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Democratic experiences for children in an urban primary school?

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education
(EdD)

School of Education
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Abstract

This dissertation is an autoethnographic study recounting my experience of working in an urban primary school between 2008 and 2010. Over a two year period, during which time I was acting headteacher and then principal teacher, I recorded my experiences in a daily journal. My focus was on children, especially children living in areas of challenging socio-economic conditions. Starting with a concern that their school experiences and interactions with adults are undemocratic and unsatisfactory, my focus in this study was to question how democratic schools are for children. From the numerous themes available, I chose to focus on the experience of children through the interactions and relationships in school structures. I consider pressures on staff and the effects of policy on the profession and the impact of these on developing democracy for children. Over eight chapters, a number of themes permeate the dissertation, including relationships and an assessment of how children are viewed in school and in society generally. Children's treatment in the school environment has barely changed over many decades. This is in direct contrast with freedoms they enjoy outside of school from, for example, their use of information communication technology. The dissertation looks to highlight the challenges that face the teaching profession and the ways in which the pressures associated with education currently conspire against developing democracy for children. I conclude by anticipating possible changes to the status quo that could, if implemented, increase democratic opportunities in schools. Prospects for change include a reassessment of leadership roles, further engagement with Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and the adoption of a more radical educational approach.

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I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature

Printed name

Chapter One: Introducing Issues

This dissertation has grown from my recent experiences and frustration with certain aspects of the current system of primary school education that militate against increasing democracy for children. The catalyst for this study was essentially that something 'wasn't right' in primary school education and in order to reflect upon my concerns, this dissertation has emerged as an autoethnographic study in which I draw on journals completed over a two year period.

I start here with a journal extract written at the start of my dissertation journey. I then outline the structure for the dissertation and begin with an explanation for my focus on democracy. I discuss many of its varied dimensions and features and explain my expectations for democracy. I consider aspects of my autoethnography methodology before summarizing the content of the remaining chapters. The extract from the journal here raises issues that frame the study and provides an immediate summary of some of the key themes I shall consider in this dissertation.

As I start my journals for my dissertation I consider that I will view many of my experiences with an emphasis on the experiences of children in primary education. I am alarmed that many children appear not to enjoy their time at school. Often I despair at the manner in which they are spoken to and I worry at the ease with which adults can exclude them from discussions. In addition, I think the way children are assimilated into school structures is inappropriate. I have anxieties over the control of children and restrictions on their rights to voice. I worry that in some way this treatment sets a trend which for many of the most vulnerable is replicated throughout their entire life. Experience cautions me against anticipating much support from other adults in school. I wonder how many of my colleagues would share my concerns or have even give it any thought? I suspect and have experienced, for instance, that many in school leadership regard democracy for children with a mixture of apathy and suspicion.

The focus for this dissertation is the need to increase democratic opportunities for children. Why do I care about democracy? Most of the children in schools such as mine come from single parent families and are often dependent on support from social services because of health and addiction issues. I believe that increasing democracy is one avenue to redress this inequality but many of my colleagues might question my pursuit of increasing democracy. They may ask why bother about democracy for children when time and energy should be

devoted to crucial priorities such as the implementation of the new curriculum in Scotland? Teachers are also required to place emphasis on the requirements of children with special educational needs as well as promoting positive behaviour in the inclusion agenda. Increasingly teachers are burdened with the expectation to self evaluate as stipulated by HM Inspectorate of Education. There is also an existing structure of enterprise and citizenship in schools with its expectation of raising awareness and involvement with activities involving people from outside of education. Do we have time to think about increasing democracy when teachers are so occupied with behaviour conflicts, the audit culture and maintaining an appropriate level of continuous professional development? There are these and many other reasons why democracy for children is a peripheral issue in the primary education environment. I believe it should be brought into greater focus.

I acknowledge that at the start of this dissertation, in 2008, there were many themes and issues that I could have hooked onto, one example being the growing sense that teachers spend too much time and energy completing paper work and not enough time directly teaching children. As a newly qualified teacher a number of years ago, I sensed that there must be more satisfactory alternatives to existing practice. As I became more aware of the machinations of schools and the education system, so my frustration grew with the amount of time spent completing forward plans, assessment sheets, attending countless meetings, serving on school working parties and being bombarded with a seemingly endless number of initiatives from policy makers. With hindsight I appreciate that not all of these were fruitless exercises, but I believed, then and now, that there was not enough time for teachers to reflect on their practice and on what education might look like in primary schools. In more recent years, and in a variety of leadership roles, including as principal teacher and acting head teacher in small management teams, I have continued to be increasingly disheartened by many of the complexities and practices of primary education. However, the over-riding drive for undertaking this research was the dissatisfaction I felt over the lack of democratic opportunities for children in primary education.

Although generally I believe that most children are negatively affected as a consequence of undemocratic practices, in particular it is those children in schools where the vast majority of pupils reside in areas where the socio-economic conditions are challenging who may be most disadvantaged. It is not my intention to analyse, in any depth, the effectiveness or otherwise of economic or social

policy but to argue that increased involvement of democracy for these, and all, children in primary school will improve their experiences of school and would be beneficial educationally and in a wider sense for their life experiences and expectations outwith school. My dissertation is aiming to highlight, with respect to children, what the recent Carnegie UK Trust (2010) endeavoured more generally to achieve with respect to inequalities in society. A two year study between 2008 and 2010 the Carnegie research had two main issues: aiming to support those in society with least power in actively engaging in decision making processes and shedding new light on concerns over what they referred to as 'democratic deficit' (2010:8). The link with this dissertation is the concern over children's access to democracy not least with respect to the report's claim that democracy and power can be seen '... as a zero-game: you either have it or you don't' (2010:11). Both the Carnegie report and this dissertation take the view that power and democracy are, given the appropriate environment, more fluid than fixed and, consequently, that power shifts and the development of increased democracy are goals towards which we might strive.

When I analyse many of the references to democracy in the chapters of this dissertation, the benefits I highlight are not necessarily or apparently shared by many of my colleagues. I am conscious that often I refer to a teaching profession that is over burdened with other concerns that create barriers, fear or even, occasionally, a general mistrust or misunderstanding of democracy. This frustrates me because democracy in primary schools will not happen by chance: there must be a belief that it is worthwhile. The importance I place on the uncertainty over whether democracy will enjoy a more prominent role in education is emphasised by the comments of Apple when he highlights the role that schools can play both as an arena of reproducing inequalities and '... as an arena for critical understanding and action in changing these inequalities (2008:259).

Despite the uncertainty I signal above, Rudduck and Flutter (2004) are clear of the necessity for schools to provide democratic experiences. With the need to increase democracy in schools for children central to this study, it is necessary to detail my understanding of democracy. What do I envisage as the aspects of democracy that I strive for in my image of a democratic school? What do I expect

to change from current practice? In what way might children's experiences be different? In detailing this I am mindful of Hughes who cautioned:

The impossibility of defining democracy is beside the mark, for though it is indefinable it is understandable, and not only by philosophers but by ordinary people (Hughes, 1951:12).

Rather than attempting a simplistic definition of democracy, I will highlight its many varied dimensions which are vital ingredients if its implementation is to provide the benefits I anticipate. This should inevitably involve what Kiwan refers to as the activity of '... active participation as a democratic activity, with this process empowering people to bring about change' (2007:229). What is necessary, also, is an appreciation of Young's view of democracy as '... both an element and a condition of social justice' (1990:91). On her view, we would regard democracy as a condition of freedom where all persons have '... the right and opportunity to participate in the deliberation and decision-making of the institution to which their actions contribute' (Young, 1990:91). Moreover, democracy requires an attitude typical of that described by Woods who writes of advocates of democracy having feeling and sentiments towards '... the realisation of second order values like hurt and fair treatment and negative feelings towards their opposite' (2005:41). Beane (1990) refers to a democratic way of life while Apple and Beane describe conditions on which democracy depends, including the following.

The open flow of ideas, regardless of their popularity... concern over the welfare of others and the dignity and rights of individuals and minorities (Apple and Beane, 1995:6-7).

Suggesting that democracy should offer rights to participate and influence decisions, Woods (2004) suggests it should contribute to open discussions and to aspire to truth. Ultimately, I am aiming for a culture in schools that resonates with all of these ideas and which is similar to the situation described by Dewey when he outlined his notion of democracy as '... more than a form of government ... primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience' (1966:87).

Whilst democracy may include much of the above and more, it is not, however, necessarily just about 'shared values' or the 'common good' (Young, 2000). Young articulates a view of 'deliberative democracy' primarily as an alternative against notions of democracy being viewed or used as 'privileged unity' that could

silence and exclude diversity. She argues for a minimal notion of the 'common good' and calls for deliberative democracy norms where '... democracy is actually deepened through enabling more inclusivity of plural claims and perspectives and empowering for less privileged participants' (2000:35). The inclusion of deliberative democracy within the mix of dimensions is important because of children who may otherwise be excluded and so too, Young's call to attend to plural claims is relevant to my study.

When anticipating democracy in schools I am aware that Apple and Beane (1995) take great care, and many pages, to discuss a democratic school. My view of a democratic school is that it should facilitate and encourage greater awareness of the needs and rights of children. The notion of democracy, as described earlier, as a process and an attitude, is consistent with Woods' description of the centre of gravity for democracy and his view of democratic practice in schools that is based on '... a sense of common humanity and a fundamental valuing of each person' (2005:42). In that vein, I look forward to democratic schools providing an environment that encourages

... talking with pupils about things that matter in school and conversations that build a habit of easy discussion between teachers and pupils (Rudduck, 2006:137).

Suggesting that schooling should be '... dedicated to the cultivation of an informed critical citizenry capable of actively participating and governing a democratic society', Giroux (2010:1). He also highlights features that would be consistent with my expectations. Before democracy is achieved Giroux claims it is necessary for children to be given a voice in schools and that

... educators need to assert a politics that makes the relationship among authority, ethics, and power central to a pedagogy that expands rather than closes down the possibilities of a radical democratic society (Giroux, 1994:361).

A fundamental component and relevant to Giroux's point on pedagogy in schools is expressed by Hodgkin when claiming democracy as '... not something which is "taught", it is something which is practised' (1998:11). This is further reinforced by Giroux (1999) when he challenges us to address how to construct ideological and institutional conditions in which the lived experiences of empowerment, for the vast majority of students, becomes the defining feature of schooling.

I expect a great deal from democracy. It is so much more than just involving people in the decision making process, important though that may be. Democracy should be responsible for creating and fostering relationships that then evolve in democratic settings. For this reason, my references to democracy throughout the dissertation often focus on how its eventual effective implementation requires changes in relationships. I will, in the sixth chapter here, 'Summerhill: An Alternative Model?', highlight the view that democracy is not necessarily based on a principle that everyone is equal or that children should have the same rights as adults. Rather it is about redressing what I see as existing imbalances in how we, as adults, treat, value and respect children in primary schools. This anticipation of democracy is summarized more generally with respect to how adults treat children with Young stating that '... to treat people with respect is to be prepared to listen to what they have to say' (1990:58). She also refers to a notion of moral reasoning, which requires '... not detachment from but engagement in and sympathy with the particularities of the social context, and the needs particular people have' (1990:96). The necessity for more equitable and fairer relationships can not be overstated and Young refers too to the powerless, for whom '... power is exercised without their exercising it; the powerless are situated so that they must take orders and rarely have the right to give them' (1990:57). From a rather different angle, Foucault warns that 'Where there is power, there is resistance' (1980:85). There are these and many other difficulties in pursuing aspirations such as more equitable treatment associated with democracy. Trafford argues that it is necessary to define more clearly what is meant by a democratic approach for 'Talk of empowering students and involving them in a democratic process', can risk '... giving rise to fears of a laissez-faire approach' (1997:7). Perhaps it is because of uncertainty over the impact of democracy that my experience would indicate that the majority of teachers would be uncertain and even fearful of democracy rather than positive towards it. Pursuing increased democracy will challenge the nature and the quality of current relationships in primary schools, exemplified through the manner in which adults communicate with children. I will, in the fifth chapter of this dissertation, Relationships, highlight the influence that teachers exercise over children and the manner in which they control them.

Rudduck and Flutter refer to this control when stating that a fundamental flaw in any process designed to empower children is that ‘... power issues are embedded in everyday regime of schools and even woven into the very strategies used for consulting pupils’ (2004:157). Similarly, Wrigley highlights the very nature of the structures within schools, an issue I will discuss in the third chapter, ‘Structure and Control’, when teachers become so accustomed to dictates from above that ‘... the idea of negotiation sounds almost revolutionary’ (2003:134). A challenge for democracy that I highlight later in the dissertation, in particular in the fourth chapter, Policy, is that governments have their own view and use of democracy. This manifests through a control and manipulation that steers democracy towards alternative meanings and objectives that are often at odds with my aspirations for democracy as outlined here.

Having briefly sketched some key dimensions of democracy and some of the barriers to its development, I will suggest benefits that could accrue for children on a journey to achieving increased democracy. When I reflect on the ‘why’ of democracy, the two issues of autonomy and more effective learning and teaching seem to be at the heart of developing democracy and I will provide a brief initial response here to these ‘why’ questions. Firstly, autonomy is identified by many researchers, according to Anderman and Maehr’s (1994) review, as a key factor in pupils’ commitment to learning in school. Rudduck and Flutter suggest that the term has many meanings but that students often plea for autonomy, for ‘... more opportunity to make decisions about what they do in class or learn from each other’ (2004:83). Woods claims that schools should encourage the development of children who are ‘... creative agents... capable of dealing with modernity through self-conscious self-determination’ (2005:43). Developing autonomy is according to Rudduck and Flutter

...the task for schools to help young people exercise power over their own lives both in school and as an investment for the future (Rudduck and Flutter, 2004:43).

Woods also suggests we regard ‘... autonomy of the person as an inherent good, which is connected with the principle of freedom’ (2005:43). Such approaches to and attributes of autonomy have clear benefits for children and advocates for increased autonomy may find encouragement from existing policy which lends some support to its development. The Scottish Government encourages teachers

to engage in dialogue with children and urge ‘... a greater emphasis on independent learning to help reinforce learning’ (2010a:3). The new curriculum in Scotland, Curriculum for Excellence, hereafter CfE, (Scottish Executive, 2004a) could also be a vehicle for increased autonomy with its emphasis on the four capacities of ‘Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens and Effective Contributors’ (Scottish Executive, 2004a:1) acting as a foundation for learning that could facilitate increased autonomy for children.

There are, however, difficulties with respect to developing children’s autonomy. Aronowitz and Giroux highlight a danger of children being programmed ‘... in certain directions so that they will behave in set ways’ (1986:129). Another challenge is that teachers may consider that autonomy is best deferred until children get to college or university. Rudduck and Flutter suggest ‘... teachers may see their contract with students in terms of ensuring the achievement of good examination passes’ (2004:85). Such practice from the profession might well be influenced as a result of the current prescriptive agenda of policy makers referred to earlier. Sergiovanni, however, puts teachers in a pivotal role with respect to developing autonomy.

But whether they will help students in a particular school or not depends on whether they are invested with enough discretion to act (Sergiovanni, 1996 cited by Mitchell and Sackney, 2000:11).

The significance of the teacher’s role and its influence on children is both critical and, at the same time, a difficulty. I will, in the second chapter, ‘Apathy or Resistance?’, highlight the pressures that face the teaching profession which may impact on the prospects for developing increased democracy in schools.

Prospects for developing autonomy will also be influenced by the vulnerability of some children. Often teachers express concerns over their pupils in descriptions of them as ‘poor wee souls’. Many of the children may indeed be ‘poor wee souls’ and at times, and in various ways, dependent but this should not preclude children from experiencing increased autonomy through democratic opportunities. Young (1990) argues that dependency and the injustice it produces need not be oppressive, turning to feminist moral theory to question ‘... deeply held assumptions that moral agency and full citizenship require that a person be autonomous and independent’ (1990:55). This model of justice accords respect,

autonomy and participation in decision making to those who are dependent as well as to those who are independent (Held, 1987). Young is adamant that 'Dependency should not be a reason to be deprived of choice and respect' (1990:55). This view provides encouragement. Even our most vulnerable children in schools have a right to autonomy. Dependency, of course, is not exclusive to children and many adults could reasonably be described as dependent at various times throughout their lives and it should certainly not be an excuse to resist the encouragement of autonomy as a key facet of democracy and justice.

The second response to 'why democracy?' lies in its potential to impact on effective learning and teaching. As with the development of autonomy for children, teachers have a vital role to play in listening to children and developing a stronger collaboration with children and ultimately facilitating changes in the nature of their relationships with them. The development of democracy can lead to a situation in which teachers are the '... professional creators of a new culture of learning' (Rudduck and Flutter, 2004:147). Bredeson describes such a culture as a basic principle of democracy through the development of a '... critical competence and a capacity to look analytically and constructively at school practices' (1999:22). In 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed', Freire (1972) claimed that no curriculum was ever neutral and that in order to empower the learner, teachers are required to adopt themes and issues familiar to their students. One such process that could increase democratic practices and positively affect learning and teaching is the recognition of and valorisation of children's distinctive culture and values:

Instead of changing children from diverse backgrounds in some way, to suit the school, I prefer to think more about changing the forms of education that undervalue the things that many children bring to school with them (Corson, 1998:68).

This philosophy, as described by Corson, may eventually lead to the increased practice of democracy and to the development of autonomy and learning and teaching, with children developing a range of skills that are social, communicative and participative. Endorsement from global policy is evident according to Osler's claim that such skills are '...running through most of the articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child' (1994:146). Autonomy and effective learning and teaching are, then, significant aspirations underlying the development of democracy in schools.

Another 'why' of democracy is its role at the heart of education. I regard a fundamental aim of education to be the development of children's awareness of their right to democracy anticipating that, through time, they will subsequently find a stronger voice throughout their lives. However, decades ago Dent cautioned: 'Before you can have an educated democracy you must offer your democracy an education that is likely to make it one' (1930:14). Similarly and more recently, Apple has posed a fundamental question with respect to the role of education and whether it should be more active in challenging existing inequalities in society, asking 'Can schools actually contribute to a more just society? (2008:252). Additionally, McGettrick asks the direct question '... what is education for?' (2005:33). He continues that time has been unable to answer this complex question and that changing contexts, changing nature of communities, changes in expectations and values do not allow any prospect of certainty or permanence to any response. McGettrick cautions that the curriculum is not the main purpose of education, but a means of achieving the primary purpose, conceding that '... the idea of making the world into a better place is open to many interpretations' (2005:35). There may be encouragement here. The views of the aims for education, expressed by McGettrick, are in part evident in policy in England and Wales, as seen through the objectives set out by the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES). Greany and Jones note that, in 2002, objective one from the DfES was to 'Give children an excellent start in education so that they have a better foundation for future learning' (2005:12). In 2004, these objectives became more holistic, focussing on child protection and general well-being and Greany and Jones state the main objective was now to 'Safeguard children and young people, improve their life outcomes and general well-being, and break cycles of deprivation' (2005:13). Prior to these objectives, Blunkett (2000), then Secretary of State for Education and Employment, in the Westminster government, stated education '... is the single most important factor in creating and sustaining a socially inclusive society' (cited in, Alexander and Potter, 2005:112). Despite such aspirations of the Westminster government and their indirect influence on Scotland's Holyrood government, the reality for many children in schools is bleak. Often these children appear destined to lives of poor health, limited employment opportunities and inadequate housing with little prospect of experiencing the richness of culture and life outwith their own environment. I categorise those

children from challenging socio-economic environments as vulnerable and in doing so I realise that such a classification may be viewed as rather crude and even inaccurate. My justification for referring to such children as vulnerable, and indeed for the occasional use of the term 'able' children, is to emphasise both the unsatisfactory and restrictive nature of the current school environment and also to use the everyday language commonly used by teachers when referring to children in school.

