerably once the policy transfers to the learning centre level, and then again transfers down to the classroom level. This process is also reversed as the staff meet within their learning centres to feed back into the policy process by discussing their position in relation to whole school policy in order that such positions can be included within the drafting and re-drafting of textual policy, as Anthony Law explained:

> There's a context at times and a difference at times and that is inevitable in any large organisation in which you are creating policy and making decisions. In terms of us internally I would hope that the vast amount policies come through discussion at learning centre meetings, that then informs the management of that particular team that filters through to me that we write into policy and I would like we have an open relationship and they're tell me when we disagree and they think we are going down the wrong path…you build that attitude into the way that everybody is…There are a lot of things about it that are really quite good and one of the things that is quite good is most leadership teams have lost the connection with the learning centres. And learning centres fundamentally are the engine rooms of school improvement, heads of departments are the engine rooms and what this leadership style does is retains the heads of departments very closely linked to their directors and their directors have a very real departmental ownership and therefore the core of departments is not lost at senior management level and that is very powerful. (1:1, Anthony Law, Director of Learning Centre, 11 July 2012)

Here, Anthony Law sets out what I heard from all five of the Directors that I interviewed: that the structures that had been developed in relation to the operational management of each of the learning centres as semi-autonomous sub-fields within the school contributed to the building of professional cultures which were aimed at harnessing the expertise of the teaching staff in the development of policies, and that the attendant autonomy was viewed as an essential characteristic within this process. Terry Landen, another Director of a learning centre echoed this position in relation to teacher positioning within the development of teaching and learning policies:

> Teaching and Learning was a funny one because it was really [the head teacher's] baby…he always gets involved in it very deeply…he openly admits that…and so I think with the Teaching and Learning in a whole school direction something becomes much more centralised and disseminated across, whereas the way the school is set up it's not – so it comes upward through the learning centre rather than top down. So I think in terms of Teaching and Learning you're still going to get very different approaches and that's how [the head teacher] wants it. So, we've got polices, but they're perhaps not dictatorial. So I think we have very clear Teaching and Learning policies and Assessment For Learning policies, and, approaches to lesson

planning. How well utilised, they are adhered to by the different learning centres I'm not sure. They are there but it's not centralised and I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing. I've had a big impact in making sure that they are all developed and there…but I think the … performance management policy I am developing will be much more disseminated across the school and an expectation that you complete the documentation and follow a process of performance management but it's not the case in Teaching and Learning, it's much more up to the individual learning centre to interpret how they want to… because clearly there are different skills and approaches to Teaching and Learning which need developing in different LC's. (1:1, Terry Landen, Director of Learning Centre, 8 May 2012)

In this sense the learning centre as a sub-field with its own and specific logics of practice form a significant aspect of the power relations within the school. Teachers and teachers' work are positioned as central in the development of policy processes relating to aspects of teaching and learning in the broadest sense, whilst simultaneously the expectation at the centre is that teachers work to deliver the standards agenda through the use of targets and data.

What is particularly striking in the data used thus far, with regards to the delivering of the standards agenda through the production of data, and the way in which these staff members have talked about policy processes, is the absence in their accounts of policy which relate directly to the students and student engagement in the processes of teaching and learning. Policy work is positioned as a banal but necessary activity, which whilst on the one hand is deeply associative to the work done in classrooms, is on the other hand also greatly disconnected from it. There is in these accounts little questioning about the purposes of such activities for the students' educational experiences; in this sense the neoliberal doxa has effectively been incorporated into the logics of practice and the professional habitus of those working within the field of the school, whereby shared assumptions have determined the "limits of the doable and the thinkable" (Maton, 2008, p. 59).

It becomes not only necessary but also "profitable" for teachers and school leaders to reveal a "habitus objectively fitted to the objective structures" of their daily work (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 214).   This point will be returned to in Chapter 7 in more detail. The next section identifies how teachers describe how they perceive the 'objective structures' of the school position staff, where professional autonomy, ownership and trust were cited time and time again as distinctive features within the field of the school. Such position-taking reveals how effectively the localised structuring of policy processes has been in incorporating the standards agenda into the logics of practice whilst developing professional cultures that have helped to ameliorate

against some of the more pernicious effects of such regulatory mechanisms (Blackmore, 2010; Gunter and Thomson, 2009; Ball *et al.*, 2012a, 2012b).

5.3.1 School structures and policy processes: Teacher positioning

When asked about the structural organisation of the school in terms of staff roles and responsibilities, 17 out of the 21 teaching staff interviewed related the organisational structure of dual responsibility and learning centre autonomy to an explicit attempt by the head teacher to ensure staff consider they have a sense of ownership regarding policy processes. For example, Kitty Stokes, Head of Combined Subjects within one learning centre, explained:

> I think from speaking to [the head teacher], one of the things that he said was he thinks it's really important that people feel a sense of responsibility of what they are doing, that they have ownership over things and can make decisions and I think that's why I think it's a positive thing and I think the school want people to take responsibility to actually feel that they are involved in what they are doing and have some impact on what's happening in school, in the learning centre, in the classroom, so I think that's really where its coming from. (1:1, Kitty Stokes, Head of Combined Subjects, 27 February 2012)

Another staff member, Ron, who is also Head of Combined Subjects within a learning centre, echoed Kitty's position, and indicated that from his point of view the leadership team explicitly looked for candidates at interview who would be willing to take on additional responsibilities at both a learning centre and whole school level:

> I think that's one of those things, this is a guess, that [the head teacher] might look for when they interview a group of candidates who will be autonomous and independent, and they like to spread the responsibility for the school across as many staff as possible. If you look at the responsibility of staff within each faculty, there are many people with things they are in charge of outside of their subject area, either pastoral, or cross curricular. I think that's fantastic and I think that definitely means there is a sense of autonomy within, or at least a massive sense of trust in the staff that they choose to employ. (1:1, Ron Taylor, Head of Combined Subjects, 19 April 2012)

Kathleen O'Hare, Assistant Director of a learning centre, also spoke about how her role within the learning centre had developed along lines in which her professional capacities to develop teaching and learning through a variety of policy processes and technologies had been supported by the head teacher:

> I was never really questioned in a negative way as to what I was doing and I have been able to implement strategies and policies as I see fit, and when I discovered a new resource rather than say one [the head teacher] had invested a lot of money in, I asked for a meeting and he didn't question my decisions. And recently he has been doing some observations and monitoring and evaluating of observations and he asked me if I would be interested in doing that with him, so we did some joint observations together and again he said you can choose what the lesson goes down as, you are the expert, so that's from the very top. So he gives that professional respect to you and I feel the same with our department structure as well, I mean I was only an NQT really when I got my first promotion to responsibility and I was never questioned with what I did. They put the trust in and they believed I could do it. (1:1, Kathleen O'Hare, Assistant Director, Subject, 16 May 2012)

Graham Saunders was one of three staff interviewed who specifically commented upon the institutional values of the school through which teachers are positioned with high levels of trust, within a framework of open communication across hierarchies:

> […] I was also shocked at the level of information we get as staff from senior teachers in staff meetings. Because I know people kind of complain that we get so much information but at my other school we weren't privy to that and I am surprised the way staff can have dialogue with senior teachers in the way that they do, it's very informal and you can say exactly how you feel and then the senior teachers, if you are saying something you shouldn't be saying, they are very empathetic with that and they understand where that's coming from and I didn't get that from my previous school…it was very tightly controlled and regulated. I'm much happier here! (1:1, Graham Saunders, Head of Subject, 1 June 2012)

These examples illustrate that although each teacher took different positions regarding aspects of their role within the policy process at different points throughout their interviews, there was a strong sense that the structural organisation of the school had been developed from the top to ensure that staff experienced responsibilities from both a learning centre perspective and a whole school perspective. 12 members of staff who were interviewed linked high levels of trust to greater involvement and ownership within policy processes, by associating everyday professional challenges and experiences within such roles to the development of policy. Thus, the positioning of staff within the process of policy development was spoken of in a positive light by 18 of the 21 staff interviewed, and was seen by the following participants to reflect the role of teacher agency within the structural organisation of policy development at both the whole school and learning centre levels:

I worked with the inclusion policy when it was first bought out, we have an award for inclusion, I worked with that one. AFL I did quite a lot of work on and I've just put myself into the behaviour working group.

Why behaviour?

I think it's an interesting one to look at and develop and I have my own theories, like I say about working with them from 7 and 8, so I do have my own bits and pieces and I'd like to know whether or not, I am right in my thinking so, pastoral is one of the things I like working with as well as the academic side of [subject] … There was another one I just thought, a while ago, they were looking at lesson plans and how to structure them and I was part of a working group working with different things and they did listen to everything we said and adjust and amend and things like that so I think it genuinely is that way. I think we have a voice, we've always had a voice as a staff. (1:1, Patricia Turner, Subject Teacher, 16 May 2012)

My experience with the homework policy was that it was open to individual learning centres to decide on the best way forward, using the guidelines of the policy, so it was tailored by each individual learning centre. So for example, there is a whole school, I think it is policy, that we set work on the VLE, actually state what the homework is on the VLE, however in [subject] we don't necessarily do that in KS4/5 because we feel we have enough coverage of homework already. So we don't actually follow the policy as such and that is fine. (1:1, Donald Northold, Head of Subject, 1 February 2012).

What was noticeable in the interviews was that many of the staff members discussed individual involvement with the development of whole school initiatives, rather than more specific policy enactments that occur on a day-to-day basis at the classroom level. It often seemed like there was a disconnect between the development, interpretation and translation of policy-as-text which occurs away from the classroom, in the context of the learning centre meetings and the daily social practices that the teachers engaged with through their pedagogy.

This position-taking in relation to policy-as-text, as opposed to the myriad of alternative guises policies take in practice, was a particularly interesting facet of how teachers may view the process of policy in relation to their professional practice. So, as Lingard and Hardy (2008, pp. 65-66) point out, there exists a space between the logics of practice that are at play in the production of policy as text as influenced by the "bureaucratic state field" and the logics of practice in the classroom. Although the leadership team at Kingswood has developed a structural organisation in which the process of policy development involves the input of teaching staff in order to link

policy to everyday classroom practices, the data suggests that teachers appear to view the processes of development and enactment of practices differentially.

In this sense the logics of practice at play within the field reveal that teachers' positioning and position-taking in response to localised policy-making are as a result of what Bourdieu (1992, p. 53) terms the "structured structures" that have contributed to the shaping of teacher disposition in which involvement with policy development was cited as a central facet of teachers' work at the whole school level. The involvement in such policy work is reflective of the structured structures of the field in which "autonomy", "trust" and "ownership" were revealed as explicit strategies for practice, as developed by the head teacher specifically and the leadership team more generally. Thus, whilst teachers talked of their involvement in the development of policy processes as "optional", there were no teachers in the study who had not been or were not currently involved with some form of policy work at a whole school level. The following two teachers described similar position-taking in relation to the specific logics of practice regarding policy development work:

> The opportunity is open to anyone who wants to do it. Which I think is a better way of doing things, because then obviously rather than people being told they have to do it, if you want to then you are going to buy into it a little bit more, which will then in turn I think may it easier to sell to other people. (1:1, Andrew Maxwell, Subject Teacher, 10 May 2012)

And:

> The reasons I think it is collaborative is that staff tend to be invited to take part in policy development activities so there is the option if you want to get involved in some sort of policy change or policy developments, you can opt in and do it, the reason I say no, would be obviously if you've not opted in then you are kind of its pushed onto you, but saying that you have been given the opportunity to have an influence.
>
> *So is there quite a lot of expectation on the staff to just get involved?*
>
> I don't think there's, I don't think, my opinion is that it's not frowned upon if you don't get involved at the policy level of development work because I think the understanding is that a lot of staff at different times of the year have different commitments and priorities, but what the school does that is good is that it gives staff, if they are working on something like an MA like I am at the moment, there's the opportunity there to get involved in whole school projects or policy developments, so the opportunities are there, and my impression is that it's up to the staff, if they want participate. (1:1, Donald Northold, Head of Subject, 29 May 2012)

The strategising effects that are built into the 'structured structures' within the field combine to produce a set of social relations in which teachers' work is positioned as optional yet central to the policy process. The "buy in" is achieved through the development of professional cultures at the school that acknowledges the professionalism of staff, which appears to work as staff position themselves as self-interested in the processes of policy development. It is possible that the power relations work in such a way within this logic of practice that teachers do feel compelled to respond to the positioning of their professional dispositions in these terms, as Amanda Greene, one of the Directors, said to me, "we get very little negativity. It's wonderful to see the staff response to negativity. If you get somebody who is not of the culture, negativity does not go down well at all".

The "institutional narrative" that is being developed thus far is one that indicates staff are positioned within the policy process as bringing within them a set of skills and dispositions that can be used constructively within the process of localised policy-making (Braun *et al*., 2011, p. 598). These dispositions are structured within a professional culture which places emphasis upon the strategising notions of autonomy, trust and ownership as central aspects of teachers' work, which in turn contributes to the development of a set of sub-fields in which teachers' work is intensified by their adoption of multiple roles and responsibilities. Teachers' position-taking in response to discussions of policy processes was to expose that such strategies appeared to highlight a gap within the institutional spaces between involvement in policy work, as text, and day to day pedagogical practices, even though the structural organisation and teachers' work within the policy process was supposed to be predicated on the importance of the relationship between classroom practices and policy development.

What is important to note here is that whilst the professional cultures described above occurred as a result of the specificity of the context at Kingswood, such cultures are also affected and indeed shaped by external influences. The following section highlights the influence of the performativity framework on how teachers position-took and considered they were positioned in relation to the externally determined policy of measuring schools on the basis of the English Baccalaureate, a standardised measurement of achievement which entered the field of education policy in August 2011, and which had a significant impact upon professional cultures at the school.

5.4 Positionality and performativity

Gewirtz (2002) argues that whilst teachers' work is controlled and constrained by externally determined structures that are increasingly linked to the performativity and accountability frameworks imposed by the neoliberal policy complex, there is space within schools for greater flexibility for teachers to be involved in aspects of policy which promote professional capacity through more democratic approaches, which in turn support autonomous practices. In particular, Gewirtz (2002, p. 73) notes that such practices may occur in schools with a "strong market position".

Kingswood High School and latterly Academy has a record of achieving well in relation to the mechanisms used to measure success within the market through both the standards agenda (league tables and performance in the national testing regimes) and accountability structures (rating by Ofsted). Yet, whilst the school enjoys a relatively "strong market position", there are some policies that carry with them species of capital that can be viewed at the local level as a necessity in contributing to the continued and relatively privileged position of the school within the schooling field.

During the year of data collection the Conservative-led Coalition government introduced the 'English Baccalaureate', an additional measure that was to be included within the national league tables, in which the percentage of students achieving five A*-C grades in English, maths, science, a language and a humanities subject (specifically history or geography) was to be published as part of the standards and accountability agenda. Although a relatively new policy to enter the field, the English Baccalaureate as a performativity measure attracted criticism from schools that claimed the measure appeared to legitimate an increasingly academic curriculum model, which would further contribute to the existing inequalities within the system of hierarchising schools positions with little consideration of the specificity of contextual factors and with what may be best for their pupils:

> The second and third [measure] will reflect the weight attached to EBacc subjects, leading to a possible new set of perverse incentives for schools to change the curriculum in favour of what is best for their public image, rather than their pupils. (Miller, 2013, unpaged)

In order to maintain a legitimated position within the field of educational policy, the school took seriously this new performativity measure. Kingswood's market position, whilst relatively strong in terms of its accumulation of symbolic capital as measured by the performativity and accountability frameworks, was not viewed as stable in terms of being able to continue to attract enough students in order to keep all facets of the provision running (particular concerns relating to student numbers in the sixth form were mentioned by a number of the School Leadership Team).

Converting to an academy and introducing the 'Professional School' concept was part of the strategising to accumulate symbolic capital in order to maintain a competitive market position, and these organisational reforms will be discussed in more detail below. What is relevant here is that the school engaged swiftly and directly with the English Baccalaureate by reforming curricula choices for Year 9 students for the start of the academic year after the new measure was announced. The deputy head explained the school's response as such:

> […] I think the curriculum here was absolutely bang on. It was excellent. And we sat down, a year and a half ago and ripped it to shreds, because when they introduced the 5 A*-C's threshold, the English Bacc, that's what employers and universities and further education places were looking at. We just didn't know where it was going at all, so to not give the advice, is neglectful, but what we hadn't thought…it actually upset me, it's the curriculum from 30 years ago. That doesn't recognise that we've moved on, doesn't recognise that there are a huge proportion of students who putting them into that very strait-jacket is no good. (1:1, Gareth Abrahams, Deputy Head, 11 July 2012)

Despite significant reservations from some staff members regarding how the new measure would affect student engagement, the school restricted the choice agenda in order to encourage students to take up the subjects that were included in the English Baccalaureate performativity measure. However, during the year of data collection, I also heard from a range of teachers who considered that this new performativity measure was having a negative impact on how they felt their work and their subjects were being positioned, which was effecting the social relations across the learning centres within the school.

Whereas teachers had talked positively of the ways in which localised policy-making was developed along lines which positioned teachers in such a way as to legitimate autonomy, trust and ownership within policy processes, the stories told in relation to the impact of the English Baccalaureate upon the logics of practice of teachers'

work of those outside of the English Baccalaureate subject areas identified the restrictive and thus frustrating nature of the policy. Kitty Stokes, who specialises in a subject not included in the English Baccalaureate, summed up how she felt the adoption and translation of the policy into a restricted choice agenda for students, had subsequently positioned staff:

> [...] and particularly people that aren't in National Curriculum subjects, that has really, or core curriculum subjects I should say, that has really wound up a lot of people. Because now we are in competition with each other, and that's a negative thing to be in so people in their, sort of say don't do that subject its rubbish, do my subject and we are all sort of competing against each other… its really, really tough and you do feel quite sort of rejected I think that your subject is somehow not important. (1:1, Kitty Stokes, Head of Combined Subjects, 21 May 2012)

Kitty's positioning reflects Gewirtz's (2002) point that teachers' work is often constrained and controlled by externally determined structures, which, as Gewirtz (2002) argues, are regularly linked to the performativity framework. With regards to this centrally determined, but locally implemented, policy, it is evident that the school considers the accumulation of the required symbolic capital made available through the policy was significant enough to implement a reformed curriculum structure, which would contribute to shifting the logics of practice away from a personalised and flexible choice agenda developed in relation to the Specialist School status in 2002 to a far more narrow and restrictive option pool.

Whilst some staff, such as Kitty, reflected on the changing logics of practice in terms of the marginalisation of some subject teachers' work, there was concern expressed regarding the impact that the narrowing of the choice agenda available to students at GCSE would have on levels of engagement:

> I think the next couple of years could be really really tough for the current Year 9 going through because they are just not going to have the options in September that are going to engage them, unless teachers are going to work miracles in the classroom there are going to be a fair number of kids that are going to dis-apply from subjects because they can't cope and their behaviour is disrupting lessons and we can write that down now, because it's going to happen. (1:1, Tom Henderson, Head of Pastoral Service, Year Groups, 11 May 2012)

Thus, whilst the neoliberal policy complex has created a set of conditions in which schools are expected to compete with one another, policies have also been introduced in which the logics of practice at the local level are being increasingly

defined by competition between the sub-fields of different subject areas. Whilst certain policies are developed collaboratively on the local level as part of a professional culture that prioritises autonomy, trust and ownership, there co-exists the translation of externally developed policy, which appears to reduce teachers' professional capacities for practice at both the classroom (in terms of having less exposure to teaching their subjects at a more advanced level) and whole school level (in terms of having to compete with colleagues to gain students into their subject area). As discussed above, the logics of practice of teachers' work is disconnected from the logics of practice of policy production. Lingard argues that:

> […] the logics of practice of the field of policy production are disjunctive with the logics of practice of teachers' work. The former logics are imperialistic in their claim to universal application. Indeed Bourdieu (1998b: 59) saw the state as the field with the 'monopoly of the universal', which is evident in the logic of policy. However, teacher practice, pedagogy, is local, situated, specific and contingent (Coburn and Stein: 2006), in stark contrast to the universalistic claims of policy. Good pedagogies are tailored to the specificities of the students in a specific class and shaped by nuanced professional readings of these specificities. (Lingard, 2009, p. 82)

That the pedagogical process is, as Lingard (2009) argues, linked to a situated specificity which reflects the dynamism involved in teachers' day to day work, is at odds with the position that much policy production is developed to be universalistic in content and application. The symbolic power that policies produced to have universal application acquire, such as those produced within the performativity and standards framework, have such a pervasive effect upon the logics of practice at the local level, that despite reservation regarding the value such policies bring with them, Kingswood conferred a sense of legitimacy because of the accumulation of capital that the following of such universalistic policy confers upon schools. As Ball *et al*. (2012a) point out, there is often the potential for dissonances between embedded institutional values and national policy trends (p. 27). This is because, as one teacher concisely said:

> […] when it comes down to it, we are in the business of exams at the end of it, GCSEs and that's what we are measured on and I don't think it's completely superficial to tell the kids, coach them, teach them how to learn for an exam if that's the game we have to play and its going to serve them and us so that's ok…But I thinks there's a disconnect between the things that we do, the management things that we do and the actual thinking about teaching and learning. (1:1, Sam Murray, Subject Teacher and Key Stage Co-ordinator, 13 June 2012)

Whilst the data suggested that teachers' work at Kingswood took place within a localised logics of practice that was determined to a large extent upon the development of localised professional cultures that prioritised autonomy, trust and ownership, this was interrupted and to some extent, re-articulated, by the school's decision to undertake curriculum reforms that responded to an externally determined policy which marginalised the professional values and purposes of some staff (Gunter and Forrester, 2010).

This example highlights the dominance of the neoliberal policy complex on localised policy-making processes, the fact that whilst some staff expressed frustration, there also permeated a sense of reluctant acceptance that policies such as the English Baccalaureate will pervade the logics of practice because, as Sam Murray pointed out, schools are in the business of exams, grades and results. This is the game teachers and schools are expected to play and so the expectation that their work will be interrupted and indeed shaped by polices produced that reinforce the principles of performativity and competition behind the game do not come as a surprise.

Instead, there appears that there is a sense of "contingent pragmatism" that pervades the accounts of position-taking in response to localised policy processes, which are deemed necessary to get on with the game (Moore, 2004). Whilst the school's position-taking in response to the English Baccalaureate is one example of how the localised logics of practice are affected by the dominant and legitimating discourses of the neoliberal policy complex, the following section will further highlight how the development of the professional cultures at Kingswood, combined with external policy demands have produced a situated context in which staff members position-take in response to the significant structural reforms that were taking place as a result of the Academies Act 2010.

5.5 Positionality and the Professional School concept

Kingswood High School converted to an academy in April 2012, during the year of the ethnographic fieldwork. The decision-making process for conversion will form a significant aspect of Chapter 6; what needs to be explored here is the way in which staff positioned themselves in relation to the development of the 'Professional School' concept, which was designed in parallel with the application for academy conversion.

The aim of this section of the chapter is to briefly outline how teachers conceptualised the 'Professional School' in order to paint a portrait of the structural and organisational changes that were in the process of taking place, ready for September 2012. From this the chapter will explore how staff positioned their professional subjectivities in relation to the localised translation of the academies policy and to show how such position-taking relates to and is constrained by both the economic and political fields. The purpose of this is to illustrate the power of the neoliberal doxa in the re-shaping and re-articulating of the purposes of schooling more generally and the logics of practice of teachers' work more locally.

When asked about the Professional School concept, the overwhelming majority of staff revealed support for the notion of increasing student access to the teaching of explicit employability skills, although as the concept was still being developed there was some uncertainty and confusion surrounding what exactly the concept entailed, from every single teacher I interviewed. The following four examples give a flavour of the types of answers garnered in response to my request for the teachers to explain what the structure of the Professional School was going to look like:

> I probably couldn't. I am probably very naïve to it but I do know a little bit about the free schools and the way in which the curriculum can be structured and that you are not as tied in what you are doing and I know we tried that on different things but I think the idea of having work skills in can only be a positive thing. (1:1, Kathleen O'Hare, Assistant Director, Subject, 16 May 2012)

> I think it sounds a bit like the school is turning into a 14-19 college…and I think that's a good thing, with the intake that we've got having links to other businesses and things like that could actually be quite beneficial to certain types of kids. (1:1, Andrew Maxwell, Subject Teacher, 9 May 2012)

> *Do you know when they are planning on implementing it?*

> September 2012 – we start teaching [names corporate consulting firm] employability skills in September – so all of Year 9, I think there's an opt in for Year 10, I'm not sure how that's being time tabled, Year 12 as well as – I think it's being put across as a strongly recommended optional extra. So that's from this September, but I don't really know the details. (1:1, Charles Wickes, Head of Combined Subjects and Head of Student Achievement, Year Group, 6 February 2012)

> I think you've either got to be a bit lazy or a bit ignorant to not, we've had enough communication through staff meetings or via email to at least understand what he has wanted from us as a school, but having said that it's still slightly difficult to get your head around and a clear vision. If a member

of my family asked me, ok, tell me come September what is the clear vision, it would take me a couple of minutes to decide and then suggest, it's not a tip of the tongue this is what now we will do. I think in a year or 18 months, where we are slowly introducing to the kids maybe that's what's happening with us, I mean we are all professional so…it's one of its own isn't it? it's going to be a pilot and that's exciting to be part of. (1:1, Ron Taylor, Head of Department, 19 April 2012)

Although the teaching staff said they had been kept informed of the developments regarding both the academy conversion and then the Professional School concept, the lack of clarity surrounding the idea indicated that the decision-making and subsequent planning were part of a top down process being led by the head teacher, who had positioned the concept in the context of the acceleration of the academies programme, and the potential freedoms that could be seen as concomitant to the reform programme:

I think all staff were involved, in terms of being informed of what was happening, I think I see it as a bit of an inevitably. I think the government's agenda is that all schools will eventually be academies, and [the head teacher] stood up in one meeting and said actually we have the opportunity to mould and shape what this academy looks like *or we can sit back and wait for the point when everyone else has done it*. (1:1, Tom Henderson, Head of Pastoral Service, Year Groups, 11 May 2012)

Interestingly, whilst the staff reported that the school structure contributed to the development of a professional culture in which they considered they were positioned with autonomy, trust and ownership and which contributed to a sense of agency in the development of localised policy processes relating to the day to day practices of teaching and learning, in relation to this significant reform process, which was also likely to have a significant impact upon their professional practices, the development of the Professional School as "the right thing to do" (Gareth Abrahams, Deputy Head) reflected a pervasive position taken up by all but one of the teachers in the research, despite having had little agency in the decision-making process.

This point will be returned to; however, what is relevant here is that most of the staff (with one exception) in their initial responses to my request to explain the Professional School appeared to support the concept despite having uncertain information as to what it actually may mean for their day to day professional practices. It appeared that the strength, for the majority of staff, lay in the idea that young people were leaving school ill equipped for the world of work, and that as educators there was an implicit responsibility for the school to ensure that the students received a coherent curriculum in which employability skills were thus

explicitly addressed. Anthony Law, one of the Directors of a learning centre, positioned the development of the policy as such:

> As you know, we're moving down the Professional School route and that for me it's kind of capturing the zeitgeist of where we are at the moment as a country, even Panorama [BBC investigative documentary series] this very week was talking about kids that are leaving school without qualifications, without the idea of how to write a CV, without any concept of how to apply for a job. I mean it's right on the cusp of the popular consciousness of where education should be going. (1:1, Anthony Law, Director of Learning Centre, 11 July 2012)

It appeared that the concept of students needing to be better taught how to compete in the marketplace was at the heart of what the Professional School was about, and this was linked by the deputy head to the wider social and economic conditions into which school leavers were emerging:

> But you do have to question, and *it's not a piece of work that we're going to do at the moment*, but you have to question the world in which we appear to be going into. With the size of kind of fees of universities and so on, whether education is really the answer, you have to ask those questions. I think a lot of us are shying away from those at the moment. Cos when you are in this job that's a very difficult question to be asking. What's the purpose of it at the end of the day? [The head teacher] thinks things are going to go around employers, big employers, taking people on at 18 and taking them through a training programme that will include a degree of university standard where that's appropriate, but at the moment there's a huge vacuum. (1:1, Gareth Abrahams, Deputy Head, 12 December 2011)

The positioning of the Professional School concept in terms of a neoliberal doxa, in which the purposes of schooling are tightly associated with economic productivity as defined by students being able to successfully enter into the labour market, was an assumptive position that was adopted by all of the teachers. In these responses there appeared to be a re-articulation of the values informing the logics of practice of what the school was for. Even though Gareth Abrahams acknowledged that there are perhaps bigger questions to be asked in relation to the ideology behind the concept, he also pointed out there was not the institutional or philosophical space to address these issues in the here and now of localised policy development.

Alongside the power of the neoliberal discourses working within the parameters of a performativity culture which positions accountability and standards (regulation and competition) as legitimate, the dimension of employability as a stated aim within these frameworks was emerging from the teachers' accounts. The symbolic capital

of grades as seen as a necessary accumulator for success was being redefined to include further qualifications which would set about positioning children at Kingswood Academy as being in a better position to compete within the labour market, to have "one leg up over the competition" (1:1, Gareth Abrahams, Deputy Head, 12 December 2011).

As Kevin Todd, director of a learning centre and the member of the School Leadership Team most heavily involved in the conceptualisation of the Professional School, said to me, the school is operating in a quasi-market place in which certain types of provision are more successful in securing a better place in the hierarchy of the labour market, and it is this inequality that Kingswood is attempting to address:

> And to be very contemporary on the transcript tape, it's no accident that you encapsulate what Michael Gove was saying at the end of last week in terms of the domination of society by the 7% of kids who go to private school, what is the mystique, what is the x factor that those schools have, some is about the established class system and connections and who you know, but those schools teach kids how to succeed, they are very skilled at building self-esteem. Depending on where you sit you could view that as arrogant. We are not looking, certainly with the Professional School to produce quasi-private school people but it does go down to the brute level of self-confidence, and self-esteem. (1:1, Kevin Todd, Director of Learning Centre, 30 May 2012)

The framing of the Professional School as providing students at Kingswood with a curriculum that addresses a perceived failure within the state system against the perceived successes of the independent school system is done so by the School Leadership Team within a discourse of competitive advantage. The emulation of the provision offered by independent schools in England is deeply embedded within the accounts provided by Kevin Todd, the member of staff most involved in the development of the concept and the head teacher David Toye, who had designed and developed the initial concept:

> […] if the kids understand the how to succeed in business they will have every advantage that private school kids have, because that's what they do with their kids, they train their kids to be successful in business by doing things with them to give them the skills they need. Now that empowers kids to be able to work the system, it doesn't make them subservient drones, quite the opposite….I think private schools have always developed, consciously developed, employability skills, they don't call them that. (1:1, David Toye, Head Teacher, 29 May 2012)

Whilst the enactment of the concept of the Professional School remained unclear to the teaching staff, there was a strong and clear message emanating from the two

members of the leadership team who were developing the concept and organising the re-structuring of the curriculum as to the ethos behind the idea. The following section explores further how teachers positioned their professional and personal responses to the ideology behind the concept. These accounts illuminate how different teachers articulated support, and acceptance for the need for explicit employability skills within the curriculum as a form of symbolic capital transferrable to a competitive employment marketplace, illustrating the strength of the neoliberal doxa in the re-articulation of the purposes of education.

5.6 Personal position taking and the neoliberal doxa

As discussed above, all but one of the teachers I interviewed expressed support for the concept of the Professional School; what I heard from the majority of staff members was a shared feeling of inevitability with regards to the conversion to academy status, and that the Professional School concept added a dimension to the conversion which was tangible in its explicit direction of encompassing employability skills into the curriculum. As Mary Child, an NQT, said to me:

> In terms of the conversion to an academy, I think it was kind of inevitable given the government's situation and the government's attitudes to schools that aren't academies, their reluctance to co-operate with them. I think the issue that concerns me more is the conversion to becoming a Professional School…at the end of the day an academy has not changed, so far, very much about the way in which the school is run. But I think the ethos behind the Professional School has a real strength but I am just not sure if it will happen, if what the aims of the Professional School will be realised. (1:1, Mary Child, NQT Subject Teacher, 9 May 2012)

Mary was not alone in displaying confidence in the *ethos* behind the Professional School concept whilst also expressing concern regarding the actualisation of how it would be realised; as Vince Cushing, one of the School Leadership Team also posited:

> Philosophically it makes complete sense if you sit and look at it on paper, as a concept, I think it's brilliant. I make no bones about it, there's sometimes that difference between seeing it on paper and how it becomes a reality. We have to make sure that we match those two up, but on paper you can't sit there and disagree with what in principal we are trying to do. What we are trying to get in terms of young people seeing their way through making rational sense of what they are doing now in terms of what they are going to be doing and what the potential is for their continued development as they go into the workplace as well. So I wouldn't question that, it's the reality of it that sometimes difficult to. (1:1, Vince Cushing, Director of Learning Centre, 15 May 2012)

Vince's position-taking with regards to the strength behind the idea, the 'ethos', as Mary described it, was shared amongst all but one of the teachers I spoke to. It was noticeable how, like Vince, staff positioned the curricular re-structuring as making "complete sense", or "difficult to argue against" (Ron Taylor). The "buy in" to David's "vision" (Ron Taylor) was significant within the staff accounts. As with Mary, the academy conversion was positioned as inevitable, with one member of staff telling me that this was how they were "sold" that vision by David at a whole staff meeting regarding the conversion and the development of the Professional School concept:

> The way that David sold it was looking at the admin process now school would get much smaller if we didn't convert to academy status and become a Professional School. And there may be some job losses and all the rest of it, we might shrink. But also we have got competition with all the other academies that are local so just in keeping up with the times really and also the DFE are refusing to deal with any schools that don't convert, so we were told really it wasn't an option. I wasn't asked to tick a box to say yes or no, but there was a lot of discussion. (1:1, Katherine Lock, Assistant Director, Learning Centre, 24 May 2012)

This data helps to make sense of the overwhelming support for the localised interpretation of the Academies Act from staff, despite a number of expressions of uncertainty regarding how such a "vision" would be realised in practice. It is possible to posit that the successful "buy in" from the staff is linked to the explicit strategising of David in terms of packaging and presenting the idea as turning something that was inevitable (conversion to an academy) into something exciting, different, innovative. How this strategising from David was so successful will be considered in more detail in Chapter 6 in an analysis of his professional habitus with regards to his position-taking to localised interpretations of policy; what is of note here is that the majority of his staff had bought into his vision, and were philosophically supportive of the idea without having much understanding of what it actually entailed and how it would be realised in practice. This is a key point, because if, as some members of staff said to me, the Professional School concept was a "model" that could be "rolled out nationally" (Adam Lee, Head of Student Achievement) it is not insignificant that there was a lack of understanding, and indeed a concern regarding how the model was to be realised at the local level.

For three staff the concern was about how students would be positioned, although students did not feature greatly in most of the discussions I had with staff regarding

the Professional School concept. Relating to how the curriculum re-structuring may position students, one member of staff said to me:

> One of the main issues is if we are a Professional School and we only get tied in with local businesses so there's been like talk about [the international bank], what if kids don't want to do those jobs, then they've got to either carry on with the academic or exactly what we can provide. So unless they link it to local colleges, which I know they are doing in Year 10 and 11, then it will be successful. (1:1, Andrew Maxwell, Subject Teacher, 9 May 2012)

Vince Cushing also referred to concerns regarding the potential impact on students the re-structuring could have:

> I'm just a bit unsure as to what kind of impact it's going to have for the whole cohort of the school. So the kids I was talking about the kids from [the social housing estate] and the poorer areas of [metropolitan borough] – I don't know that they will benefit from it. Especially if it means a reduction in B-Tech kind of qualifications, I don't know if it will have a dramatic reduction in that, but not all kids that the school churns out are going to be working for banks or engineering companies or graphic design companies. As much as I see a huge benefit in having links with those kinds of companies, for some of the students. (1:1, Vince Cushing, Director of Learning Centre, 15 May 2012)

Vince was the only staff member who explicitly stated his concerns regarding the potential impact on the positioning of students from different SES backgrounds. How any of the changes were actually going to impact on the daily social practices related to teaching and learning from the children's point of view were auspicious in their absence. Andrew Maxwell, by his own admission, was concerned about this; he had noticed that in the meetings relating to the academy conversion and the development of the Professional School that talk of the children was absent, but was not prepared to speak up about this for fear of sounding "very idealistic":

> I'd like to think it's more to do with our kids but I think that has to be taken into consideration as well. The economic climate and the fact there aren't going to be millions of jobs out there depending if you've got A levels or GCSEs so having a trade is a good thing so I like to think that it's a combination of the two. But one of the things, going back to the academy question that concerned me most and I didn't actually say to any of the teachers because I thought it would make me sound very idealistic was that when we had meetings about it staff were saying things about changes in pay and all that kind of thing and it wasn't until probably the third meeting that anyone actually asked the question about the kids and how it would help them. And that concerned me. But at the same time people who have been teaching a long time might be concerned. I'm not on a lot of money so I don't know! But I'd like to think it's more to do with the kids. (1:1, Andrew Maxwell, Subject Teacher, 9 May 2012)

In an interview with the deputy head, Gareth Abrahams, I raised the question of how the structural changes at the school may be perceived by the students as a result of the conversations I had had with Vince Cushing. The following exchange took place:

> *I understand that, and I can see that specifically from our perspective. But as a young person themselves do you think they would see it like that? If you are sort of saying well I'm going to go to university cos my mum and dad went to university and I am obviously going to do that so this is all just whatever, but what if a child doesn't have that, say, for example, people are unemployed at home or the parents don't have 'professional' jobs themselves, and you are saying to them a vocational pathway will be the most interesting for you, I mean, do you see what I mean? Our perception might be different to what their perceptions are.*

> Yes. Perhaps that something we haven't given a lot of thought to…sometimes you just assume people understand the messages you are trying to give...I mean realistically there are some youngsters who will go one way and some who will go another…But it's that middle group. I need to write this down, because effectively they will be doing the same qualifications which is largely GCSEs, so they will be choosing from the same option pools so from our perspective I think we think it's clear that we are not labelling the kids, but we've got to be really careful about that in our marketing and how we speak to them. It's a really good point. (1:1, Gareth Abrahams, Deputy Head, 1 June 2012)

Here is a powerful example as to the way in which the development of the Professional School concept had been discussed and talked through at the higher levels of the school's organisational structures, but had not been explicitly linked to how the students themselves could potentially perceive the sorting and selecting into pathways labelled professional or otherwise. When this was raised, it was from a marketing perspective that Gareth immediately viewed this potential issue, and this response goes some way to illustrating the strength of the neoliberal doxa in shaping how the school was constructing a future for their students in relation to the market, whilst paying scant attention to the impact such a construction could have on the subjectivities of different groups of students. This position will be explored in more depth in Chapter 7 in a discussion of how the data from Chapters 4, 5 and 6 contribute to an analysis which identifies a doxa of misrecognition with regards to the enactment of localised policy processes at the school.

So, whilst there were instances of staff expressing concern as to how the localised enactment of policy was going to impact on and position the children, this was a secondary narrative to the core positioning in response to discussions about the Professional School concept, which were generally positive, unquestioning and

supportive. One of the most powerful doxic narratives that were present, however, was the neoliberal discourse of choice and competition. Kitty Stokes summed it up when she exposed how the Professional School may impact on curriculum choices, contributing to further marginalisation of already marginalised subjects such as hers, under the English Baccalaureate:

> So I worry that offering that qualification at the expense of other subjects, I'm fighting my own corner here, like RS for example but any other subject really that we are not actually really preparing them for the work place … I think we could be teaching employability skills through a really good PHSE scheme, which we don't have, we don't offer PHSE here. We don't do it and I think that could be done and it should be done … it's a great idea and my heart is in with it, I've got no problem with the idea it's just not the range it should be. (1:1, Kitty Stokes, Head of Combined Subject, 21 May 2012)

Despite already feeling frustrated by the impact of localised enactments of national policy agendas on her professional positioning within the school, and the concern that the Professional School would add to this, Kitty still positions herself as supportive of the idea overall, despite offering up an alternative in the form of using existing curriculum subjects to support the development of employability skills. The way that Kitty describes the logic of practice, though, is tightly bound to the discourses of competition and choice; she has to "fight her own corner" in order to try and protect her professional interests in an increasingly squeezed field of subject choice. That the Professional School might infringe on this even more is a real threat for Kitty, and illustrates how the re-structuring of the curriculum is related to the organisational purposes of the school, in which certain subjects hold greater capital value than others. Yet, as above, the institutional 'buy in' for the localised enactment was significant, and most of the staff members ultimately positioned this with the need to secure and maintain advantage in the competitive marketplace of the schooling field.

5.7 The professional illusio in localised policy-making

What the data has illustrated is the powerful way in which a significant re-articulation of what the school is for, that is the bolstering of employability skills within the curriculum as a means of increasing students potential economic productivity, had permeated staff position-taking, with very little resistance or probing. The

legitimation of such significant changes at the local level was linked in nearly all staff accounts to the structures within the wider economic and political fields. As Kitty demonstrated above, the concerns were about protecting the symbolic value of capital the school was able to offer students, and by proxy, the protection of the school's interest within the wider schooling field.

As such, the localised enactments of the Academies Act can be understood in terms of strategising within the field; the way teachers positioned this as a necessity within the social practices of the school can be understood in relation to the interpretation of the field conditions that surrounded them and interacted with their professional habitus. Grenfell (2008, p. 156) argues that interest, or 'illusio', developed into an integral feature of Bourdieu's empirical analyses. Grenfell (2008) posits "interest is a word used to grasp the logic of the *field,* which allows for instinctive and semi conscious acts of behaviour in terms of a maximisation of profit in accordance with current symbolic forms" (p. 156). Grenfell (2008) goes on to point out that habitus and field offered Bourdieu "a mechanism whereby the interests of individuals and groups of individuals were defined according to the relationship between cognitive motivating structures, the socially structured (and structuring) context and the immanent objective social functions of the field" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 76). Such interest is also "doxic in that it corresponds (or not) to a particular orthodoxy and is expressed through habitus because of the immanent structure that constitutes it in its ontological relationship with field surroundings" (Grenfell, 2008, p. 166). In relation to the teacher position-taking that has been presented here, the field of Kingswood Academy is breached by the external structures of both the political and economic fields. There are two factors at play: the pervasive influences of the standards and performativity agendas; and the dominance of a discourse in which the forms of symbolic capital exchange in relation to economic productivity, made available through the re-structuring of the curriculum along the lines of the Professional School, combine to produce a logic of practice in which the neoliberal policy complex has produced an orthodoxy as to what the school is for.

There is apparently a collective illusio among staff members, which positions the localised enactments as necessary for the school's survival in a field structured by discourses related to competitive advantage, to the detriment of discussions that analysed the potential impact such structures may have on students from different SES backgrounds, or indeed on the professional and social practices of the teachers themselves. The powerfulness of this discourse is notable in the following

position-taking of Kevin Todd, the school leader who was working closely with David Toye in the development of the Professional School concept:

> If they want to go to FE or HE then they can do that through distant learning or internally sponsored foundation degrees, call it what you like, learning is a lifelong journey, not something that stops at 22 when you wear your mortar board and you graduate. And I think that shift is the landscape in which the Professional School sits. And if we can make it happen and if the DfE continues to be as interested in us in terms of a scalable national model then maybe that's what education should be…next year the whole of Year 9 will begin to do employability skills and the sixth form so we will start to see the awareness in the student body, this consciousness and we'll be able to do some tracking and evaluation, research around their responses to it, the measuring matrix tool, competency framework, call it what you want, nobody knows at this point in time, that will be in place, so staff will be able to use and experience that as will kids and parents. And relationships with businesses are beginning to be in place and dialogue is beginning to happen between teaching staff and some people from business…resources etc…the notion of co-construction between those two stakeholders is beginning to happen…I think enterprise, entrepreneurship, employability, professionalism as cultural entities as things that are happening. (1:1, Kevin Todd, Director of Learning Centre, leading on Professional School, 30 May 2012)

The interests presented here are related to the school's positioning in the field of educational policy making; the attention of the DfE is something that legitimates the localised interpretation of the Academies Act, as something that "education should be". Alongside this apparent re-articulation of what the school is for, what education should be, was the discourse of marketisation so embedded within the neoliberal policy complex:

> As for becoming a Professional School as in that tag, I think it was what we have talked about – a marketing thing, try to give the school an edge – something that no other school has. I wouldn't ever say that David doesn't have the genuine interest of the students here and I think it was to generally give students an opportunity that they won't get anywhere else. Especially with the fact that university fees have rocketed and fewer students are going – so to give them a bit of a boost.
>
> *And so you think the current economic climate has had an effect on the decision-making?*
>
> In a knock on sense yeah, because fewer people can afford to go to university they are going to need a string to their bow really, if they are going to look for work straight after school. (1:1, Charles Wickes, Head of Combined Subjects and Head of Student Achievement, Year Group, 8 May 2012)

The positioning here is that the Professional School concept offers a valuable marketing tool, necessary in giving the school an "edge", keeping the interests of the

school one step ahead of the game. Earlier I cited Vince's concerns regarding the impact on some students; later in the conversation, Vince positioned this concern in line with the structure of the field in terms of marketing as well. His social justice concerns were very real, yet the discourse adopted embodied the neoliberal doxa of competition and advantage in the field:

> I kind of worry that some of the [metropolitan borough] parents they might vote with their feet. I think for a lot of the Kingswood parents, the [middle class feeder primary schools] parents – they might see that as a reason to come here as opposed to go elsewhere. Um, but for a number of parents – I think the [social housing estate] kids will still come here because it's the default setting but I think it might have an impact on some of the [metropolitan borough] kids – unless its *marketed* really well and clearly and unless it's got a lot of immediate success I don't know, I can sort of foresee there might be a dip in numbers. (1:1, Vince Cushing, Director of Learning Centre, 15 May 2012)

Ron Taylor also talked in terms of "bums on seats":

> But long term they are going to smarten up the school and provide this professional curriculum, and all students will be involved in that, and again as I said to you earlier on, we teach to the pupil and I think the school will then cater for the individual pupil and therefore long term, and if I say 5 years that doesn't sound that long really, but in 4/5 years we will start to see some positive impact in terms of student numbers increasing, I don't know if that's naïve, it's just a lack of knowledge about academies in general. (1:1, Ron Taylor, Head of Department, 22 May 2012)

As with Charles Wicke, Amanda Greene revealed that the concept had particular value when marketing the school, when considering the wider impact of the changes in the fields of higher education, and the expansion of university fees for students:

> It's been fantastic marketing wise – to the parents I have shown round, the bit that they really pick up on is that university education is expensive, that they are, if it all comes about, the kids here will leave here at 18 with a professional qualification from [corporate consultancy firm]. That the big names that we have interested may look favourably on their child when it comes to getting jobs. So those are the things the parents I come across are valuing. But how it's going to pan out – I don't know. The proof of the pudding is in the eating! (1:1, Amanda Greene, Director of Learning Centre, 11 May 2012)

Kevin Todd echoed this position-taking, in revealing his understanding that the benefits of the Professional School were tied to competitive advantage for both the students, and the school:

> There is some very different thinking and if you can build the relationship between an employer and an individual student and that progresses well, the benefit to the employer is that they have the chance to almost run the

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selection process through their mentoring involvement in the sixth form and they might really want x as she leaves cos they know her – no money on an advertising campaign, they know and have worked with this individual for more than a year…and yes it's cheaper, but they can take x and can develop them. And that's an amazing realisation, so we can say in any kind of sixth form prospectus, for each of these curriculum pathways there are three jobs at the end, three paid jobs, but to do that there are certain skills and attributes that you are going to need to demonstrate at all times and don't forget that some of you will be fired! So you still get you're A Levels but you are playing for big stakes. (1:1, Kevin Todd, Director of Learning Centre, Lead on Professional School, 30 May 2012)

What is revealed here is the dominance of the neoliberal doxa in how these staff members positioned the development of the Professional School as a localised initiative that was designed to protect the interest of the school, whilst aligning the purposes of what they were offering students to the economic and political field relating to the job market and changes within higher education. There is peppered throughout these accounts a shared professional 'illusio' as to the self-evident necessity of buying into the discourse of marketisation. Bourdieu wrote of illusio:

> Illusio, in the sense of investment in the game, becomes an illusion, in the originary sense of an act whereby one deceives oneself…only when one grasps the game from the outside, from the standpoint of an impartial spectator who invests nothing in the game or in its stakes. This stranger's point of view, which ignores itself as such, leads one to overlook that fact that investments are well found illusions. Indeed, through the games it proposes, the social world procures for agents much more and something quite other than the apparent stake, manifest ends of action: the chase counts as much as the capture, if not more, and there is a profit of action that exceeds the profits explicitly pursued, wages, prizes, rewards, trophies, titles, and positions, and which consists in escaping indifference and in asserting oneself as an active agent, caught in and by the game, occupied, an inhabitant of the world inhabited by that world, projected towards ends and endowed – objectively and thus subjectively – with a social mission. (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 195)

That the teachers at Kingswood are active agents operating in both structured structures and structuring structures is an important point to remember; the data from earlier in the chapter pointed to the ways in which professional cultures at the school had been developed through localised policy-making in ways which ameliorated the discourse of teachers as 'deliverers' of the standards agenda at the local level.

The professional trust, autonomy and ownership that were evident in the way in which the teachers positioned their professional practices in relation to localised school policy processes and enactments are significant in the way they reveal that

active agency is also structured within the field of the school, through the way in which the head teacher, David Toye, has pursued professional development opportunities for staff.

The level of institutional loyalty running throughout the accounts is noticeable, and helps to bring forward an understanding as to the strength of shared values and assumptions regarding the interests in developing and enacting the Professional School concept. The relationship between the professional illusio presented in this last part of the chapter and Bourdieu's conceptions of 'misrecognition' will be analysed in Chapter 7, once the decision-making process has been considered in Chapter 6, as an important part of this.

5.8 Summary

This chapter started out by demonstrating the logic of practice in the field in which the standards and performativity agenda are pervasive elements, as shown through the use of policies related to data and tracking at the local level. However, the chapter went on to show how such an agenda was to some extent ameliorated by the development of localised structures and policy processes which positioned the staff as active members within the field, granted high levels of professional trust, autonomy and ownership over their pedagogical practices.

The data also revealed that external demands brought tensions into the field, despite the development of a strong professional culture, and positioned the teachers in competitive ways. Despite this, the strength of the professional culture was revealed through the way in which staff positioned their support for the development of the Professional School concept; what this position-taking also embodied was a professional illusio revealed through a collective habitus in which the neoliberal doxa pervaded the way in which the majority of staff positioned the development of the Professional School as a necessary and positive enactment which would secure the children's place in the economic field and the school's place within the schooling field.

The chapter has demonstrated the centrality of the neoliberal policy complex on the professional subjectivities of the staff at Kingswood, contributing to the significance of such a conceptualisation for thinking through how positionality is constructed in

relation to the external pressures as defined by the field of power outside of the schooling field.

The following chapter builds on this position by revealing the ways in which the habitus of the head teacher has interacted with the wider field in order to produce a set of dispositions that have enabled the school to engage with the field of education policy on their own terms, enabling the school to accrue symbolic capital, and ultimately distinction, through the opportunities and interruptions available as a result of the national policy agenda.

Chapter 6: Leadership and policy

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will use data, theory and literature to explicitly render how the head teacher and the deputy head, supported by the School Leadership Team, have engaged with the opportunities and interruptions made available to them through the focus on diversity and autonomy embodied within neoliberal policy complex. This analysis will develop the argument that from the localised enactment of the Specialist Schools Programme to the decision to convert to an academy and the subsequent Professional School concept, the position-taking suggested through the data is illustrative of a professional illusio in which there exists a "tacit recognition of the value of the stakes in the game", and the significance that the professional dispositions of key leadership figures have in shaping a logic of practice reflective of the dominant discourses within the field of power (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 42).