Reference to vulnerable children brings me to the final and perhaps most compelling response to 'why?' for democracy, namely the plight of these vulnerable children and the impact that their environment has on their educational and life prospects. The plight of children living in challenging socio-economic areas has haunted me from my early days in teaching when I became aware of families who are seemingly permanent features of economically deprived areas. Horgan, in a United Kingdom study examining the impact of poverty on young children's experience of school, is clear that poorer children in the study accepted that they were '... not going to get the same quality of schooling, or the same outcomes, as better-off children (Horgan, 2007:1). What for many families can only be described as a cycle of hopelessness, has been a factor in large cities for generations. This hopelessness is captured in a report about Glasgow which states:

... most of the other problems facing the city (drug/ alcohol addiction, educational failure) can be traced back to the sense of hopelessness experienced by generations in the same family who have never worked (The Centre for Social Justice, 2008:).

For many, the traditional escape from such poverty and despair has been through education. Goodman and Gregg caution that children growing up in poorer families emerge from school with substantially lower levels of educational attainment and note that '... such 'achievement gaps' are a major contributing factor to patterns of social mobility' (2010:1).

Certainly there has been some recognition of such struggles for some time. The architect of the 'Third Way' philosophy, Giddens, argued that exclusion at the bottom in society tends to be self-producing and any strategies which break poverty cycles should be pursued for '...a well-educated population is desirable in society to reduce inequality and allow for the redistribution of possibilities'

(1998:109). Whilst Goulden suggests that ‘... poverty is dynamic’ (2010:3) he also admits that about a fifth of poverty is ‘...recurrent where people only escape temporarily’ (2010:1). Further studies from Tomlinson and Walker would substantiate that view: ‘... measures of income poverty, financial strain and material deprivation are either chronic or recurrent for a quarter of the population’ (2010:4). For many children their families seem to have been incapable of altering their destiny; one can almost plot their lives for them, even as early as the first year of primary school. Research in Scotland by McQuaid et al. exploring the difficulty faced by parents attempting to escape from recurrent poverty, uncovered key barriers to that escape.

Cost of public and private transport; rent levels; health issue; low qualifications; and lack of confidence or self-esteem. Issues such as domestic violence, traumatic experiences and drug addiction (McQuaid et al. 2010:3-4).

Undoubtedly some children do escape from deprivation. However, for a significant percentage this is not a realistic expectation. Increased democracy is one possibility of a route out from poverty but I now highlight what I regard as a failure of education to develop democracy effectively and the subsequent detrimental effect this has on our most vulnerable children. Firstly, there is an impact on children, mentioned earlier, from their challenging environments. Fullan states that Berliner’s analysis of the impact of poverty in the United States creates ‘... a compelling case for why we must put school reform in societal context’ (2006:12). Closer to home, Powers (1997) refers to the housing estates on the periphery as areas of social and economic desolation and the Scottish Government recently stated that issues of inequality continue: ‘Children from poorer communities and low socio-economic status homes are more likely than others to underachieve’ (Scottish Government, 2008:9). However, despite what would appear to be recognition of inequalities, there is also, at times, a reluctance to acknowledge the material and class division of society. Scotland is often still depicted as a singular, homogenous nation, described by Law and Mooney as ‘... the distended nation, the ‘One Scotland’... imagined as a horizontal, multicultural (though rarely vertical, multi-class) community of interests’ (2006:528). The reality, however, according to Paterson et al. (2004:151), is a seriously divided and stratified society where ‘... the nature and experience of the resulting exclusion may, if anything, have

worsened'. Fullan, summarizing Berliner's findings, suggests that the link between academic achievement and poverty is multifold and pernicious.

Poverty, and all that it entails, has direct health and indirect physiological and psychological consequences that inhibit the capacity to learn (Fullan, 2006:13).

Secondly, having recognised the impact on children of challenging environments, it is important to consider what action can be taken. Apple and Beane maintain that we need to be more proactive and extend beyond just improving the school climate. Democratic educators seek not simply to lessen the harshness of social inequalities in school '... but to change the conditions that create them' (Apple and Beane, 1995:11). Nussbaum, too, suggests that schools are key institutions of the public good and '... crucial to both the health of democracy and to the creation of a decent world culture' (2009:6).

Thirdly, it is necessary to recognise the challenging goals outlined by Apple and Beane and Nussbaum. Giroux warns of a move by policy makers and politicians that is designed to question the quality of teaching when the worth of teachers is solely determined by student test scores on standardised tests. 'Professional experience and quality credentials are now more irrelevant next to the hard reality of empiricism' (Giroux, 2010a). While recognising that the implementation of CfE may create an environment at odds with that described by Giroux, I can imagine, only too easily, the deafening silence that might follow a suggestion at a staff meeting to tackle social inequalities. Most teaching staff have clear lines of demarcation and they would consider fighting against social inequalities falling outside their remit. What is required is a radical re-think of what is expected of educators in areas such as my school with challenging socio-economic conditions. Apple highlights the plight of an inner-city school.

The curriculum and those who planned it lived in an unreal world, a world fundamentally disconnected from my life with those children in that inner-city classroom (Apple, 2008:242).

Reflection on Apple's concern brings into focus a failing of schooling, namely a belief that those children most disadvantaged in our schools and communities are the very children who appear to benefit least from our present schooling structure.

Giddens (1997) would look to empower the most vulnerable children in society from past restrictive practices that resulted in both social and educational exclusion but Ginsburg cautions that 'Schools for poor children are not functioning properly, and poor children often fail at school' (1972:1).

What could be regarded as a failure of government forces closer examination of the aspirations that government have for these children from 'poorer communities'. Is the expectation and reality that only those with the necessary 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1977) are to be successful in the new Scottish 'One Nation'? Is citizenship and enterprise education the pinnacle of expectation for our most vulnerable children? Is this to be the extent of their democratic experience in primary school? Law and Mooney caution that, at times, the working class are viewed as a hindrance to the Scottish national interest and that the most precarious and vulnerable groups are 'Increasingly seen as being out of step with what policy elites consider as normal or mainstream' (2006:528). The journal extract below would support the claims of Law and Mooney and also points to the need for a more democratic and equitable approach in education for our most vulnerable children.

When I reflect on concerns I have about the lack of democratic practice in primary schools, one of the major issues for me is the failure of the current education system to deal effectively with the significant needs of our most vulnerable children. I believe that policy has simply failed those children who are most vulnerable and that policy makers are often out of touch with those communities such as the one that serves my school. On a daily basis I see reminders of the inequalities that blight the lives of children in my school. Often I will sit in my office on days like today and despair at the poverty, poor appearance, inadequate diet and domestic turmoil and instability that seem to be constant features of significant numbers of my pupils' troubled lives. When you experience these difficulties on a regular basis one really appreciates some sense of the magnitude of the struggle faced by these children. I realise that school is often a place that provides shelter, heat, school dinners, some structure and respite from the disarray and helplessness of typical home life. Is this enough? Do we not as educators have a responsibility to at least highlight these dreadful inequalities in society? Days like today leave me feeling utterly despairing and depressed. I think about individual

children in my school and predict their life prospects. Each time I do this I imagine a lifetime of struggle through ill-health, unemployment, affected by crime and a general lifetime of dependency. Surely these children deserve better?

The journal extract above invites debate with regard to the purpose of education as highlighted by people such as Neill (1917). There are significant tensions in this debate and, even as a passionate advocate for democracy; I am challenged by the wider question of the main purposes of education. The severity of the situation described in the extract above is a cause of great frustration for me, especially when I consider what appears to be a lack of any noticeable reduction in the struggles that face some of my pupils and their families and communities. Shelter's report on bad housing and homelessness for children states that

Two thirds of social housing which children live in has failed the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)... children and young people in Scotland continue to live in run-down, overcrowded, damp housing or are stuck in temporary housing affecting all aspects of their current and future lives (Shelter, 2009: 2).

The journal extract above also alludes to the despair faced by many in such communities through the cycle of hopelessness that is so often prevalent for those living in such areas. The reality is that for many children at my school this depressing lifestyle often stretches back generations. The depth of gloom that seems to engulf such areas forces me to question why, to date, government appear to have been unsuccessful in putting into place effective measures to assist in alleviating this situation. Goulden notes, however, that in recent years there have been some signs that '... policy in the UK is starting to recognise and respond to problems caused by cycles of poverty' (2010: 4). Even allowing for Goulden's observation, the failure to date to develop and adopt policies that might impact more positively on vulnerable children especially is summed up by Apple: 'If we cannot get angry at what this society is doing to its children, what can we get angry about?' (2000: vii). Reynolds and Trehan argue that '... to pretend social inequalities are not present, inevitably serves the interest of the dominant group' (2003:166). It would seem wrong to assume that, as a starting point, everyone has equal access to the debate on inequality. In a wider context, and of equal concern, is Apple's claim that there '... has been an altering of the very meaning of

what it means to have a social goal of equality' (2000:30). He claims that definitions of freedom and equality are no longer democratic, rather they are commercial, and he goes on to blame this on the 'Right in both the US and UK ... who have begun to reconstruct the social order' (Apple, 2000:30). There is also an emphasis on consensus, described by Reynolds and Trehan as '... a subtle manifestation of consensus masquerading as common interest' (2003:74). It should be recognized that there is little evidence of schools creating a culture for equality.

Having reflected on and introduced the main themes for the dissertation, the what and why of democracy and factors such as relationships, the role of teachers and the home environment, it is to my research methodology that I now turn. I felt it necessary to write this dissertation in a form that could narrate the last two years and highlight the experiences, fears, doubts, emotional pain and immense frustration of attempting to understand myself and the actions of those around me more fully. Berger describes this sort of study as 'narrative autoethnography' (2001:509) although I will, throughout the dissertation, use terms such as 'narrative enquiry' and 'narrative autoethnography' interchangeably to describe my methodology. Ellis and Bochner suggest that '...autoethnography provides an avenue for doing something meaningful for yourself and the world' (2000:761). They also claim that autoethnography '... demands self-questioning in deeper ways and leads to a better understanding of others' (2000:738).

I reflect now, at the end of the study, that autoethnography was not only an appropriate methodology but perhaps the only way of reporting my experiences and introspections. I had only become aware of the methodology through dialogue around the planning of my thesis when autoethnography was suggested as a suitable methodology for my study. I did not, at that time, have any knowledge of the methodology. I was initially rather sceptical over how I could complete a thesis through merely compiling and reflecting on journals. How could this be academic? An ignorance of the methodology forced me to become, firstly, immersed, and, very shortly thereafter, fascinated by autoethnography's weaving of personal narrative and theory. There was, however, still uncertainty. Embarking on a thesis is fraught with doubts as to the most appropriate path to take. I had to be sure that autoethnography suited me. Added to my anxiety was the awareness that the

methodology was potentially rather risky and I will deal shortly with some of the many criticisms it attracts. However, I was determined to persevere. Over an extended period I read seemingly endless autoethnographic journals and marvelled at the detail of the narrative associated with the methodology, becoming excited about the impact that the use of emotion had on my understanding and connection with the various issues highlighted in the articles I was reading. Only then did I begin to think that autoethnography might, after all, be an ideal fit for my research.

First and foremost I state that I am telling my story. I am not declaring a scientific truth but rather providing, as described by Dyson, '... my creative construction of a reality, which I have lived through' (2007:39). As I do so, I am aware of Richardson's view that writing '... is not simply a true representation of an objective reality: instead, language creates a particular view of reality' (1995:198-221). This dissertation is about my professional life and my view of the unsatisfactory experiences of, in particular, our most vulnerable children. I want others to imagine what I have experienced. Autoethnography appears exciting because its many features include a reliance on an explorative, uncertain and fluid process rather than one that purports to discover something. Ellis and Bochner (2000) refer to the need for social science texts to construct a different relationship between researcher and subjects and between authors and readers from that so prevalent in much academic research. One of the ways that autoethnography facilitates this is through narrative inquiry, described by Ellis and Bochner as stories that create the effect of reality '... showing characters embedded in the complexities of lived moments' (2000: 744). While being mindful of the many paths I might have followed I was attracted to the 'advocate research model' (1984:20) description of ethnography used by Burgess for that it would be not enough just to describe or to make sense. Rather, the point, argues Brewer is to '... intervene and improve the position of the people studied' (2000:147). I want criticism and debate and I want this dissertation to bring my area of concern, that schools should be more democratic for children, to the fore. I am interested in who agrees or disagrees with me. I would like there to be some impact as a consequence of my dissertation. My hope is that those involved in educating children will react to my dissertation and that teachers and those in positions of leadership, whether

novices or vastly experienced, will engage at a professional level with the issues that arise here. Ultimately my aim is to effect change in primary school environments in order to provide a more satisfactory experience for children.

The dissertation, then, reflects my experience and thoughts, influenced by examples of writing from those such as Tedlock (1991, 2000) Richardson (1992, 1997, 2000) and Ellis and Bochner (1996, 2000). In this dissertation, it is my intention to use the advice of Coles: 'Take your readers in hand, take them where you've been, tell them what you've seen' (1997:97). The use of narrative inquiry (Ellis and Bochner, 2000) sits comfortably with the emphasis placed on reflexivity and described by Brewer (2000) as a critical reflection on social processes and data. Ellis and Bochner talk of '... an understanding of the self acting in the social world' (2000:153) and this goes some way to dealing with what Denzin and Lincoln refer to as the issue of 'double crisis' (1998:21-22). Brewer described this crisis as 'A disillusionment surrounding the ethnographers' claim to provide a privileged and special access to reality' (2000:39). Further potential crises, or criticisms at least, such as representation and legitimation (Holt, 2003), emotional or intellectual impact (Richardson 2000) and validity (Ellis, 1993) also deserve consideration.

One of the attractions of autoethnography is its evocative narrative and the opportunity to write from an ethic of care and concern (Richardson, 1997) in direct contrast with the authoritative voice commonly associated with *good* research (Lather, 2001). I am moved by the prospect of shedding light on my experiences of primary education. I hopefully have, as suggested by Jago, peeled back 'multiple layers of consciousness' and will display my concerns, fears, limitations as well as my hopes (2006:405). I am attracted to and guided by Nussbaum's suggestion that one might have '... openness to being moved by the plight of others' and '...the willingness to be touched by another's life' (1990:162). For Richardson (1997), this manifests as 'emotional work' to express feelings and to be intimate with potential readers. This emphasis on the emotional is something I will return to in the final chapter but suffice to say, this willingness to be moved by my own and others' experiences is an ultimate aspiration, even with the knowledge of the claims of Ellis and Flaherty (1992) that it requires giving up power and privilege, a particular skill they claim for women rather than men.

I opted to use autoethnography to raise awareness of the issues that have emerged in recent years in primary education and to highlight the nature of the existing school environment which I believe is both unacceptable and unsustainable. My goal, therefore, is to capture segments of my experiences and to describe these for myself and others and to open them up to analysis and debate. I note that Reed-Danahay suggests that:

One of the main characteristics of an autoethnographic perspective is that autoethnographer is a boundary-crosser and the role can be characterised as that of a dual identity (Reed-Danahay, 1997:3).

I believe that my intimate, active involvement of school life as a school leader combined with my more reflective academic role places me in a good position to cross the boundaries of these two very different practices.

Having highlighted some of the positives of the methodology it is important to outline some of the substantial intricacies that require a degree of untangling before autoethnography can be effective. Woods cautioned that schools should not be opened up to ethnographers, claiming ‘... them to be arrogant outsiders’ (1986:150). This is autoethnography and I am not an outsider. There are, however, ethical issues to consider not least around my role and position in the school and consequently how others react to me and, also, whether I have recorded others’ experiences accurately. I will deal in more detail with these issues in the final chapter but the use of journal entries are snapshots of my reality and recordings of my every day experiences. I do not claim that they reflect the reality of anyone else and neither do I claim them as ‘the truth’. However, there is a challenge highlighted by Richardson: ‘Does the text embody a fleshed out sense of lived experience?’ (2000:15). Eisner (1991) stresses the need to avoid the criticism of being self-serving and Richardson is also critical of writing that is ‘... narcissistic and wholly self-absorbed’ (1997:87), suggesting it is dangerous when research makes a difference only to the individuals conducting it. I therefore require to be guarded against assuming that others will necessarily be engrossed or even interested by what I experience and write. Richardson argues that the difficulty for ethnographers is that stark self-revelation is done poorly if it is a decorative flourish that is not essential to any argument and is merely ‘... exposure for its own sake’ (Richardson, 1996:13). Going further, Behar cites relativist arguments ‘... that auto-anything is a combination of, nonevaluative, anything goes

self-therapizing logic' (1997:13) whilst Coffey suggests that those who preach autoethnography are '... in danger of gross self-indulgence' (1999:132). Perhaps then, in this case, it is useful to acknowledge Schwalbe's view: 'Every insight was both a doorway and a mirror...a way to see into their experience and a way to look back at mine' (1996:58). I was often guided by this notion.

The challenges of any methodology are significant and within autoethnography there is the requirement of an awareness of which hooks, which issues, to develop and how deeply to analyse these. I will cite one example of this intricacy, namely the issue of trust, referred to often throughout the dissertation and in particular in the chapters on Relationships and 'Towards a Conclusion'. What is reasonable analysis of this issue? How much can one achieve in an essentially broad dissertation and what must one omit? For example, I could refer to the literature and the use of emotional writing in autoethnography as the catalyst for further deliberation of issues such as trust. Similarly, reflection of the complexities of relationships could have led my study to Nussbaum and her work on the differences between compassion and empathy and the construction of a 'double life' (2001:335). Frustratingly, I was unable to develop my study in these directions because of restrictions over the ordering of issues, what to include and exclude and limitations of time and space. The reflexive nature of autoethnography invites such inquiry and consideration of how far and how deeply one should develop any issue. Recently there has also been some discussion with respect to how analytical researchers should be. Ellis and Bochner were critical of realist ethnography and analytic autoethnography claiming ethnography '... for us is a journey; they think of it as a destination. They (ethnographers) want to master, explain, grasp it but caring and empathizing is for us' (2006:432). Caring was for me, too, but not necessarily at the expense of explanation and analysis. Anderson had been critical of the 'Evocative and mode of storytelling' nature of autoethnography (2006:377) and, with others including Atkinson, Coffey and Delmont (2003) would subscribe to analytic autoethnography and its 'Analytic reflexivity, dialogue with informants and commitment to theoretical analysis' (2006:378). Despite my unwavering support for the style of Ellis and Bochner, the debate of these issues reinforces for me the many pathways available through autoethnography and is also a reminder of the tensions over issues such as appropriate depth of analysis of specific issues. Ultimately, perhaps, there are no

'right' answers but I have tried, here, to focus on both a caring, empathetic approach and analytic reflexivity.