Within this chapter I will show how through the staking of symbolic capital made available through the neoliberal policy complex the head teacher and the leadership team have framed localised policy-making as a mechanism through which to achieve distinction within the field of power and the autonomy made available by the Academies Act (2010) represents a legitimated form of action for developing a localised trajectory. I will argue that the head teacher, imbued with dispositions developed as a result of active and previous strategising in the field, has effectively anticipated the importance of such legislative interventions, by utilising his previously accumulated symbolic capital in order to develop localised policy-making, which is intended to shift the school's position within the field of power in order to continue to occupy a distinctive, legitimated position within the neoliberal policy complex.

In studying how the school leadership team has framed these significant changes at the local level as required symbolic capital for the school to both 'survive' and achieve distinction within the field of education policy, important and urgent

questions need to be raised regarding a number of issues pertaining to the positioning of different actors within the symbolic economy of the school itself, as illustrated in Chapters 4 and 5, as well as with regards to the school's role in defining the values and purposes of education within the neoliberal policy complex. The data suggests that this position-taking has lead to a 'misrecognition' by the school leaders that in 'playing the game' in responding to such policy discourses as legitimate action, they are securing the school's and therefore the students' places within the neoliberal policy complex without critically engaging with what they may be staking in return, that is, the fragmentation of localised, equitable and democratically accountable educational provision.

There are a number of significant and intersectional layers present in the stories I heard which it is necessary to unpick in order to draw a detailed analysis with which to address Research Question 3; that is: *How do external policy demands interplay with and structure the development and enactments of localised policy processes*? The first section will briefly contextualise the decision to convert to an academy within the modernising reform agenda of the neoliberal policy complex, in which the logic of the field is framed by the on-going and systematic privatisation of educational provision through legislative interventions related to diversity and autonomy (McGinity and Gunter, 2014).

This section will then identify how the school, and specifically the head teacher, has worked to accumulate legitimate symbolic capital over the 14 years of his leadership in order to reveal the logics of practice at play within the specific field of Kingswood. By doing so the section will illustrate how practices are relational to habitus and specific field conditions, which in turn contribute to understanding the role of leadership in developing localised responses to national policy agendas (Maton, 2008).

The last section will use the data to illustrate how the head teacher has embodied the dispositions and strategies used to stake the school's claim in the field of educational policy making, by exposing his 'feel for the game' through engaging in the development of networks and networking with agents in the political field, in order to both legitimate and strengthen the school's position within the neoliberal policy complex. In this sense the chapter develops an analysis which will enable a discussion over Chapters 7 and 8 with regards to the construction of these

'opportunities' as representative of a doxa of misrecognition in terms of the (re)imagining of the purposes of education within the neoliberal policy complex.

6.2 The field of educational policy-making: The symbolic economy as a legitimating force

One of the continuing features of educational policy-making under successive UK governments in England is the political consensus that has seen cross-party commitment to the decentralising of school provision through privatisation (Thomson, 2005; Ball, 2008; Chapman and Gunter, 2009; Glatter, 2012). The rapidity of the approach under the current government to increase both school autonomy and diversity is framed within the political rhetoric that reflects the principles behind New Labour's original academies programme: that increased autonomy and diversification within educational provision will beget increased attainment amongst young people attending these institutions (DfES, 2005).

The fact that there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that increasing autonomy through the development of academies does indeed act as a barometer for improvement (Curtis *et al*., 2008; Machin and Wilson: 2009; Gorard: 2011, 2014) suggests that strategies used by policy actors are characterised less by a reliance on applied empirical research and more by a commitment to the neoliberal agenda of privatisation of public services (Ball, 2009; Gunter, 2011). However, this position was refuted on behalf of the government by the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, who argued in a speech in January 2012 that:

> The academies programme is not about ideology. It's an evidence-based, practical solution built on by successive governments – both Labour and Conservative…Research from the OECD and others has shown that more autonomy for individual schools helps raise standards. In its most recent international survey of education, the OECD found that 'in countries where schools have greater autonomy over what is taught and how students are assessed, students tend to perform better.' Two of the most successful countries in PISA international education league tables - Hong Kong and Singapore - are amongst those with the highest levels of school competition. And from autonomous schools in Alberta, to Sweden's Free Schools, to the Charter Schools of New York and Chicago, freedom is proving an unstoppable driver of excellence. (Gove, 2012, unpaged)

Still there is a range of research that has been undertaken, which at worst questions the veracity of the belief that evidence suggests increasing autonomy acts as a

driver of excellence (Gorard, 2005, 2009, 2014), and at best indicates that not enough time has passed for meaningful analysis to unearth the impact of this policy (PricewaterhouseCooper, 2008).

However, what is happening in England as a result of the government's commitment to greater autonomy of schools within state education is that schools who remain under local authority control as maintained comprehensives are becoming increasingly side-lined from the government's attentions as the spotlight continues to shine brightly instead over the converts to the reform agenda. Writing in the Guardian newspaper in October 2011, Estelle Morris, a previous Secretary of State for Education under New Labour commented on the acceleration of the academies programme under the coalition government:

> The government seems to have stopped noticing successful schools unless they're academies. What a tragedy. Whatever else, one thing is certain: success and failure, innovation and creativity will be found in both academies and non-academies. There is not a school structure yet invented by a politician…that by itself can guarantee success. (Morris, 2011, unpaged)

Despite this, the on-going re-structuring of the school system and the number of (secondary) schools converting into academies as a result (as of 31 March 2013 1618 secondary schools had converted, with a further 973 in the process of converting – compared to 203 in May 2010) (DfE, 2014) illustrates the legitimating force that the programme has had upon localised policy-making decisions regarding the structures of schooling provision.

Within the neoliberal policy complex the schooling field can be viewed as a site of struggle in which schools engage in processes of capital exchange, framed by the performativity and accountability agendas, and shored up by legislative interventions focussing on autonomy and diversity, in order to gain recognition, legitimation and distinction within the field of power. Jenkins (1992), in explaining Bourdieu's field theory posits that the "field is structured internally in terms of power relations…a field is by definition a field of struggles in which agent's strategies are concerned with preservation or improvement of their positions with respect to the defining capital of the field" (p. 85).

As such, within the neoliberal policy complex the coveted capital within the schooling field is symbolic, which Bourdieu defined as "the form that the various

species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 76). Bourdieu explained:

> We have different fields where different forms of interest are constituted and expressed. This does not imply that the different fields do not have invariant properties. Among the invariant properties is the very fact that they are the site of a struggle of interests, between agents or institutions unequally endowed in specific capital. (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 111)

Within the field of education policy the current Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, is the chancellor of the symbolic economy: bestowing symbolic capital upon those schools that choose to convert as part of the system-wide reform in the form of an acknowledged legitimacy (in the form of perceived and actual financial benefits, for example), whilst simultaneously marginalising schools that have not availed themselves of the autonomy available through the Academies Act 2010 (Basset *et al*., 2012; West and Bailey, 2013).

Thomson (2005) uses Bourdieu's field theory to suggest that the abrupt educational policy shifts under Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government and the adoption of these shifts, with adjustments, under Tony Blair's New Labour government identifies "policy working as codification…and as currency exchange within and across fields" (2005, p. 741). Bourdieu (1990a) wrote, "codification is 'an operation of symbolic ordering' which removes ambiguity, normalizes activity and 'goes hand in glove with discipline'" (p. 80). Thomson (2005) asserts that in the "political field dominant agents in the state use student and school data in several ways" and specifically argues that "the disciplining effect of the heightened symbolic economy reduces political opposition and allows individual and collective agents who are not conforming to be easily and 'objectively' identified and dealt with" (p. 752). Under the Conservative-led Coalition government such effects have arguably been accelerated as the codification of autonomy from the state has been legitimated through the legislative intervention of the Academies Act 2010, and the large numbers of schools that have subsequently converted lends further legitimacy to the disciplinary nature of the symbolic economy within the schooling field.

This position was highlighted by the deputy head's response to a question posed during our last interview when we were discussing his ideological opposition to the academies programme, in contrast to his commitment to the conversion because of

his belief that despite his own reservations, conversion was "what is right, for this school, at this time":

> You just have to play the game.
>
> *Don't you then become complicit?*
>
> It's so hard…to stand up and say...A lone voice is useless. You've just got to try and hang on to as many of your principals as you can as long *as well as doing what you are told*…you have to try and keep hold of what's important to you. (1:1, Gareth Abraham, Deputy Head, 1 June 2012)

The continued commitment of the academies programme as an arm of the neoliberal policy complex established by Thatcher, adopted by Blair and embraced and accelerated by Gove suggests that the field of educational policy continues to work to "codify new practices and old hierarchies in the field" and to "rationalize and legitimate the bureaucratic rupture of the relative autonomy of fields and the imposition of new practices" (Thomson, 2005, p. 753). That the field of educational policy has produced a space in which schools struggle to protect their interests is evidenced by high profile cases in which specific schools have been targeted by the Department for Education to convert to academy status because of perceived persistent failure to raise standards, despite local resistance to such attempts to codify such schools' positions in the field (Pearse, 2012).

This position is further compounded by the centralising characteristic of policy-making which has historically failed to recognise that schools operate in differing contextual circumstances within the field and a number of academics have highlighted this as problematic, specifically when exploring the discourse of school improvement within a social justice perspective (Braun *et al*., 2011; Smyth, *et al*., 2006; Thrupp and Lupton, 2006).

When this perspective is explored within a Bourdieusian framework, indicating that the site of struggle for access to specific resources and capital at stake takes place within an uneven playing field, it becomes all the more important to look at the specific experiences of individual schools and how school leaders engage in localised policy-making as a means to maintain a footing and to receive legitimacy within the field of power. As a result, individual context and resulting decision-making processes are of great importance to consider as "each field by virtue of its defining content, has a different logic and taken-for-granted structure of necessity

and relevance which is both the product and the producer of the habitus which is specific and appropriate to the field" (Jenkins, 1992, p. 84).

6.3 The accumulation of symbolic capital and professional habitus

In 2004, under Blair's New Labour government, Kingswood High School received a grant from the then Innovations Unit at the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES)[8]. The grant was official recognition of the school's successful record of raising attainment across all stages of the school and acknowledgement for the adoption of a number of innovative approaches to whole school development by the school leadership team.

One example of such developments was the school's interpretation of and response to the Specialist School Programme; an initiative that entered the field of education policy in 1986 under the Conservative government, but was adopted and adjusted for expansion by New Labour in 1997 (and subsequently dropped by the current Coalition government in May 2010). Secondary schools were encouraged to apply to specialise in a particular curriculum area (for example, performing arts, humanities, science and technology) as a means for boosting achievement, and schools would receive additional funding in order to undertake capital projects to enhance facilities in these areas. Research commissioned by the New Labour government indicated that the initiative led to increased attainment (DfES, 2004; Jesson and Crossley, 2004; Ofsted, 2005); however, these findings were disputed by a number of academics working within the field of school improvement (Schagen and Goldsmith, 2002; Taylor, 2007). The parallels within the neoliberal policy complex between the Specialist Schools Programme and the Academies Programme as perceived drivers of improvement through the diversification of school provision are apparent.

Kingswood High School approached the DfES in 2002 with the proposal of allowing individual students within the school to specialise in curriculum areas of interest rather than arbitrarily having to specialise as a whole school. Under this model students at the end of Year 8 would be given a wide range of options regarding their curriculum choices for their following year's education. For example, students could

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[8] The Innovations Unit was privatised in 2006 (http://www.innovationunit.org/our-story).

choose to 'specialise' in humanities subjects that would see them receiving a higher number of lessons in this curriculum area (up to four a week), and a reduced number of lessons in other areas, such as performing arts (reduced to once a week).

This approach to the personalisation of the curriculum was developed in order to give students' greater autonomy and control over what they learnt. The DfES were interested in this proposal, arguably because it dovetailed nicely with the government's developing advocacy of personalisation within public services (Leadbetter, 2004; Milliband, 2004). As a result the DfES approved the proposal and the school became the first secondary school in England to offer individual student specialism, rather than a whole school specialism.[9] Thus Kingswood High School established itself as an effective player within the symbolic economy of the neoliberal policy complex.

The school accumulated symbolic capital through legitimation via public recognition for its innovative interpretation of policy as well as in terms of the rise in attainment levels, as a perceived result of the schools specific policy enactment:

> […] that innovation unit grant that we got was fantastic, it was an acknowledgement from central government that we were doing things really that most schools weren't in terms of personalisation…the notion of kids specialising in a particular area…has proved really powerful. If you talk to kids they love the structure in Year 9, staff do too. It's made Year 9 much more positive because kids are doing, by and large what they are choosing to do. Last year's Year 11, where as you know, we've had results way ahead of what we've achieved before, they were the first year that we did both the integrated curriculum and the [individual specialism]. And I think that's been one of the factors which has really been very positive in its impact. (1:1, David Toye, Head Teacher, 16 January 2012)

As a result of this process, the head teacher at Kingswood High School accumulated significant symbolic capital through his experience of dealing with powerful policy actors, which was to prove useful for the next stage in the school's development, the conversion to an academy and the development of the Professional School concept.

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[9] Although the DfES insisted that the school adopt an overall specialism, in order that the designation and provision remained in line with the Specialist Schools policy.

Bourdieu (1990b) argued that, through the successful accumulation of various forms of capital social, agents reproduce their positions of dominance within the field (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). The accumulation of this capital endows the agent with symbolic power which in turn contributes to the strength of the agent's position within the field of power. Bourdieu posited:

> Objective relations of power tend to reproduce themselves in relations of symbolic power. In the symbolic struggle for the production of common sense, or more precisely, for the monopoly over legitimate naming, agents put into action the symbolic capital that they have acquired in previous struggles and which may be juridicially guaranteed. (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 21)

In a follow up interview, the head teacher couched the decision to convert to academy status in terms which recognised the influence and impact of official legitimation on the decision-making process:

> We've had contact with the department. We ran a big project with the innovation unit … And we've had a lot of links with the specialist schools trust and done a lot with and through them. But the department as it currently is, following government policy obviously, is only interested in academies. (1:1, David Toye, Head Teacher, 16 January 2012)

Thomson (2005) argues that as social scientists "we must look to the logics of practice determined by the positions occupied in the fields in order to explicate the actions of individual people" (p. 743) and thus must engage with Bourdieu's notion of habitus. Jenkins (1992) explains that "the habitus disposes actors to do certain things; it provides a basis for the generation of practices. Practices are produced in and by the encounter between habitus and its dispositions, on the one hand, and the constraints, demands, and opportunities of the social field or market to which the habitus is appropriate or within which the actor is moving, on the other" (p. 78). Therefore, the following section will draw on data produced from head teacher David Toye in response to Bourdieu's belief that "the habituses of the agents within the field must be analysed along with the trajectories or strategies which are produced in the interaction between habitus and the constraints and opportunities which are determined by the structure of the field" (Jenkins, 1992, p. 86).

David Toye took his position as head teacher in September 1997, and explained the school, at that point, was underperforming in relation to the national benchmarks as measured through the GCSE examinations:

> […] there is this awful tendency to think that what was there before, was awful, and you were the kind of white knight that came and saved the school. But, um, it was in a mess, really, if I'm being honest…if you take the results as the key outcomes for a school, the percentage of kids getting 5 or higher grades was 48%, which for a school *in a place like this is lamentable*. (1:1, David Toye, Head Teacher, 5 December 2011)

David points to the situated context in which Kingswood operates, the apparent affluence of the market town of which it is the only secondary provision, as being a key to understanding the goals he set for himself and the school when he became the head teacher. The schooling field is hierarchised through different forms of capital and one way such a hierarchy of positions occurs is by the capital assigned to schools through their geographic locations; those in more affluent areas are often marked more highly than those operating in areas of high poverty (Thomson, 2005). Working within the framework of the standards and accountability agendas, it was considered by David that it was imperative to improve the examination scores of the students at Kingswood, because, as he pointed out:

> […] if you take the sort of principle outcome that inspection looks at, but really, I'm not, I think the league tables and everything around that is a terrible distortion and I think that it's effecting, effected the national system very badly but I've always held to the view that our principle task is to move the kids on to the next stage, and that for most of our kids the determinant of what they are able to do is their exam results. Because that's as the national system is. And I know from my own kids, well we all know, don't we, that if kids want to get a good job, they need good grades, whether at GCSE or at A' Level or preferably both. So that I mean that I have no problem in regarding the results the kids get as being the key outcome, while accepting that there has, we have to deliver on a lot more than that. It's the way that national government has used results, which is the problem. (1:1, David Toye, Head Teacher, 5 December 2011)

Thus, from the outset David accepted that the standards agenda was a key determinant by which schools would be judged, and students would be successful, which was further underlined by the 'affluent' veneer of the town of Kingswood, and as a result the perceived cohort of children the school serves and the school's place within the hierarchised structure of the field. The constraints and opportunities determined by the structure of the field were, from the outset, demarcated in relation to outcomes as expressed through the standards agenda.

Decision making with regards to how the school engaged with national policy agendas was a process that was to consistently take into account the perceived necessity of the school to work towards ensuring the students achieved acceptable

levels at GCSE and A Level in order to be best equipped to enter the job market, as this was framed as the determining structure of the neoliberal policy complex, in which they would eventually be required to compete. Through revealing his habitus in response to the standards agenda during this first interview, David's subsequent position-taking with regards to the school's policy trajectory, in the conversion to academy status and the attendant development of the Professional School, continually returns to this point, that the students need to acquire the necessary capital in order to have the best possible chance of success, determined by effective entry into the job market:

> I think private schools have always developed, consciously developed, employability skills, they don't call them that. They've always done it, giving kids the capacity to do well in whatever they're going to do, and so they come back to saying, what we're trying to do is to empower kids, not disempower them. It's really important that state schools do that, so that you're giving kids the same chances as kids from private schools, so I'm really quite excited by it. (1:1, David Toye, Head Teacher, 29 May 2012)

This position-taking with regards to the independent school sector will be returned to later; however, it is important to note here that David's focus upon employability skills and economic productivity as a driver for the restructuring of the school is reflective of his calculated estimation of the shifting perimeters of the youth employment market, and the impact of these potential changes upon the work that schools do in preparing students for this competitive landscape. Gareth, the deputy head summarised David's position-taking in the following way:

> What's the purpose of it at the end of the day? [The Head] thinks things are going to go around employers, big employers, taking people on at 18 and taking them through a training programme…What he's talking about there, will, I think, be exactly right if that's where we're going, we just don't really have a clue where we are going at the moment, at a national level, it will drop out of what's going on, by necessity I think. (1:1, Gareth Abrahams, Deputy Head, 1 June 2012)

Whilst the direction and impact of the youth employment market, combined with changes within the field of Higher Education remained uncertain, David's habitus reveals his engagement with and estimation of the impacts of both the economic and political fields upon schooling provision and to develop localised policy trajectories that attempt to stay 'one step ahead of the game' (1:1, Gareth Abrahams, Deputy Head, 12 December 2011) as a result of these predictions. David's previous position taking with regards to the Specialist Schools Programme,

also demonstrated a capacity to engage with policy in a way which revealed strategising in order to innovate on a local level, whilst surveying the wider landscape of both the political and economic fields. As Addison (2009) points out, David's professional habitus has been "formed and reformed over time by the impact of multiple fields and has a marked impact on the way in which [he] respond[s] to situations and lead[s] [his] … organisation" (p. 333).

In understanding habitus as a set of embodied dispositions that form an essential aspect as to how agents' actions are both structured by experiences and events of the past as well as structuring present and future practices, it is possible to establish the relational connection between habitus and field. The relationship between habitus and the structured structures of the field reveal how agents' embodied dispositions are both a part of and contribute to decision making as strategising:

> In short, the art of estimating and seizing chances, the capacity to anticipate the future by a kind of practical induction or even to take a calculated gamble on the possible against the probable, are dispositions that can only be acquired in certain social conditions. (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 64)

David's strategising with regards to the school's response to both the Specialist School Programme and the Academies Act, together with his disposition to ensure that the school enacted these policies in ways that secured legitimation from the centralised mechanisms of bureaucracy and thus protect the school's position within the field of educational policy-making by responding to perceived opportunities in such ways that were both part of the game whilst also being one step ahead, echo how he termed his position-taking in response to other initiatives and policies over the years of his headship. For example:

> And five years ago we were way ahead in terms of tracking student achievement, intervening, we've got posts in the school, which no other school had. ... But we hadn't developed the statistical side adequately and we've had to do a bit of catching up there. …What we're doing now is better than most schools again but I don't like catching up so that *I believe that you need to be constantly ahead of the game*. When workforce reform came out and they sent, and the Department said, these are the things you need to do around workforce reform, I was terribly smug because everything they said we needed to do we had already done, before it had become a requirement of any kind. I'm in danger of sounding really smug…

And:

> I was part of a development team for the humanities diploma and the day that we finished it was just after the election (2010) and we got this phone call at 10 saying you must stop work instantly, the Government is scrapping

the humanities diploma … but one of the exam boards has picked up what we've done and is intending to offer it … as an A Level, so OCR the exam board have asked me to be part of the steering group for developing that A Level…

So it's not all wasted work then?

No, I was a man with a mission because I got to, I'm on the sort of steering groups for humanities schools, the national specialist schools steering group, and I was a man with a mission to try and persuade them to persuade one of the exam boards to pick it up and our next meeting … I don't need to go and hassle them now because somebody's done it, they've already picked it up so I'm really pleased. (1:1, David Toye, Head Teacher, 27 September 2010)

David's professional disposition is to remain, wherever possible, 'one step ahead of the game'; by doing so he displays tenacity in his capacity to engage with the changing structures within the field of educational policy-making. His membership to the specialist schools steering group, his strategising with regards to workforce reform and the development of detailed tracking and intervention of student achievement through data all illustrate that through the surveying of the field he has attempted to accumulate symbolic capital in order to help maintain the school's position as an effective player within the field. As the field of educational policy-making has undergone structural changes, in part as a result of the changes in government during the period of his headship, David has persistently revealed both an interest in and a commitment to sustaining a high profile for the school through his professional practices and active engagement with networks associated with various policy initiatives. That at times David feels he is in 'danger of sounding really smug' as a result of localised enactments of and responses to national policy agendas serves to reinforce the significance that he places upon such position-taking within the logics of the field, a modest suggestion of smugness belies a confidence in the effectiveness of the game-playing strategies he has deployed at different times throughout his leadership of the school.

What is of particular note is that David's habitus, his dispositions embodied through his strategising position-taking, has revealed how by playing the game throughout an evolving policy context he has ensured that the school's localised developments kept abreast of the shifting boundaries of the neoliberal policy complex. This 'feel for the game' is illustrative of the significance of how the fields of politics and the economy breach the logics of practice within the educational field and thus help to shape localised responses (Thomson, 2005; Gunter and Forrester, 2010).

For instance, during New Labour's administration political emphasis was placed upon the personalisation agenda. This agenda infiltrated the development of public policy in, for example, the fields of health, social services and education, and institutions within these fields operated in a context which encouraged localised engagement with this agenda, without it being mandated through legislation (PMSU, 2006). Therefore, by developing personalised curriculum pathways from the year 2002, David displayed his capacity to respond to shifts within the political field and to adopt localised policies which spoke directly to this emerging agenda.

Under New Labour's City Academies programme (2000) certain schools operating in challenging circumstances and which were deemed to be 'failing' were converted to academy status as a means to tackling underperformance (Blunkett, 2000). The adoption and expansion of this policy under the Conservative-led Coalition has led to the forced conversion of an increasing number of schools, not just those operating in areas of high deprivation. Therefore, the shifting nature of the neoliberal policy complex within the field of education has witnessed a process of the codification of 'failure' through a logic of practice which forces schools out of local authority control as a means of linking effectiveness with autonomy (West and Bailey, 2013).

Yet such a logic of practice works to reinforce key tenets of the neoliberal policy complex: namely the increased commitment to the privatisation of publicly run services. The codification of this commitment to privatisation within the education system, embodied within and accelerated by the Academies Act 2010, served to expand school autonomy by encouraging 'successful' schools to voluntarily convert, alongside the forced conversion of 'failures'. By doing so, such processes are imbued within a policy discourse that champions success as synonymous with autonomy (West and Bailey, 2013). Thus, localised responses to such codification further legitimates leadership decision-making along autonomous lines that are "juridicially guaranteed" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 21), which powerfully contributes to the evolving nature of the neoliberal doxa in defining both rules of the game and how the game can be 'effectively' played.

The hierarchy of power and attached status within the field is tightly bound to these rules, and those players that have successfully negotiated their position and the position of their institution within such shifting structures accumulate the symbolic capital that necessitates future successes along such lines. The process of

codification has contributed to the production of particular ways of thinking and doing by school leaders such as David, which reinforces the strength of the neoliberal doxa through playing the game, and doing so in such ways that retain high levels of visibility within the field of education policy. In their article concerned with elite leadership development, Tomlinson *et al.*, (2013) argue that such a process is a form of acculturation by central policy-level leaders as a political strategy, which serves to reproduce centrally driven policy goals, such as the privatisation of education (p. 82).

If such processes are part of a political strategy aimed at garnering support through acculturation of specific dispositions for success, it shows how both structured structures and structuring structures generate practices that are formed as part of an "unconscious relationship" between habitus and field (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 76). David's position-taking with regards to development of the school's localised policy trajectory reveals how the structured structures of the neoliberal policy complex have both enabled and encouraged localised responses to the reform agenda by adopting strategies that conform and contribute to (re)producing the logics of practice along neoliberal lines, codified through the discourses of choice, competition, diversity and autonomy, as symbolised by both the Specialist Schools programme and the Academies Act 2010.

The acculturation of such principles has over time become the bedrock of the core activities within the localised policy trajectory, the powerfulness of these discourses being constantly reinforced by discourses emerging from the fields of politics, the economy and influential media organisations (Rawolle, 2010). Therefore, over the 14 years of David's leadership at Kingswood, he has revealed a set of dispositions that have contributed to the ability to successfully accumulate the necessary and available symbolic capital within the field of educational policy-making as a way of protecting the school's interests and strengthening the school's position by engaging in a process of localised acculturation.