Contemplation of the issues here both allows and forces me to reflect specifically on the difficulties of writing autoethnography. I immediately appreciated that the process would be much more complex than merely observing people's actions, recording my experiences and being reflexive, and making links to relevant theory. There are anxieties over misrepresenting people or of not being reflexive enough. What should be included in a study? What should be left out? What information should I use? Have I analysed the information fairly and accurately? Macbeth (2001:49) refers to the constitutive reflexivities of everyday life as one of the many complex discourses of qualitative research whilst Garfinkel (1967) asks how we make sense and meaning, how we give order and fact to everyday life whilst Bernstein (1971) was critical of what he described as an elite collection code where the interpretation of knowledge was for the chosen few. It is necessary to realise that autoethnography creates what Beatson refers to as uncertainty; it is not a scientific method with a hypothesis or '...a set of questions to be answered' (1972:vii). Instead it is, on Woods' (1986) view, more like a detective hunt in which one looks for clues, seeking to discover and analyse. It is this uncertainty and necessity for further enquiry which applies equally to autoethnography and which I view as a challenge but also a fundamental strength of the methodology.

For instance, I would subscribe to the view of philosophical hermeneutics, namely that there is never a finally correct interpretation. Maddison would argue that ultimately my aim as a researcher is philosophical, it is to '... understand what is involved in the process of understanding itself' (1991:121). Similarly, Schwandt states that understanding '... lies at the heart of qualitative inquiry' (1999:451) and Gadamer argues that one should not attempt to develop a procedure of understanding but '...clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place' (1989:263). There does appear to be, in qualitative research, an unsettling aspect of analysis of interpretive practice due to the seemingly constant shift of the analytic pendulum (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997). There are many views on how best to understand human action. Richardson stresses that an individual's understanding is dependent on whatever discourses are available. Furthermore, contradictory interpretations are governed by social interest rather than objective

truth. She deduces that subjectivity ‘... is shifting and contradicting; it is not stable or fixed’ (1997:89). I do subscribe to the view that a qualitative inquiry such as this autoethnography is trying to construct the meaning of something, however, temporary and subjective that is. Gadamer (1989) reinforces claims that subjectivity is a distorting mirror shaped by history, not just through self-examination, and Richardson notes that ‘Self-awareness of the individual is only a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life’ (1997:276-277). In this regard Ellis and Bochner (2000) claim that interpretive practice engages in the “hows” and “what” of social reality with echoes of this social construction seen in Karl Marx’s adage that ‘...people construct their own world, but that they do so entirely on their own terms’ (1956:488). Ultimately I am persuaded by Bernstein’s view that we can make ‘... comparative judgements and seek to support them with argument and appeal to good reason’ (1975:338).

It is also important to acknowledge that some are hostile, doubtful and sceptical of autoethnography. Delamont views it as ‘... lazy – literally lazy and also intellectually lazy... almost impossible to write and publish ethically’ (2007:2).

Atkinson argues:

Research is supposed to be analytic not merely experiential.
Autoethnography is all experience, and is noticeably lacking in *analytic*
outcome (Atkinson, 2006:400-404).

Shooter (1987) claims autoethnography fictionalizes life and that distortions result in a story about the past and not the past itself whilst Atkinson, again, deems it unworthy of social science because it ‘Creates a romantic construction of the self and becomes a storyteller rather than a story analyst’ (1997:327). Brewer (2000) cites Dickson’s description of the style as being ‘Anecdotal, hearsay with a tendency of accentuating the unusual at the expense of the mundane’ (1996:16). Woods (1986) refers to theoretical limitations of ethnography, but, such criticisms refer equally to autoethnography, citing Sjoberg and Nett (1968) ‘A researcher must often be able to remove himself intellectually and emotionally from the immediate social situation’ (1968:148). Woods cautions that the difficulty for ethnography is that ‘Immersion and retraction do not go well together’ (1986:148). My own experience would, however, indicate that the emotions involved in writing a journal entry do not preclude reflection of specific incidents at a later time although I would not wish to suggest I could or even should have tried to remove

myself from those reflections. However, challenges remain. Hall argues that 'Culture hides much more than it reveals and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants' (1959:30). Karra and Philips (2007) also note that 'Several researchers have doubted the use of the self as a primary data source' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998:156). Further challenges of the methodology come from Denzin (1990) who cautions that 'To go native results in a loss of authority' (Karra and Philips, 2007:548) and from Sparkes who suggests that use of the self as a primary source leads to 'Over emphasis and romanticisation and is difficult to evaluate' (2000:21-41). While acknowledging these criticisms, I do not believe or claim that the status of my authority was a significant factor in my research or that I have found it difficult to evaluate. I have attempted not to romanticise what was my natural working environment and my reactions to it.

I should acknowledge that perhaps some of the criticisms levelled against autoethnography arise in part because narrative inquiry is against the current trend in educational research which has come to rely on evidence based policy, with an emphasis on scientific rationality (Sanderson, 2003) as the gold standard (Eraut, 2003). Hodgkinson (2004) argues that there is an attempt to put in place a new orthodoxy for educational research and Avis suggests the following.

This orthodoxy determines what counts as 'good' educational research...the current importance attached by the state to evidence-informed practice and systematic review (Avis, 2006:108).

Often such research is marked by what Avis refers to as 'Technicisation and instrumentalism...partly to meet the rigorous standards of what is to count as educational research' (2006:109). Such scientific research has a certainty which perhaps counters any perceived obfuscations of academics and Schwandt claims that empiricist theory is determined to 'Trump our lived experience' and to provide the last word in a quest of getting to the bottom of things and put on a sound objective footing (1999:453). Similarly, Latour argues that 'Science produces objectivity by escaping as much as possible from shackles of ideology, passions and emotion' (1998:208-209). There is also a view that evidence-based research and subsequent systematic reviews leads to the dissemination of good practice with Hammersley warning that systematic review assumes the superiority of the positivist model of research.

This is a result of the methodological criteria used to evaluate studies which place experiments, randomised controlled trials and statistical analyses at the top of the credibility hierarchy (Hammersley, 2001:544-545).

Considering recent criticisms of autoethnography and because of the trend towards more positive research models it is important to question issues such as the quality, validity and reliability of my research and resulting dissertation. Before attempting to answer such questions it is, however, useful to consider the terminology associated with particular types of research. Joppe defines reliability and validity as follows:

Reliability, the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population...Validity, determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research result are (Joppe, 2000:1).

However, Watling (1998) has suggested that reliability and validity ‘... are tools of an essentially positivist epistemology’ (cited in Winter, 2000:7) although, Patton (2002) takes the view that validity and reliability are two factors which any qualitative researcher should be troubled about when judging the quality of a study. A useful compromise is offered in Richardson’s proposal that validity should not be seen as a rigid two-dimensional object but a multi-dimensional crystal providing us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic in which ‘... paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know’ (1997:92). I would reiterate that I am not attempting to discover truth as if it exists *per se* or if it is available if we only look hard enough and so concepts such as reliability and validity, borrowed from positivist research, are less appropriate than others such as crystallization. I subscribe to the view of Golafshani who suggests that ‘...these terms defined in quantitative terms may not apply to the qualitative research paradigm’ (2003:600). Perhaps inevitably, there is confusion. Stenbacka states that if ‘... a qualitative study is discussed with reliability as a criterion, the consequence is rather that the study is no good’ (2001:552). When I judge the quality of my dissertation it is not through criteria such as reliability and validity. I am substituting these measures of ‘goodness’ for concepts such as trustworthiness (Mishler, 2000). Trustworthiness has been, according to Rolfe, divided into:

... *credibility*, which corresponds roughly with the positivist concept of internal validity; *dependability*, which relates more to reliability;

transferability, which is a form of external validity; and *confirmability*, which is largely an issue of presentation (Rolfe, 2006:305).

Trustworthiness, following Johnson is '... defensible' (1997:282) and will help to establish confidence in my findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In addition, I would argue that my focus is '... for precision (Winter, 2000) credibility, and transferability (Hoepfl, 1997) and trustworthiness' (Golafshani, 2003:600). I would describe my research not as testing, predication and evaluating of findings in a quantitative sense but as Hoepfl (1997) describes it '... illumination, understanding and extrapolation to similar situations' Golafshani (2003:600). I also acknowledge the criteria that Richardson uses when reviewing personal narrative and so constantly have asked myself:

Does the piece contribute to our understanding of social life? Does this piece succeed aesthetically? Does this affect me emotionally and/or intellectually? Does it generate new questions or move me to action? Does this text embody a fleshed out sense of lived experience? (Richardson, 2000:15-16).

Even using these questions, Lincoln and Guba want us to ask 'How can an inquirer persuade his or her audience that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?' (1985:290). Whilst Eisner's (1991) view is that a good qualitative study can help us '... understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing' (Golafshani, 2003:601). Sandelowski (1986) refers to the notion of the researcher leaving a decision trail and this, for Rolfe, shifts the emphasis for judgement over issues such as quality '... from the producer to the consumer of the research. A study is trustworthy if and only if the reader of the research report judges it to be so' (2006:305). My own view is that as a researcher it is fundamental that I judge the quality of my research using a combination of the criteria highlighted above. I also relate to Arendt's conception of storytelling as an activity which 'Reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it' (1973:107). When I consider the trustworthiness of my dissertation I am clear that I do not claim to capture the past accurately, as if I were holding a mirror to it. The dissertation is my own reflection from journal entries and experiences. What is of importance are the consequences my story produces as I and others can ask, '... what kind of person does it shape me into and what new possibilities does it introduce for living my life?' (Ellis and Bochner, 2000:746). All stories, in some form, reinvent, omit, revise, and rearrange events for various reasons. Furthermore, I would argue that academics, by their nature, training

and motivation, will differ in opinion. I subscribe to the view of Tompkins who is critical of '... the trashing of emotion a ceaselessly waged war against feeling, woman, and writing that is personal' (1989:138). I neither hide nor try to reduce writing that is emotional. Autoethnography for me is in some way a liberating process that facilitates reflection on life through personal narrative.

A fundamental tool for this narrative is the completion of, reflection on and inclusion here of journal entries. To this end, throughout the final two year period of my dissertation, the journals I wrote were therapeutic, cathartic and a powerful heuristic tool, allowing me to reflect, think and re-write my personal narrative. The journal extracts that appear here were not modified in any way to make them academic although they were occasionally altered if their grammar or meaning was unclear. Janesick (1999) takes an interesting view of the connoisseurship of diary writing, claiming it can increase our understanding of our own thinking. Journalling provides clear feedback from ourselves (Progroff, 1992). However, it is also important to recognise that all diaries are selective and Hammersley warns that the use of diaries is like a voyage of discovery in which '... much of the time is spent at sea' (1984:61). Ellis and Bochner highlight another potential difficulty; journal writing could be difficult to carry off if the writer isn't introspective enough or is too introspective. Some, for example, '... aren't observant enough of the world around them' (2000:738). Ellis and Bochner, describing such writing, suggests it can display '... layers of consciousness connecting the personal to the culture' (2000:739). They claim that the distinctions between the cultural and the personal become blurred as the author changes focus and moves back and forth between looking outward and looking inward. My process, in this respect, involved writing these journals each evening. Very occasionally I would write them at my desk in school or a few days after an event. The journal was the most important tool for recording and reflecting on my experiences. From these initial recordings I would contemplate what issues and themes would frame both my dissertation and my actions in school. There were difficulties. For instance, on one occasion I had completed five pages of my journal and had recorded events only up to early morning. This presented challenges with respect to the time it took to complete my journals and uncertainty over the appropriate length for each entry. In addition, on reflection of my early journals I realised that I was being too introspective with incidents that related to me personally rather than

issues that might have a broader importance. I was forced to reflect who I was writing for and why. I worried that I was too insular but at the same time was mindful of Janesick's (2000) line that such practice allows '... for stepping into ones' inner mind and reaching further into interpretations of behaviours and beliefs and words we write' (cited in Ellis and Bochner, 2000:745). These examples highlight not only the complexity of writing within the methodology but the challenges and benefits of reflection with the importance of recording copious notes and the necessity of experiencing the evolving nature of the methodology. What I would describe as the fluid characteristics of the methodology can be viewed as both a positive and negative feature. Despite the time consuming nature and even the inefficiency of the recording of events, the completion of the journal afforded an opportunity for reflection on which hooks, which issues, were best suited to provide links with literature for further analysis. In the 'Towards a Conclusion' chapter I will reflect further on some of the limitations of writing in an autoethnographic style that became apparent, for instance, when set within academic parameters. It is worth noting here, however, that the EdD dissertation, though significant, was only one element, one driver, for my journaling as I came to rely on my journal writing and reflection to support my everyday practices and actions in schools.

Having outlined my methodology and briefly introduced concepts of democracy, the final section of this chapter outlines the content of each of the remaining chapters. There were many influences from reading literature, especially with respect to democracy, but in particular I draw upon the following as most significant in their impact on my understanding of crucial issues: Michael Apple, Paulo Freire, Iris Marion Young, Michael Foucault, Henry Giroux and Antonio Gramsci and, with respect to my methodology, Carolyn Ellis, Arthur Bochner and Laurel Richardson who all, in different ways, capture the beauty and strength of autoethnographic writing. I refer also to the influence of Jean Rudduck and Julia Flutter and their work on student voice and school improvement. The dissertation chapters focus largely on specific themes and issues relating to an anxiety over the prospects for increasing democracy and their content and themes overlap. Hence making decisions on how to structure this dissertation were challenging. The Apathy-Resistance chapter deals in some detail with what I refer to as a general apathy or resistance amongst the profession with respect

to engaging with democracy. There is a combination of factors for this perceived apathy or resistance including, for instance, the crowded curriculum, audit culture and behaviour issues, and I will discuss these in some depth. The 'Structure and Control' chapter deals with the actual structures of schools and how they are used, knowingly or otherwise, to control children. I make a distinction here between structures that are formal and informal and describe spaces in schools that are tightly controlled by adults contrasting these with 'forgotten spaces' in which children are relatively free and more autonomous. In the 'Policy chapter', I consider additional factors that have a significant bearing on democracy because of their influence on the practices of the profession. Paramount here is the nature and the direction of policy and its effect on the profession. In the Relationship chapter I consider relationships between teachers and pupils. This is a theme I return to frequently throughout the dissertation and it is necessary to emphasise that I regard the nature of the relationships in primary education to be at the root of many of the difficulties currently faced. Effective relationships are fundamental before advances towards increased democracy can be achieved.

I develop my argument further in the next two chapters, 'Summerhill: An Alternative Model?' and 'Behaviour', by taking into account additional key issues that might influence prospects for increasing democracy. For instance, I highlight the example of alternative practices through education in progressive schools such as Summerhill as a direct contrast to the environment that often prevails in the schools I have experienced and I also consider the influence of the current citizenship agenda. In addition, I reflect on the effects that the influences of socio-economic conditions have on children's education discussing, for example, the level and manner in which behaviour can impact on schools and be influenced by the home environment.

The six chapters, combined, provide a sketch of my direct experience of teaching in a primary school in the two years from 2008 to 2010 when I started to 'write-up' this dissertation. The cumulative effect of these chapters reinforces my early prognosis that 'something wasn't right in education' whilst providing the opportunity to analyse why this might be so with particular respect to democracy, or lack of it, in schools. My focus on children does not stop me from being empathetic towards teachers as I think about my colleagues in an environment

which often drains them mentally and physically, where there is little trust or respect or time to reflect on one's practice. What hope is there for change to more positive, equitable and democratic relationships? It is to address such questions that I contemplate the need for some alternative practice in the 'Towards a Conclusion' chapter which summarises some of the issues raised previously and allows me to reflect on my choice of democracy as a main theme in this study. With respect to alternative measures, I question how the new curriculum in Scotland, Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Executive, 2004a) might influence and help to effect changes towards increased democracy. I question, also, historical barriers to change and the need to adopt more distributive and democratic models of leadership before briefly considering prospects for a more radical approach to education, such as Freire's critical pedagogy (1970). In the final section of the 'Towards a Conclusion' chapter, I discuss how this dissertation has impacted on my practice and consider the influence, limitations and advantages of my methodology on this dissertation, future studies and my own practice.

Apathy or Resistance?

This chapter highlights the experiences in school that have led me to question whether aspirations to create increased awareness and opportunity for children to practise democracy are feasible. In an effort to better understand if practising democracy is a realistic goal in primary schools, I will focus on some of the significant issues that potentially influence the profession's perception with respect to its capacity to realise and ability to implement democracy. The focus on difficulties faced by the profession captures some of the challenges for those wishing to pursue an agenda of increasing democratic opportunities for children in education. An example of the challenge is what I perceive to be a lack of dialogue about democracy in the profession. I struggle to recall many examples of teachers conversing over any aspect of democracy. What is not clear to me is whether the profession's apparent reluctance to engage with and develop democracy is because of apathy or is as a result of a fundamental resistance to democracy. Alternatively, is democracy low down the agenda because of neither apathy nor resistance? Perhaps teachers are too busy to devote any significant time or energy to tackle issues such as democracy. Teachers, in Scotland, seem to be so preoccupied meeting the demands of a new curriculum and a continuing need for increased accountability that they may be unable to consider such issues as relationships or the treatment of children with respect to democracy. A typical example of the challenge faced is contained in the journal extract below which describes a not uncommon phenomenon. I could imagine similar scenarios occurring in other schools. Had this episode occurred outwith my school, I might have dismissed it as typical of attitudes and practices in many schools and a demonstration of the barriers to developing children's democracy. But it occurred under my leadership and therefore is a particular embarrassment to me personally because I have always considered the development of democracy for children to be a fundamental issue and believe myself to be a supporting voice for its development.

Today I oversaw the new seating arrangements in the dinner school. The children are now expected to sit in places decided by the teacher on dinner duty and not, as before, wherever they choose. A significant number of children were displeased with the new arrangements. My understanding is that the teachers on dinner duty dismissed the complaints of the children apparently without any thought of engaging in dialogue with them. Later a group of children came to complain to me that they had been treated unfairly. The children were unhappy because they were not consulted and because of the way in which their complaints were dismissed by staff. My first thoughts were of a realisation and shock that I had acted against my principle of including children more in decision making. Why weren't the children involved in the decision process to make these alterations? I could easily have brought it up at a pupil council meeting or during assembly. No-one thought to ask them! How dare I pontificate on the lack of democracy in schools when I was too busy to practise it myself! Although this incident, in itself, is unlikely to cause any long term or significant emotional or psychological damage to any of the children, it does succinctly highlight for me the issue of lack of democracy and voice in schools. My feeble excuse was that I was too busy with other matters to include the children in this decision. Actually I probably also thought that this matter was not important enough to consult them!

Reflection on the journal extract above raises a number of issues. Does it point to a profession that is overburdened and therefore unable to find time for reflection? The extract highlights the ease with which children can be excluded and also the possibility that adults and children have differing views on the importance or significance of specific incidents. It is an instance of adults seemingly placing their priorities and issues ahead of those of children and it may also demonstrate a lack of understanding and underestimation of children by adults which can lead to conflict. I will consider these issues in more detail in the Relationship chapter but when I reflect on the 'dinner school incident' my initial focus is the significant anxiety I felt from being instrumental in allowing this situation to occur in the first place. I was too busy to think about how these changes might impact on pupils but is it too convenient, too easy, for teachers to use the excuse of being busy as justification for neglecting to bring children into the decision making processes?

The reality is that I am acutely aware that the profession is faced with substantial demands. Their inability to adopt or even reflect on any alternative ideas or practice is encapsulated in the analogy of teachers used by Bottery and Wright: they are '... too busy pulling their curricular carts to lift their heads to see where

they are going' (2000:82). This situation is not helped by increased prescriptions of curriculum and the emergence of a performativity climate that has been reinforced with the '... establishment of development planning, quality indicators and statistical monitoring' (Doherty and McMahon, 2007:251). It is too early to determine whether the emergence of CfE will alleviate some demands of the curriculum. These demands associated with the performativity climate place pressures on teachers and have substantially increased their workload. There are many factors that teachers have to consider in their practice and Maitles and Deuchar highlight substantial teacher opposition to democracy in schools due to the 'Assessment-driven nature of the education system where teachers are judged on pupils' academic results' (2006:261). There may also still be those in the profession who would subscribe to the views expressed by a former chief inspector for schools in England, Woodhead (2002) that, 'Teachers teach and children learn. It is as simple as that'. In some respects Woodhead's view of teaching may be attractive to some in the profession because it appears to place potentially difficult issues, such as democracy, at the periphery. The complexity of the pressures faced by the teaching profession will be considered in more detail later when I look more closely at the challenges facing primary education, as a consequence of education policy, in the 'Policy chapter' but here I will suggest that, regardless of pressures, too often children may be viewed as an easy target and often, though not in the journal extract above, they will not feel confident enough to voice their grievances.

It may be convenient to disregard or ignore completely the opinion of those who don't really have a platform on and from which to voice their displeasure about their treatment. Perhaps the profession is unable to deviate from the pressures of teaching. Some have argued that the ability of teachers to make professional judgments has been reduced through a move towards what Bottery and Wright (2000) call a primarily technical based set of priorities. This can be seen through the introduction of the Standard for Full Registration (General Teaching Council Scotland, 2006) and typifies a move towards a clearly defined set of competences and expectations for the profession. Ball argues that teachers are now inscribed in exercises in performativity and that '... efficiency is asserted over ethics' (1999:8). He further states that the teaching profession is being de-intellectualised and, as a consequence, '... the trainee teacher is re-constructed as a technician rather than

a professional capable of critical judgment and reflection' (Ball, 1999:8). The possibility of the emergence of a teaching profession who are less reflective and critical of their practice raises a number of concerns.

A profession unable to reflect could reduce the likelihood of a move to an implementation of democracy. I subscribe to the view expressed by Lester that '... practitioners need to be able to construct and reconstruct the knowledge and skills they need and continually evolve their practice' (1995:1). Reflective practice is described by Hatten et al. as an '... individual, self directed, experience-based professional learning and development process for the practitioner' (1997:4). However, the demands placed upon the profession make aspirations of such a reflective practitioner difficult to achieve. The failure of many in the teaching profession to reflect is arguably linked to the issue of feeling overburdened whilst reflection is crucial if it allows practitioners to step outside, to become temporarily removed from, the pressures associated with their role and, crucially, to contemplate alternatives to practice if necessary. Schon (1991 cited in Hatten et al. 1997) describes reflection as an essential skill '... in a professional world in which both ends of the theory-practice gap are changing rapidly' (p.6). Fullan reinforces the benefits of reflection through the claim that

... it is not that we learn by doing but that we learn by thinking about what we are doing. It is the purposeful thinking part that counts, not the mere doing (Fullan, 2006a:10).

One of the consequences of policy in recent years is that there are too few teachers engaging with the principles behind Schon's (1983) notion of becoming a reflective practitioner.

Reflection is not an easy option for it imposes demands on time in a practice that can be unnerving. Paradoxically, increased awareness and engagement with reflection can produce significant challenges to the profession's practice. However, it is important with theorists such as Young highlighting the need for those in privileged positions to become '... aware of how their habitual actions, reactions, images and stereotypes contribute to oppression' (1990:154). Such reflection by the teaching profession could result in significant changes in the assumptions of teachers, for instance, with respect to the previous journal extract then contemplation of the necessity to be more sensitive to the needs and views of

children would be a positive outcome in support of a move to increased democracy. The argument over the need for a more reflective profession is evident in the journal extract below which indicates additional challenges for children's democracy and reinforces the necessity for participation in decision making and dialogue whilst further highlighting reservations over how teachers often treat children without sufficient regard for their feelings.

Recently I had first hand experience of how the resistance and even negativity from children towards those in authority can easily become entrenched, when a group of our pupils felt it necessary to question the school management's judgement and integrity. The pupils were displeased over how I had allocated activities for 'golden time', a time set aside on Fridays for fun activities, and at another, more senior member of the management team who had allegedly accused one of them, in front of the whole class, of being a bully. I welcomed the challenge from the pupils, I was genuinely pleased, although I did feel a little uncomfortable when I analysed their grievance and my part in it. On reflection, I do also admit to feeling a little defensive over their accusations that I had acted unfairly towards them. My pride was hurt because children were being critical of what I perceived to be my democratic and thoughtful ways towards them! Thankfully, however, I resisted the natural urge to persuade the children that I had acted appropriately or that they in fact were misguided with their protestations. After some personal reflection on my behalf and a further meeting, I explained my actions to the children and promised to alter my practice in future to take account of the issues they had raised. I felt this to be necessary and reasonable mainly because I valued the fact that they actually challenged me in the first place and because their objections were merited.

Unfortunately, my view was not shared by others in management. What transpired was a disgrace and an abuse of power by adults over children. The group in question were spoken to in a manner that made me uncomfortable. The children were clearly incapable of defending their side of the story because of the aggressive tone and articulate manner in which they were spoken to. The children realised that they were unable to respond effectively. I know from my subsequent discussions with the class teacher and with the children that they felt humiliated and angry, and that this was the unanimous view of the group. My immediate objection was that the children had been treated unfairly. The children's grievances were quashed without any regard to their feelings or future ability or willingness to voice their concerns. I still feel disturbed by this experience. For instance, there wasn't any attempt at opening dialogue with the children on how best they should approach management in future and certainly no obvious thought over how the children may have felt on reflection of the incident.

Having considered this incident above, I reflect on the enormity of the task I have in attempting to create an environment in my school that is in any way conducive to developing democratic opportunities for pupils. I compare the actions of some adults in my school unfavourably with the views expressed by Foucault (1977) in, 'Discipline and Punishment', for the need for impartiality and justice which has absolute validity. Too often there appears to be a lack of justice or impartiality displayed towards children in schools. One issue arising from the journal extract is the reality of the different agendas and expectations of children and teachers and school management. Each group often have differing objectives which may be difficult to reconcile equitably and efficiently. The school management in this instance appeared to view the challenge to their authority as an unwelcome distraction from what they might have perceived as their more pressing responsibilities: accountability, behaviour, attainment and quality assurance. The children, meanwhile, may view issues that arise over break time, games in the playground or the quality of the environment in the dinner school as their main concerns. When conflicts arise it is the view and priorities of adults that seem, almost always, to prevail.

One of the possible reasons for this inequality between adults and children, is the lack of communication and absence of the sort of dialogue described by Lodge which could '... produce engagement, openness and honesty' (2005:134) importantly, Robinson and Taylor insist that dialogue involves '... respect and that it should not involve one person acting on another but rather people working with each other' (2007:9). The journal extract above exemplifies that, on this occasion, there was little evidence that all adults were either open, respectful of, or working with children positively and it shows also how some in the profession view children as easy to dismiss, easy to 'act on'. Another fundamental issue for me is that adults in a school setting were unable to rise above a challenge to their authority to allow some sort of concession for the children involved.

There are, however, some positive signs in the journal extract that bode well for the possibility of greater democracy in schools. The extract indicates a confidence that some children have to challenge adults. It captures the capacity that many children possess to sense and highlight an injustice and this raises issues of relationships between children and adults in primary education which I will re-visit

in the 'Relationships chapter'. Whilst, in some ways, the experience above deepens my despair over the prospects of increasing democratic opportunities for children, some would argue that the example actually shows democracy in practice. The children aired a grievance and it was forcefully countered by those who were cited. As stated in the 'Introducing Issues' chapter, democracy in schools is more than just allowing children to vote and air concerns: it is also about how people are treated and valued and how relationships are forged and developed.

Democracy must be more than engaging in debate, not least because of vulnerable children. There is a concern that our most vulnerable children are less likely than others to have the confidence necessary to challenge adults in school for, often, these children are unable to articulate their opinions effectively. Greany and Jones (2005) detail the recent emphasis that the United Kingdom government have placed on well-being. Surely teachers have a responsibility to ensure that, regardless of whether they subscribe to increasing pupils' democracy or not, that they are mindful, at least, of children's health and wellbeing and of appropriate action to assist them in their development? The journal extract below reinforces the reality of the need to gauge an appropriate pace and expectation for democracy against the background of a school environment that does not seem predisposed towards its development.

When I read through my journals the lack of democratic discourse is indicative of a fundamental problem in education. I have, in recent meetings with the teaching staff, re-emphasised the desire to increase the pupils' involvement in school decisions. I know that the teachers remain unconvinced over the merits or the necessity of this objective. None of them have openly challenged my thoughts of increasing pupil involvement. However, sometimes it is what people don't say that may point to their true feelings. On the few occasions when I have raised this issue there is very little appetite for debate: actually no one seems in the least bit interested in it. I contemplate whether it is my academic work which exaggerates the significance of children's voice for me. I do in my less positive moments question the worth of pursuing this objective any further. I am increasingly frustrated by the realisation that many teachers are, at best, ambivalent to any moves to increase democracy for children. I reflect that one of the difficulties for me is to gauge exactly what is a reasonable expectation for pupils' involvement in school life. Niggling away all the time is the thought, highlighted previously, that not many in education seem too perturbed about the difficulties of increasing the role that children have in the decision making processes. Typically, the view in schools seems to be, "we have a pupil council so let's tick the box on pupil involvement". The

challenge I have is to alter this mentality though the prospect of adding democracy to the existing crowded curriculum is perhaps rather unappealing for many in the profession.

The journal extract above raises a number of issues. There appears to be a view that pupil involvement in democracy is covered through the presence of a pupil council and that anything over and above that would be a step too far. What could be described as apathy towards democracy accounts for the personal frustration which I feel over the lack of progress to date. These factors combine to produce a tension around the level to which schools should or could involve themselves in facilitating increased democratic practice for children. For instance, what role should education have in democratising children?

Greene argues that it is an 'Obligation of education in a democracy to empower the young to become members of the public' (1985:4). The choice, or perhaps challenge, for schools appears to be whether they are content with teaching about government and democracy or if they are motivated to actually enact the principles in a democratic community. Schools do have the opportunity to decide their level of engagement with democracy through how they implement the citizenship agenda, concepts of well-being and a Curriculum for Excellence in its broadest but most profound sense. However, Rudduck and Flutter highlight issues that may work against the insertion and development of democracy found in their research with a group of head teachers in tough inner-city schools with the following comment exemplifying the difficulty.

Schools can't be democratic... It is important to teach about citizenship... Our kids have such insecurities at home that when they come to school they just want to be told what to do, not given choices or responsibilities... If you invite pupils to express views at school and they're not allowed to at home then you're in trouble (Rudduck and Flutter, 2004:131).

These research findings also indicated that many of the head teachers in such schools felt that they were doing their best and working to their maximum effort in their daily battle of maintaining control and supporting learning. The prospect of these teachers giving more freedom for pupils to express their views was daunting to students and teachers alike. Another view, and typical of my experience, is described by Wyse as an impasse.

Pupils didn't feel that teachers wanted to listen to them and that the influence they had through the school council was limited and trivial; teachers for their part felt that in school, adults should be in control and that only when they get older will children be ready for more rights and responsibility (Wyse, 2001:209).

I will, in the next chapter, detail the manner in which structures of school can create and sometimes exasperate some of the difficulties described above and in turn play a significant part in restricting the development of democracy. In the meantime, the journal extract below considers the possibility of vulnerability in the profession over the prospect of engaging in any form of change, resulting in amongst other things, continued practices with little likelihood of the profession adopting new ideas.

Today at a staff meeting I briefly discussed the importance of increasing democracy in school. In particular I encouraged discussion on the possibilities and challenges of children having increased autonomy and becoming more involved in decision making processes. Normally teachers are rather polite but noncommittal when I broach this subject, but today there was an air of resistance to any notion of giving children more democracy. It was probably the most direct I had been about changing our existing structures to ones that were more democratic. I was rather taken aback by the reaction of staff and shocked by the mixture of fear and aggression the teachers displayed over any thought of correction or change in current practice. The danger of children becoming too familiar and worries over changes in relationships, in particular teachers having less authority and control, were real issues for the majority of those present. Unfortunately such concerns over relationships were reinforced when senior personnel from the local authority warned teachers, following class monitoring visits, against moves towards relationships with children that would encourage children to be 'too familiar'. Later I reflected that perhaps I have underestimated or misunderstood 'apathy' in the profession and that there was both the fear of losing control that pervades the profession and a lack of willingness from those in leadership to embrace changes in relationships between teachers and children.

The extract above forces me to appreciate that the issues that surround resistance to democracy are complex. Previously I have argued that some teachers may not even think much about democracy because they do not value it or perhaps because they do not think it necessary. On reflection, I believe the journal extract demonstrates that sharing power is not an easy option for many in the profession and that engagement with it takes some amount of courage. For many of the teachers at our meeting there appeared to be genuine uneasiness that pupils

would abuse any increased empowerment and voice. This possibility is noted by Rudduck and Flutter who claim there is unrest from teachers fearful of being ‘... on the receiving end of personal criticism’ in challenges to the ‘familiar hierarchical structure of the classroom’ (2004:147). They also note that some teachers in their research raised explicit reservations over the possibility of a change in relationships between children and adults in schools. Trafford’s research on developing democracy in school, is also relevant here as it shows that a number of teachers and parents in his school regarded democracy as dangerous because

... of the risk of loss of respect for those in authority if everything was open to question... Kids will just abuse freedom, they don’t know how to handle it (Trafford, 1997:20).

Trafford (1997) suggested that adults felt threatened by the thought of empowering children. Some teachers were worried about whose view would prevail in any dispute and were concerned that the more one gives; the more one would be expected to give. Such views would now appear to contrast with the expectations that the Scottish government has for the new curriculum through a desire to develop children as suggested below:

Curriculum for Excellence the most ambitious reform of Scottish education for many years...to enable our young people to become responsible citizens, confident individuals, effective contributors and successful learners (Scottish Government, 2008:46).

Despite government expectations for CfE, further reflection on the journal extract raises the possibility of fear over democracy and I will in the ‘Policy chapter’ detail how fear has affected teachers in their practice. For the time being I would highlight Ginsberg and Lynche’s view: ‘Fear is our most primal emotion’ (2008:14) and cite Glassner (1999) who refers to ‘... a culture of fear’ as an increasing feature of American education (2008:12). It seems reasonable that this fear does and could continue to prevail in Scotland. I have previously alluded to vulnerability in education over the prospect of changes from existing practice. Change of any sort can produce uncertainty and with it an element of fear. Increased democracy could provoke fear because of the perceived dramatic changes it may produce. There is also the possibility that some teachers are agitated over their own lack of democracy in school. My own experience would substantiate a view that many teachers are disheartened because of their lack of voice which might explain why some feel less than enthusiastic about facilitating democracy for others, especially

for their pupils. Rudduck and Flutter stress that the teaching profession generally should have a greater voice and that their needs are too often ignored especially '... by policy makers and particularly in relation to the flow of school improvement initiatives' (2004:112). Similarly, Mitchell and Sackney claim teachers may feel profoundly angry at being '... simply the tools by which other people's agendas and wishes are enacted' (2000:128) and they may be ready to reassert their own professional autonomy. Although the argument for increased teacher democracy is compelling it should also be recognised that traditional school structures and those operating in them have not made notions of democracy a priority. I often think that the environment in schools is similar to that described by Gramsci in that there are two groups of people '... rulers and ruled, leaders and led' (1971:144). For Gramsci this division was a primordial fact: '... every society, up to and including the present, had always been divided into the haves and have-nots' (1971:144). The school environment is often consistent with the views expressed by Gramsci in that much of what we do in education is about teaching 'the ruled' children cultural values through expectation and adherence to social norms such as obedience, attentiveness and the need to show deference to the ruling adults. The journal extract below indicates that there is little evidence that the rulers are about to relinquish their control over those they lead.

Today I had one of the most frustrating experiences of my professional career when a group of children were denied the opportunity to voice an opinion without any rational reason being given. This incident and several other less significant ones in recent months have further reinforced my view that it is all too easy for the democratic process to be manipulated or negated and controlled by those in power. My experiences have caused me to doubt whether democracy will ever gain any prominence in primary schools. Twice in one week pupils in my school were refused permission to contribute to meetings. The children had prepared a power point presentation for a public meeting regarding proposals from the local authority to close the school. I had overseen the pupils as they articulated their objections to the school closure. They were looking forward to contributing to the meeting and I had assumed that, as representatives of the pupils in the school, they would be allowed to contribute their views on the school closure. On each occasion, what I believe to be their right to an opinion on something which was affecting them, and to engage in the democratic process, was curtailed by senior local authority education personnel. On each occasion the principles and capacities of CfE, which place great emphasis on children having voice, were conveniently dismissed by these leaders! Although I vented my displeasure that pupils were refused permission to make some sort of representation, it was made

clear to me that the children's contribution was not welcomed and indeed was probably viewed with some suspicion. This incident has left me shocked to the core.

I have been reflecting on the censorship of pupils in my school earlier in the week. Criticism of the local authority is unwise; its structures and procedures are in place and any deviation from normal practice is not welcomed. In effect and despite everything I have understood about CfE, I am expected to accept that if children want to voice concern or even have input, it will not be allowed because that is not the way existing processes operate. Those in power will decide what is acceptable and what is not and it would appear that democracy will be on their terms. My suspicion and worry is that in practice these leaders actually don't really value democracy for children. In addition there is a frustration over the way the children were treated and my inability to challenge these officials. I reflect that perhaps this is often how children may feel in school.