The stakes in the game are so high, the game itself such a "risky business", that by utilising the skills and experience garnered from over a decade in the role of head teacher, one of the key strategies revealed through David's actions has been through the development of a strong professional culture at the school (Thomson, 2001, p. 14). Specifically through an explicit process of hiring staff members that were likely to 'fit' with the culture, David has shored up support for the legitimated

actions taken by the leadership team in response to national policy agendas. As David said in one exchange:

> I think whoever, in not so many years, takes over from me, whether it's good, bad or indifferent I'll leave you to judge. But there is here, I think, a very strong culture and if somebody comes in and tries to change that they'll find it quite difficult, because inevitably I have appointed people who fit that culture and most of the staff at the school, I've appointed now … You talk to people and you get a very clear sense of what people believe in. I think the culture of a school essentially reflects the values and beliefs of the people who are there. (1:1, David Toye, Head Teacher, 29 May 2012)

David's explicit strategy to embed certain values and beliefs within the culture of the school through the appointment process is indicative of the role that the doxa plays in defining both the rules of the game and the accepted ways of playing the game. Bourdieu (2000, p. 11 cited in Gunter and Forrester, 2010, p. 57) suggests that the "game is defined by, and entry controlled through, the doxa or self-evident truths located in values and discourses". At Kingswood the values and discourses are evident in the game-playing dispositions of the head teacher and revealed through the shared habitus of a staff body that displays active support for the head teacher's development of localised policy processes along neoliberal lines, as discussed in Chapter 5.

As discussed, staff talked about an explicit development of a professional culture and institutional values that they considered demonstrated active position-taking by David, in which trust and autonomy were linked to the logic of practice in the everyday pedagogical practices of teachers. As illustrated in Chapter 5, one head of a combined subject went so far as to link such a culture with the appointment process, directly echoing David's comment above:

> I think that's one of those things, this is a guess, that [the head teacher] might look for when they interview a group of candidates who will be autonomous and independent, and they like to spread the responsibility for the school across as many staff as possible. If you look at the responsibility of staff within each faculty, there are many people with things they are in charge of outside of their subject area, either pastoral, or cross curricular. I think that's fantastic and I think that definitely means there is a sense of autonomy within, or at least a massive sense of trust in the staff that they choose to employ. (1:1, Ron Taylor, Head of Department, Combined Subjects, 22 May 2012)

Thus, a process of 'acculturation' has taken place through the way in which David has strategised and used recruitment to re-produce centrally and locally desired

policy goals (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2013). This is not to be reductive of the professional and institutional cultures that David has invested in alongside this process. The way the staff discuss the autonomy and trust they experience working at the school is illustrative of the strength of feeling such 'micro-political' approaches to professional development and practice engender amongst teachers (Hoyle, 1999). This is all the more poignant when contextualised against a backdrop of national policy developments and media representations of the teaching workforce as an increasingly de-professionalised and centrally regulated profession (Clarke *et al.*, 2007; Beck, 2008). However, such micro-politics have explicitly contributed to mobilising a localised workforce to display a high level of support for the development of localised policy as well as the appointment of key members of staff in senior positions that have been acculturated by the neoliberal doxa through their professional practices, in which career trajectories have mirrored the political strengthening of the neoliberal policy complex in both political and economic life. As such, "while the doxa defines the game and field boundaries, disposition to enter and play means that the doxa speaks to the person, where there is an 'illusio' or 'a fundamental belief in the interest of the game and the value of the stakes which is inherent in that membership'" (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 11 cited in Gunter and Forrester, 2010, p. 58).

It is possible to understand David' position of investing in localised policy processes that both encourage and protect 'limited autonomy' as an ameliorating strategy that reveals understanding of and support for professional trust within teaching and learning, which also serves to strengthen support for policy processes such as the Professional School concept, by defining the value of the stakes in play through a process of micro-politicking:

> They see their function as mobilising teachers to deliver on externally determined policies. This is what their charters require, what their contracts are based on, and what their careers are vested in. This mobilisation might also be accompanied by that other function of micropolitics identified by Pfeffer (1981), i.e. `quieting opposition'. One of the promising areas of micropolitical enquiry is the collusion between principals and teachers in ameliorating the impact of policies on autonomy. (Hoyle, 1999, p. 220)

The amelioration of the impact of policies on professional autonomy is an important element of what is being discussed here. The interests that are being protected by David's strategising relate back to the macro-political "risky business" that schools are expected to operate under in the neoliberal policy complex, that is the risk of

losing (or in the preferred parlance, 'failing' to play) the game altogether and thus being handed over to a sponsor or a provider (Thomson, 2001, p. 14). The game involves risk and David has deliberately appointed people to fit with a culture that supports professional trust and limited autonomy, but also support for 'risky' decision-making, such as the development of an 'innovative' model of provision. As a result of David's demonstration of successfully being able to play the game, staff commitment, or ability to invest one's illusio in the dominant stakes, that is in localised policy processes that shore up the neoliberal doxa, explicates how "officialising strategy" (Bourdieu, 1977) regulates practices which support and protect local interests, and that such position-taking is partially contributable to the pragmatic acculturation undertaken by David.

6.4 Staff positioning in a culture of non-disagreement

David's decision to convert to an academy in order to develop the Professional School concept, and latterly to develop a bid to open a Studio School as part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT), all situated on the Kingswood site, has been framed as part of a strategising approach by David in order to protect the school's interests and legitimate the school's place within the neoliberal policy complex. Whilst David has developed a model for the leadership team which is fairly distributed amongst a relatively large number of senior staff (ten overall, not including David or his deputy Gareth), all of whom have a 60% teaching commitment, the members of the leadership team that I interviewed were clear that whilst such a model enabled opportunities for linking classroom practices with the development of localised policy, certain decisions such as the conversion and the development of the Professional School, were firmly introduced and subsequently established by David. As one school leader said to me:

> You were asking were we collaborative, or is it more top down. In that sense the Professional School was very much his vision, so that's the contradiction because you've got him being very autocratic in a sense and he's very skilled at introducing an idea and consulting on it and getting support for it, over time. (1:1, Terry Landen, Director of Learning Centre, 9 May 2012)

And:

> He's quite bold and innovative in his perspective as well and I mean it's open to criticism…and as a head that not usually a good thing and something that most people shy away from so I've always, that aspect of him to be able to

> plough his own route and say this is what I think and this is what I am going to do, is really good. (1:1, Anthony Law, Director of Learning Centre, 11 July 2012)

Such positions reveal David's leadership strategy to develop a school structure which enables the school leaders and a large number of staff to have autonomy over certain aspects of the school organisation, such as pedagogical approaches, curriculum development and learning centre policy development, whilst simultaneously engaging in a process of micro-politics which has contributed to the creation of a culture of non-disagreement. A good example of this culture of non-disagreement came from Amanda Green, one of the School Leadership Team, who revealed that despite having serious concerns regarding the conversion, 'as with everything' David has her support:

> So I said to David straight away I don't believe in it…obviously whatever you decide to do, as with everything, you have my full support, publicly. As we got on board, the next conversation I had, it's like big waves at the seaside, you can either choose to surf on top of it and wind up on the beach that way and smile and be ok, or you can just be rolled over and dragged until you are beached. Yeah? You are going to end up on the beach anyway so you might as well do it. And that's the way I see it. (1:1, Amanda Greene, Director of Learning Centre, May 2012)

Amanda had worked at the school for 25 years, and, like many staff, had developed a strong sense of institutional loyalty to David's leadership. This loyalty came through in many interviews, as described in Chapter 5, and this may help to explain how and why members of staff bought into the conversion decision despite some holding ideological and political reservations regarding the Academy programme. The development of a culture of non-disagreement also chimes with the way in which the policy agenda is being framed at both the local and national level, through the squeezing out of alternative discourses to the privatisation of public services agenda, which forms a significant aspect of the neoliberal policy complex (Ranson, 2003; Whitty, 2009; Morris, 2012).

This powerful discourse enables, or indeed encourages, localised strategies which acknowledge the omnipresence of this discourse through localised adoption and enactment of related policies, such as the conversion to academy status. For members of staff like Amanda, it is the successful juxtaposing of David's leadership habitus which has revealed his feel for the game through a decade of 'innovative' developments of localised policy, which has resulted in the accumulation of necessary symbolic capital to thrive in the field, and which acts as both a product of

and contribution to the strength of the neoliberal doxa as revealed through his position-taking. The spaces for alternatives seem almost non-existent to Amanda, yet the fight to survive by doing what is deemed necessary (that is, through playing the game) is a narrative that runs throughout the interview she gave. As with other members of staff, it was the focus on risking the consequences of non-engagement with such a powerful discourse, and the fear of a loss of autonomy as a result, which really underpinned their commitment to the culture of non-disagreement created by David, as this excerpt from an interview with deputy head Gareth illustrates:

> Largely because in my experience in teaching which have been largely the last administration and this one, whatever government decides, is what will happen. So we have pilots and we have consultations but generally the pilots go into being largely as they were… So our view, both [the head] and me, is that the Academies programme is what will happen. A few years down the line we will all be academies so then the argument became, so, do you go now or do you wait until you're pushed? (1:1, Gareth Abrahams, Deputy Head, 12 December 2011)

Thomson (2010) has examined the logic within the claim for autonomy and how it is both created by and shapes the game in play: "regardless of whether one is for or against policy, for or against the game, heads are key players and while they work to advantage their school and students, what they do – their agency – is always framed by a decision about whether they are prepared to play to their own positional detriment" (p. 17). What the data here indicates is that David has spent over a decade strategising through the development of localised policy-making and creating a culture of non-disagreement, which reveals his disposition to protect the school's position through playing the game, rather than engaging in any type of activity that would play to either his own personal or the organisational detriment.

Another member of the School Leadership Team commented on this position further, echoing the deputy head's stance that the decision to convert had been reconciled by a realistic necessity to bow to pragmatism, and in so doing identifies the domination of neoliberal doxa within the socio-political structures in which the school is operating:

> I think it's very driven by David. I think he wanted it and if he didn't want it I don't think we would have become an academy…generally I think the SLT viewpoint was all schools will become academies eventually and you're better off being on board early on rather than later – I think it's a pragmatic approach. I think [the head] saw a possibility of *gaining a higher profile for the school*…it's very much his vision, he wanted to develop the concept of the Professional School and there would be no way of developing that

without being an academy. I think he was also a bit jaded with the relationship with the LA. *He wanted greater autonomy* for running the school. And in terms of marketing, the school has falling numbers and one way, was a fresh approach and being *particularly distinct from other schools*, and therefore encouraging more people to come to us. (1:1, Terry Landen, Director of Learning Centre, 9 May 2012)

This excerpt crystallises the significance of Bourdieu's arguments that in order to understand practice (and practices as strategies) it is imperative to look to the relationship between the habitus revealed by an agent, the social field in which that agent is operating and the capital at stake within the field. The political field of education policy is internalised by David as being a space in which symbolic capital must be accrued, not only from the Secretary of State and the Department for Education but also on a local level, as a result of the neoliberal policy complex establishing a framework of competition in which schools must attract students in order to survive in a quasi-market place. David's interaction with the field in this sense, his internalisation of what is at stake means that he also successfully embodies the potential for exploiting opportunities to make pragmatic moves within the field, whilst reconciling this to his colleagues by framing its necessity as a means of survival.

It seems that the autonomy offered through the Academies Act is a powerful mechanism for encouraging schools to convert to academy status, and is part of a historical tradition within the field of education policy, as illustrated by the 1988 Education Reform Act and the introduction of LMS and GMS, in citing autonomy as a means for advancing a school's position within the field (Thomson, 2010). The logic of practice in Kingwood Academy is that as effective game players their capital can be deployed to deliver policy interventions on their terms, which in turn both legitimates and protects their position within the field of power. The next section will develop this point further by explicating the role that policy networks and networking had on legitimating the development of the Professional School within the field.

6.5 Networks and networking

As the model and its associated structures developed over time, the way in which David presented the Professional School shifted. As discussed earlier, David argued that the only way in which such localised changes to the delivery of the curriculum

could be enacted were through the conversion process. The positions various staff members presented echoed David's position, which was that the autonomy granted through the academy conversion enabled David and key players within the School Leadership Team to develop the employability framework, through which the remodelled curriculum would incrementally begin to be delivered. The subsequent development of this localised policy was from the outset set up as an intervention into curriculum remodelling on the school's own terms. The capital that had been "juridically guaranteed" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 21) as a result of previous enactments of localised interpretation and intervention of national policy agendas contributed to the position that 'innovative' enactments were not only desirable but necessary conditions for the school to emulate, in order to protect and extend its place within the neoliberal policy complex, and that autonomy was the driver that could help to make this possible.

David explicitly stated the centrality of the 'employability agenda' within the Professional School concept during an interview on May 2012 in which he linked the localised move towards a business-oriented curriculum, within a wider context of failure amongst state schools to engage with the economising needs of a modernising society:

> I think like most schools, I think English schools are very good about wider contexts in the social domain so that most schools I think have been very good around things like the anti-racist agenda, about building tolerance, understanding difference. And a lot of schools have sort of majored in work in that kind of area. I think very few schools have done anything significant or coherent around that economic sort of area, let's call it the employability agenda and I think some of that has reflected the late 60s, 1970s agenda which was anti-business really. It was that kind of late 60s, not anarchy, but kind of conformist anarchy really that being hostile to capitalism, hostile to big business and very suspicious that's like this parent who is moaning at us now is part of that agenda.
>
> *That you're making your children too corporate?*
>
> Yes, you're making them into corporate clones. It's quite the opposite; it's making them so they are not clones. And I think a lot of that attitude did come out of the culture and values of the late 60s/70s. (1:1, David Toye, Head Teacher, 5 December 2011)

Here, David aligns his professional habitus with the field interests embodied through a discourse that has consistently highlighted young people's lack of employability skills suited for the world of work and linked this to the discourse against progressive education that emerged as a result of the fragmentation of the social

democratic consensus (Ozga, 2000; Gewirtz, 2002). David's position-taking with regards to the need for schools funded through the state to take more seriously the challenge of preparing children for the world of work is further explicated in the following extract from the same interview in which he reveals the development of employability skills with the input from business as the central plank behind the Professional School model, and one which closely aligns the purposes of education to enable children from the state system to effectively compete with their independently educated peers:

> He's an Arthur Scargill lookalike and he thinks it's a devious capitalist ploy to kind of make the kids subservient drones, it's quite the opposite, because if the kids understand how to succeed in business they will have every advantage that private school kids have, because that's what they do with their kids, they train their kids to be successful in business by doing things with them to give them the skills they need.   Now that empowers kids to be able to work the system, it doesn't make them subservient drones, quite the opposite. That's what private schools do I think, they empower kids, I mean they've got networks, my daughter, her fella went to Tonbridge, and he and his family, dad works for Rothschilds they know someone who does everything; he shares a flat with the son of Nigel Farage of UKIP, they have contacts, and private schools can do that because the kids that go through them are the sons and daughters of captains of industry and captains of politics.   That is as it is.   But beyond that I think private schools are much much better at developing the broader dimensions of kids' development than state schools are perversely. In the course of developing this Professional School, we've got all sorts, we've spent a lot of time with Edexcel to try to get them to and I think we have got them to, for September, launch a professional baccalaureate which is not a qualification, but it's a certification – it's a kind of over-arching acknowledgement that they've achieved across a range of things, academic qualifications but also applied ones – all kids, and that'll be fantastic, but in the course of those discussions with them we've got something called the Harrow deployment – Harrow School has this deployment which is exactly the same as we've been trying to get, which acknowledges a breadth of accomplishments so that it's quite similar really to what we hope our professional baccalaureate will be, except that it hasn't got any applied certification. (1:1, David Toye, Head Teacher, 5 December 2011)

Rather than challenge a system which is imbued with inequitable outcomes for young people from less advantaged backgrounds, David's position-taking embodies a deeply engrained discourse within the modernising reform agenda, that is the "entrenched prestige" of the private school system which has "produced a persistent devaluing of alternative…versions of excellence" (Edwards and Whitty, 1997, p. 10).

What is of note here is that in order to address these perceived inequalities, David reveals how such a discourse is increasingly legitimated by his actions, in

considering that the approach to address such issues within the education system relies on the privatisation of the state sector through policies such as the Academies Act, which enable schools to adopt reforms which more closely align them to the approach to education perceived to be the dominant domain of the private school sector, that is the successful preparation of students for entry into the employment market.

The neoliberal doxa is such that increasingly the best model for educational provision is through the creation of more 'independently funded state schools'. Such position-taking reveals the depth of the re-articulation of the values and purposes of education in line with the economising nature of the neoliberal doxa, and illustrates how the game is now framed along these lines. The lack of alternatives as highlighted by the data in the previous section works within the confines of a field whose boundaries have been re-drawn to further endorse the restrictive capacities of alternate localised responses.

Alongside this localised position-taking, the school's location within the constituency of the Member of Parliament who holds a senior position in the UK Cabinet was also discussed by David, Gareth and a number of staff, as to how and why the Professional School concept had received approval from the Department for Education at the speed at which it had. The accumulation of previously acquired capital, for example, through the localised enactment of the Specialist Schools programme, undoubtedly contributed to David's success in developing and gaining high profile attraction to the model. Yet the role of this MP and Cabinet minister in helping to co-ordinate the networking involved in bringing together a number of powerful policy actors in order to push the agreement through the necessary channels was significant because it further legitimated the development of the Professional School concept by bestowing additional symbolic capital through the involvement of high profile actors with not insignificant levels of influence and power within the field of educational policy. In the same interview, I asked David directly to explain the relationship with the MP and Cabinet Minister and the role that he had played thus far in supporting the school through the application process with the Department for Education:

> *Is that relationship something that's been developed as you've developed the idea of a Professional School?*

> I took the idea to him originally

That was the first contact you made with the government?

Yes, it was through him, he was the one that routed it through to [name of Parliamentary Under Secretary of State]. He was in on Friday. He was with the kids for about half an hour, and about 20 minutes with the Chair of Governors. One of our industrial partners is the [name of a national business support group], which is the biggest employers' organisation for small and medium sized businesses. And by random chance is based in Kingswood. It's a pure historical accident it's based here. They're one of our partners in the Professional School, and the guy who's the chief executive by the end of this afternoon is going to be one of our governors. Which I'm really pleased with that, he's really enthusiastic about what we do, so he came to the meeting with [MP] and said what we were doing is truly brilliant and all schools should be doing it. It's exactly what they've been lobbying government for forever what schools should be doing so what we've got is an agreement that [MP] will meet with us, we haven't got much time because he was seeing the kids, so this is where it is possible for us to have half an hour but the next time we'll come down to London, because when he comes up here he's always massively pressed for time because he has to get as many photo opportunities in different parts of the constituency as possible. So he said yes that was possible and he would bring an education minister so I've got all sorts of devious schemes that would take me too long to explain, with this Professional School. I am very wedded to it, certainly for this school, but I think it's something all schools should be doing. (1:1, David Toye, Head Teacher, 29 May 2012)

Unequivocally, David acknowledges that the MP and Cabinet Minister's involvement had been pivotal in securing meetings both with powerful policy actors in government but also in engaging local influential players to become actively involved in the development of the Professional School by appointing people such as the Chief Executive of the [national business support group] on the Board of Governors. Such meetings, as described by David, serve to further legitimate his localised enactments of the national policy agenda by securing approval from these influential actors and through the agreement given by MP and Cabinet Minister to 'bring an education minister' to further meetings. The parallels between the way in which David has utilised the capital available to him through the development of these influential relationships and the way in which he discussed the need for state funded education to exploit localised connections in embedding an employability agenda into curriculum reform is marked.

The power of having such a high profile political figure involved in the development of Kingswood Academy's re-organisation was remarked upon by six members of staff during interviews. In particular, Gareth, the deputy, spoke at length about David's exploitation of this contact, and how such a relationship had helped to

accelerate the process of approval from the Department for Education, commenting in one interview: "its speed, it's been amazing; I've never known anything move so quickly in terms of working with government in particular". Gareth went on to explain why he considers such networks have been influential in gaining both approval for the model and the speed at which such approval was gained:

> *What do you think it is about the proposed new structure of the Professional School, you obviously could have turned into an academy without any problem whatsoever, so what is the facet of the structural change that would need their agreement, what is it about it?*
>
> We could have done it without but then what we wouldn't then have got is the associate membership with the trust, which then has one by one opened door after door. Without it, it could have taken us five years to get it known about by which point there would have been thinking that that's what we would be doing anyway. But this has just gone very, very quickly because each person David has met, it isn't happening anywhere else … and people aren't going to go to university and employers get increasing rattled by basic skills, soft skills of kids, so it's just tapping into everything all at the right time. Which is why it's grown so much I think…Everything and everyone that is successful often depends around a number of factors hitting at the same time and in that there's either an element of fate or luck, don't really know which it is, but at this point somebody decided that all these factors came together and he's just storming ahead. You know, it's being taken really seriously by some very high profile people. Which is good. (1:1, Gareth Andrews, Deputy Head, 12 December 2011)

As with David, the involvement and approval of these 'very high profile people' is presented by Gareth as a legitimating force. The ideology behind the Professional School is presented as common sense, the shifts in the fields of higher education and the youth employment market, along with David's disposition towards autonomy, are taken for granted, that such a model of embedding employability skills into the curriculum is such an obvious development for the structure of state funded education that all schools are likely to be working in such a way within a few years. The support of the MP and Cabinet Minister thus serves to reinforce this position-taking, regardless of the fact that none of the high profile individuals that had been mentioned thus far were educational professionals, or involved in educational policy-making was not discussed, or seen as problematic in anyway. In fact, Gareth was very explicit that David's engagement with the MP and Cabinet Minister was a pragmatic approach that exploited the capital necessary to develop the provision, but that it was an arrangement that saw both men acting as 'canny operators':

You use everything you need don't you, to move an idea forward and David's just been pragmatic all the way through this. Like with the use of [MP name] as well. [MP name] is a canny operator. (1:1, Gareth Abrahams, Deputy Head, 1 June 2012)

Gareth went on to state further how he considered the relationship to be mutually beneficial between the two men:

What do you feel about David's relationship with [MP name]?

It's pragmatic.

That's a very political answer. It's interesting that I spoke to him earlier this week and I saw [MP name] was here at school and obviously here because of the developments and changes that the school is making. Is that how you view it?

Yes, and I'm not sure how David views it, I'm not sure if he would tell you how he views it, if *[MP name]* hadn't made the right noises, in Whitehall, to the right people, this wouldn't have gone anywhere.

Do you think?

Because essentially, what we are doing is fundamentally sound, and it's where schools are going to be in three years' time, David is just tapped into something very early I think…(because of these people) it's kind of just snow balled. So *[MP name]* is being used, but then no doubt at some point *[MP name]* will want to be associated with it if it does grow really big so, *[MP name]* is not stupid. He knows that there is political gain in it if things go well.

Why do you think it wouldn't have gone anywhere without that sort of high-powered support?

Because civil servants, my perception, don't let things through unless they think the minister wants to know about them and so I think it would have just got lost, in a pile of stuff they get day in and day out and a vast majority of letters come from MP's don't come from them, they sign off, so that's principally the reason, the capacity of the service. I think 'Yes Minister' is a caricature of what it's like. (1:1, Gareth Abrahams, Deputy Head, 1 June 2012)

Gareth's position-taking reveals how David's strategising has enabled Kingswood Academy to move into a dominant position within the field of educational policy-making: that is, by predicating the localised enactment of the privatised policy agenda through the development of the Professional School upon the legitimating presence of *[MP name]* and colleagues. Another member of staff also commented upon David's strategic manoeuvring of engaging with powerful players within the policy game:

> So everything that David's done has been or had a one step ahead of where everybody else seems to be. And given that he's had all these meetings with high-powered people clearly people see something in him. And I'm not aware and he's not aware of any other school thinking of doing things in this particular way. So, theoretically it should be a rip roaring success. (1:1, Adam Lee, Head of Student Achievement, Year Group, 2 February 2012)

The capital acquired in previous struggles, revealed through David's professional habitus of appearing to be "one step ahead of the game" and through his strategising approach of engaging powerful policy actors within the game to further legitimate the moves being made, has contributed to a logic of practice in which staff such as Gareth and Adam Lee reveal a professional illusio, acknowledging the stakes at play (playing but keeping ahead in and of the privatisation game), and the necessary position-taking in order to be successful players within that game:

> Thus we have *stakes (enjeux)* which are for the most part the product of the competition between players. We have an *investment in the game, illusio* (from *ludus*, the game): players are taken in by the game, they oppose one another, sometimes with ferocity, only to the extent that they concur in their belief *(doxa)* in the game and its stakes; they grant these a recognition that escapes questioning. Players agree, by the mere fact of playing, and not by way of a 'contract', that the game is worth playing, that it is 'worth the candle', and that this *collusion* is the very basis of their competition. (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 98, original emphases)

It is important that David's strategising is not viewed as an individual being "power hungry" (Thomson, 2010, p. 10), the neoliberal doxa of autonomy pervades the logic of practice at the local level, thus "the disposition for autonomy is not simply that of the headteacher but is integral to the field of education" (p. 13). The interest and support from *[MP name]* and other key policy players thus serves to re-legitimise the schools position taking within the field, because of the way the school has manifestly conceptualised the neoliberal policy complex in which autonomy is being used to deliver the policy imperatives of economic productivity (and academic performativity), and which are located as fundamental outcomes of education. Thomson points out that:

> Headteachers are literally disposed to act in the interests of their schools – that is to maintain its/their relative position in the field, and to advance it if possible, and to ensure that students can use the capitals accrued in the school to maintain their pre-existing social and economic positions if not advance them. The actions that headteachers take – the strategies that they adopt, which feel completely natural to them – are also in their own interests … The quest for more and more freedom is a necessary positional disposition, which drives agent's actions (their practice) to shore up position (school, self, students) and to play for the achievement of new distinctions and position. (Thomson, 2010, p. 14)

David is involved in an explicitly political game. The strategies he has employed in exploiting the networks available to him are political, and as such the processes of localised policy-making have developed to conform to the logic of field in which distinction is achieved by seizing the opportunities within the field to both align and protect the school's interests within the neoliberal policy complex. Ball *et al*. (2012a, p. 45) state "interpretation is an institutional political process, a strategy, a 'genre chain', a process of explanation, elucidation and creation of an institutional agenda"; at Kingswood, the institutional agenda is deeply associated with the neoliberal policy complex, both through the way in which the school delivers the standards and performativity agenda and the way it is involved in constructing a future which is positioned as unique and necessary within a competitive marketplace. Bourdieu posits that game playing such as this reveals:

> The sense of good investment [which] dictates a withdrawal from outmoded, or simply devalued, objects, places or practices and a move into ever newer objects in an endless drive for novelty. (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 249)

What the data suggest is that the symbolic economy in the field of education policy awards prizes of distinction to those schools who walk to the beat of the neoliberal drum, and that this discourse pervades and indeed is internalised by key players of at the local level:

> It's a good thing for the school in gross self interest marketing terms, because the school needs some sort of unique selling point, it's always had that because when most schools had very, very restricted choices for kids, we had a very sophisticated choice framework in the options because that, when the national curriculum sort of folded at Key Stage 4, everyone else went down that route so what was a big unique selling point for us disappeared, *this gives us that*. (1:1, David Toye, Head Teacher, 29 May 2012)

David's positioning reveals how his actions accord to the prevailing doxa in the field of the neoliberal policy complex, that distinction is a necessity and is indeed a common sense approach to developing localised responses to the national policy agenda. That the schools institutional agenda is distinct was illustrated in the way some staff members talked about the changes, such as Adam Lee:

> […] we're at the cutting edge of where schools are at nationally... It's an exciting time to be here. It feels like the beginning of something that could be growing arms and legs and could become a model for other schools around the country. (1:1, Adam Lee, Head of Student Achievement, 2 February 2012)

Kingswood Academy has successfully achieved distinction in the field; the rationale for this form of distinction is deeply embedded within the neoliberal doxa, in that staff such as Adam position the development of the school's localised policy trajectory as a legitimated form of symbolic capital necessary in playing the game successfully. Thomson posits:

> Bourdieu suggested that a doxa works as misrecognition; doxic narratives deliberately obfuscate how the game (re)produces social inequality through the (re)production of the hierarchy of positions and capitals. Furthermore, he suggested, the doxa provides a teleological rationale through which failure is able to be attributed to poor playing, rather than the nature of the game itself. (Thomson, 2005, p. 746)

Thus, the nature of the game as it has been conceptualised at Kingswood is related to striving to achieve distinction within the neoliberal policy complex rather than critically engaging with what is actually at stake, that is, the fragmentation of alternative and democratic approaches to the development of localised schooling structures.

6.6 Summary

In this chapter I have drawn on data produced with the head teacher, as well as members of the senior leadership team, in order to illustrate that that the localised interpretation and enactment of the Academies Act 2010 must be viewed within a context of capital exchange, in which the stakes are high for schools to not only be recognised as legitimate, but also to attempt to achieve distinction in the field. Within the neoliberal policy complex, autonomy and diversity have been located as centrally desired policy goals, which I have argued are reflective of successive government's commitment to the privatisation of public services.

Kingswood provides a very good example through which to theorise the "disciplinary framework" of the neoliberal policy complex in which schools' position-taking illustrates the strength of the privatising discourse (Gewirtz, 2002, p. 19). Bourdieu's thinking tools of capital, habitus and field have been particularly important in enabling me to develop an analysis which demonstrates that effective game playing is viewed as a necessary strategy for a head teacher, and that playing for positional advantage through a process of capital exchange contributes to the entrenchment of

the neoliberal doxa in how staff, students and school leaders position-take and consider they are required to position-take within such competitive field conditions.

The data revealed that 'canny' strategising from the head teacher by engaging in a process of high profile networking served to strengthen the perceived legitimacy of the school's enactment of the privatisation agenda, and the institutional and personal support of the majority of the staff was further evidence of this. Such position-taking reveals a commitment to playing the game as it is structured through legislative interventions aimed at shoring up the autonomy and diversity discourses within the neoliberal policy complex. At the end of the chapter, I argued that such position-taking reveals a misrecognition as to the impact of the game on thinking and doing things differently, in ways which may challenge the discourses of autonomy and diversity within the neoliberal policy complex, which do much to keep (re)producing the inequitable nature of the game.

The following chapter will focus on this point in more detail by synthesising the data drawn from Chapters 4, 5 and 6 in order to answer the research questions set out at the start of this thesis and to demonstrate how the doxa of misrecognition works to (re)produce educational advantage and disadvantage both amongst students within the school, but also between schools.

Chapter 7: Interruptions, opportunities and threats: discussing localised school policymaking in a time of rapid reform

7.1 Introduction

Throughout this thesis I have deployed the term neoliberal policy complex in order to think through the ways in which neoliberal political and economic macro-structures contribute to shaping agency and ultimately practice at the local level. The purpose of this chapter is to summarise how the data and subsequent analyses presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 have contributed to the development of the neoliberal policy complex as a means of understanding the multi-layered and multifaceted relationship between structure and agency in the development and enactment of localised policy-making, and how such a nexus both positions actors and requires position-taking from actors as a result of this process.

In order to do this, the chapter will start by outlining the key analyses from Chapters 4, 5 and 6. After which I will illustrate how these analyses address the first and second research questions presented in Chapter 1 of the thesis: firstly, *What is localised policy-making and how do agency and structure interplay within such processes*?; and secondly, *How do different actors within the school position themselves or consider they are positioned in relation to the development and enactment of localised policy processes*?

The remainder of the chapter will then provide an opportunity to address the third research question, *How do external policy demands interplay and structure the development and enactments of localised policy processes and what effect does this have on the positioning of different actors in the school?* In answering this final question, it is possible to "make explicit the forms of misrecognised symbolic power (i.e. *doxa*) that underpin the implicit logic of practice, expectations and relations of those operating" within the field of Kingswood Academy (Deer, 2008, p. 122). By doing so the tensions inherent in developing localised policy processes within the neoliberal policy complex are revealed, providing significant insights into understanding the regulatory conditions under which localised policy-making is

developed and enacted and the ways in which Bourdieu's thinking tools have been useful in thinking through these issues. At this point it will also be possible to summarise the ways in which the findings in the study have contributed to the development of the neoliberal policy complex as a framework for understanding the inherent complexities involved in localised policy-making. This will then lead to the final chapter, in which the contribution to knowledge will be explicitly stated along with suggestions for further research into the area of localised policy-making.

7.2 Analysis so far

At the start of this thesis I stated that the aim of the research was to provide an empirical account of localised policy-making, and to explain how and why certain policy processes are engaged with, prioritised and re-articulated through the use of the neoliberal policy complex. At the heart of this investigation is an interest in the ways in which actors within the research site are positioned and position-take in response to powerful discourses which are rooted in the commitment to a marketised education system by successive governments, legislatively embodied and codified particularly by the ERA of 1988 and the Academies Act 2010. The ambition is to reveal the relationship between agency and structure within this modernising reform context, and to understand how processes of capital exchange result in the positioning and position-taking of different actors imbued with different levels of capital.

Chapter 2 mapped the development of the neoliberal policy complex and provided an explanation as to how Bourdieu's thinking tools enabled me to investigate localised policy-making within this environment. The chapter then outlined why studies into localised policy-making matter, not least because it is essential for empirical work to uncover local processes within these broader socio–political contexts (Power, 1995). This then enabled me to set up Kingswood as the site of research into localised policy-making, as a means to investigate the relationship between agency and structure, and micro and macro power relations. Chapter 3 subsequently laid out the research design, which led into Chapter 4 and the first set of empirical findings, focussing on how student participants position their sense of

self and construct their learner identities in relation to powerful discourses concerned with academic performativity and economic productivity, embodied within the neoliberal policy complex.

In Chapter 4 I argued that the domination of the neoliberal doxa within the logics of practice produced field conditions in which the symbolic capital at stake in 'playing the game', as framed at both the governmental and local levels, squeezed out alternative spaces of resistance for some of the student participants. The main findings were as follows:

- The purposes and outcomes of schooling are closely aligned to academic performativity and economic productivity, which structure the logics of practice within the field of the school and are packaged as a means to a 'successful' end for all children within the schooling field.

- Within the schooling field symbolic capital is staked in the form of grade distribution, which has been framed by the standards and accountability agenda, as embodied through the A-C economy. This was evident in the development and enactment of localised policy processes and social practices relating to attainment, as discussed by some of the student participants in particular with regards to assessment procedures (target setting) and organisational approaches (ability setting).

- The centralised location of attainment within localised policy processes was evident within the school's policy documentation, linking the symbolic capital of grade attainment with the probability of future success. This restrictive position is reflective of the dominance of the disciplinary framework of the neoliberal policy complex, in which human capital approaches to schooling are at the forefront of centralised educational reform.

- The resultant position-taking of students of working class and lower attainment backgrounds reflected the limited institutional space to reject or re-articulate such dominant and thus legitimated policy processes, learner habitus was revealed to be both affected by and a product of performativity policies. Thus students played the game in order to try and accumulate the requisite capital valued within the schooling field.

- Agency and constraint operated through micro level transactions, revealing that whilst students were active agents within teaching and learning situations, localised policy processes, structured by the powerful discourses embodied within the neoliberal policy complex, served to constrain the alternative spaces available to these students to re-imagine or re-articulate their position within the schooling field.

Thus, these findings indicate that the neoliberal policy complex pervades localised policy processes at the school level by creating field conditions in which students are positioned, and position-take in ways which illustrate the dominance of strategies relating to academic performativity as a means to economic productivity. Such positions are relatable to the doxic experience of schooling by these students, who have internalised these neoliberal discourses into their learner identity and as such seemingly accept the dominance of such discourses in how they engage with schooling as a process of symbolic capital accumulation.

Chapter 5 moved from the analyses offered as a result of data collected from the student participants to analyses of data relating to how teachers positioned themselves and considered localised policy processes positioned them. I argued that strong professional cultures had been developed at the local level as a means to ameliorate some of the more restrictive elements of the neoliberal policy complex on professional practice, meaning that large numbers of staff considered that, within the disciplinary framework of the standards agenda, they still had high levels of autonomy and trust meted out to them through localised policy processes and for which they displayed high levels of loyalty and trust in leadership decision-making in return. As a result there was a tacit recognition that the success of the school rested in no small part on the top down approach of implementing organisational and structural reforms, in response to the competitive demands of the neoliberal policy complex, but on the school's own terms, and for which staff were supportive in recognition of the need to play the game in maintaining the school's position in the schooling field. The main findings from this chapter were as follows:

- The neoliberal policy complex has set up field conditions in which teachers as technicians are expected to deliver the national standards agenda through performativity mechanisms that are designed to establish a logic of

practice in which efficiency, effectiveness and productivity are deemed the hallmarks of success.

- However, teacher agency plays an important role in the day to day practices of teaching and learning through the co-production of localised policy processes, an explicit strategy of the head teacher, and one which appears to ameliorate some of the more restrictive elements embodied within the neoliberal policy complex.

- The operational management of learning centres as semi-autonomous subfields within the school contributed to the building of strong professional cultures, with high numbers of staff holding dual responsibility, which were aimed at supporting and harnessing expertise of teaching staff, and the attendant autonomy developed as a result of this was viewed as an essential element within this process.

- Through the development of data-tracking software, staff acknowledge the legitimated position of an audit culture on the work of teachers, which locates the symbolic capital embodied within such systems as a necessary element of professional and pedagogic regulation within the schooling field.

- Academy conversion, the development of the Professional School concept and the English Baccalaureate were revealed as necessary and legitimate interventions in order to accumulate necessary symbolic capital to maintain a competitive market position despite reduced professional capacity in some instances.

- Overwhelming support for the head teacher's development of the Professional School concept was an assumptive position shared by all but one of the staff, in which the purposes of schooling were tightly associated with economic productivity defined by entry into the labour market, revealing a logic of practice in which the neoliberal policy complex has produced an orthodoxy of what school is for.

Thus, teacher position-taking and positioning in response to localised policy processes reveals the complexity of the relationships that exists between agency

and structure – on the one hand, the field of the school has created conditions in which teachers agency is highly regarded and encouraged, and yet on the other, that the sway of powerfully influential external policy interventions on the schooling field, whilst developed on the school's own terms, still pervaded the logics of practice of teachers' work with regards to the English Baccalaureate. These interventions have contributed to the way in which teachers framed the purposes of education with regards to the academy conversion and the development of the Professional School concept.

Chapter 6 outlined the ways in which the head teacher, supported by his school leadership team, has engaged with the opportunities and interruptions made available to them through key national policy agendas within the neoliberal policy complex. The argument developed within the chapter outlines the significance of the professional dispositions of the head teacher in developing a logic of practice which endorses the neoliberal doxa; in playing the game, the school is taking legitimate action and accumulating the necessary symbolic capital in order to survive within a quasi-market place. The main findings from this chapter were as follows:

- The localised adoption, translation and negotiation first of the SSP and subsequently the Academies Act illustrates the head teacher's emergence as an effective player within the symbolic economy of the field of educational policy.

- The focus on employability skills as the driver for significant organisational re-structuring and provider of additional symbolic capital is reflective of the head teacher's interest in and commitment to sustaining a high profile for the school through professional practices and engagement in networks associated with various policy initiatives.

- A process of acculturation took place through which the head teacher strategised and used recruitment to reproduce centrally and locally desired policy goals by appointing staff that fit with a culture that supported professional trust and licensed autonomy, but also supported 'risky decision making'.

- Risk was actually inferred as a factor in *not* making the decision to convert and develop the Professional School, the 'risk' being left behind in the game. Instead, the head teacher exploited opportunities and networks to achieve distinction within the field, on his own terms, and thus legitimate and secure the schools position within the neoliberal policy complex.

- Therefore, what is legitimate and the relative value of symbolic capitals are altered – field participants, such as the head teacher, who are imbued with dispositions and active strategising, anticipate the importance of policy interventions, respond by utilising their accumulated symbolic capital and draw on their experiences in order to shift their field position and continue to occupy a desirable position – i.e., a legitimated and legitimising position.

Drawing these three strands together, the main outcomes of the study can be summarised as follows:

- Within the neoliberal policy complex autonomy and diversity are positioned as a baseline for achieving distinction, which in turn have shaped the logic of the schooling field, which has increasingly responded to the privatisation agenda as constructed within the neoliberal policy complex.

- Distinction is positioned as possible to achieve through differentiation – whether this is through targets and ability setting, or the re-structuring of provision enabled and shored up by marketing and strategising.

- The development of business alliances is positioned as enabling of achieving distinction in a way that collaboration through traditional networks provided by the local authority is not. It is through developing a network of relationships with business that the school's future is constructed

- Localised policy-making is deeply associative with the stratified and hierarchical conditions created within the neoliberal policy complex, and as such indicates that the field of the school, and the agentic position-taking within, is structured in response to the powerful discourses that form the 'disciplinary framework' under which schools are expected to operate.

- By doing so, many of the actors in the school are engaging with a process of *misrecognition* in responding to policy discourses within the field of power as legitimate action, without critically engaging with what is actually at stake, that is the fragmentation of alternative responses for the 'successful' school as a result of the dominance of the neoliberal policy complex.

This final point will be expanded in Section 7.4; however, the following section will first develop the points stated here in order to answer the research questions set out at the start of this thesis in a detailed and synthesised manner.

7.3 Synthesising the findings: addressing the research questions

1. ***What is localised policy-making and how do agency and structure interplay within such processes?***

Localised policy-making is used to refer to the operationalising of processes undertaken by individual schools in response to ongoing changes in macro-legislative frameworks as well as locally derived need. Within a centrally regulated system such as England, such legislative frameworks provide powerful and influential structures within which schools are expected to operate; yet space does exist for individual schools to develop responses through localised policy processes, allowing agentic action to engage with the peculiarities of a specific and contingent context (Lingard, 2009; Ball *et al*., 2012a, 2012b). In this sense localised policy-making is about agenda setting within a specific context and delivering on that agenda, albeit through the tightly bound and regulating nature of the neoliberal policy complex, in which delivering on the standards, performativity and accountability agendas are contextualised within legislative interventions that locate autonomy and diversity as centrally desired policy goals. I follow Ball and colleagues (2011, p. 637) in understanding localised policy-making, although often messy, contradictory and sprawling, as "strategic and tactical, relational, and productive". In this sense understanding what localised policy-making is requires the acknowledgment that there may exist a logic of practice in which a wide range of processes interact at any given time, that can be related to the development, translation, and enactment of policy. Whilst this is the case, it is still possible to draw

out of the data two dominant processes at play, which shape the logics of practice of localised policy-making at the school.

At Kingswood, localised policy making appeared to have two inter-related strands, both tied into the development of organisational purpose within the framework of the neoliberal policy complex. The first strand reflects the structural development of the role that learning centres play in mediating the development of policy relating to the day-to-day processes of teaching and learning. In this sense localised policy-making is about encouraging teachers to play an active role in working collaboratively with colleagues in and across learning centres to develop feedback on policies relating to assessment, behaviour management, homework and lesson planning, amongst others. The number of staff at Kingswood with additional or dual responsibilities at a learning centre and whole school level was significant (17 out of 21 interviewed), and it thus appeared that through these dual responsibilities, teaching staff took seriously the opportunities afforded to contribute to and co-produce aspects of localised policy-making.

The driving force behind this approach, it seemed, was that through the active engagement of staff in the development of these policies followed the carving of a strong professional culture, in which staff felt valued and trusted. Alongside this staff were given 'limited' autonomy to engage with the enactment of such policies, which was highly appreciated by the participants within the study, and appeared to ameliorate some of the more restrictive elements of the neoliberal policy complex. Fundamentally, localised policy-making in this sense was committed to developing a logic of practice in which collaborative input was required in order to produce field conditions in which staff delivered on the core organisational purposes of raising attainment.

The second strand of localised policy-making evident in the data was the top down approach taken by the head teacher and supported by his leadership team, which related directly to agenda-setting in response to the legislative, economic, political and ideological structures being constructed within the neoliberal policy complex. This strand was about the perceived requirements of a "good" school, led by an "innovative" head teacher, keeping one step ahead of the game, and for which he enjoys "a very high degree of support" (Ofsted, 2011, p. 8).

In this sense localised policy-making particularly speaks to Ball and colleagues' (2011) assertion that such a process is "strategic and tactical" (p. 637). Localised policy-making reveals the role that David's disposition, "acquired through experience", plays in revealing his "feel for the game", allowing successful manoeuvring through the development of effective strategic and tactical moves in order to maintain and secure a place within the field of power (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 9). In order to do this successfully, the policy interventions developed at the local level speak directly to the central tenets embodied within the neoliberal policy complex: that is, the necessity to respond to the requirement for efficient, productive and competitive approaches to educational provision.

This is true because, as Gewirtz (1997, p. 218) argues, policies "represent responses to structural problems of the state", and as such, schools operating within the neoliberal policy complex are positioned in both media and political rhetoric as being responsible in delivering interventions which address these constructed problems, which predominantly focus upon the need to develop a schooling system which utilises the freedom granted through legislative interventions codified by the ERA 1988 and the Academies Act 2010 to produce outcomes associated with the standards agenda (Glatter, 2012). The successes through which schools produce such outcomes relates to their place within the hierarchy of the field of power and as such, in Kingswood's case, have become central to the processes of localised policy-making.

Importantly, neither strand of localised policy-making involves the students. Whilst the school has a school parliament through which student representatives may stake a claim in response to certain issues that are deemed central to their schooling experience (for example, vending machines, and in the past, bullying policy – see Gunter and Thomson, 2006), they were absent from the main frame of developing localised policies, although they are of course central in the delivery of such policies. This leads me to address the second part of Research Question 1, which asks: *how do agency and structure interplay with processes of localised policy making*?

Gewirtz and Cribb (2009) make a salient point in critiquing the different ways in which the sociology of education has constructed a response to the dichotomy of the relationship between structure and agency in schooling processes. They argue that structure and agency are "two sides of the same coin" (Gewirtz and Cribb,

2009, p. 32), because inherent within the dichotomy is a tension which acknowledges that both structure and agency make up the 'social' within society and thus one cannot be considered without due consideration to the effect and response of the other. In this critique there is constructed an "interpenetration" of structure and agency, which speaks directly to Bourdieu's notions that with empirical weighting the application of the thinking tools of field, habitus and capital may be useful in offering a multi-dimensional understanding of the relationship between structure and agency, overcoming the implicit binary that such a construct has so often reflected in sociological work (Jenkins, 1992).

My research at Kingswood revealed that it was through a complex set of arrangements that structure and agency interpenetrated one another in the development of localised policy processes. So, the students, whilst acknowledging that some of their peers were part of a structured process (the school parliament) that allowed access to contributions regarding localised policy processes, were in fact passive players within the development process and thus the structures which framed such processes. This shifted when in the classroom, however, as they became active agents in constructing learning with their peers and their teachers. The student voices that made up the majority of Chapter 4 illustrated that their learner subjectivities revealed their associative positioning of relating their place in the school with structures borne out of localised policy processes – predominately those relating to attainment, through ability and target setting.

In these stories it was revealed that the students framed their agency around structures developed as part of the neoliberal policy complex, and in this sense had limited agency in thinking and acting in alternative or unorthodox ways. In this respect the interpenetration of structure and agency relates to the limitations that the former can exert on the latter when operating within a centrally regulating and restrictive framework, as constructed by the neoliberal policy complex.

With regards to the teaching staff I spoke to and observed in practice, their agentic action within the processes of localised policy-making was much more marked; spaces had been created through the development of a logic of practice in which their agency was constructed as an essential element in the structuring of policy with regards to their professional practice. In this sense the trust and ownership and autonomy that were discussed by participants in interviews relating to policy processes revealed the strength of such values in creating field conditions in which

the staff were supported and encouraged in the interpenetration of structure and agency. Teachers were positioned as active agents in the process of the day-to-day reality of policy enactment within their classrooms on the micro level and their learning centres at the meso level. However, the logics of practice within this relationship were still essentially framed by the performativity expectations embodied within the neoliberal policy complex. In this way, agency and structure worked together to produce sets of dispositions, which foresaw the construction of teachers' work within policy processes as associative with the standards agenda, thus contributing to the neoliberal doxa that was evident in the overwhelming support for the development of the Professional School concept.

With regards to policy developments relating to the 2010 Academies Act, the extent to the head teacher's agency was relatable to the field conditions was structured by the neoliberal policy complex. Thus, whilst displaying 'entrepreneurial agency' in the development of policy that would ultimately serve to accumulate necessary symbolic capital to maintain a legitimate and distinct position within the field of power, his agency revealed how powerful the structured structures of the neoliberal policy complex were in shaping his strategic and tactical responses to the "problems" constructed by the state (Gewirtz, 1997, p. 218). I will develop this point when responding to the third research question in Section 7.3; what is necessary to point out here is that even at the top of the hierarchy within the field of the school, it is evident that the interpenetration between agency and structure informs the development of localised policy processes through the expectations developed as a part of the neoliberal policy complex.

2. *How do different actors within the school position themselves in relation to the development and enactment of localised policy processes?*

The data reveal the multi-dimensional ways in which social actors within the school considered they were positioned and subsequently position-took in response to localised policy processes. This multi dimensionality is reflective of the complex and "hybrid" nature of policy processes being played out in the field of the school (Ball *et al*., 2012a, p. 7). The policy processes and enactments that were discussed, in the course of the research, with the students around behaviour, uniform, ability and target setting, and with the teachers around the structured structures in which their professional practices interlaced with the development and enactment of policies relating to the standards agenda, reflect the hybrid and complex nature of policy

processes and illustrate the difficulty in producing singular accounts of how these processes ultimately position these actors.

In recognition that there is no singular expression that can effectively capture how teachers and students in the research considered they were positioned by an array of overlapping and interconnected policies, it is possible to tentatively suggest that there is a common experience running through the accounts presented, that all of the respondents spoke in terms which revealed the extent to which the neoliberal policy complex contributes to the existence of the neoliberal doxa, through which values associated with the complex were cited, either directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, as core to the way in which position-taking occurred in the field of the school (Gewirtz, 2002, p. 3).

The positioning of actors by policy processes is inherently linked to a set of values that have come to represent the core functionalities of what schools have been constructed to be, which has been developed at the macro level of the neoliberal policy complex, and which structures the field conditions in the school: the privileging of certain knowledges and capitals which subsequently become orthodoxy within the participants' accounts. Students like Jack and Ted, Lauren and Paul, revealed that their position-taking was deeply associative of the standards agenda, and their sense of self worth was measured against the symbolic capital at stake in their interactions with schooling processes. For some of the teachers it was the values embedded within the neoliberal policy complex that revealed deep tensions in the way in which they position-took (for example, the way in which so many outwardly supported academisation, yet had to reconcile this as contingent pragmatism in order to stay one step ahead of the game) and were positioned (for example, the competition between subjects brought into the school as a result of the English Baccalaureate).

The common strand that runs throughout these accounts is the supremacy that policies designed to deliver on the central tenets of the neoliberal policy complex have on the discursive production of positionality within localised policy processes. This is how the "disciplinary framework" as set up in Chapter 2 is so powerful in creating the field conditions through which both agency and structure are ultimately shaped. The values that are dominant are those which are reflective of the symbolic capital at stake, that which it is necessary for social actors to accumulate to maintain

a position within the field of the school and thus contribute to securing the schools on-going position within the schooling field and thus the field of power.

3. How do external policy demands interplay and structure the development and enactments of localised policy processes and what effect does this have on the positioning of different actors in the school?

The significance of drawing on the work of Bourdieu's sociology of education is revealed through the analyses offered thus far, that have emphasised delving "into the deep micro-structures of the social and cultural practices that mediate macro-power structures and individual consciousness" (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009, p. 43). In this respect, it is possible to think of "individual consciousness" as a way of understanding how actors construct the social world they inhabit, through illuminating how the habitus interacts with field conditions to reveal sets of dispositions that to some extent unveil how different actors position themselves within this constructed social space.   Bourdieu argues that such "construction is carried out under structural constraints", meaning that "the mental structures through which they apprehend the social world, are essentially the product of the internalisation of the structures of that world" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 130).