When I look back on the issues arising from this journal extract I recognise that the themes seem to be consistent with other entries. It appears too easy for professionals in primary education to deny children access to democratic processes. The experiences above impacted on me especially because there appeared to be a notion, or a fear, at senior educational authority level that children might say something inappropriate and counter to council expectation or policy. I am unable to reconcile why senior education figures felt able to contradict the aspirations, referred to earlier, that the Scottish Government (2008) have for the development of children's voice through the Curriculum for Excellence. When I reflect on the recent examples of apathy and restrictions in the profession I am forced to question if anything other than a very limited incremental change towards increased democratic practices is realistic. I fear that CfE will not be ambitious or far reaching enough to tackle democracy. I will continue to deal with these doubts in more depth both throughout the dissertation, in particular in the 'Towards a Conclusion' chapter, but my own inclination is to be persuaded by the argument that we need to consider alternative and more radical notions of democracy if children are to enjoy genuine increased democracy. I now, in the next chapter, highlight the issue of school structures and their impact on aspirations of increasing democratic opportunities for children in school.

Structure and Control

Having previously considered some of the issues surrounding the current level of apathy and resistance towards democracy in the teaching profession, I focus here on structural aspects of school life that challenge efforts to increase democracy for children. My recent experiences have confirmed previous suspicions that the actual structure of schools militates against increasing democracy and whilst my journal entries in this chapter cover a wide range of experiences they tend to reflect the frustration I feel over the way children are spoken to, the lack of progress towards democracy and an overall unease that, often, the experience of children in school is neither pleasant nor democratic. I look to the theory of Foucault, in particular, to consider space, power and control using a broad definition of what I determine to be school structures. I regard such structures to include not only physical structures, but also the practices, rules and norms that guide people and those every day happenings: the way 'things are done around here', including, for example, the expectations people have of the relationships and interactions that will occur in school. I focus, here, on what I perceive to be some of the significant consequences of existing structures in schools, suggesting that such structures can be oppressive as teachers are overloaded with other priorities and are consequently too busy, or not interested enough, to challenge current practice in schools. In addition, I will reflect on historical aspects of 'Structure and Control', the slow nature of change, failure to understand or treat children appropriately, and the rigidity and entrenched nature of school structures. Further consideration will be given to controlling children's behaviour and how that impacts on democracy. I will reiterate the lack of opportunities for children to become more involved in decision making, for instance in aspects of school design, and consider areas of school that are not currently as controlled by adults as others.

Foucault refers to control of people in space as '... a canalization of their circulation' (1984:253). Osborne and Rose claim that previously this control was seen by many historians as being '... an attempt to discipline and master, to impose a kind of order' (2004:215). Historically there has always been this need to control the masses and regimes of power will rationalise their own justification for any such system of regulation. Young refers to such traditional forms of rule describing a situation in which:

...rulers exercise power in accordance with their particular desires, values or ends. The ruler has a right to expect obedience because he is sovereign, and need give no other reason (Young, 1990:76).

Within a school setting, the justification may be that structures of control over children can easily be warranted because of the need for discipline, safety and structure in the often otherwise chaotic lives of many children and most likely because of the need for an appropriate learning environment. Foucault refers to Bentham's panopticon which he sees:

As an allegory for the ordered form of a society, a clean and pure community, mastered by hierarchy gazes ...dominated by authorities that incontestably have control over all individual human bodies (Foucault, 1977:178).

Foucault views Bentham's panopticon as a symbol of the disciplined modern society, arguing that control is exercised through the division and branding of dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal; mad/sane binarier and that, with respect to people: 'Constant surveillance is to be exercised over him (sic) in an individual way' (1977:199).

Bentham's panopticon is not that removed from the structure and processes that control many schools. In any context structures give specific people the power to make decisions and these can reproduce or ameliorate inequality and unjust constraints. Structures in schools often reproduce injustices, partly because decisions are made in a predominately adult world in which Crick and Porter suggest adults, at best, '... tolerate the notion of children as citizens in waiting' (1978:7). Consequently a situation arises, described by MacBeath et al. as one in which 'From an early age, children learn that they have no right to choose' (2001:78). Those in control of the structures that are in place in schools serve the existing dominant social institutions which according to Arnistine are '... hierarchical, authoritarian, unequal, competitive, racist, sexist and homophobic' (1995:25). The analysis of structures with respect to ways in which they might inhibit democracy may be an area that has been relatively neglected. Young refers to the exploitation and marginalization of people and cautions that rarely are structures an explicit focus with respect to theories of justice. In the previous chapter I referred to oppression as a systematic constraint. Young views oppression as structural because of the nature of the '... underlying institutional

rules and the collective consequences of following those rules' (1990:41). When I refer to structure and oppression, I use structure in a broad sense. The consequences of any structure, for instance the practice of oppression, means that even changes in personnel within a specific context will not necessarily eliminate it: its mechanisms and practices may still be systematically reproduced. This in turn ensures that restrictive and or oppressive structures have a considerable influence, creating what Frye refers to as an '... enclosing structure of forces and barriers which tends to the immobilization and reduction of a group or category of people' (1983:11). Such views reinforce the significance of the controlling nature of structures.

The impact of school structures are such that, from an early stage, children are made aware of, and may realise for themselves, their subordinate place in schools. Previously children had to endure draconian structures such as the Lancaster Method of monitorial schools, during the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, which resonated with the utilitarian philosophy of Bentham with their emphasis on disciplinary power through the production of bodily docility (Hassard and Rowlinson, 2002). Schools using the Lancaster Method featured what Foucault describes as a '... complex clockwork of mutual improvement school was built up cog by cog' (1977:165). Foucault refers to such institutional control, which looked to mould people as though they were pliable, through reference to '... a docile body that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved' (1977:136). One of the main thrusts in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* is what Hassard and Rowlinson refer to as '... our pervasive compulsion to normalise the subject' (2000:617). One aspect of normalizing, described by Foucault as the 'sole aim' of the system, was '... to accustom the children to executing well and quickly the same operations' (1977:154). Foucault continues, suggesting that the system involved '... the rhythm imposed by signals, whistles, and orders imposed on everyone temporal norms' (1977:154).

Although we have progressed somewhat from such austere methods, current school structures continue to restrict democracy. This is evident in Holloway and Valentine's description of schools in which:

Children spend most of the weekday in a very time-disciplined environment at school where all their activities from arrival, registration

and lessons, through to eating and playing, are governed by the daily rhythm of timetables and bells which signal the choreographed mass movements of pupils within the school (Holloway and Valentine, 2003:108).

It is this necessity to control which seems to be the fundamental problem with the structures of schools. Lawton describes schools as essentially 19th century institutions with theories and practices similar to workhouses, factories and prisons. The 'inmates' within are controlled by a smaller number of supervisors. The features that are common in these institutions are strict discipline and hard labour. For this to be effective schools also require:

Silence, strict control over time (marked by bells) and restriction of space (sitting in rows...) and movement. In all cases, including schools, control was the dominant factor (Lawton, 2001:1).

In my more pessimistic moments I identify strongly with these austere descriptions of the school environment. Furthermore, I am confident that a number of pupils in my school would concur with these assessments of how they are controlled.

This description of schools by Lawton reminds me of Foucault who stresses that the '... chief function of the disciplinary power is to train' (1977:170). I also cite behaviour as a significant factor of control in schools and I deal with its impact on democracy in more detail in the 'Behaviour chapter', but discipline is often used as Foucault suggests, as a means to manage pupils through a '... medium whereby one is able to insert the power to punish more deeply into the social body' (1977:82). The discipline of children is surely one of the most meticulous and fundamental cogs of the school machine structure. Foucault goes on to describe how control in schools is enabled by a succession of penalties for issues such as lateness, absence, impoliteness and insolence. The structure of the school becomes what Foucault refers to as the accepted norm and is centred on the adult controlled world where children have little or no input. At its extreme level, when there is tension and fatigue alongside the issue of behaviour and stress, I can easily recognise aspects of Foucault's question.

Authorities of surveillance and registration, its experts in normality...is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons? (Foucault, 1977:227-228).

Of particular concern for me, and the main motivation for looking at school structures, is the lack of evidence of existing school structures providing any transformation in power from teacher to pupil. A fundamental element of developing democracy is the necessity for children to experience increased autonomy and involvement in decision making processes. The journal extract below reinforces certain aspects of the school structures that have been alluded to and substantiates a number of points that have been highlighted in the text above.

Many teachers have a lovely caring way about them and I am so grateful for that. However, it occurred to me recently, following reflection of my journal entries, that often they contain passages of incidents involving teachers treating pupils unfairly. I determine this unfairness is a consequence of the way children are spoken to, treated and spoken about, by some teachers and adults within school. It's 'unfair', because mostly children are unable, or feel helpless to redress these situations. I do find myself getting disheartened over the inequality of schools when I recount these all too frequent occurrences. Regardless of their view of children's right to democracy, teachers should be kind and caring to children. At times I am convinced that some teachers appear to not even like children. Many people might recoil at this statement; I have struggled with the reality of this situation and do not make the statement lightly. Earlier today I sat in my office and I cringed at the manner and tone in which adults spoke to children. I am convinced that these same adults wouldn't behave so dismissively to other adults, but seem to feel justified talking to children as they please. Following such incidents I immediately identify with the view children sometimes express over the barriers they feel between themselves and adults. I have, on a number of occasions discussed with colleagues the attitudes of teachers towards children: ultimately it is necessary for these people to challenge their own perceptions of children. I believe that it is because of what I refer to as the institutionalised nature of school practice that these teachers feel able to treat children as they do.

Reflection on the journal extract above highlights tensions in the nature of the relationship between children and some adults in schools. This issue will be further developed in the chapter on Relationships, when I will emphasise the nature of the hierarchy that exists for children who may feel unable to challenge adults over these uncomfortable experiences. For the moment, the main issue arising from the journal extract above is the possibility that, for some teachers, structures such as school customs and practices in some respects endorse hierarchical relationships. I am fearful that democracy is unlikely to develop without changes to existing school structures to allow a system that will take into

account the views of children. Change to date has been decidedly slow and school structures have not changed as much as might have been expected. This view is echoed by Lawton who claims that:

Schools have been slower to change than other institutions such as factories. In many respects schools are now out of step with the rest of society (Lawton, 2001:1).

In addition to the concerns over the slow pace of change to school structures any changes to structures must also be accompanied by profound changes in how we, as educators, think about pupils. Some children have a negative view of school because of the manner in which they are spoken to and I suspect this is consistent with the view expressed by Clough and Holden (2002) when they argue that pupils need to feel that their views and opinions are valued and that they are respected as individuals in the school community. Giroux highlights one of the difficulties with the structural aspect of schools suggesting that there appears to be an historical precedent for resistance to change in schools, referring in particular to any attempts to increase pupil engagement as being '... perceived as either irrelevant or unprofessional' (2000:4). The journal extract below reinforces some of the issues highlighted earlier and indicates that many children do not view primary school in a positive way.

Often I reflect from my experience and journal entries that school does not represent an enjoyable time for children. I have a concern that the nature of the structures in schools (the physical, procedural and customs that operate) create barriers for children that restrict their opportunity to partake in sufficiently democratic practice. Almost on a daily basis I experience, through the structure of a typical school day, pupils who are restricted from having a genuine say in any aspect of school life. Furthermore, they are not encouraged to engage in discussions about matters that interest them. The facility to negotiate what they are taught, their views on the appropriate procedures for homework or on whether they should have input with respect to seating arrangements in class are not discussed with them. One of the reasons for this assessment relates to a long held anxiety that the structures that exist within primary education seem to reinforce and reproduce power imbalances that children have to endure throughout their time at school. Before democracy can develop effectively it is necessary to consider if the structure of schools can be altered in an effort to facilitate increased power for children.

The extract raises a number of issues with respect to children's democracy including the quality of the school experience for many children and the possibility

that existing school structures limit democratic practice with children denied an adequate input to decision making. With respect to restriction in decision making processes, I am forced to conclude that the structures of school probably work against aspirations for increased democracy. A number of adults, knowingly or otherwise, seem to hide behind the structures of schools to restrict increased children's democracy. Ross et al. (2007) note that schooling is predicated on adult power and decision-making and this is, in part, maintained because of the view that adults have of children in schools. According to Ross et al. schools are unlike normal community settings in which the boundary between adult and child is more continuous and ambiguous and, instead, the '... school severely institutionalizes the boundary ... this is in terms of authority structures and the different longevities of the actors' (2007:239).

In schools, children are seen as less powerful and more transient than adults. The structural practices referred to above are consistent with Simpson's reference to structural phenomena as a '... macroscopic transfer emerging from a complicated set of individual actions' (1980:497). Following these lines, any inequality between adults and children would impact on the prospects for increasing democracy. Young cautions that generally the scope for justice is further restricted because '... of the failure to bring social structures and institutional context under evaluation' (1990:20). There is a network of practices and relationships within the school structure reflecting what Wartenburg (1989) refers to as institutionalized power and what Hartsock (1983) classifies as a structural phenomena of domination. The structures ensure that power, seen by Bachrach and Baratz (1969) as a relational process rather than a thing, circulates amongst adults not children within school. Foucault reinforces a point made previously that the structure of power in school is such that individuals will come and go without it being diminished because '... it is never in anybody's hands...it is employed and exercised through net-like organisations' (1980:98). My experience would substantiate that view: the structures in schools are rarely if ever in children's hands and consequently children's relationships are peripheral to influencing any power structures. Hoy and Sweetland express it clearly: 'Like it or not, schools are bureaucracies - they are hierarchies of authority...technical competence, and rules and regulations' (2001:296). Others, throughout time but still seemingly relevant today, have made equally damning assessments of the bureaucratic nature of school structures

referring to them as structures that produce overconformity and rigidities (Gouldner, 1954), block and distort communication (Blua and Scott, 1962), alienate and exploit workers (Scott, 1998), stifle innovation (Hage and Aiken, 1970), are unresponsive to the public (Coleman, 1974), and eschew such feminine values as collaboration, care and equality (Ferguson, 1984). Although these views critique school structures as unresponsive, unfair and rigid, an alternative and more positive view is offered in Hoy and Sweetland's suggestion that a more enabling structure can assist in '... guiding behaviour, clarifying responsibility, reduce stress, and enable individuals to feel and be more effective' (2001:297). However, Hoy and Sweetland maintain that structure in school is inevitable and despite reform rhetoric 'Hierarchy of authority in schools will continue. Indeed, the accountability movement itself demands more, not less, hierarchy' (2001:300).

Whilst the hierarchy of authority in school structures and control outlined here may be inevitable there is evidence that children can find their own space and time outwith the panopticon control and scope of adults. The journal extract below highlights the spaces in school where structures and panopticons are not prevalent and where adults have less influence over what children say and do. These spaces seem to be where children most enjoy school life and where their interactions are more rewarding and relevant to them.

I have been so busy in recent weeks; more meetings, phone calls and paper work seem to make the day whiz by. Although I have the autonomy to decide what my priorities are, I always make a point of being present in the school playground and dinner hall at break times. I could easily justify not being on duty at these times but I enjoy being out in the playground or in the dinner school where I often just walk, talk and observe. Sometimes children just ignore me and carry on with their play; I don't mind this because in some respects I feel I am in their space. I genuinely feel that I am visiting them and that they are doing their thing. Although I enjoy the experience I also sometimes feel out of place. This part of school is definitely, in my view, the child's. Children of course are friendly and they will follow me around in small groups and tell me their news, offer me sweets or just walk with me. What I especially like about this is that it is quite a different relationship from inside school. I think the children respect my position and in doing so they are mindful of how and what they say to me. What interests me is the fact that they are doing something that doesn't need any help from me but at the same time they have the opportunity to talk to me about issues outwith school. Mostly it would be fun stories about what they have been up to or what they are looking forward to doing or, for example, as is the case for most children, what is happening at home.

Even the act of offering me sweets signifies the normality of the relationship. I genuinely don't like to hear the bell sound for the end of playtime - it is the end of children's space and time in direct contrast to the prescriptive nature of relationships inside the school building. I obviously appreciate that the teaching and learning that goes on inside school is fundamental. Perhaps it is my own experiences of enjoying playtimes as a child that influence my feelings.

The journal extract above could have been written most days and would certainly be an accurate description of how I feel at times about school structures and priorities. The initial entry of the journal implies an issue about the workload and priorities of adults in school. Even in the example above I would reflect that I choose to go on playground duty because of the benefits I gain from this as opposed to any thoughts for the children. But does the profession prioritise workload appropriately and with the best interests of children at heart? How often do we stop and think about what might be best for children? I suspect that, in the majority of cases, we prioritise tasks by their importance to us and the school management agenda before even considering what children may want. The adult world of school structure ensures that it is the adult agenda that prevails. Nonetheless, the main issue for me from the journal is the apparent flattening of hierarchical structures in the playground and the restricted adult presence and influence in this space. It is these positive features, through the lack of any noticeable structure or adult control in playgrounds, which further emphasises the restrictive influence of the structures inside schools. This is best reflected from the example of the more equitable relationship between children and adults in the playground.

The school playground is a highly significant space for children. Many ethnographic studies have uncovered richness in the imaginative and creative play that thrives in school playgrounds. Thomson argues that these studies seem to challenge the assumption that many adults have of children, namely that '... they don't know how to play' (2001:7). Blatchford refers to the playground as '... the forgotten space of the school' (1989:4). While admittedly, for some, it is a place of boredom and loneliness, for most children being in the playground is the best part of school as they are with friends and trying to play as much as they can (Rousmaniere, 2001). I believe that the playground exemplifies children's capacities to organise themselves and flourish outwith the control of adults and

that both groups have different perceptions with regard to the significance of this space. The forgetfulness of this space by adults, according to Burke and Grosvenor, underlines the '... quite different (from children) priorities many adults have for what children should be doing' (2003:45). Burke and Grosvenor highlight research indicating that children viewed the playground as fun and that the ultimate feature for the majority of children would be a swimming pool and school yards with those making the '... best playground they have ever visited' (2003:49). This comes at a time when, according to Pellegrini and Blatchford, there '... is increasingly restricted time that schools are allowing children to play freely' (2000:69-72) and I take this as further evidence of the different priorities and agendas that exist between children and adults.

The significance that children placed on play is further evidence of different perspectives between children and adults, emphasised by Burke and Grosvenor who state that many adults in school associate playtime with '... apparently chaotic and random behaviour' (2003:45). This negativity that many adults associate with play is in direct contrast to Nussbaum's view of play being a basic entitlement. Nussbaum refers to the central human capabilities as '... basic entitlements ... or opportunities for functioning' asserting that society should guarantee these. One of her ten capabilities Play: 'Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities' (2001:416-417). It would seem reasonable that the 'basic entitlement' of play is prevalent in schools and that the adults 'in control' at least recognise its value to children. However, perhaps adults want to protect children from perceived dangers but this desire to protect may be both misplaced and symptomatic of adult underestimation of children. Jones, for example, challenges parents and guardians '... not to let our fear of risk to children run out of control, to the extent that we utterly confine childhood' (2002:28). There is the possibility that teachers and adults generally are being too protective towards children with Jones pointing to claims that children have '... been driven from the streets to their bedrooms' (2002:27). Similarly, Allen (2002) suggests that children have less opportunity for spontaneous games because parents have become more controlling, resulting in parental organisation and supervision of play.