Therefore, in relation to Kingswood as the field in which policy processes contribute a large part to the structuring thereof, it is not surprising that students and teachers within the research position-took and were positioned in direct relation to the values embodied within the neoliberal policy complex that itself plays such a powerful part in structuring the field at the local level. Such positioning reveals the extent to which external policy demands, that is, policies relating to the delivery of the neoliberal policy complex, had within the research site. This was true from the place that attainment had in the development and enactment of policies relating to teaching and learning as discussed by both students and teachers within the research; these policies are intensely associative with the standards agenda as framed by the neoliberal policy complex, to the development of the Professional School concept, which is embodied as the raison d'être for so much of the discursive elements of the neoliberal policy complex.

This was particularly revealed by the way in which the localised adoption of the English Baccalaureate structured the logics of practice within the field by producing

a set of circumstances in which some teachers were positioned directly in competition to each other, as they acknowledged that within such a policy certain subjects embodied within them higher levels of symbolic capital, which were deemed as necessary for the school to accumulate to protect their position within the wider schooling field, due to the symbolic power that external performativity mechanisms such as league tables hold within the field. In this example the codification of the neoliberal policy complex is replete in exposing localised tensions between the personal and professional positioning of individual teachers and the wider considerations that such teachers may hold with regards to the "collective enterprise" of working to produce the most desirable position in the schooling field (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 130).

It is such tensions that were also revealed by the discussions focussing upon the development of the Professional School concept as a direct result of the school's conversion under the Academies Act 2010, as a necessary approach to maintaining a position of 'distinction' within the schooling field. Within the field of power, the codification of the symbolic capital available to 'successful' schools in exercising innovative responses to the 'problems' constructed by the state, through the opportunities available as a result of such legislative framing, are of utmost significance. Bourdieu (1990a, p. 135) suggested, "symbolic relations of power tend to reproduce and to reinforce the power relations that constitute the structure of social space". At Kingswood, this is apparent both through the way in which the development of the Professional School concept was imagined by David and the School Leadership Team and the way in which the idea was powerfully 'sold' to staff as a necessary means of protecting the school's place within the schooling field by responding to the requirements of what good schooling looks like, as structured by the neoliberal policy complex.

Staff were both positioned and position-took in response to the power relations constructed as a result of David's position as a successful head teacher at both the local and national level. The power that David's success held was part of the "politics of recognition" that the neoliberal policy complex is so adept at celebrating (Power and Frandji, 2010). Within this important part of Kingswood's story, David's engagement within the field of educational policy, through the adoptions and translation of the SSP and the Academies Act, revealed his own abilities of acknowledging the significant role that 'recognition' plays within the schooling field.

Through the successful development and enactment of these policy interventions, David accumulated capital which in turn contributed to powerful "symbolic property which gives one a right to share in the profits of recognition" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 135). Within this process, the power of the neoliberal policy complex in structuring the moves that players may take in order to acquire such legitimate capital is revealed; the neoliberal doxa is in full effect in how the moves have been constructed as the only available and most natural response to the need to stay one step ahead of the game. That the game is constructed as such by the players at Kingswood is further attestation of the power that such an analogy has within the schooling field, that is by revealing "choice, competition, efficiency, effectiveness, performativity and productivity" as doxic narratives that shape the way in which schools and the social actors within them construct their place within the schooling field (Gewirtz, 2002, p. 3).

In this respect the codification of the 2010 Academies Act represents "the legal consecration of symbolic capital" which "confers upon a perspective an absolute, universal value, thus snatching it from a relativity that is by definition inherent in every point of view, as a view taken from a particular point in social space" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 136). This position helps to account for the way in which Gareth Abraham's, the deputy head, discussed the conversion to an academy and the attendant development of the Professional School as "what is right, for this school, at this time" and that staff "instinctively" know this (Interview with Gareth Abrahams: date).

In this sense the position taking of staff and students in response to external policy interventions, whether through policies relating to attainment or the conversion of an academy, is about collective recognition in response to what has been constructed as a necessity within the schooling field as a result of the neoliberal policy complex. The symbolic capital accumulated through David's successful negotiation within the field of power, whether during the SSP process or the academy conversion, represents the way in which such capital comes to be both legitimate and legitimising. Bourdieu (1990a, pp. 137-8) argued that "symbolic capital is credit; it is the power granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition". This process was evident in the way in which David positioned the conversion to academy status as the next natural step within the schools evolutionary trajectory as a successful institution that required on-going

legitimation (recognition) in order to make further innovative change at the local level.

Within such a process the position of teachers and students can be argued to be colonised by the discursive elements that structure the neoliberal policy complex as "compliant operatives" (Smyth *et al*., 2001, p. 1). Following these lines agency is reduced, or maybe more accurately restricted, to legitimate action taking place within a centrally regulated structure, as nationally developed by the neoliberal policy complex and locally constructed by the explicit strategic and tactical responses revealed by David's position-taking. Whilst tensions exist between the interplay between these fields, the overarching dominance of the former over the latter appear to obscure space for a 'politics of resistance' (Dale, 1992). In this regard there was very little evidence of the critiquing of the development and enactment of localised policy processes, let alone as a possibility "to obstruct and disrupt macro-structural forces" (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009, p. 42). Instead, 'recognition' was played out in the perceived limitation of doing things differently. That the teacher who felt marginalised and frustrated by policies that positioned her professional subjectivity in competition to others, that the student who felt marginalised by policies that left him 'standing on the bridge', that the deputy head who reserved personal discomfort of the academies policy for seeing it as the only viable option: all spoke of being positioned by policies in ways in which their agency appeared to be restricted by the structures embodied within the neoliberal policy complex. There wasn't recognition that there were alternatives ways of utilising their agency within and in response to these structures, or that such an avenue was worth pursuing. In this sense their 'compliance' speaks to Bourdieu's notion of misrecognition.

7.4 The doxa of misrecognition in localised policy-making

In Chapter 6 I used Thomson's work to illustrate how the doxa of misrecognition works in producing conditions in which agents work to compete for "what is at stake" in the field rather than to look to "change the rules of the game" which "constitute its winning formula and its contribution to the wider mission of the state and the field of power" (Thomson, 2010, p. 16). The data suggests that David has strategised and used his dispositions and knowledges "juridicially guaranteed" in previous struggles

to maintain the school's position in the hierarchy of the field of power, for which an important element is the relationship with the MP and Cabinet Minister, which has been instrumental in pushing the Professional School concept within the Department for Education (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 21). Such positioning carries with it symbolic capital at the local level; students and teachers witness the regular visits to and from London of these high profile policy actors, which in itself lends a certain chord of legitimacy to the proceedings, echoed in accounts from staff such as Adam Lee who considered the "attention from high powered people" looked like the model was likely to be a "rip roaring success" and thus would be rolled out nationally.

The doxa of misrecognition in this respect is deeply anchored to the way in which the Professional School model has been imagined and presented – as a potential for delivering what thus far is missing from state education (that is explicit employability skills) - to the extent that the possibilities abound for replicating this innovative approach to fixing this problem on a national scale. In this respect the doxa of misrecognition reveals the deeply powerful influence between what the private or independent sector does and to what the state sector must aspire.

This position was apparent in the interview with David in which he remarked on the success of the independent sector in "developing the broader dimension of kids' development" which in turns "empowers" these young people in order to succeed in the employment market. In discussing that these schools had "contacts" because they educated the "sons and daughters of captains of industry and captains of politics", David reveals the significance he places upon such aspects of the independent schooling field; at points it feels almost as if he is seduced by such a possibility, because of the doors that such contacts can open to the 'lucky' few.

In Chapter 2 I discussed how the neoliberal policy complex is significant in the way it encourages alliances between powerful interest groups and individuals as a means of delivering on certain policy agendas. In the absence of "the sons and daughters of the captains of industry and captains of politics" at Kingswood, the Professional School concept, shored by the relationship with the MP and Cabinet Minister, appears to represent the possibility of creating such links by encouraging powerful business interests, such as the multi-national bank, the international airport, and the international consultancy firm, to become involved in the development and delivery of the curriculum re-structured around employability skills. This was apparent when I attended a governors' meeting and the chief executive from a local business was

introduced as the newest governor, as well as revealed through a discussion of the possibility of having a business suite sponsored by the multi-national bank, with the suggestion that the sponsorship should be badged as such on the walls of the room.

Within this, the positioning of such alliances for the importance of bringing success to the Professional School project reflects an interesting paradox, which illustrates the way in which the doxa of misrecognition works in providing "a teleological rationale through which failure is able to be attributed to poor playing, rather than the nature of the game itself" (Thomson, 2005, p. 746). Alliances with these powerful interest groups bring a perceived legitimacy to actions deemed as necessary in protecting the school's position in the schooling field. That they have been invited, as part of the proposal, by David and backed by his leadership team, widely supported by the staff, to become involved in the school's development, reveals the importance of the school appearing to develop the school's trajectory on its own terms. David is using the autonomy granted as a result of the 2010 Academies Act to strategise over the sort of alliances he wants to build to make the Professional School a success. The conversion was always positioned as preferable to doing things their own way, rather than waiting to be 'pushed' once the totalising drive of the policy for autonomy took hold, as was predicted by most of the participants within the study. Yet within this matrix of policy-making, the fact that such alliances have been formed reveals that in order to stay one step ahead of the game, David considered it a necessity to involve private business in some capacity in the running of the school, reflected in the appointment of the chief executive to the Board of Governors. Of course, this is only a small contribution, and is not equitable to the role that academy sponsors play in the running of schools forced to convert under the policy (Salokangas, 2013). However, it does suggest that the logics of practice within the field of the school have developed to take account of the need that to be successful and retain a legitimate place within the hierarchy of power, such alliances are a necessity.

In this sense, as Thomson (2005) cogently argues, the doxa of misrecognition lies in the fact that fear of failure is bound up with not playing the game in the right way, rather than with the rules of the game as they have been developed, in my argument, under the aegis of the neoliberal policy complex. In order to deliver on the Professional School concept, the game is framed around using curriculum restructuring to increase the employability skills of students, and presented as an

essential aspect in what the school should be for by the majority of the staff in the research.

The need to do something within the newly codified terrain as a result of the Academies Act 2010, is taken as a given, and failure to take advantage of such game-playing opportunities presented as a non-option. To do nothing would be to fail the students, in the way that the (state sector) education system is framed as failing within the neoliberal policy complex in a way that the private (independent) sector does not. Nowhere did the discussion of the possibility of changing the rules of this game come up, nor the possibility that by playing the game the school was actively engaging in the sorting and selecting of students at the age of 14 into pathways which, fundamentally, would position them as ether 'professional' or other.

Whilst the 'other' stream includes pathways that would enable skills to be developed in the fields of digital technology, performance art and technical employment, as these will be offered as part of the Studio School, set within a different building on the school site, it is the 'Professional' side of the Multi Academy Trust that is most prominent on the school's website, and arguably reflects a hierarchy of the values placed on the traditional and academic subjects offered within this pathway as opposed to those offered in the more vocational options within the Studio School.

This is not to leave unacknowledged that students will have access to a broad range of options, and that this should be seen in some positive light, but it is difficult to reconcile that with the place that policy interventions such as the English Baccalaureate have already had on the field of Kingswood, in highlighting the importance placed on gaining such symbolic capital, and the place that the standards agenda has within localised policy processes.

The notion of misrecognition is about how "the game (re)produces social inequality through the (re)production of the hierarchy of positions and capitals" (Thomson, 2005, p. 746). At Kingswood misrecognition has prevailed in the way in which the policy agenda has focussed upon autonomy as a means to work with private business to deliver on the purposes of education, framed around employability, as a means of keeping ahead of the game within the field of power, rather than around exploring opportunities that may have been available in working together in a collaborative approach with other local schools regarding a collective interest in

renewing or creating a consort of provision based on democratic notions of what delivery of educational provisions in the area could, or should, be.

Instead, the position and capital available to students attending Kingswood is presented as being secure within the hierarchy of the schooling field, and is reflective of the individual and entrepreneurial agency celebrated and rewarded within the neoliberal policy complex. That the development trajectory of the school through localised policy-making at Kingswood may contribute further to the need to stand out, in direct competition with neighbouring provision, rather than in co-operation does not figure within the decision-making process. The disciplinary framework of the neoliberal policy complex structures the field, and the doxic narratives of "choice, competition, efficiency, effectiveness, performativity and productivity" pervade agentic action at all levels (Gewirtz, 2002, p. 3).

Thus, it is the neoliberal policy complex that defines and structures the field, and the strategies to be used within this structure are those reflective of what is deemed to be successful within the complex and this is why the neoliberal policy complex matters – because its hold as a field structure continues to tighten and regulate the strategies available to schools playing to survive within the field itself.

7.5 Re-imagining the purposes of education in a neoliberal policy complex

This study has been concerned with investigating and critically analysing the relationship between structure and agency at Kingswood as defined via processes of localised policy-making. I have argued that there exists a complex interplay between how such a relationship manifests itself within the accounts shared with me from students, teachers, school leaders, governors and parents. This chapter has provided a synthesis as to how the different strands evident in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 can be made sense of when located together in an argument which suggests that it is through processes of capital exchange that the doxa of misrecognition is at its most apparent and powerful.

Whilst there exist many instances of agentic action with regards to the development of policies related to the daily practices of teaching and learning, particularly from the perspective of the teachers, but also from the students, there remains a restrictive counter-balance with regards to the options available to think and do

things differently that challenge or subvert the dominant messages embedded within the neoliberal policy complex. This was most apparent in the strength of opinion regarding the need to convert to an academy in order to develop the Professional School concept as a means of achieving distinction in the field. What ties such position-taking to the complex is the centrality of accumulating symbolic capital as means of achieving such distinction.

Such a theoretical position is significant, not only because it speaks to the conditions in which many schools in England find themselves, but because of what it says about how the future of 'state' education is being constructed. This is important because whilst there are many valuable contributions researching how the field of schooling is being reconstructed at the national, indeed international, level, there exists a paucity of in-depth studies that look to understand what this means to individual schools, and the social actors within them (Maguire *et al*., 2011; Exley, 2012; Glatter, 2012; Hoskins, 2012; Morris, 2012; Wright, 2012; West and Bailey, 2013; Gunter and McGinity, 2014). Such studies are necessary and indeed in urgent need, because as the field is re-configured to blur the lines as to what is meant by public and private, there is not enough empirical evidence being made available to those who *are* engaging in activism as a means to challenge the dominant discourses embodied within the neoliberal policy complex.

Whilst the data from Kingswood suggests that the doxa of misrecognition reveals the conscription of those working in the school into a commitment to developing educational provision that explicitly speaks to an agenda which seeks to create distinct and diverse prototypes of schooling outside of local authority control (and into the hands of 'sponsors'), there are other schools, and school leaders, who do not want to see their future to be constructed in such terms (Pearse, 2012). In this respect Kingswood did not use "the capacities of devolution to enhance local participation and achieve specific community goals" in the way Thomson (2008, p. 10) argues is possible using policy interventions in which autonomy is codified.

However, because of the 'structured structures' within the neoliberal policy complex, it is difficult for those schools to maintain sustained resistance. This is because the legitimacy that is tied up within the symbolic economy of the neoliberal policy complex contributes to conditions in which those schools that have not "efficaciously accumulated" the 'right type' of symbolic capital struggle to be recognised as legitimate (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 98).

This can be seen in the schools that are forced into conversion because, according to the accountability and standards frameworks, they are deemed to be failing and that autonomy (from the state) has been positioned as the only available and thus legitimated action left (Gunter and McGinity, 2014). How autonomy is constructed for schools forced into chains of academies is a question that requires in-depth analysis and which has begun with the work of Salokangas (2013). But it is this particular narrative that matters, because what the research in this thesis illustrates, is that the central, enduring success at Kingswood has been the accumulation of symbolic capital as a means of survival in a competitive quasi-market place that has been recognised as legitimate, in response to central policy agendas, and which has been positioned as such through discursive descriptors in the data, seeing such actions as "innovative", "unique" and necessary to "survive".

The significance of the theorising offered here is that the field of critical policy studies must acknowledge the centrality of capital exchange in how schools are responding to the rapidly changing context in which they are operating. Capital exchange is not an equitable business and as such shines light on the way in which advantage and disadvantage are operationalised in the way in which schools respond (or are forced to respond) locally to agendas embodied within the neoliberal policy complex. While Kingswood is positioning itself and is being positioned, as a 'winner' in such processes, there will ultimately also be losers in such processes.

This research points to the way in which a multiplicity of data from a range of research sites, applying analyses which draw on theories of capital exchange and the interrogation of the complex relationship between structure and agency, could be useful in not only tracking how the structures of the neoliberal policy complex work to restrict position-taking by schools, but produce empirical evidence that would contribute to scholarly activism for those committed to challenging the doxic narratives of neoliberalism in the re-construction of our education system. As remarked in Chapter 2, Apple reminds researchers that such work is important because:

> Too often important questions surrounding the state and social formation are simply evacuated and the difficult problem of simultaneously thinking about both the specificity of different practices and the forms of articulated unity they constitute is assumed out of existence as if nothing existed in structured ways. (Apple, 1996, p. 141)

7.6 Summary

This chapter has illustrated how the data presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 work together in showing how position-taking by social actors at the research site must be seen as part of a wider process of capital exchange, shaped by the conditions created by the neoliberal policy complex, which ultimately reveals how the centralising and hierarchical notions of power work to produce a narrative of misrecognition with regards to how the school must develop localised policy-making in order to remain a viable and legitimate entity in the schooling field.

I have addressed the three research questions set out at the start of this thesis as a way of bringing these strands together to show that localised policy-making positions and requires position-taking from the range of social actors in the research in ways which reveal their commitment to the central structures within the neoliberal policy complex, that is "choice, competition, efficiency, effectiveness, performativity and productivity" (Gewirtz, 2002, p. 3). Such position-taking, I argue, reveals the doxa of misrecognition by predicating that such tenets are relatable to the purposes of what schooling is for, and that such positioning reveals the strength of discourses that place autonomy and the attendant collaboration with business as central to the core organisational purposes of the schooling field. In this argument, the data presented from the participants at Kingswood show that the accumulation of symbolic capital that is recognised as legitimate is at the forefront of the imagery as to what individually and collectively, the students, teachers and school leaders at Kingswood must strive for in order to be successful.

For the students this manifests itself in the way they engage with the A-C economy and the attendant policies that support this, such as ability and target setting. For the teachers it is present in how employability is positioned as a necessary angle to take in the re-structuring of the school's curriculum and provision of the Multi Academy Trust. For the head teacher and his colleagues in the school leadership team it manifests through the way in which such re-structuring is presented as a means of survival in a competitive quasi-market place, along with a belief, from the head teacher in particular, that the state is failing to provide what the private sector manages so successfully: that is, work preparedness for young people entering a crowded and competitive employment market. As a result, alliances with high profile businesses and networks are positioned as necessary in the re-construction of provision at Kingswood as a means of achieving distinction in the field of schooling.

I went on to argue that, as a result, the study is significant because it offers an in-depth ethnographic study that locates the importance of understanding processes of capital exchange in relation to how structure and agency work to produce advantage and disadvantage in the quasi-market place that is the schooling field as imperative in empirical work; this understanding can then be used to challenge the doxa of misrecognition as to the purposes of education along neoliberal lines. The future of state schooling in England is undergoing massive reconstruction and there is a requirement from scholarly, community and parental activists for data that can help in composing alternative narratives to those proffered through the neoliberal policy complex. The way in which the role of the state is constructed as a barrier to success, to be replaced with business and sponsorship in the running of schools requires challenge, and the use of Bourdieu's thinking tools to do this is one of the main contributions within this thesis.

The following and final chapter of the thesis will conclude this contribution to knowledge by explicitly mapping out how this thesis has addressed a gap in the literature with regards to how schools 'do' policy and the implications of this for future research.

Chapter 8: Contributions to the field and directions for future research

8.1 Introduction

The field of policy studies offers a diverse array of empirical and theoretical work that sets out to identify how centralising discourses in the terrain of public policy are interpreted, translated, developed and enacted at the macro, meso and micro levels of school policy-making (Ozga, 2000; Lingard *et al*., 2001; Gewirtz, 2002; Stevenson, 2007; Barker, 2008; Gewirtz and Cribb, 2008; Gunter and Forrester, 2009; Blackmore, 2010; Maguire *et al*., 2011; Exley, 2012; Hoskins, 2012; Ball *et al*., 2012a).

Many of these studies have been instrumental in contributing to the shaping of my own empirical analyses and theoretical constructions within this thesis. In particular, the work of Gewirtz (1997, 2002) has provided a foundation for the development of the concept of a neoliberal policy complex as a framework with which to think through the structural restraints embodied within neo-conservative agendas relating to the development of educational reform. Alongside Gewirtz's (1997, 2002) work I have also drawn on the work undertaken by Ball, Maguire and Braun (2012a; 2012b) amongst others. Therefore, the first section of this chapter will address the ways in which this thesis both speaks to and builds on the work of these scholars in developing a policy scholarship approach to understanding how localised policy-making has positioned and required position-taking by a range of social actors at Kingswood during a period of intense reform.

In this sense, as the previous chapter outlined and synthesised the empirical contribution to knowledge contained within this thesis, the current chapter starts with providing a conceptual contribution to the field. Following Bourdieu (1990a, 1990b), whilst the following section speaks to the literatures, it does not do so in such a way to completely divorce the conceptual contribution to knowledge from the empirical and methodological contribution to knowledge offered thus far; instead, this section

draws together elements from each dimension to offer a clear position with regards to my contribution to the field of policy scholarship. Following on from this, the chapter will then identify an agenda for future research into localised policy-making. Finally, the chapter will provide a brief summarisation of the empirical, methodological and conceptual contributions to the field of policy scholarship in conclusion.

8.2 Contribution to knowledge, speaking to the literatures

The following section summarises the overall arguments made within this thesis and locates them within the key literatures I have used in order to build my analysis. By doing so, the contribution to knowledge with regards to how this research both builds on and extends work in the field of policy scholarship will be made apparent and as such, will illustrate the conceptual contribution to knowledge this research brings to the field.

The dismantling of the welfare state initiated by Thatcher's government and continued by policies under Tony Blair and the Coalition government is a position acknowledged by policy sociologists I have drawn on throughout this thesis (Thomson, 2005). The hegemonic application of neoliberal political, economic and ideological policy formations within public policy accounts for my conceptualisation of a neoliberal policy complex, which has been supported by the theorising I have undertaken drawing on Bourdieu's thinking tools in developing an analysis which looks to synthesise an understanding of the relationships between structure and agency in a rapidly reforming context. The research indicates that this complex, in which the imbrication of neoliberal positioning both is structured by and structures policy responses in the field of educational policymaking at the local level, has been the crux of the empirical findings at Kingswood Academy.

In this regard the conceptualisation and deployment of the neoliberal policy complex is representative of the field of power, as defined by Bourdieu as the "product of the synthesis of the actions of all fields taken together" (Thomson, 2010, p. 749). Through such a schema it has been possible to develop an analysis that locates the hierarchical nature of the field of power within localised policy-making decisions at Kingswood Academy. In particular, this is seen through the necessity of the head

teacher to strategise in order to maintain and develop positional advantage within the wider field through the development of the localised policy trajectory. The actions which legitimate such position-taking happen through a process of capital exchange that was laid out in Chapter 7, the purpose of doing so to achieve distinction in the field. This was positioned as desirable and necessary by the majority of participants in the research, because the logics of practice structured by the neoliberal policy complex work in such a way to reward distinction through hierarchised notions of what is valued within the schooling field, which, within the neoliberal policy complex, are underpinned by a commitment to autonomy and diversity as a means to raise standards.

I have drawn heavily on the work by Gewirtz (2002) in the development of the conceptualisation of the neoliberal policy complex. The work done by Gewirtz (2002) in the *Managerial School* influenced me greatly: a terrific example of policy scholarship in action. However, I consider that the deployment of the PWEPC as utilised in that study required development to take account of the policy interventions post-2000 in which autonomy has become entrenched within policy discourses regarding schooling processes. Gewirtz (2002) recognises the significance of autonomy in the pre- to post-welfare policy complex, but in order to remain relevant to the research site I found at Kingswood, with the centrality of the conversion to an academy, and the development of localised polices as a result of this conversion, it seemed to me that post-welfarism falls shy of encapsulating the structured structures and structuring structures that have dominated the discursive rendering and positionality of policy processes at the school.

These structures are ultimately relatable to and a product of neoliberalism and the hegemonic dominance of this ideological, political and economic position was visible in all of the accounts of localised policy-making I heard. Ideologically and politically, these accounts positioned autonomy as essential in developing the localised policy trajectory of the school as a means to achieve distinction. Distinction was framed within a trajectory which forefronted both the privatisation agenda and economic arguments for the re-structuring of provision as a human capital approach to both the processes and outcomes of schooling. Therefore, the conceptualisation of the neoliberal policy complex extends the work of Gewirtz (2002) by firstly applying a theoretical framework drawn from the thinking tools of Bourdieu (1977, 1989, 1990a, 1990b) to the field of policy scholarship, and secondly, by using this framework to

centralise the role of neoliberal subjectivities on the positioning and position-taking by the social actors within the research site.

That such position-taking reveals a doxa of misrecognition was expounded in the previous chapter. The fact that the neoliberal policy complex structures the schooling field along competitive lines was reflected in the development of the Professional and Studio Schools. The school's future is being constructed in alliance with big business involvement, the local authority shunned as rigid and restrictive in the ways in which it works with the school. The misrecognition occurs in the doxic narratives that there is no alternative worth pursuing, despite the appearance that in such competitive conditions, it is without doubt that some students and some schools will ultimately lose out.