My experience would concur with the view that teachers and adults can be anxious when children are playing and I have often heard teachers expressing concerns

over what might happen during break time. Foucault refers to the meticulous control of operations which, in the past, resulted in ‘... disciplinary control, and especially of how the division of time became increasingly minute’ (1977:149). Perhaps it is the lack of control that teachers have over this space in the school that contributes to their anxiety. However, the implication for democracy is that this playground space is not subjected to anything like the same adult control or hierarchy as other aspects of school life. I believe that it is this relaxation of adult control in this space that allows children to enjoy the playful and more democratic environment of the playground as opposed to the more tightly disciplined classroom. The journal extract below summarizes why children view playtime so very differently from other aspects of school life.

Today I happened to focus on the immediate change that comes over children as soon as the bell sounds for the end of playtime. The structure in my school is that children will make their way to their class line where they will line up in silence, single file, facing forwards and standing directly behind the person in front of them. These instructions are regularly shouted out by the adults once they arrive to collect the children. This arrangement is not peculiar to my school and is probably common practice in most. Throughout the journey from the relative freedom of the playground to the classroom the children mustn't speak to each other or to any other adult for that matter. As they are marched into school the adults will be strategically placed to ensure that any child not obeying instructions will be suitably rebuked. Although today I observed this custom from the playground, often at the sound of the bell I will have returned immediately to my office by the time the children return to class. For some reason as I view this daily ritual I feel uncomfortable. I realise that the children are only going to class and not some dreadful fate. The extremes of the sense of freedom, play and laughter of playground, and the control, restriction, silence and seriousness of school seems to strike a negative chord with me.

The extract above is consistent with the previous journal extracts in its emphasis on the extremes between two aspects of school life and structures. The dramatic change in environment for children from one area of school to the other would possibly not be so apparent if increased democratic practice could facilitate the plea from Blatchford that we ‘... should take pupils more seriously’ (1996:62). For Blatchford this would entail children having some input to the school improvement agenda, which might well include, as a priority for children, changes to the space and time allowed for play. Rudduck and Flutter note that:

As adults we may think of school in terms of classrooms, the curriculum, and teachers teaching but for pupils being at school is a social occasion as much as an opportunity for academic learning (Rudduck and Flutter, 2004:87).

An additional benefit of including children in such decision making processes would be the prospect of adults having invaluable access to how children think so they might better understand their view of the world. Burke and Grosvenor suggest that: 'The adult world would recognise that children are children and must play' (2003:49). The prospect of adults viewing school improvement agendas from a child's perspective and acknowledging that their preferences and priorities might not always coincide with ours appears, in present circumstances, to be a remote possibility.

Another example of adults failing to understand children's needs is provided in the journal extract below. The lack of personal space for children can also present problems (Burke and Grosvenor, 2003). Generally children, for a variety of reasons including safety issues, are unable to find a space in school where they can be alone. Adults may fail to appreciate the needs that even the youngest children have for finding and creating their own space. People often have a need to search for identity, companionship, a sense of belonging and also to search for a place for themselves (Mitchell and Sackney, 2000). I believe that a restriction on space and movement for children is another example of the controlling nature of school structures. McGregor reiterates this when arguing that space '... is mobilised as a resource in the production and reproduction of power relations between teachers and students' (2002:154).

Most days I am on dinner duty and at times it is a rather hectic part of the day. There are nearly always incidents of one kind or another. Often petty squabbles come to a head during lunch and this leads to a number of children being upset. Today there seemed to be a sizeable number of children who required attention. I do find this difficult to deal with. There is something distressing about primary children being upset. Normally, especially for adults, the act of sitting together and eating is enjoyable and relaxing but I believe that the opposite is the case for many of the children at my school. This leads me to worry about their vulnerability and how they can possibly be expected to face the remainder of their school day in a positive manner. I often think about the design of our school. As adults we can find a space that is consistent with our needs, especially if we need time alone to reflect on something. Mostly children don't have this luxury. There are of course

other children who, on a daily basis, come into school having endured traumatic experiences at home. We don't really cater for these children adequately. I am not sure why I am so sensitive about children being upset; I didn't have a particularly difficult school life. I do, however, remember specific incidents from primary school vividly and they seem to touch a nerve somehow. I wonder if the vulnerability of many of our pupils makes attempts at developing democracy more challenging. At times my head feels as though it is spinning. I do not have answers to these questions. The reality is that other more pressing issues will shortly move my thoughts onto another topic and dinner arrangements will seem so very trivial in my alternative adult world.

Reflection on the journal extract above highlights the significance of providing space for children and their lack of autonomy exemplified by the control of their seating and movement in school. In addition, it points to the complexities of meeting the different needs of children and further emphasises the conflict, referred to previously, in priorities between adults and children. The pressures of my job do not ordinarily allow me to dwell for any significant period on issues such as space, regardless of how important this issue may be to me personally. For children, issues such as space may be crucial factors in determining the quality of their school experience. Adults are more able to find and use space as suits their needs. I also believe that the journal extract is consistent with what Freire describes as the challenge to educators and designers of schools when he calls for '... a contribution toward the transformation of the world, giving rise to a world that is rounder, less angular, more humane' (Freire, 1996:397). The example of traditional school dinner arrangements exemplifies a frequent failure to provide an appropriate environment for children. Hart calls for '... the need to redesign the forgotten spaces where informed learning occurs: school yards and lunchrooms' (2002:32). I have great reservations over the nature of the hierarchical system of children sitting down together in a tightly controlled and authoritative arrangement of dinner schools which often represent a rather forbidding and threatening place for children. Large spaces dominate and are noisy, hectic and controlling with respect to space and the opportunity to socialize as opposed to calm quiet places where children can sit in a variety of seating arrangements in soft seats in a warm calmer atmosphere. Too often school meals are served within an atmosphere of distrust and compulsion (Burke and Grosvenor, 2003).

While the use of school space is an example of how 'Structure and Control' can impact on democracy, other, more general issues include unease in the profession

over teachers' lack of autonomy, indiscipline of pupils and a general fear of loss of control. I suspect that a consequence of such concerns results in some teachers using the structures and rules, described by Foucault (1977:272) as a '... net of different elements' as a means of control to maintain a distance between themselves and pupils. The journal below is evidence that the austere environment of school can facilitate and foster attitudes that provide a distancing between teachers and children that is incompatible with attempts to increase involvement from children in decision making processes.

Today I was re-reading a note from my journal which included an imaginary letter to a member of staff that was critical of how she spoke and taught children and the ease with which she punished children when they transgressed. It was never my intention to actually send this letter to the person but to use it almost as a cathartic measure because of frustration I felt over some aspects of her practice. What mattered to me was what I regarded as the negative impact she was having on children. My focus was on some of the more sensitive children in her class who I felt were susceptible to the less than positive experience in class. What troubled me was the experience of any child who, for whatever reason, finds school and classroom life difficult. I have previously witnessed children in these situations whose lives became very challenging; especially if their own home circumstances were unsatisfactory.

My frustration with the situation above is from the experience I have of some teachers who manipulate school structures to impose what I regard as inappropriate control of children. This is often through the use of discipline, control and failure to establish any reasonable relationship with their pupils. What opportunity is there for children to alter their circumstances in such instances? From my experience children in primary school have very little scope to alter the factors that may be making their time in class difficult. Who do they turn to if they want to complain about how a teacher treats or speaks to them? Given a situation where a teacher is acting as described, I imagine that a child can feel desperately isolated. Often I believe we pay too little attention to this aspect of a child's education and wellbeing. Admittedly, this is not common and schools often have procedures in place to deal with children's well-being; nevertheless I am sure they can also be very lonely places if you are feeling vulnerable.

There are a number of issues that can be explored from the extract above. Teachers can clearly have a huge influence on a child's life. Without doubt mostly these are positive influences but there are teachers and other adults who have an unfortunate attitude towards children. The prescriptive and hierarchical nature of school structures facilitates and perpetuates this control as described previously

through the control of movement (Lawton, 2001) or space, as seen through Foucault's (1984) reference to canalization. The main focus of the journal extract above relates to the likelihood of children being able to deal with negative relationships and environments controlled by adults. My own experience would confirm that such difficulties are rare but, when they do occur, school structures may be incompatible with the provision of supportive and democratic opportunities for the children concerned. The journal extract above also refers to children's well-being which I would describe as the development of a child's knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and the attributes required for their mental, emotional, social and physical development. The Scottish Government notes that features of well-being include:

...promoting confidence, independent thinking and positive attitudes and dispositions... children should feel happy, safe, respected and included in the school environment (Scottish Government, 2008:1).

Often I assess the well-being and prospects for increased democracy for children in relation to the physical quality of the school structures and how these can act as a barrier to children's democratic development. The seemingly inherent problems of design and suitability of many buildings, both old and new, are significant issues that can both militate against establishing more autonomy for pupils in schools and highlight children's lack of influence. Not only can children be intimidated by the harshness of a schools' daily structure, from the first bell to the last, but for some children schools can appear to be an aesthetically unwelcoming place controlled by adults. Little has changed since the Plowden Committee (1967) criticised school buildings. Generally the design aesthetics and comfort of schools are unsatisfactory with Burke and Grosvenor stating that there is anxiety amongst the teaching profession over the standards and quality of buildings that have recently emerged and disquiet '... that the design of schools today will rapidly become outdated as the organisation of learning changes in future' (2003:18). Rouse notes that even new schools have been described by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment as inappropriate and like 'Sheds without windows' that '... fail to comply with best-practice standards of natural light' (2002:19). It is perhaps not surprising that extensive research of children's views of the appropriate shape and design of schools differs greatly from those of adults. Burke and Grosvenor claim that the 'School I'd Like' competition, in which young people were asked to imagine their ideal school, produced thousands of plans and

designs and that typically the designs featured '... domes and pyramidal structures, circular spaces and a lot of glass' (2003:19). Children are affected by the design and standard of their schools; unsatisfactory toilets, vandalism, limitation of space and lack of colour are common complaints (Burke and Grosvenor, 2003). There are examples of 'good designs' that have resulted in improved learning environments and increased decision making involving children discussing with architects the design of their school (Rudduck and Flutter, 2004). The significance of school design is further emphasised by the Centre for School Design, who recently criticized the new coalition government following an announcement of cut-backs in the school design programme

... we know decent school environments have an impact on pupil attainment, behaviour and wellbeing as well as teacher recruitment and retention (Centre for School Design, 2010).

The journal extract below suggests that whilst the standard of the school building does not in itself perhaps directly influence the overall level of democracy in schools, often children's efforts to address sub-standard buildings are futile and another indication of their lack of influence within the structure of schools. It raises the issue again of children and adults having different agendas and perceptions.

My school is colourfully decorated with displays, both inside and outside of class. Nevertheless, the actual fabric of the building is poor, often there is flooding because of rain penetration. The necessity for plastic windows because of vandalism ensures little visibility and consequently there are poor aesthetics together with cold classrooms, accentuated by an ineffective heating system. It is not uncommon during cold spells of weather for the school to be extremely inhospitable; on a few occasions recently physical education lessons were cancelled because the gymnasium was too cold for children to run about in! Often at pupil council meetings the children will ask for improvements to aspects of the school that they feel are significant, these include, toilets, cloakrooms, leaking roofs, poor gymnasium facilities and more equipment for the playground. Although these concerns are recorded, invariably no action results, partly due to lack of funding from the local authority but also I believe because we pay lip service to children's views. I am unable to recollect even a single significant alteration to schools as a result of a pupil council request for improvements.

Reflection on this extract highlights the perilous state of many urban schools and the necessity for schools to receive increased spending to allow them to be maintained to an acceptable standard. In addition, the journal extract confirms that

children's requests for school improvements, which they view as significant, are too easily dismissed by adults in school. Often this is because of financial restraints but it also signifies the hierarchical nature of schools what children regard as priorities are often disregarded by adults. Further reflection on the extract allows me to reflect that in a wider context, not just for school building aesthetics but school structures generally, what is necessary and viable will be neither a quick fix nor a superficial make-over. There are a number of deeper changes that would facilitate structures more likely to develop a more equitable school environment. Any solutions will depend on reviewing the deep structures of a school and examining the relationships in that school. This would stand more chance if there was a move from schools as learning organisations to a learning communities in which children are viewed as an integral part of the community and as essential participants of educational reform. This crucial role of children is evidenced in the work of Finn and Checkoway (1998) who piloted a study of community based youth initiatives in which students were active participants and Metzger's (2004) work involving students as active participants in classroom management decisions. Zion refers to the need to '... buy-in of all participants and stakeholders' and '... to bring students' voices into school reforms' (2009:131). These examples of children's involvement in school decisions is consistent with the view of Freire, who asserts that dialogue is the cornerstone of communication and that it requires the involvement of all parties in education.

It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor attempt to impose that view on them but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours. We must realize that their view of the world: manifested variously in their actions, reflects their situations in the world (Freire, 2001:77).

Although I will argue in the 'Towards a Conclusion' chapter for changes in leadership models in primary education, some aspects of these changes do not require management for their instigation. Perhaps, in this instance, it is the responsibility of teachers to be the gatekeepers and implementers of change. Stenhouse stated that only teachers could '... really change the world of the classroom and that they would do so by first understanding it' (1975:208). A fundamental problem, highlighted previously, is the inability or unwillingness of many teachers, to date, to listen to children. Children's learning is unlikely to be understood properly if teachers do not take time to listen to children (Hall and Martello, 1996). From my experiences I would question the likelihood of any such

change in practice, in the short term at least, but I still ask what could be the catalyst that would enable the profession to aspire for a greater awareness and understanding of children?

The justification in arguing for an extensive review of existing school structures is primarily the belief that they severely restrict any significant growth in democracy. There is a view that schools are key forces in reproducing inequalities in society as they perform tasks such as sifting, selecting, grouping, awarding and failing. This is reinforced when the menu for learning is limited to a pre-selected and served up curriculum (Apple, 1995). It is the restrictive and controlling environment which facilitates what Burke and Grosvenor refer to as children's learning that is: 'Restricted by barriers set up against their accessing fields of knowledge held by policy makers to be inappropriate' (2003:59). This is despite, Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), in England advocating: 'More diverse programmes of works for children' (2002:1). These restrictions come at a time when children have more access to knowledge and their own interests than ever before. Seymour et al. make this point.

In the world beyond the school gates, students are surrounded by modern technology that enables them to access the images, sounds and text that interest them, at their own pace (Seymour et al., 2001:15).

This seemingly ever increasing technological freedom at home is in direct contrast to the sustained control within the school environment. I will, in the 'Towards a Conclusion' chapter deal in more detail with curriculum change and its role in developing democracy, but currently the institutionalisation of childhood has resulted in hierarchical accepted structures of dividing children according to age and ability (Woodhead, 1997; Baker, 2001). Presently there is a situation where school is a designated site of childhood with space organised and controlled by adults with a view to an ordered transition from childhood to adulthood (Burke and Grosvenor, 2003). What transpires is the normalisation, referred to earlier, of behaviour through which children are shaped and controlled by right and wrong, possible and impossible, normal and pathological behaviours (Rousmaniere, 1997). Children have to become aware of the normative regime of expectations of schools. They are judged by how well they understand and fit into the institutional procedures, practices and discourses of schools. Armstrong (1999) claims that school discourses routinely collapse individual identities into stereotypes and

categories. What then transpires is described by Burke and Grosvenor when the individual becomes the category – ethnic minority or special needs or ‘she’s free meal or bottom set’ and ‘... as a consequence occupies certain social spaces determined by these categories’ (Burke and Grosvenor, 2003:93).

This tendency to categorise and label children is recognised by Young who refers to paradoxical oppression in ‘cultural imperialism’ when the dominant group, in this case adults, establishes the norms of practice and the dominated, here children, ‘... are both marked out by stereotypes and at the same time rendered invisible’ (1990:59). She highlights Lyotard’s idea of a multiplicity or a diversity in which justice is not placed under a rule of convergence but rather a rule of divergence. Perhaps a move towards the philosophy described above by Young would result in a more equitable school environment. It is important to reflect when considering children in the school structure that children are children and not merely adults in the making. I am troubled that in some way they are expected to assimilate into the adult world Young highlights the danger in this process when it is implied that those excluded, in this case children, are coming into the game after it has begun and after the rules and standards have already been set for ‘...the privileged group implicitly define the standards according to which all will be measured’ (Young, 1990:164).

There are of course many complexities to consider. Individuals should not be burdened by traditional expectations and stereotypes but it is necessary to realise that some groups may actually welcome any positive self-definition of group difference as liberating (Young, 1990). Just as an assimilationist idea assumes all persons require the same treatment, rules and standards, a politics of difference, she suggests, requires:

Equality as the participation and inclusion of all groups sometimes requires different treatment for oppressed or disadvantaged groups (Young, 1990:158).

My experiences of the school structures in place presently would indicate that little if any thought is diverted towards such notions and that invariably the majority of structures in school are characterised through adult control and surveillance. This situation is consistent with concerns expressed by Shor and Freire when addressing the relationship between schools and social reproduction.

It's not education which shapes society, but on the contrary, it is society which shapes education according to the interests of those who have power. If this is true, we cannot expect education to be the lever for the transformation of those who have power and are in power (Shor and Freire, 1987:35-36).

Education would appear, on that view, unable on its own to mount a challenge to redress any imbalance in power. Similarly it seems unlikely that current dominant groups have any motivation to challenge a system that has previously delivered power to them (Lumby and Coleman, 2007). What appears to be necessary in school and society generally, is, as Davies (1998) suggests, that the focus should not be on redressing grievances of particular groups, but on reconfiguring organisations as democracies which will offer power to all. In education the teacher is pivotal if children are to realise increased democracy and so I turn in the following chapter, to explore more closely the role of the teaching profession within current school structures.

Policy

I will focus in this chapter on policy direction and, in particular, to what is commonly referred to as 'the audit culture' (Humes, 2002). This culture is part of the creation of an environment claimed to be at odds with classical notions of teachers' professionalism centred on autonomy and self regulation and we are, according to Doherty and McMahon (2007:251) '... working in a performativity climate'. This situation in many schools is aptly captured by Apple's phrase '... if it moves in classrooms it should be measured' (2004:614). I turn my focus towards policy here because of its effect on the teaching profession's practice, because of the dramatic way in which it has shaped the school environment and, not least, because of its potential to influence democracy in schools. My experience would indicate that there have been a number of policy developments in recent years that have restricted the profession's ability to act autonomously either for their own, or for children's, benefit. Autonomy for teachers and pupils are necessary qualities required for developing democracy. The impact of the audit culture and a performativity climate with the prospect of even further scrutiny as a result of more recent economic world turmoil and subsequent fiscal tightening leave the future journey for the profession, aptly described by Kauffman's analogy as more a paddle down rapids than a sail on the ocean (Dator, 2002). This environment has created pressures for the profession and is probably not the best climate in which we might expect to see a move towards greater democracy for pupils.

Against this background, I outline ways in which policy has shaped the profession and consider how this might restrict the development of democracy for children. An example of the impact of policy is seen in Apple's (1990) criticism of the lack of voice the teaching profession has with respect to curricular and professional decisions. Although I am specifically interested in educational change with respect to democracy, there is the possibility that the profession is becoming increasingly unable to influence any innovative changes in their practice because of the intense pressure placed on them as a consequence of policy. I consider three areas here. Firstly I outline a recent history of government interest in education detailing some of the consequences of policy direction on the profession before citing an example of policy and legislation. Secondly, I consider

the control of policy, its impact on Scotland and how policy makers have managed to manipulate and control policy through the use of language. Thirdly, I consider the accumulative effect of policy through detailing how fear has become a prominent feature of teaching.

Government interest in education is not new and Callaghan's 'Ruskin speech' in the 1970's is seen by many as a watershed in the nature of government involvement (Pollard, 1997). The teaching profession have been subjected to influences from both neoliberalism (Treasor, 2003) and Third Way politics (Giddens, 1998). Peters describes the influence from neo-liberalism as greater '... emphasis has been placed on economic goals... and the promotion of a greater partnership between education and business' (2001:74). Further neo-liberal influence is seen through Bryce and Humes highlighting how, in Scotland, the then Conservative Education Minister, Michael Forsyth, '... changed the discourse to include, choice, standards and achievement' (1999:79), principles that New Labour only too readily adopted. An overview of teaching in recent years indicates that the profession has been subjected to many challenges, including those from technological changes, globalisation and the increasing influence of the knowledge economy, resulting in, according to Kellner (2004), the necessity to look at education in new ways. Such changes have resulted in schooling and education being subjected to forms of competition, with government looking to provide, amongst other things, 'choice and diversity' according to Alexander and Potter (2005:113). Honig suggests that schools are now subjected to increased pressure with school systems now held accountable for '... demonstrable improvements in the academic achievement of all students in ways barely imagined just 20 years ago' (2006:1). There is an unequivocal reason why government has taken a closer interest in education following Brown et al. who state that the rise in the global economy has resulted in national governments being more interested in education, and that, '... the competitive advantage of nations is frequently redefined in terms of the quality of national education' (1997:7-8). As a consequence, education is viewed as bringing economic prosperity and increased interest in it from government has had significant implications for the profession.

The main consideration here is the workload and pressures that seem to have been placed on the profession as a result of recent policy initiatives. The sheer intensity of these pressures of work may have reduced the profession's ability to influence change of any description, democratic orientated or otherwise. The profession appears to have little control as they attempt to negotiate increased expectations and pressures associated with each new policy initiative. This lack of control has implications because democracy will not happen by chance. Its implementation and development require a profession willing to embrace risk-taking and innovation with open minds to change and energy to implement change. In recent times these attributes seem to have been drained out of the profession. The significance of teachers in challenging current policy, either to develop democracy or any other innovation thought necessary, is succinctly summed up by, Brearley's view: 'The potential teachers have to create learning is enormous... the power they have to stop learning is frightening' (2001:3). Sears adds to this point when claiming that teachers who have innovative aspirations will often '... stir controversy; stimulate critical analysis and challenge orthodoxy' (2004:165). The cumulative effect on the profession of policy demands could be described as leaving the profession at least unsure how to respond. Humes could have been alluding to this when he urged teachers to be less compliant and to be more challenging when faced with '... pontification and criticism of educational experts' (Smith, 2005:TESS). It may be difficult to rise to Humes' challenge. My own assessment from experience of schools is that many in today's profession are demoralised, fearful and lacking in enthusiasm. Burgess, highlights a concern from the, Primary Review Research Survey, that some of the problems in teaching are related to:

...the number of policies and the speed at which schools have had to implement the changes since 2002 causing initiative fatigue among teachers in some case (Burgess, 2008:19).

An example of how this fatigue occurs can be seen through the impact of inclusion on the teaching profession, I return later and in more detail to inclusion in the 'Behaviour chapter' but here I cite the plethora of legislation to demonstrate inclusion as just one of many areas of policy that is subjected to the rigours of audit and performativity. For Riddell (2006) inclusion policy in Scotland can be considered as beginning in the mid-1970s. Since then a range of other legislation had followed as sketched below.

- 1980 The Education (Scotland) Act (Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (SOEID) 1980).
- 1995 The Children (Scotland) Act (SOEID 1995).
- 2000 The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act (Scottish Executive 2000).
- 2000 The National Priorities for Education (SEED 2000b).
- 2001 The Special Educational Needs and Disability Discrimination Act (SEED 2001).
- 2002 The Education (Disability Strategies and Pupil Educational Records) (Scotland) Act (SEED 2002).
- 2004 The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (SEED 2004).
- 2005 Supporting Children's Learning: A Code of Practice (SEED 2005a).

The expectation from just one area of education, inclusion, in some way exemplifies why the profession might be finding it increasingly difficult to reflect on their practice. Many teachers feel unable to establish and consolidate practice and as a result appear to be consumed by the expectations and agendas of policy makers. Such a situation may deny them opportunities to engage with practices outwith the parameters set by policy. When combined with the presence of low confidence and morale in the profession (Outson et al. 1998a) this casts a shadow over the profession's ability to cope with substantial changes in education. Previously, in the 'Apathy or Resistance?' chapter, I highlighted the accusation from (Bottery and Wright, 2000) that teachers were just too busy to lift their heads to see where they were going. There seems never to be a let up of pressure with staff feeling that they constantly have to introduce and evaluate the latest initiative from the education authority. Fullan refers to the need for policy makers and government to include 'capacity building' when introducing theories of change, describing that as:

... any strategy that increases the collective effectiveness of a group to raise the bar and close the gap of student learning (Fullan, 2006:9).

Crucially, however, for capacity building to be effective there requires to be a '... combination of pressure and support' and '...unfortunately policy makers overdose on the side of pressure' (Fullan, 2006:8). It is the presence of negativity,

pressures and an emphasis on accountability that Fullan claims results in most theories of change being ineffective.

It is the pace of the pressure referred to above as well as the intensity of policy that impacts most on the profession. The journal below is a representation of how many teachers might feel about their existing working environment.

When I think about many aspects of teaching I can easily identify with a profession which faces substantial difficulties as a direct consequence of policy direction of recent years. I often think about how accurate the analogy is of the profession en masse pulling a cart and being too busy to lift their heads to see what is going on. It really strikes a chord. I reflect on recent visits from the education authority's audit personnel. These visits are structured to ensure that I have completed the necessary sections of the school's self evaluation programme as set out by the local authority. It is clear from my interactions with the 'audit team' that despite any improvements that have been acknowledged, such as, a more positive attitude and atmosphere in the school, there is an overriding expectation that national and local targets will be met. I am left in no doubt that national assessment targets are the prime focus. I am certain from these dealings that issues such as staff morale and pupil well-being are nothing more than peripheral issues. The local authority's priority is national assessment results. Following these visits I am always left rather anxious and demoralised. I know the pressures that teachers and pupils face daily, but I worry whether the local authority really appreciate the enormity of the task faced by schools, especially in socially and economically challenged areas such as ours.

The extract above highlights a number of significant issues including the impact of policy on the profession and their struggle to deal with the changes that have resulted from increased audit. The intentions of government and policy makers to enforce and embed policy are clearly evident and pervasive and lead to the second main focus: control of policy.

The control of policy implementation takes a number of forms, one being that policy initiatives are a feature of much of a teacher's professional development and show themselves most visibly in teacher education. Hirst (1989) cautions that 'Teacher education in-service training concentrates severely on the practical demands of new legislation' (in Goodson and Hargreaves, 2003:15). This professional development of the profession appears to create a vicious circle of

teachers who are unable to challenge changes to their practice with Kirk pointing out that:

... teacher education consistently fails to produce teachers who have a critical insight into their (democratic) role and function as teachers ... and the role of schooling in society (Kirk, 1986:159).

A further reason for a lack of critical insight may result from the prescriptive nature of professional development. There are now increasingly set agendas for professional training, professional reviews linked to school development plan and the provision of in-service training that, according to Bottery and Wright is entirely '... a management conception of what it means to be a professional' (2000:30). Peters describes the current environment as one where 'New Public Management has extended into education policy through self regulation' (2001:72). Peters refers to 'New Public Management' as self-management and as a strand of the neo-liberal 'freedom to choose' Chicago school. In education this has manifested as self evaluation, which is now a fundamental element of local authority 'support' as can be seen in the policy initiatives 'How Good is our School' (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education)(HMIe, 2002a) and 'The Journey to Excellence' - part 3: How Good is Our School? (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education [HMIe], 2007).

This control through the prescription of self-evaluation is a prominent feature for teachers and management and further reflection on the journal highlights the nature of the direct influence and close attention from local authority with the expectations exerted on management to implement policies effectively. The relationship between the local authority's audit team of quality improvement officers and school management is a crucial cog in the wheel of control and the reinforcement of policy practice. The local authority dictates and monitors self-evaluation through its quality assurance calendar which is meticulously followed in all schools to ensure a uniform approach throughout the authority. Added to this, increased accountability has resulted in stakeholders requiring more transparency from schools which has created, according to Doherty and McMahon (2007:251) the previously highlighted '... performativity climate' where paper work and statistics have enormous significance not least with respect to workload. What has emerged in teaching is a demanding environment that has produced pressures and a workload that seem incompatible with providing teachers time to developing ideas such as democracy for children.

The increased prescription and control that has emerged in many countries has perhaps had a particular impact on Scottish teachers. Traditionally, the concept of teacher professionalism, identity and the responsibility associated with it has always been fundamental in Scotland. The teaching profession has a clear sense of history and in particular of their role and place in society. Therefore changes to professional autonomy and any perceived threat were bound to create significant tensions. Blane (2006) argues that, in Scotland, the profession craves for increased autonomy as opposed to the increased workload and paperwork from initiatives that have emerged in recent years. These expectations for autonomy together with a strong sense of professional commitment to improving the learning environment are firmly established principles in the Scottish teaching profession. In Scotland, there appears to have been some attempt by government to initiate a move towards improving the ability of teachers to initiate change through the vehicle of the McCrone agreement and its 'Teaching Profession for the 21st Century' (SEED, 2001). The much heralded agreement involved a restructuring of the profession's terms and conditions, including a prescribed continuing professional development (CPD) allocation and a commitment to a working agreement that included a significant commitment to engage in collegiate meetings, whole staff, management and other stakeholder meetings. Scobie claims that the then Education minister, Jack McConnell, described the McCrone agreement as '... the single most important opportunity for a generation to change the culture and atmosphere in schools' (2001:8). The merits or otherwise of the McCrone agreement are not particularly relevant to this dissertation, except to note that, regardless of its intentions, generally it seems to have done little to bolster a fragile profession and is currently being reviewed by government. Indeed its implementation has actually further facilitated the previously mentioned structure for increased paper work and audit and provided less teaching time for the profession. Furthermore, rather than being less so, many schools are now more hierarchical than ever. Smith highlights a situation in which

More and more, teachers are told that their performance must be monitored, they must be observed and, if found not to be engaging in "best practice" (whatever that might be at any one time), they will have to address this, perhaps with some judicious "mentoring" by someone chasing a curriculum leader's job (Smith, 2005:3).

The example above from Smith would appear to place doubt on the benefit of the McCrone agreement. Whatever the initial intention for the agreement, the journal extract below highlights a difficulty in the current environment in which it appears that the policy makers' agenda is sacrosanct and too prescriptive. Often teachers attend staff meetings with little enthusiasm, motivation and suffering from low morale. Too often they are spoken to rather than consulted and rarely is there a sense or opportunity for teachers to demonstrate any autonomy.

It is always obvious when there is a scheduled staff meeting at the end of day in school. Staff become less animated throughout the day as the meeting approaches! I do sympathise and realise that it is extremely difficult for teachers to motivate themselves due to the pressures they face. Teaching can be mentally exhausting and often teachers require some time to recover from their exertions at the end of the school day. Meetings do not generate much enthusiasm for most staff. Rarely do they contribute and at times many sit seemingly determined not to make any sort of eye contact with the person chairing the meeting. Unfortunately, today we have a collegiate staff meeting and when I was compiling an agenda it struck me how constant the pressures are from the local authority. They very much drive our school planning and development, for example, there are clear expectations over what curricular areas require development and how this should be achieved. Invariably this accounts for a great deal of our time at staff meetings. Often the agenda is full of the latest policy initiative or local authority expectation for developing a specific curricular area. Teachers I am sure come to our meetings knowing what to expect. My experience would reinforce that teachers are now very much aware of the expectations from management and policy makers. Staff collegiate evenings, in-service training and constant self-evaluation using, for example, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education's document, How Good is Our School 3 (HM Inspectorate of Education) (HMIe, 2007) support this notion of audit and ensure that staff sing from the same hymn sheet. Staff are included in self-evaluation meetings and would be expected and encouraged to participate in any school improvement plan. There seems to be no escaping the audit culture. Head teachers have to ensure they have spoken to staff for their views, previously head teachers have been spoken to by their line managers. There is a feeling I am aware in teaching that the view from the top of the hierarchy is passed down the line with little appetite for challenge or alteration as it travels down the line.

Consideration of the journal extract above raises a number of crucial issues that reflect the current environment in primary schools. Firstly, there is a lack of enthusiasm from teaching staff towards meetings. In addition, the prescriptive

nature of education ensures that almost every meeting has agendas that are detailed and demanding of the profession. Harold McMillan famously once called for a '... period of masterly inactivity' and many within the profession would certainly welcome less frantic government (TESS, 2003). Having previously attended these meetings as a teacher I am very much aware of the feeling that every meeting brings further expectation and pressure from the local authority.

The nature of government influences over the profession brings into focus the use of language in policy as a means of control. Characteristics of this use of language are emphasised by Humes when he argues that policy language surrounding professionalism, uses terms such as '... objectives, targets, competences, standards and effectiveness' (2000:43). This use of language for control and its social script (Walford, 1994) is used in Scotland and elsewhere in government language that is often focussed on failing schools, incompetences of teachers, poor test results, behaviour and performativity. At the same time, such control of and use of language tends to inhibit any focus on any internal institutional issues, lack of funding or broader social inequalities in education.

The potential use of language to control is reinforced in Apple's (2000) description of democracy, in wider society, when he refers to collective deliberations, struggles and compromises that led, for example, to the creation of state services. Any move from democracy, viewed as collective, towards increased emphasis on individualism, presents challenges for those who have notions of collective democracy. Apple (2000) claims that the very collective principles of democracy are being challenged in educational policy. The landscape that has emerged is described by Apple's reference to wave after wave of educational reforms that have not only failed to demonstrate much improvement in schooling but marked a '... dangerous shift in our very idea of democracy from thick collective forms to thin consumer driven and individualistic forms' (2004:614). The immediate challenge for those attempting to implement increased democracy is, according to Leys, the process of '... dedemocratization... within an unforgiving ideology of individual accountability' (2003:71-73). Such a change in emphasis for democracy has fundamental implications for prospects of developing collective democracy in education and it is to this issue that I now turn. Ley suggests that needs and

values have been marginalised and ultimately abandoned and that '...market-driven politics can lead to a remarkably rapid erosion of democratically determined collective value and institutions' (Leys, 2003:4). Although movement from collective to individual forms of democracy may seem rather abstract, in relation to primary education, Apple argues '... they speak to significant and concrete changes in our daily lives in and out of education' (2004:616). For some time, most notably in the United States of America, but also in the United Kingdom, there have been efforts to reconstruct society within a liberal market economy. It seems inevitable that these changes have some impact on practices in school. Habermas, for instance, describes such changes as '... an attempt to have the system colonize the life-world' (1971:616). For teachers' the reality of today's 'life-world' would appear, according to Leys, to be a society which is moving away from a culture based on trust and shared values to one that is grounded in the most extreme possible exposure to market forces with '... internal market, profit centres, audits and bottom lines penetrating the whole of life from hospitals to play-groups' (Leys, 2003:35-36). The implications for education from such exposure to market forces is that teachers are subjected to a proliferation of auditing resulting in what Leys (2003) refers to as new understandings of terms such as democracy. Apple (2004) suggests that democracy for some is more about consumer choice as opposed to creating opportunities for the more vulnerable people in society and schools to be involved in decision making. In the United Kingdom, New Labour in particular encouraged the perception that education was a commodity that consumers could choose. There were significant tensions when public announcements were made by senior Westminster government figures such as when, Alistair Campbell used terminology including, 'bog standard comprehensive education system' (Mansell, 2002: TES). Although admittedly many of these market-led initiatives, including, individual learning accounts (TES, 2003) and the then Education Minister, David Milliband referring to 'two-tier schooling providing, ladders and escalators' (Dobson, 2003: TES) could be described as an English phenomenon but teachers in Scotland are not immune from such discourse and the extensive media coverage which often surrounds political spin does nothing to alleviate frustration and fear in teaching. Public interventions, described above, from senior political figures may have succeeded in challenging or shifting our understanding of what democracy

signifies. In relation to democracy in education, the parent's right to choose between successful and failing schools took precedence over giving children a voice in decision making processes. It is worth noting, too, that political and media interest in choice seemed to centre on what may be regarded by some as peripheral issues such as the type of schools we should have, rather than more fundamental concerns over, the purpose of education (Munro, 2000).

It is government control of policy implementation and language, together with the effects that policy has had on the profession, which further emphasises the restrictive and prescriptive controlling nature of policy. Government appear to have successfully maintained and manipulated the practices of the teaching profession in close synchronisation with the latest policy initiatives and directions. There are extensive examples of how government have altered the environment to enable them to have greater influence. For instance, as the co-ordinator of staff professional development, it occurs to me that, almost exclusively, professional development courses available are linked to national and local government policy initiatives. The cumulative effect has been the creation of an environment for the teaching profession described by Pollitt (1992) as one in which the professional is on tap as opposed to on top (Bottery and Wright, 2000). This control by government and their agencies is described through an analogy of teachers and their professional bodies rowing policy while the government steers it. No allowance appears to have been made for any prospect for deep or extended commitment to an overview of education and Bottery and Wright maintain that the manipulation and control of policy has resulted in the '... de-professionalisation and re-professionalisation' of teachers (2000:1). This view from Bottery and Wright seems consistent with the philosophy of Chris Woodhead, who stated, when HM Chief Inspector of Schools in England and Wales, that head teachers' qualifications should not involve scrutinising government policy

Training ought to be practical...it is ludicrous to think they should waste precious time pontificating on the rights and wrongs of the latest political announcement (Woodhead, 1998:55).

Woodhead goes on to refer to '... self indulgent academics being ludicrously out of touch' (1998:55). His tone appears typical of a particular philosophy, namely that any intellectual questioning of policy, reflection or critical thinking is neither necessary nor encouraged in the profession. Rather, the expectation, according to

Goodson and Hargreaves, would be of a profession controlled by strict guidelines and central edicts resulting in teachers becoming ‘... technical deliverers of guidelines and recast as technical rationalists’ (2003:126). This has left many in the profession believing that government would prefer teachers who are well trained technicians ready to deliver politically inspired criteria (Pickard and Dobie, 2003).