Using Bourdieu's (1977) theory of reproduction, the likelihood is that children from 'professional' families with high levels of capital and knowledge of how to navigate the newly constructed provision at Kingswood will follow such a pathway at the school, leading to placements at highly regarded businesses or university places. What about those that are not imbued with such capitals? The children in this study whose voices were central in Chapter 4 were not from such families, although they were all supported in their education by their parents. The children all revealed doxic recognition of the significance of performativity policies on their schooling experience, illustrating the lack of institutional space for alternative responses to such powerful and hegemonic structures. From the staff there was much talk of marketing, and survival in the field of schooling in the development of the Professional School concept; there was less discussion of how such a restructured provision may (re)produce educational advantage and disadvantage for different students. I would argue that such spaces are squeezed out in the race to achieve institutional distinction, emphasised through the formal structures of regulation, the "disciplinary framework" conceptualised by Gewirtz (2002, p. 19)[10].

The impact of the "disciplinary framework" of the neoliberal policy complex is bought into relief through the study of positioning within localised policy processes, which

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[10] This is not to recognise that individually children will receive brilliant input from their teachers, the pastoral team and the like, as I witnessed in the many hours I spent in the school and talking to these dedicated professionals, but these aspects, on the most part, remained obscured in interviews with teachers and school leaders.

contributes to an analysis that recognises the place of power relations within such processes are an essential aspect in this piece of policy scholarship (Gewirtz, 2002, p. 19; Grace, 1995). This matters because, as Blackmore cogently argues:

> Policy is also a product of practice and relations of power. Policy within any field plays a key role in terms of symbolic power as it leads to practices of differentiation and distinction. And it is this symbolic power of policy that can lead to misrecognition and symbolic violence within and across fields. (Blackmore, 2010, p. 109)

The misrecognition that occurs as a result of the neoliberal policy complex's power over localised responses to schooling structures and processes is evident in the way in which Thomson (2010) argues that such a logic of practice ensures the field, and its competitive nature, is protected rather than challenged. It is this position that brings me to a discussion of Ball, Maguire and Braun's (2012a) work in the study *'How schools do policy: Policy enactment in secondary schools'*.

Throughout the thesis I have drawn on Ball *et al*.'s (2012a) study; in particular, I found the empirical synthesis of how four 'ordinary' schools 'do' policy impressive and the way in which the large amount of data has been presented and analysed in no small part encouraged me at times when the overwhelming volume of data I had accrued seemed impossible to tame into three empirical chapters. The emphasis in the study on the importance of context and as such, the importance of policy studies which take "context more seriously" (Thrupp and Lupton, 2006), is a clarion call to which this thesis is responding.

What my analysis offers is a theorisation of positionality in localised policy-making during a period of rapid reform in the field of educational policy-making in England. How the social actors at the school have responded under such conditions, conceptualised as the neoliberal policy complex, is understood through the theoretical tools offered by Bourdieu (1977, 1989, 1990a, 1990b). So, whilst I follow Ball *et al*. (2012a) in thinking through how a school may do policy, I utilise theoretical lenses which enable an analysis of the "cross field effects" of the neoliberal policy complex on such processes and what this means in terms of power relations at the micro and macro levels (Rawolle and Lingard, 2008, p. 738). In this sense the research offered in this thesis extends the work of Ball *et al*. (2012a) by situating the analysis beyond a purely enactment theory, to think through the larger structural constraints in operation when schools undertake localised policy-making which, drawing on Bourdieu (1990a), enables the research to reveal the dominance

of the neoliberal doxa on the professional and personal subjectivities of the participants within the research.

In addition, the rich accounts offered by Ball *et al.* (2012a) focus predominately on teachers and school leaders, but do not provide empirical evidence drawn from students at the four schools. In this sense, much of the work done in the field of policy scholarship is missing these important voices. The students themselves are as much positioned and are required to position-take by policy processes as teachers and school leaders. This is a major contribution of this thesis, and one of the many benefits of undertaking an ethnographic approach to policy scholarship in a single setting – the stories are told from the perspective of a whole range of social actors within the research site, and has made these voices central to the arguments developed throughout.

As a result, the research and theorising offered within this account of localised policy-making during a period of rapid reform in England contributes to the field in a number of empirical, methodological and theoretical ways, which are outlined below:

- The development of the conceptualisation of a neoliberal policy complex drawn from the empirical findings and influenced by the work of Gewirtz (2002) provides a contemporary lens through which to understand the structural restraints operating at the macro and meso level with regards to how schools may respond to and construct their futures in a context of codified of autonomy.

- The conceptualisation of the neoliberal policy complex is theorised drawing on Bourdieu's thinking tools which enables an in-depth analysis of how agency and structure interact in such conditions, thus offering an epistemological construction of localised policy-making which is grounded in the relationship between theory, data and practice.

- The inclusion of students, teachers, school leaders and parents contributes to the rich field of policy scholarship by giving a platform to the experiences and voices of a range of social actors engaged with the development, delivery and reception of policy agendas set at the local and national levels. In particular, the inclusion of student voices is an underrepresented aspect in the field that this research seeks to address.

- The empirical findings of the research suggest that localised policy making is undertaken as series of capital exchanges, which are undertaken as a means to achieve differentiation and distinction in the schooling field, regulated by the neoliberal policy complex through the codification of autonomy and diversification identified in the tenets of "choice, competition, efficiency, effectiveness, performativity and productivity" (Gewirtz, 2002, p. 3). The construction of a future which views the involvement of business in the development and delivery of education at the school along human capital lines reveals how distinction is positioned as achievable as part of a neoliberal doxa in which the purposes of education are narrowly defined. This is important in contributing to understanding in the field as to how the re-articulation of values in education are played out and contribute to the logics of practice at a local level.

- Students embody the discursive rendering of the standards agenda within their learner identities, revealing the extent to which the neoliberal policy complex contributes to the "structured structures" and "structuring structures" which contribute to the generation of such dispositions, revealed through the doxic narratives regarding target and ability-setting practices. This finding provides empirical evidence as to the importance of including young people in policy scholarship as a means to understand the influence of the neoliberal complex on their learner identities.

- The subjectivities of the student, teacher and leader participants revealed the extent to which a neoliberal doxa is apparent in the ways in which positioning and position-taking occurs. Alternative responses are squeezed out as a successful school is led through the development of a localised policy agenda which seeks to construct a future which will achieve positional advantage in the field as a means of survival in the competitive conditions created by the neoliberal policy complex.

- The analysis that offers misrecognition as a theoretical conceit with which to problematise such position-taking is not one that is often seen in policy scholarship and contributes to the development of how complex social

theory can be operationalised as a means of explaining the consequences of policy processes for different social actors in schools.

- The rich and varied data collected via an ethnographic approach to policy scholarship illustrates the potential for more such case studies in order to understand the shifting nature of localised school policy-making at a time when the landscape of educational provision in England is undergoing a huge transformation. This is important both for documenting the impact of these seismic shifts and in order to produce evidence to enable conversations with schools, communities and policy-makers with regards to challenging the hegemonic, neoliberal assumptions underpinning such changes.

These findings contribute to the field by building on and extending understandings within existing literature regarding an empirical dataset that explores positioning in localised policy-making as well as making important theoretical and methodological contributions in conceptualising why such processes require investigation during a period of transformation of schooling provision in the English context. The use of Bourdieu's thinking tools has enabled me to describe and explain the interplay between the micro localised policy context and the macro neoliberal policy complex and to illustrate how the breaching of economic and political fields contributes to the structuring of policy development and enactment within this matrix. The following and final section of this chapter will build upon the summary of the contribution to the field and lay out a set of directions for future research into localised policy-making during a period of rapid reform.

8.3 Directions for future research

This research project has offered a theorising of the ways in which the neoliberal policy complex positions and requires position-taking from a range of social actors at Kingswood, which have had a significant impact upon how the school's future is being constructed at the local level. This section will indicate how this particular research project could be developed and extended on the basis of the findings.

This ethnographically informed research took place over a three-year period and as such, can be described as a longitudinal project. As described in Chapter 2, the current project sits within a traditional of school university partnership between the University of Manchester and Kingswood Academy. Already, there exists a rich body of empirical data, which tracks the school's development trajectory from a number of dimensions (Gunter and Thomson, 2004; Thomson and Gunter, 2006, 2007; McGinity and Gunter, 2012; McGinity, 2014a; Gunter and McGinity, 2015).

Relationships have been developed over this period of time, and as such, offer an opportunity to continue with research visits to the site in order to continue to track the impact of the changes outlined in this thesis on a range of social actors in the school. As with any project I had to make a conscious decision at when to 'stop' collecting data. As the school moves into opening the Studio School on site, and continues to embed an employability agenda into the development of the Professional School, there is an argument for building upon existing research in order to understand how Kingswood continues to construct a future as a Multi Academy Trust. Such an undertaking would provide data regarding the school's development trajectory over a period of over a decade and provide an important account in the field of policy scholarship, where such empirically based longitudinal projects are rare. As a result, in the first instance, I will be working to produce a bid for a small research grant in order to begin such a process, and will focus upon involving a range of actors within the school to build upon the work of positioning in the neoliberal policy complex.

Furthermore, the role of the school – university partnership model of working needs to be theorised within such a complex. I have begun this work through a contribution to an edited book, in which I problematise the collaborative research partnership between Kingswood and myself during a period of rapid reform (McGinity, 2014a). Such a reflexive account of the *processes* involved in developing research agendas are an important contribution to the field, as it is important that recognition and transparency are given to the complexity of developing research partnerships and the sort of impact this can have on the findings of such projects (McGinity, 2014a). The role of the researcher in a policy scholarship approach must be acknowledged, and because research is a political act, it is imperative that the field takes seriously the implications and opportunities for 'scholarly activism' offered up through such processes of knowledge production (Gunter, Hall and Mills, 2014).

Knowledge production is a significant aspect of this project. I have taken seriously my role and responsibility in knowledge transfer, both within the academy via conference presentations, seminars and publications (McGinity and Gunter, 2012; McGinity, 2012b, 2014a, 2014b) and at the school via written reports (McGinity and Gunter, 2011, 2013), as well as presentations to students, staff and governors. However, there remains important work regarding how to engage with the school with regards to my interpretation of how the neoliberal policy complex works to restrict position-taking at the local level. I would welcome advice as to how such an undertaking could be managed, in order to encourage open dialogue with regards to some of the findings in this thesis which may produce tensions, but are nevertheless important conversations to undertake.

Outside of Kingswood Academy, however, there exists a continued need for projects which seek to understand and explain how schools are constructing their futures as a result of the 2010 Academies Act. Therefore, I propose that a project which looks to engage two more schools into a research relationship to continue this work: one school that has remained under the control of the local authority; and another which has been 'forced' to convert to academy status. The project would seek to build on the research undertaken at Kingswood by exploring the perceived opportunities and threats offered within the current policy climate in England. The more case studies that exist with regards to how different schools have engaged or indeed rejected the national policy agenda of academisation will contribute not just to understanding why different school leaders, teachers and students are positioned and required to position-take in certain ways, but also will help to build evidence with regards to how schools may be able to resist the hegemonic and dominant aspects of the neoliberal policy complex, which may (re)produce educational advantage and disadvantage for different groups of students.

8.4 Summary

This chapter has outlined the key contributions to knowledge I have identified as a result of my research at Kingswood Academy. It has focussed upon providing a summary of the ways in which the research, analysis and theorising presented in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 speaks to the field of policy scholarship and builds upon but also extends the important work undertaken by colleagues since the introduction of

the ERA of 1988. The chapter illustrates how this work responds to the calls for more context specific, in-depth case studies of how schools are undertaking localised policy-making in neoliberal times and the impact this has on the positioning and position-taking of different social actors within the school.

Drawing on Bourdieu (1977, 1989, 1990a, 1990b) has enabled a theorising of these positions through the development of the conceptualisation of the neoliberal policy complex as a frame with which to understand the complex relationship between power, structure and agency, with "educational policy as a specific object of analysis" (Thomson, 2005, p. 741) and which was explicated in Chapter 2. The analysis offered within Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 has accumulatively argued that the neoliberal policy complex shows the power of the "cross field effects" of certain valued capitals (Rawolle and Lingard, 2008, p. 738) that are synonymous with success – so 'employability' with the input from business in the development and delivery of the curriculum, for example, becomes a lynchpin that is sutured into the fabric of localised policy-making as desirable and necessary - and which reflects such desired and necessary central policy aims that are apparent in the neoliberal policy complex. This alignment illustrates how the logic of practice is shaped by a doxa of misrecognition, which asserts the powerful and influential imbrication of such positions within the structured structures of the neoliberal policy complex.

Through the in-depth analysis in Chapters 6 and 7 as to how the head teacher's dispositions have enabled him to play the game and engage with processes of capital exchange to achieve distinction in the field by constructing a future for the school, along neoliberal lines, the research findings respond to Thomson's call for studies that look to explore:

> How the interpellation of particular heads and particular dispositions happens at the level of the position and subfield of the school. Empirical research, as Bourdieu would argue, is required in order to test it out, to probe the specific ways in which the conditions of the field both incite head teacher's drive for autonomy, frame the ways in which this is negotiated with other actors within and without the school and build on historical constellations of embodied field practices. (Thomson, 2010, p. 17)

This thesis offers an important contribution to this conversation, as well as identifying areas where further research is required in order for policy scholarship to continue to

critique and challenge some of the more restrictive aspects of the neoliberal policy complex.

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Appendix A

Table of Participants and Contact

Year group (2011-2012)	Name	Interviews	Duration	Observations	Focus Group	Total
8	Harriet	20th October 2011 23rd May 2012	55 minutes 25 minutes	6th February 2012, Period 4 (Co-ordinated curriculum) 9th February 2012, Period 3 (Swimming)	No, due to illness	3 hours 20 minutes
8	Jack	20th October 2011 23rd May 2012	1 hour 30 minutes	23rd February 2012, Period 4 (Co-ordinated curriculum) 2nd March 2012, Period 2 (Maths)	17th July 2012, 1 hour	4 hours 30 minutes
8	Anna	20th October 2011 25th May 2012	25 minutes 15 minutes	7th February 2012, Period 2 (Music) 9th February 2012, Period 4 (Co-ordinated curriculum)	17th July 2012, 1 hour	3 hours 40 minutes
8	Katie	16th November 2011 23rd May 2012	40 minutes 20 minutes	1st February 2012, Period 4 (English) 22nd February 2012, Period 4 (English)	No, due to a medical appointment	3 hours
8	Lauren	10th November 2011 25th May 2012	45 minutes 22 minutes	23rd January 2012, Period 5 (English) 2nd February 2012, Period 4 (Maths)	17th July 2012, 1 hour	4 hours 7 minutes

8	Kimberley	10th November 2011	35 minutes	31st January 2012, Period 3 (History)	17th July 2012, 1 hour	3 hours 50 minutes
		25th May 2012	15 minutes	5th March 2012, Period 1 (English)		
8	Shanice	10th November 2011	40 minutes	2nd February 2012, Period 3 (Science)	17th July 2012, 1 hour	4 hours 5 minutes
		25th May 2011	15 minutes	9th February 2012, Period 4 (English)		
8	Ted	10th November 2011	35 minutes	22nd November 2012, Period 2 (P.E.)	17th July 2012, 1 hour.	4 hours
		23rd May 2012	25 minutes	6th February 2012, Period 4 (Co-ordinated curriculum)		
9	Fergus	14th November 2011	30 minutes	26th January 2012, Period 2 (Graphics)	16th July 2012, 1 hour	3 hours 57 minutes
		9th May 2012	27 minutes	7th March 2012, Period 4 (Creative Media)		
9	Nick	16th November 2011	38 minutes	6th February 2012, Period 1 (History)	Didn't show up	3 hours
		15th May 2012	22 minutes	6th February 2012, Period 2 (English)		
9	William	11th November 2011	28 minutes	8th February 2012, Period 2 (Maths)	Absent from School	2 hours 28 minutes
		No second interview		9th February 2012, Period 5 (English)		
9	Mandy	16th November 2011	12 minutes	No further involvement	n/a	12 minutes
		No second interview				
9	Rachel	14th November 2011	23 minutes	23rd January 2012, Period 2 (Biology)	16th July 2012, 1 hour	2 hours 35 minutes
		18th May 2012	12 minutes	No second observation		

9	Olivia	16th November 2011	36 minutes	31st January 2012, Period 2 (History)	16th July 2012, 1 hour	3 hours 51 minutes
		29th May 2012	15 minutes	7th February 2012, Period 5 (Chemistry)		
10	Max	24th November 2011	32 minutes	8th February 2012, Period 4 (PE)	16th July 2012, 1 hour	3 hours 50 minutes
		16th May 2012	18 minutes	8th February 2012, Period 5 (History)		
10	Lucy	22nd November 2011	41 minutes	23rd January 2012, Period 4 (French)	Didn't show up	2 hours 41 minutes
		No second interview		2nd February 2012, Period 2 (Science)		
10	Paul	24th November 2011	38 minutes	2nd February 2012, Period 2 (English)	Absent from school	1 hour 53 minutes
		15th May 2012	15 minutes	No second observation		
10	Daisy	8th November 2012	32 minutes	No observations due to personal reasons	16th July 2012, 1 hour	1 hour 32 minutes
		No second interview due to personal reasons				
10	Isobel	11th November 2012	10 minutes	Withdrew from study after first interview		
10	Hannah	2nd November 2012	37 minutes	31st January 2012, Period 5 (Psychology)	16th July 2012, 1 hour	3 hours 54 minutes
		17th May 2012	17 minutes	1st February 2012, Period 5 (English)		
					Total	**60 hours 42 minutes**

Name	Child	Occupation	Date of Interview	Location	Duration
Christine	Katie (Year 8)	Unemployed	24th February 2012	Home	50 minutes
Peggy	Jack (Year 8)	Housewife	7th March 2012	School	56 minutes
Sarah	Ted (Year 8)	Part time administrator for husband's business (taxi driver)	1st March 2012	School	54 minutes
Julie	Harriet (Year 8)	Hairdresser	23rd February 2012	Home	59 minutes
Helena	Nick (Year 9)	Housewife	22nd February 2012	Home	1 hour 7 minutes
				Total	**5 hours 17 minutes**

Name	Position and Subject if applicable	Years at school	Date/s	Duration
David Toye	Head Teacher	15	27th September 2012 5th December 2011 16th January 2012 29th May 2012	1 hour 15 minutes 1 hour 20 minutes 50 minutes 1 hour 10 minutes
Gareth Abrahams	Deputy Head	5	30th November 2010 12th December 2011 1st June 2012	1 hour 20 minutes 1 hour 15 minutes 1 hour 46 minutes
Peter Lewis	Chair of Governors	?	19th July 2012	1 hour 6 minutes
Cassandra Watson	Parent Governor	?	19th July 2012	1 hour 6 minutes
Amanda Greene	Director	25	11th May 2012	35 minutes
Terry Landen	Director	17	9th May 2012	46 minutes

Vince Cushing	Director	17	15th May 2012	38 minutes
Kevin Todd	Director	12	30th May 2012	59 minutes
Anthony Law	Director	4	11th July 2012	1 hour 21 minutes
Andrew Maxwell	English	2	9th May 2011	34 minutes
Sarah Kermode	English Lit Co.	10	9th May 2012	46 minutes
Jerry Highland	Sci KS3 Co.	6	30th May 2012	33 minutes
Adam Lee	Sci Lead T	16	2nd February 2012	48 minutes
Katherine Lock	Sci Ass. Dir	15	24th May 2012	30 minutes
Sam Murray	Sci	10	30th May 2012	24 minutes
Alison Goodyear	PE Lead T	32	12th December 2011	1 hour 8 minutes
Kathleen O'Hare	Ass Director	8	28th May 2012	39 minutes
Charles Wickes	RS	5	8th May 2012	52 minutes
Janet Utley	Art – textiles	34	17th July 2012	29 minutes
Mary Childs	English NQT	1 (NQT)	9th May 2012	26 minutes
Donald Northold	Head of Physics	4	29th May 2012	29 minutes
Patricia Turner	Maths	11	22nd May 2012	23 minutes
Kitty Stokes	Humanities	3	21st May 2012	29 minutes
Ron Taylor	Head of SS	7	22nd May 2012	35 minutes
Graham Saunders	Curriculum Leader for Art	2	18th June 2012	43 minutes
Tom Henderson	Head of Student Support US	6	11th May 2012	1 hour 2 minutes
Fin Appleby	SSO	2	17th May 2012	22 minutes
Tina Cross	SSO	1	17th May 2012	34 minutes
Rose Turner	Head of Student Support LS	6	12th December 2011	1 hour 8 minutes
		Total	**34**	**39 hours 23 minutes**

Appendix B

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Student Information Sheet

Your parents have recently signed a form agreeing for you to take part in a student research project. This will sheet will give you some more information of what you will be will happen if you want to take part.

I am interested in finding out how you feel about school, and in order to do this I have asked permission to work with you in the following ways:

1. Firstly, I would like to interview you 2 or 3 separate times throughout the school year (about once a term). The interviews would last up to one period (an hour) and we would discuss lots of different aspects of school and how you feel about them.
2. Secondly I would like to invite you to take part in a focus group. This means that you and some other students taking part in the project would meet with me and we would spend some time talking about school and finding out what each other's views are.
3. And finally I would like to observe two of your lessons, which we can agree on together with your head of student achievement.

If your parents have given consent for you to take part but you do not wish to do so, then please indicate this by telling me. Alternatively, you can give consent by filling out the following slip and returning it to me. Please note, that you have the right to stop being part of the study.

I agree to take part in the above research. I have read and understood the above information. I am also aware that my participation is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw at any given time.

Student's Signature _____

Print Name_____

Date_____

Appendix C

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The University
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Interview schedule: School Students (Interview 1)

Interview Protocol

- ❑ Explain who I am and what I am doing in School.
- ❑ Remind the respondent of their rights (Participant Information Sheet) and that their parents have signed and returned the Consent form.
- ❑ Remind the respondent that the interview will take up to one hour.
- ❑ Remind the respondent not to make personal remarks about staff or students.
- ❑ Remind the respondent that I am asking them for permission to audio record. Remind them that their name will not be attached to the data. If the person does not give permission to have an audio recording then I will take notes. If this is refused then the interview cannot go ahead.
- ❑ I will ask the respondent if they have any questions before the interview goes ahead.

Background information
Names

Questions:

1. Would you like to tell me a little about yourself?

   Probe: what you like doing (in and out of school) hobbies and interests, sports, T.V. music etc

2. Would you like to tell me a little about your family?

   Who do you live with, how many siblings, what your parents do etc.

3. Do you enjoy school?

   Probe: Why/why not/favourite subjects/challenging subjects/

4. Are you happy with your progress?

   Probe: if yes, why? If no, why?

5. What can make learning easy/difficult for you?

   Group work/reading/writing/talking/practical stuff

Why do you think you come to school/ Why do we have schools?

To learn/future/something to do/see friends

6. What is the most important part of being at school for you?

   Learning/peers/activities/

7. What do you expect to get from your time spent in school?

   Good job/grades/friends/

8. How would you describe the school?

   Probe: happy/settled/strict/easy going/nice staff/listen to you

9. What sort of things happen in school to make you feel you have done well with your learning? Are these important to you and how hard you try?

   Teacher praise/good grades/merits/enjoyment/good work

   What do you think of the teachers at school?

   Good/supportive/strict/fair/relationships are good or not so good with them?/listen to you? Tell you off/can do attitudes?

   Do you have any problems in school – do you get into trouble at all? If so why? If not why not?

10. Do you do homework at home/do you get help/?

    See the point in it? Do parents read with you? Do you like to talk about school at home? If not why not?

11. What would you like to do when you leave school?

    How realistic?

12. Have you always wanted to do that/what makes you decide what you want to do when you leave school?

    Lessons that you are good at/what family do/

13. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Appendix D

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1. Letter to Parents
2. Participant Information Sheet
3. Consent form
4. Interview Schedule

1.   Letter of invitation to parents.

Dear [name]

I am writing to introduce myself to ask for your consent to include you in a research project I am undertaking in Kingswood High School.

My name is Ruth McGinity and I am undertaking a PhD in the School of Education, University of Manchester, funded by the Economic and Social Science Research Council. I am delighted that Kingswood High School is a partner in the project and I look forward to working with the School over the next three years.

I have already written to you and you have agreed for your child…….to be involved with my research project. As a result I am writing to you now to ask if you would be willing to take part with the research project as well, I would like to interview you about your views on your child's progress at school.

A participant information sheet is included with this letter and you will see that it outlines the project and your rights as a participant. A consent form is also included and if you are willing to being included in this interview process would you please complete the form and return it to School.

I would like to stress that giving consent your participation is based on informed consent, and you have the right to withdraw. Furthermore I will ensure confidentiality as I will not discuss what you tell me to anyone in School, and I will not attach your name to any data in any report or publication.

I do hope that you can support this project and I look forward to hearing from you. Please return the consent form to [name] by [date].

Yours sincerely,

Ruth McGinity.

Project title: An ethnographic exploration into the impact of social and cultural practices on learning culture in a secondary school setting.

2. Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study that I am undertaking in Kingswood High School as part of my doctoral studies at the University of Manchester. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?

Ruth McGinity, School of Education, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester. M13 9PL

Title of the Research

An ethnographic exploration localised policy-making at a time of rapid reform.

What is the aim of the research?

The aim of the research is to explore different aspects of policy-making at the school over a period of a year to better understand how such processes may position different people in the school.

Why have I been chosen?

I am planning to work with a range of adults and school students in the School during the school year September 2011 through to the end of July 2012. I have contacted parents regarding consent for interviews with the families of the student participants to help to contextualise the information the students give me.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

I would like to interview you once between January 2012 and June 2012. I will ask questions about your child's progress at school.

What happens to the data collected?

I will ask your permission on the day to make an audio recording. I will be analysing the data to look for key themes and checking it with documents and other data collected. The data will help to contextualise the data given to me by your child.

How is confidentiality maintained?

You have my assurance that I will not discuss what is said in the interview with anyone else except my supervisors. I will ensure that your name is not attached to any data. All the data will be kept secure, password protected and your name will not be included. Once the interview is transcribed the actual oral interview will be deleted.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

There is no payment for involvement in the project.

What is the duration of the research?

I will interview you for up to one hour.

Where will the research be conducted?

Kingswood High School

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

I will use the data you provide for my PhD thesis and I expect to give papers at conference and to publish the findings from the research.

Criminal Records Check (if applicable)

I have been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau and the School has a copy of my certificate.

Contact for further information

Ruth McGinity, School of Education, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester. M13 9PL

What if something goes wrong?
Please do contact me if anything prevents you from participating.

If you wish to make a formal complaint about the conduct of the research then you should contact the Head of the Research Office, Christie Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL.

The University of Manchester

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3. Consent form (Students Interviews).

Project title: An ethnographic exploration into the impact of social and cultural practices on learning culture in a secondary school setting.

If you are happy to agree to participate in an interview with Ruth McGinity over the next academic year at Kingswood High School please complete and sign the consent form below.

	Please initial
I confirm that I have read the attached information on the above project and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily	
I understand that participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment	
I understand that the interview will be audio recorded	
I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in the study resulting from this research	
I agree that the data (anonymised) may be archived for future researchers to use.	

I agree to my child taking part in the above project:

Name of participant   Date   Signature

Name of person taking consent   Date   Signature

4. **Interview schedule: Parental interview**

Interview Protocol

- ❑ Explain who I am and what I am doing in School.
- ❑ Remind the respondent of their rights (Participant Information Sheet) and that they have signed and returned the Consent form.
- ❑ Remind the respondent that the interview will take up to one hour.
- ❑ Remind the respondent that I am asking them for permission to audio record. Remind them that their name will not be attached to the data. If the person does not give permission to have an audio recording then I will take notes. If this is refused then the interview cannot go ahead.
- ❑ I will ask the respondent if they have any questions before the interview goes ahead.

Background information
Names

Questions:

- ❑ Their views on how their child learns and attitudes to school.

  Probes: Are you happy with the school? Does your child enjoy school? Are you happy with the relationship?

  Please give examples.

- ❑ Their views on the school's development approaches.

  Probes: Changes at the school? How different aspects of the child's schooling is handled – homework, behaviour, communication etc.

  Please give examples.

- ❑ Their views on their child's progress and achievement.

  Probes: challenges, strengths, relationships etc.

Is there anything else you would like to say?

Appendix E

5. Interview schedule: Teachers

Interview Protocol

- ❑ Explain who I am and what I am doing in School.
- ❑ Remind the respondent of their rights (Participant Information Sheet) and collect the Consent form.
- ❑ Remind the respondent that the interview will take one hour.
- ❑ Remind the respondent that I am asking them for permission to audio record. Remind them that their name will not be attached to the data. If the person does not give permission to have an audio recording then I will take notes. If this is refused then the interview cannot go ahead.
- ❑ I will ask the respondent if they have any questions before the interview goes ahead.

Background information
Name
How long they have been at KHS
What is their role in the School

Questions:

1. Could you please provide me with a brief history of your involvement in the School and what innovations you have been involved with since joining the School.

2. What policies have you been involved with developing?

3. How do policies get developed (collaborative etc.)

4. What are your views on teaching and learning at the school in general (what? Why?)

5. How are students generally engaged in learning in school, and how might it be improved?

6. I am interested in trying to understand the different learning cultures in the school – how would you interpret learning cultures and what are views? Does the school have an official learning culture?

7. Are there any groups of students that you are concerned are less engaged with the school's learning culture? If so, why might this be?

8. How effectively do you think the school is embedded within the local community?

   a. Do you consider that the location of the school as a centrality within the community is important in achievement and aspiration for the students?

9. Have you been involved in the decision to convert to an academy? How?

10. Can you briefly explain to me how the Professional School is to be structured?

11. What are your views as to why the school has converted?

12. What are your views about the new structure?

13. What do you anticipate the impact, on the students to be? And on the local community?

14. Anything that the member of the school leadership team wants to say that has not had the chance to say.

Appendix F

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The University
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5. Interview schedule: Chair of Governors

Interview Protocol

❑ Explain who I am and what I am doing in School.
❑ Remind the respondent of their rights (Participant Information Sheet) and collect the Consent form.
❑ Remind the respondent that the interview will take one hour.
❑ Remind the respondent that I am asking them for permission to audio record. Remind them that their name will not be attached to the data. If the person does not give permission to have an audio recording then I will take notes. If this is refused then the interview cannot go ahead.
❑ I will ask the respondent if they have any questions before the interview goes ahead.

---

1) Could you please provide me with a brief history of your involvement in the School?

2) How would you describe the role of the governing body?

3) Can you explain the changes that are occurring at the school as a result of the conversion to an academy and the subsequent conceptualisation of the Professional School?

4) To what extent have you been involved in these changes?

5) Why have these changes taken place?

6) What do you imagine the impact of the PS to be on students and student outcomes?

7) How engaged do you think students are at the school?

8) How embedded in the local community is the school?

Appendix G

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The University
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5. Observation schedule

Date:
Location:
Teacher:
Participants:

Focus:	Field notes: (including timings)
Curriculum/Scheme of Work: **What is the lesson and what are the key purposes?**	
Framing: **How is learning framed by the teacher?**	
Learning: **What evidence is there of learning taking place?**	
Teaching: **What teaching methods are used and how to they link with learning?**	
Is achievement/underachievement directly addressed?	

Other areas of interest to note	

APPENDIX H

Fictional vignettes for Student Focus Groups

(The purposes of these two accounts are to provide a starting point for a discussion for a student focus group. Both fictionalised accounts use ability setting as a way to explore achievement and aspiration and the differing social and cultural factors that may or may not have an effect on a student's engagement. The accounts have been drawn from data from the baseline study (McGinity, 2011) in which I talked to 23 students across Years 8,9,11 and 13 about teaching and learning at Kingswood High School).

These are two fictional students at Kingswood High School.

Billy:

Billy is in Year 9. He lives quite near the school, so he walks with his younger sister Amy who is in Year 7. He really doesn't like doing this and would rather walk with his mates, but Billy's mum has to leave the house really early to get to work and so has asked Billy to make sure they both have breakfast and get to school together. So Billy obliges. But he doesn't like doing it.

Billy doesn't really like walking to school with Amy, also because he doesn't really like going to school. He finds it boring and quite often uninspiring. He knows he is quite smart, although his grades aren't as good as they could be, his teachers are always going on about how he could get higher grades '*if only he put more effort in to the work and less effort into disrupting the class*'. Billy finds this sort of whining intensely annoying, and generally it puts him off school and learning even more. So he has a tendency to muck about a bit. Just messing around with his mates, but this usually ends up with him getting D-merits, and then all the ones in the class who care about such things get annoyed with him and his mates, well mainly they get annoyed with him and Joe, because they are the ones who wind each other up the most. They get more annoyed because in quite a lot of his classes Billy's in the second to top set, and a lot of them in there are trying to move up to the top so get really mardy about the messing about, but Billy's not really interested in going up. Billy probably wouldn't mind going up in science in a way, his mate Tom is in top set Science and they got to go to London this time to meet some bloke who knows loads about space and that, and Billy thought that sounded quite good, but that only happened once, and really he'd rather mess about with Joe than *'put more effort in'*. Mainly he reckons that the problem with school is that most of the teachers just go on about stuff, some of which is interesting but most of it is pretty pointless and has nothing to do with what really happens in the world. For instance, he wonders how often Wayne Rooney has needed to work out the lengths of x, y and z of a right angled triangle as he's pummelling Man City to the ground. Or if his mum gives a crap about how an oxbow lake is created when she's doing the books for the garage where she works and worrying about the rent. And Tom is hardly going to become an astronaut, so meeting the space bloke was probably just a laugh getting to go on the train down south for the day. And it doesn't help that the teachers mainly just stand there and go on and on and sometimes show videos and let them use the computers but not nearly enough and so it's no wonder that drifting and messing happens. Billy reckons that if he could do more practical stuff that would actually help him get a job, then he would

probably stop messing about so much. But you have to wait till you're 16 for that, and by then you might as well just go out and get an actual job, or maybe an apprenticeship, cos at least then Billy'd have his own money. Billy thinks this is the most important thing, to become financially independent, so that he can have more freedom, but also to help his mum out, since Billy's dad died when he was 5 his mum's had to do everything on her own, and he'd like to help her out more.

Lisa:

Lisa is in Year 9. She gets the tram and the train to school, because she lives quite far away, nearer the city. Lisa doesn't mind this too much, although she often feels quite tired by the end of the day and generally finds it hard to concentrate in the last lesson of the day. Lisa lives with her older brother and her mum, who is a teacher at a primary school near where they live.

Lisa likes school, mainly because her friends Hannah and Stacy are in most of her classes and they all get on really well with each other, apart from sometimes, when they fall out and have to take sides, but this doesn't happen all that often. Lisa tries hard at school, but sometimes can get a bit distracted by her friends. She is in the second to top set in most lessons – but is in top set for PE which she is really, really good at. She was in the girl's football team but it was too much because they met after school and by the time Lisa got home it was after 7, so she stopped. If she lived near the school she went to then that wouldn't be a problem, but her mum feels the schools near them aren't very good, unless it's a grammar and Lisa just missed out on passing the exam to go there. She felt upset at the time about this but is glad she came to this school now, because of her friends and everything. In fact she likes this school a lot, it's fair and not too strict but enough that you get on with the work. Sometimes some of the boys can be really annoying, especially the ones in her classes that just mess around all the time but still seem to do ok with their grades so the teachers aren't always as strict about them as they should be. Lisa finds that pretty annoying, but then some of the girls are like that too, everything seems like a bit of a game. Lisa really likes maths and science as well as PE. She thinks this is probably because they make sense – there are clearly wrong and right answers which she finds satisfying, plus Mr Smith the science teacher makes everything interesting and practical and the class just sort of respect him so people try harder for him. Recently they had an assembly about options for GCSE and beyond, Lisa quite likes the idea of going to university to do sports science so she could combine both her interests and become maybe a sports physiotherapist, working with women footballers.

Discussions points

Can you relate to any of the experiences in Billy and/or Lisa's stories?
If so, in what ways? (for yourself, peers, or friends). (For example setting, targets, options, teaching methods)

How important are the following in the way we are at school – i.e. the way we behave, the way we work and what we think the point of it all is, and how this might affect what we want to do when we leave:

Teachers/friends/peers/parents.

Appendix I

Some limitations of the study: a post viva addendum

I have been asked by the External Examiners to include some critical reflections on aspects of this study, in order to demonstrate reflexivity regarding both the content and process of my research methodology as well as provide future readers with an addendum within which to locate the limits of the research as reported in the main text. As such the following addendum will address some of the complex and pertinent issues as identified by the external examiners, Professor Meg Maguire (Kings College, London) and Professor Gerald Grace (Institute of Education, University of London), whose work this thesis is indebted and for whom I would like to thank for the care and attention they paid in the process of examination.

The addendum will provide some critical reflections on the following issues; the limitation of a single case study with no comparator school; the principles and procedures in analysing the data; the extent to which the student participants in chapter 4 (Student positionality and localised policy processes) is one aspect of student positioning in response to localised policy processes; the issues involved in the deployment of Bourdieu's thinking tools in order to make a contribution to description, understanding and explanation within this project; and finally I will consider how the processes of having completed a research project generates perspectives about methodology and methods.

1.1 A Single Case Study

It was discussed in the viva that the research as a single case study had not been formally stated within the body of the thesis and what follows below is a written version of the oral answer I gave within this discussion. In particular, the study as a piece of policy scholarship, drawing on the thinking tools of Bourdieu, is interested in revealing the "deep micro-structures of the social and cultural practices that mediate macro power structures and individual consciousness" (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009, p. 43). In this respect the siting of the research in a case of localised policymaking in a

school enabled in-depth examination of how one school experienced the interplay between the agency of the policy actors and the structuring of the neoliberal policy complex, over a period of three years.

The decision to undertake the research sited in one educational organisation as a 'case' location was initially presented as a result of the ESRC Case Studentship which had been developed in consort with the head teacher of Kingswood and was connected to the on-going research relationship between the school and the university since 2004 (as outlined in pages 68-70). In this sense the singular nature of the case site was implied through the arrangement that had been agreed between the University and Kingswood prior to my arrival, and is consistent with projects from within the policy scholarship community (e.g. Ball 1981, Maguire et al. 2001). However, I consider that had I thought it necessary to develop the research to take account of another institutional setting in order to draw a comparative case study as to how to schools develop and enact localised policy-making I could have investigated a second site such as another secondary school in a similar area. By doing so I would have been in a position to develop an analysis which took account of the way in which the neo liberal policy complex might work in alternative ways to produce learner and professional subjectivities in different institutional settings and thus provide a means of acknowledging the significance of the specific and contingent contexts of schools in how they develop localised policy processes.

I think the benefit of a comparative case study would be to illuminate some of the restrictions of deploying the conceptual framework of the neoliberal policy complex in relation to one site, in order to illustrate the centrality of agentic action in the development of localised policy processes. Having said this, however, I do consider that as a single case site, I was able to probe in some depth the way in which the localised policy-making was being undertaken over a period of three years, and to develop a sophisticated and specific analysis of this positioning in relation to the neoliberal policy complex.

The purpose of the research, as defined through my research questions was to provide a "particular, descriptive, inductive and ultimately heuristic" portrait of how one school is constructing a future during a period of intense and neoliberal educational reform (Chadderton and Torrance: 2012, p. 54). In this sense, I developed a thesis which set out to demonstrate how Kingswood engaged with the policy context at a specific period of reform, and which is useful in terms of not necessarily generalising

how all schools may respond to the same reform processes, but rather how a school engages with processes of capital exchange to achieve legitimation and distinction in a competitive field environment, in a similar vein to earlier ethnographic, policy scholarship work by Ball (1981) and Maguire et al. (2001).

The policy scholarship analysis of siting the interplay between global and globalising interventions within localised policy process at one school contributes to the field in ways which acknowledge and reveal the importance of providing micro, detailed analyses of policy processes to better understand and explain the pressures, opportunities and potential threats as revealed through a theorising of the relationships between structure and agency at a time of rapid reform (see for example chapter 7).

1. 2 Analysing the data

The analysis of the data is outlined in pages 97-102, and here I present more detail about the coding and categorisation processes. It is worth revisiting the aims and the research questions, which were developed in order to structure and design the study, because within these are embedded the "values, world view, and direction of an inquiry. They are also influential in determining what type of knowledge is going to be generated" (Trede and Higgs, 2009, p. 18). As such the aim of the study was "to provide an empirical account of localised policy-making, and to explain how and why certain policy processes are engaged with, prioritised and (re) articulated, and the ways in which such processes are influenced by political, economic and cultural conditions developed as part of a modernising policy discourse and framed at both national and international levels" (p. 13). The research questions used to structure the study were:

1. *What is localised policy-making, and how do agency and structure interplay within such processes*?

2. *How do different actors within the school position themselves or consider they are positioned in relation to the development and enactment of localised policy processes*?

3. *How do external policy demands interplay with and structure the development and enactments of localised policy processes, and what effect does this have on the positioning of different actors in the school?*

These questions provided the lenses through which I sought to engage with, understand and explain my data. As such it was important for me to start with an approach to coding which took account of structure, agency and the interplay between them.

In the first instance I created a folder entitled 'Themes and categorisations' and within this folder I created 4 individual documents. These were produced as a result of identifying initial and rudimentary thematic aspects within the data in relation to the questions developed in the interview schedules for all the different groups of participants, and linked to the underlying research questions as I had developed them. These were to identify the *structures and processes of policy development* at the school; the *social and cultural practices* that took place alongside and in relation to these structures and processes, and to locate the *views from respondents* as being potentially illuminative in how the specific context of Kingswood impacted upon localised policy making at the school. The last document I entitled *attitudes and aspirations*, which was developed specifically to make sense of the student data.

This was important because in identifying attitudes and aspirations in response to schooling processes I would be in a better position to understand how the young people were both positioned and position took in relation to localised policy-making. And thus I had four initial folders in which to produce memos, codes and emergent analysis, which would inform the next stage of data collection.

From these specific documents I read through each transcript in detail, and colour coded data that referred to each of these over-arching and general themes, I then copied and pasted the relevant excerpts into the files, keeping the original transcripts in tact to ensure that I could go back and re-evaluate and re-contextualise my decisions in this process. This led me to have a huge amount of data in each file, and as a result led to the development of more specific files which would enable me to organise the data in a way that was more workable. The process of developing the first set of files had been instrumental in my understanding that there were a number of important and recurring themes that I considered needed to be included in the analysis and so as a result I developed 4 additional folders. This process was aided

through my reading of Saldana (2009) in which the processes of coding and memo writing are explicated in detail. These four folders were entitled *agency and positionality*, *fields of power*, *leadership and purposes of education* and *policy processes and structures*. Within each of these folders were opened sub folders, and Table 15 below outlines how these were organised and colour coded from the original source material, with a selected amount of memos attached.

Table 15 Themes and sub-themes

Theme Folder	Sub folder	Themes	Colour Codes	Examples	Memo
Agency and Positionality	External factors	Accountability	Dark Blue	I think with the academy coming in and fundamentally the responsibility of pay and conditions is now with the head and not the LEA, that will have an impact I think, of people becoming more aware of their accountability. (T3)	Pay and conditions
		Standards	Light Red		Academisation
	Internal factors	Collaboration	Light Orange		LA
		Innovation	Yellow		Individualisation of accountability through pay explicitly linked to role of LEA.
		Pedagogical positioning	Dark Purple	If you want to plan a good lesson with resources that isn't, I'm a science teacher so we have trade up lessons so its easy for me, my planning involves filling in a sheet that says lesson 3 this sheet, if it's a practical I need that, it takes 20 mins on a Thursday and I plan for a whole week, If I wanted to do something a bit more thoughtful I would need more time to plan for an individual lesson and its finding that time to do those things.	Links to time and collaboration
		Professional Autonomy and trust	Light Green		Impact of temporal organisation on teachers work at individual level
		Reflexive practice	Black		
		Structural impacts on positioning	Light Brown		

				(T8)	
Fields of Power	Neoliberalism		Dark green	Yes I do! It could be a whole marketing strategy about that I believe. We don't really do much marketing, I don't from a physics point of view, I don't think science does, I don't see much across the whole school apart from the occasional thing on the homepage for the website…I'm not sure its really pushed that much. So they could push the marketing (T5).	Role of marketing across levels in school – impact of nlpc on development of professional identities and marketing as a central aspect of this. Who are they marketing at and why?
	Social and cultural		Dark red		
Leadership and purposes of education	Leadership and habitus	Headteacher	Medium blue	Well I came from a mining family. Mum and dad supported me al the way through but never ever made me go in a certain direction. And I wouldn't of even thought of applying to oxford until somebody at 17 years old said you ought to apply, the head of 6th form, and I wasn't prepared for it (T2).	Working class origins
		Deputy headteacher	Dark orange		Positioning and preparation
	Values and assumptions	Leadership	Light grey		How does this reflect a sense of responsibility to the w/c kids at Kingswood?
		Whole school	Light purple		
		Community and beyond	Dark orange		
	Teaching and learning	Pedagogical purposes and values	Light blue		
		Societal	Magenta		
Policy processes and structures	External	Macro	Dark grey	I have half hearted opinions on a variety of areas to do with it! I mean you hear	
	Internal	Micro	Dark brown		PS reasoning, inclusive of head teacher habitus, field affects of NLPC

				things, within your LC and the staff room, perhaps as our head will be retiring soon is he trying to leave a legacy? So that's one attitude that's passed around. Because X is our constituency MP is there a desire to be a flagship in some way and then perhaps, yes, there is deep-seated desire to prepare students for the world of work (T15).	re world of work, capital relatable to networks and networking

What Table 15 is designed to do is to give a map of how I worked with my data in order to make sense of what the data was saying in relation to my research questions. It was a very messy process, and so the memos developing in the fifth column, each of these, (which was done as a comment inserted in the margins of the document), formed the basis of an aspect of the analysis and was linked to other themes in order to ensure that the data not completely de-contextualised from its original context (Saldana, 2009). These codes and themes were collated as I continued to work on my analysis and eventually led me to a situation in which I could then read the data by using Bourdieu's thinking tools. An example of how I did this is illuminated in the last of the four categories, *policy processes and structures*, and an indicative section of data is highlighted in the far right column. This data, taken from T15 (Teacher 15), was an extract in which she was discussing the rationale for the professional school concept. Within her account I was able to theorise using Bourdieu's thinking tools, by explaining the 'legacy' the head teacher may want to leave, in relation to his habitus, through which analysis had revealed an intense and generative ability to strategize

and accumulate symbolic capital through a variety of professional activities (see section 6.3 – pp. 184-195). Such an analysis enabled me to relate the centrality of capital and habitus to field (in particular the neoliberal policy complex) in order to understand and explain practice(s) within localised policy-making.

I produced an analysis that connected the positionality of the participants through a conceptual understanding informed by Bourdieu's thinking tools, into the framework of a neoliberal policy complex as indicative of the power of the external policy field and the importance of capital exchange upon the individual and collective subjectivities of the participants. The neoliberal policy complex emerged as an important thinking tool because it represented a way of explaining how "neoliberal political and economic structures contribute to shaping agency and ultimately practice at the local level" (p. 29).

Data analysis is a very detailed, complex and iterative process. I think it is important to show aspects of how it was done in order to be both rigorous and transparent in the production of research. This is in order that the work produced can be read both as a single account of localised policy making, and also contribute to the wider field of policy scholarship by providing an account which may be positioned as relatable to alternative experiences of schools also operating under the neoliberal policy complex. As such, the account produced in this thesis has been developed from an analysis which is one way of understanding and explaining localised policy-making at a single site, yet another researcher may have approached and developed a very different project in the same site. My interpretative stance (Hammersley, 2008) is connected to the internalisation of my time in the field, along with my own "researcher habitus" which is also revealed through the processes of categorising and coding at the office in the university or in my study at home (p. 22). This section has illuminated how I was able to try and make sense of my data, and has made transparent the way in which data, theory and practice were analysed in order to explain localised policy-making at Kingswood Academy.

I.3 Children's account of localised policymaking
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The work of Chapter 4 in the thesis was to enable a platform for student voices in relation to localised policy processes, a platform which is often missing from accounts of policy scholarship. I was keen that the research took seriously this limitation in the field and thus would also serve as an important dimension of my contribution to

knowledge. As described in pages 77-80 of the thesis the sampling for the 18 young people who eventually formed the basis of the study helpfully took place in collaboration with the school. Through the process of coding and categorising as explained in section 1.2 of this addendum, in particular, in relation to attitudes and aspirations of the student participants 6 of these participants stories provided rich within case examples which needed to be examined in depth because of the understanding they generated in relation to the research questions as set out above.

Whilst the 6 stories retold in the thesis offer important understandings with regards to positioning in relation to localised policy processes, I take seriously that a range of possible other chapters had been available, and were discussed in relation to the design and completion of the thesis. We considered that I might have agreed a different sample, and this could have enabled other aspects of localised policymaking to be examined. For example I could have drawn on data produced with an even broader range of young people, and in particular, had I sought out to speak to those deemed, gifted and talented, for example, I may have revealed another aspect of how the neoliberal policy complex contributes to the positioning of young people in ways which are often classed and gendered and raced. This is an important point, because it acknowledges that young people experience and engage in a wide range of positioning's in their schooling, and to focus unduly on one smaller sub-section of the population is to risk marginalising and silencing alternative accounts. One way that this may have been addressed was through the framing of the research questions, in order to account for and explain how young people can be both disadvantaged and advantaged through localised policy-making.

In relation to this, if I were to go back and do this aspect of the study again, I could attempt to engage a smaller number of children than the original 20, and to see them more often in order to deepen the research relationship between us and hopefully lead to a more nuanced explanation of their positioning in response to localised policy processes (following the ethical procedures as required). The intention of this being that additional and in depth data might further reveal how the neoliberal policy complex works on individual subjectivities in the ways in which success and failure, advantage and disadvantage are imagined and experienced by students from different class backgrounds, thus adding additional understandings to the existing literature in this area.

These options are important, and I will be keeping them at the top of my agenda as I begin to revisit my data for on going publication and the design of new projects.

1. 4 Bourdieu's thinking tools

This leads me onto consider the deployment of Bourdieu's thinking tools, in particular, the concerns that such a study runs the risk of being too deterministic in the conclusions it draws. Whilst this is a criticism of Bourdieu's theorising by some scholars (Connell, 1983), it is the case that the epistemological framework that the thinking tools of habitus, field and capital offered, when put to work simultaneously on a set of empirical data, enables a close reading of the inter-relation between individual and collective positioning in a specific set of social, cultural, political and economic conditions (for examples of work in which this study follows see: Lingard et al. 2003, Addison, 2009, Gunter and Forrester, 2010, Thomson, 2010).

Much of Bourdieu's work is concerned with using empirical data to theorise and examine the interplay between agency and structure, and the thinking tools of capital, habitus, and field have been deployed in order to do this work and in particular to enable the theorising of practice in relation to these structured and structuring processes (p. 36). In this sense the development of the neoliberal policy complex provides a framework through which to think about how the agency and practices of the various social actors within Kingswood (children, teachers, parents, head and deputy head, governors) interplays with the structuring context of policies located in neoliberal thinking and strategies. Through this reading the neoliberal policy complex neither generates agency that floats free from structures, and neither structures or determines a denial of agency. There are examples of debates and struggles within the school regarding the children (pp. 109-142), teachers (pp. 143-208) and senior leaders (pp. 178 - 208) that show this interplay, and how positioning and position taking becomes a real and required aspect of the 'game' of localised policy-making.

The construction of the neoliberal policy complex in this study enables agency to be recognised as well as giving attention to the restricting agentic positioning on the local level. The neoliberal policy complex does indeed produce this restriction through the mechanisms of power and control that lies at the heart of what is deemed legitimate and distinct within the field of educational policy-making. I consider that whilst the thesis offers a particularly analytical approach to understanding this phenomena, it may do so at the risk of marginalising other ways of interpreting agentic action. Not

everything that is done in and by schools is 'neoliberal', and other projects may focus on this. That said, I do think that my study offers an important reading of how and why the neoliberal policy complex is an important framework for understanding and explaining the drive towards academisation in England as a result of the 2010 Academies Act, and the pressure that such legislative interventions place on schools and those learning and working within them.

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