The claims of de-professionalism and moves to well trained technicians have implications for the profession and for democracy. Bottery describes something pervasive occurring when teachers observe each other and are inducted into the managerially defined system of best practice. Teachers ‘... inhibit, live and think the discourse of a shriveled universe’ (Bottery, 2000:7). This scenario, referred to by Bottery (2000) as the Benthamite/Foucauldian panopticon is, in this instance, through teachers thinking only in terms of the specific discourse as dictated by policy makers. When this occurs, there is no need for external control. Not only do teachers apply the discourse to themselves but to everyone else. The situation described above is, in my experience, reasonably accurate of the profession and would be seen in many schools as acceptable and accurate. Unfortunately such a scenario is further evidence that practices in the profession are more conducive to reacting and satisfying the demands of policy makers, rather than focusing on what some teachers may view as abstract transformations such as increasing democracy.

Rudduck and Flutter highlight another potentially worrying facet of teaching, namely that at a time when teachers should be nurturing children that are inquisitive, innovative and even entrepreneurial the ‘... profession is too vulnerable to the flattening effect of habit (Rudduck and Flutter, 2004:142). My experience is of a profession which relies on the familiarity of everyday context, the dominance of routine and habit, rather than the need to view the ordinariness and interactions in the class with new eyes and the daily reconstruction of their familiar world. The evidence from recent passages would indicate that presently many in the profession are not best placed to adopt more innovative and risk taking approaches and this view would be in accord with Scobie who suggests that teachers require showing more eagerness to ‘... move beyond the safe and familiar towards taking risks if significant changes of any description are to be

realised' (2001:5). This challenge from Scobie, however, introduces the third main focus here, the issue of fear in the profession. The journal extract below may shed further light on why there has been little resistance to policy changes in recent years.

I have been considering why teachers often resist changes to their routine. On days like today I have practical experience of how difficult this can be to achieve. From a personal point of view I experienced at first hand some of the potential barriers to developing democracy. I have once more found teachers unwilling to implement some small change in procedure that would have assisted in moves towards developing children's democracy. When I reflect on why there is resistance, I believe that it is intellectually disturbing for some teachers, especially when the profession's main focus and significant energies go towards meeting the targets set by government and local authorities. They seem incapable of deviating from practice that requires changes to relationships and current hierarchies in schools. I know from my recent dialogue with teachers that they have anxieties over achieving national assessment targets and despite my protestations that democracy will assist them in this aim, they remain unconvinced. I believe the justification for this reluctance to change is the reality of the pressure they face from management if, for example, a specific group or individual fails to meet a national assessment target. It is only natural within such an environment that teachers' priority is to establish a routine that delivers national assessment targets as opposed to developing democracy. Some teachers may even regard issues such as democracy as rather abstract notions. Ultimately my experience would indicate that many teachers feel pressurized to obtain good results for the school's benefit! What concerns me mostly is that I am certain from my discussions that many teachers are yet to be convinced that policy makers genuinely strive for democracy or that it is even beneficial.

The extract above raises a number of issues. It reinforces that there is little evidence of any concrete action in the profession to counter or even to add to existing policy directions. The journal extract also highlights some resistance or fear from the profession with regard to the merits of democracy and towards changing relationships in schools. This issue of relationships is a significant element of democracy and I will deal in some depth with this in the following chapter. There is also evidence from the extract that there are considerable anxieties in teaching with regard to meeting assessment targets set by policy makers. Further reflection on the journal extract and comments made previously in the 'Apathy or Resistance?' chapter raise the issue of fear. Fear is certainly a

recurring theme that exists in the teaching profession and it would be remiss of me not to reflect on its impact.

The charge is that, as a consequence of changes in education policy described in this chapter, fear has become so prevalent that it has become an energy sapping, demoralising drain on many teachers. It is inevitable that the additional workload and increased accountability of recent years has impacted on the profession. Little, if any, thought appears to have been given to just how demoralised the teaching profession feels. The extract below indicates that often the profession has experienced great difficulty in coping with the current environment in primary schools. The journal extract is not an embellishment of school life but a snapshot of what many might describe as the typical pressures of primary school education.

I often feel that today's profession is particularly vulnerable. In recent times there have been a significant number of teachers in a distressed state because of the pressures they feel. Mostly it is when matters come to a head, for instance just before an observed visit from management, national assessments or before their termly forward plans of work are due to be handed in. There is a growing anxiety and an immense feeling of fear that they may not have done something right. Teaching appears to me to be increasingly stressful. I don't think the insecurity that seems to be an almost permanent feature of the profession is acknowledged enough. This week alone I have been aware of at least half of our teaching staff suffering from significant distress as a result of pressures they perceive from the inclusion agenda and performativity climate as a consequence of changes to their practice as a result of policy changes. This is so upsetting. Although I would always comfort these teachers I at the same time despair at the prospect of a profession that reduces people to these emotions. It is my experience that teachers work best when they are being innovative and creative in an environment that is stimulating and challenging. At its best teaching is a wonderful experience. Unfortunately, too often teaching today is for many a fearful experience. Unease over behaviour, deteriorating social and economic backgrounds and the unstable emotional nature of our children make teaching a very emotional, delicate and challenging profession. However, my experience is that teachers are particularly resilient when it comes to caring for our vulnerable children. The most significant challenge for the profession today is almost entirely as a result of the pressures that teachers feel from the impact of recent policy. Every staff meeting seems to bring a new idea and with it a feeling that we just aren't doing things properly. I don't think I have attended a meeting where those assembled have been told 'you are doing a

good job...just carry on doing it'. Instead it is a message that we must change existing and previous practice. When I consider how often I witness teachers in stressed conditions I wonder how today's young teachers can be expected to cope with such pressures throughout their career.

When I reflect on the extract above I regard it as a fair description of the profession based on experience of managing in a number of schools in recent years. The journal extract highlights a profession under pressure and feeling, at times, overwhelmed by the expectation of management. Hardman captures these pressures through the description of teachers who are '... bombarded with demands and advice and many of them suffer from initiative fatigue' (2003:1). Further anxieties are recognised in Humes' description of a profession suffering from '... policy hysteria and innovation fatigue' (2002a: TESS). These factors have combined and result in many in the teaching profession lacking motivation with Fullan stating that:

If one's theory of action does not motivate people to put in the effort – individually and collectively – that is necessary to get results, improvement is not possible (Fullan, 2006a:8).

Such claims, if substantiated, have serious implications for education.

It is therefore necessary to question why the current climate in primary education seems to have resulted in a culture of fear, low motivation and innovation fatigue evolving. In *Education the Right Way*, Apple (2001) argues that neo-liberalism requires the constant production of evidence that teachers are doing things efficiently and in the correct way. The culture which has evolved includes watching their every step, as opposed to allowing them to be in any sense carefree, risk taking and artistic and it has clear implications for a profession suffering from stress and low-morale. In addition, there have been a series of public attacks directed at the teaching profession. Taken in isolation these attacks could reasonably dent morale, but in the context of the other pressures highlighted here they are a savage blow to an already beleaguered profession. Apple claims that in the United States of America, Secretary of State, Page, labelled the profession and other public workers as '... recalcitrant, selfish and uncaring' (2004:618). In England, the aforementioned, Chief Inspector for Schools, Chris Woodhead, was for a period a determined and regular critic of many aspects of the teaching

profession and Woodhead was deemed by many in the United Kingdom to be too aggressive towards the profession (Mansell, 2000).

Although the profession in Scotland has not been subjected to the same level of aggression as in other countries, it has suffered in more subtle ways. There have for instance previously been anxiety over attempts to introduce “naming and shaming” when the government were criticised for a plan to release performance figures for schools, ‘The controversial move which is seen as encouraging a demotivating naming and shaming programme’ (TESS, 1998). Furthermore, various pronouncements from school inspectors and the fear from teachers of an external school audit also have had negative implications for the profession. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Education (HMIE) in Scotland seem only to have added to the stress and fear levels in the profession despite claims from a committee of members of the Scottish parliament that ‘... they displayed professionalism and integrity’ (Munro, 2007:TESS). Often teachers’ experience of the inspection process is of great reservation over the manner in which schools are inspected and subsequently reported. Reacting to the suicide of a Scottish primary headteacher, shortly before an anticipated critical HMIE report for her school, Cameron (2008) claimed criticism from HMIE was often the final straw for hard pressed professionals. Further criticisms of HMIE’s role are highlighted in Cameron’s statement that children cannot learn when they are afraid or humiliated and neither can adults ‘... their audits are positively antediluvian and a ritualised naming and shaming’ (Cameron, 2008:4).

What has emerged from such an environment is of a profession which is very fragile and vulnerable. Scheon and Fusarelli highlight research in the United States of America, which I believe could be echoed in Scotland, showing the shadow of ‘... a fear of failure hanging over the profession’ (2008:193). Fear is pervasive in teaching in Scotland and is a fundamental and growing problem for the profession. Deming emphasised the negative effects of fear when he claimed it ‘... inhibits creative thought but also causes dishonesty and competition which are counterproductive to achieving organizational goals’ (1986:94). Such an environment as described by Deming seems incompatible with any desirable or effective school environment.

The profession must overcome fear in an effort to counter the challenges that appear to be having such a devastating effect on many aspects of teaching. Tackling fear in the profession may act as the catalyst which will help resolve some of the difficulties that have been highlighted. Roosevelt warns that 'The danger lies in refusing to face the fear as it will take away your confidence' (1960:29-30). If eradicating fear is to be an integral element in any process that may restore confidence to the profession, there are fundamental obstacles to be overcome before this objective could be realised. The obvious difficulty is the stark reality of what Apple refers to as the two major emphases in education internationally: '... neo-liberal reforms such as marketization and neo-conservative policies involving the push for ever-increasing national standards, curricular and testing' (Apple, 2008:240). The presence of fear in the profession acts as a further reduction of the likelihood of any effective challenge to such existing policy. The profession can anticipate that there will be further changes in policy towards what Apple refers to as '... the danger of the move towards conservative definition of common culture in the curriculum' (2008:240). The issues highlighted in this chapter have in turn a significant bearing on the relationships between the teaching profession and children and it is on this issue that I now focus in the next chapter.

Relationships

I will, throughout this chapter, emphasise aspects of relationships between teachers and children. That relationship was a constant and critical concern for Freire (1974) during the entire course of his life and work according to Au and Apple (2007). For the purposes of the dissertation the relationship between children and teachers is a vital cog in the development of democracy. There are a number of factors that influence and shape this relationship and I will detail these in three sections. Firstly, I look at the status of children in schools and society, focussing on perceptions of children and considering differences between their experiences in and outwith school. Secondly, I consider children's participation in decision making processes in schools and thirdly I question the nature of relationships and communication in schools between children and teachers.

Before taking into account the issues above it is worth reflecting on what children expect from their relationships with adults in school. Burke and Grosvenor claim, from research on children's opinion of schools, that children would like to talk more to the adults in school. They suggest children want to '... lean on and trust adults' and that this could empower children and reduce authority barriers that may exist between the adults and children (Burke and Grosvenor, 2003:8). This view from children is consistent with what I would recognise as key to progress towards developing relationships that are more effective for democracy. The reality, however, is that often the teaching profession do not talk enough with children. Hall and Martello caution that '... children's learning will never be understood properly if teachers cannot spend time listening to children' (1996:vi) and they note that without such listening developing democracy will be severely limited.

At the start of this first section, on the status of children, I refer to a previous journal extract from the 'Apathy or Resistance' chapter which indicated that children who raise objections over an aspect of school life can suffer a forceful backlash. The entry, summarised below, is a reminder of the reaction of management to senior pupils who questioned the judgement of the leadership in school over a number of incidents. My own assessment, at the time of the incident and since, is that the pupils had every right to question the actions of the school's leadership.

What transpired was a disgrace and an abuse of power by adults over children. The group in question were basically spoken to in a manner that made me uncomfortable. They were clearly incapable of countering the aggressive tone and articulate manner of the adults who spoke to them. It was a mismatch and the children realised that they were unable to respond effectively. My immediate concern was the knowledge that the children had been treated unfairly. I know from subsequent discussions with the class teacher and with the children that they felt humiliated and angry, and that this was the unanimous feeling of the group. The children's grievances were squashed without any regard to their feelings or future ability or willingness to voice their concerns.

The extract above demonstrates how schools can fail to embrace increased involvement from children in decision making processes. A fear noted in the journal was that incidents such as this may increase the danger of alienation of children within the predominately adult world. Shallcross et al. remind us that children interpret the world differently from adults '... not because of any development deficiencies but because they grow up in distinctive childhood culture' (2007:74). The journal extract also highlights the related absence of respect that may be damaging to children with many commentators, including, Rudduck (2006) highlighting the importance of creating a classroom climate that is, instead, marked by trust and openness. Similarly, Maitles and Deuchar suggest that qualities such as mutual respect and trust are prerequisites when dealing with children's democracy.

On the one hand, there can be lip service that young people are citizens now as opposed to Marshall's (1950) proposition that they are 'citizens in waiting'; but on the other, the adult world at best 'tolerates' (Crick and Porter, 1978:7) actions that it deems unpalatable. (Maitles and Deuchar, 2006:262).

The view from above lends some weight to my experience of children not being respected nor apparently valued and trusted by some teachers. Bryk and Schneider (2003) argue that trust requires work on a number of levels and will be more effective in schools where relationships are strong. What is required are relationships that help create an ethos and environment in which everyone, not just children, will feel valued. Nieto highlights an essential issue in this discourse when she claims that any improvements to pupils' voice will be ineffective if such changes are not accompanied by profound changes in how we as educators think

about our students suggesting that: 'One way to begin the process of changing school policies is to listen to students' views' (1994:395).

Often children are not, however, listened to in school and it is important to consider why. Further reflection on my experiences, the above journal extract and recent passages, convinces me that the practices of the teaching profession and the relationship between teachers and their pupils may be shaped by how society more broadly regards children. Freeman (1987) offered a rather damning critique of the status of children in society suggesting they have not been accorded either dignity or respect. Instead, Davie suggests, 'They have been reified, denied the status of participation in the social system and labelled as a problem population' (1993:253). This less than satisfactory perception is not dissimilar to the assessment of children by Moss when describing the UK children's services, who see the child as incomplete and immature, '... a becoming adult who will attain complete personhood as an adult through processes of development' (2002:4). The claims of Davie and Moss appear to be consistent with a common attachment in society and schools to a notion of children and childhood that emphasises the requirement of significant adult supervision and the necessity for regulation. Tisdall states that it is in fact '... child welfare services that are based upon and help produce particular constructions of the child and childhood' (2006:101). Evidence of an uncertainty about how the child should be viewed is expressed by, Moss who claims the following.

The child of children's services is a 'poor child': she is 'the child in need', 'the child at risk', 'the vulnerable child', 'the child needing to be readied to learn'...But is also a redemptive agent, who will grow up to rescue society – but first needs to be saved (Moss, 2002:101-102).

The claim about children above is supported by Lister who highlights a trend in children's policy under the previous New Labour government which labelled children as '... the future citizens of tomorrow' (2003:435). This assessment of children is somewhat contradicted by Maitles and Deuchar's reference to young people being '... citizens now, not in waiting' (2006:250) when discussing a key theme underpinning Learning and Teaching Scotland's vision for citizenship. Further evidence of confusion from policy makers over their assessment of children is encapsulated by Such and Walker when they describe government.

Torn between the notion that children are dependent on parents for well-being and the idea that individuals should take responsibility for their own actions (Such and Walker, 2005:39).

Experience would indicate that often this perception of children as dependent is one that is shared by many teachers. Rudduck and Flutter claim such ideas of childhood are a comfortable assumption for many adults and that these have '... shaped policy and practice in many aspects of life' (2004:4). The philosophy that has prevailed in many primary schools is one in which children are thought of as 'would be' adults, their status is a 'becoming' as opposed to the here and now status of 'being'. There is also the need to be mindful of warnings from those such as Rudduck and Flutter that: 'We should not delude ourselves by thinking that younger children are not also susceptible' (2004:7). The authors cite how children have been courted as consumers and they detail the manipulation that can occur through advertising. Despite the note of caution it would be equally inappropriate to suggest that children are always vulnerable or in some way inadequate. Such perceptions restrict children's involvement in schools. There is a danger here that if we regard children in some way as inadequate and incomplete, they will remain so until they reach adulthood. Not least, there is a fundamental flaw with any notion that defines adults as rational and competent while children are deemed necessarily irrational and incompetent. Importantly, many of the children at my school do not have good adult role models. Leonard questions what happens when children grow up against a backdrop of less than healthy democracy in which adults '... are incapable of acting in a reasonable, competent, rational manner?' (2007:495). Such situations as described perhaps reinforce the role of schools in providing appropriate role models with respect to the behaviour of adults and the nature of relationships within.

Adults, competent or otherwise, often interpret what pupils are saying incorrectly. Rudduck and Flutter highlight the danger of '... accommodation when challenging ideas of pupils are modified by adults so that they conform to existing orthodoxy' (2004:121). In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire challenged the notion of the 'correct' knowledge of teachers and the act of depositing ideas into another.

Because dialogue is an encounter among humans who name the world, it must not be a situation where some humans name it on behalf of others (Freire, 1974:77).

Examples of the imbalances in the relationships between pupils and teachers that I have experienced are consistent with the act of depositing and naming on behalf of others described above. Perhaps what is required is a complete reassessment of the status of childhood. MacBeth et al. claim childhood has changed in recent years, citing examples of young people displaying a mixture of social maturity, street wisdom and naivety, and challenging us to ‘... get real’ (2000:82). In addition Macbeth et al. cite examples of young people involved in extortion, drug dealing, intimidation and ultimately murder. These examples and media coverage over recent years of horrific acts of violence, most notably the James Bulger case in England (Sutcliffe, 1994) in which two young boys were convicted of murder, should challenge our assumptions of the necessary innocence and dependency of children. Although these examples of childhood are extreme, they highlight the need for the teaching profession and society generally to be more active and critical of their own assumptions of childhood and to recognise its evolving nature. Whilst the accusation that children and adults live separate lives could be made throughout time, today’s children have embraced technologies that have made these distinctions even more pronounced. Whilst these differences between adults and children could possibly be assessed as predictable or even insignificant, their very existence creates barriers and restricts the development of democracy for children. Exemplifying differences between adults and children is the ignorance that many adults display over just how different and embedded children’s use of information communication technology has become in their culture. Rudduck and Flutter cite an example of a pupil who failed an examination question that asked pupils to write a letter to a friend. The pupil in question used text language to communicate. A spokesperson for the examination board claimed ‘... text message language holds no sway with us. There is no place for slang in exam papers’ (2004:106). While it may be unreasonable to be too critical of the authority, in this instance the example highlights the need for educators to be more sensitively attuned to the current world of children.

Another difference between children and adults, and one that has particular significance for education, is the distinction for children between their experiences inside and outside school. Perhaps typical of school experience is the environment described below in a summary of thoughts about children from

Australian teachers. Such thoughts are recognisable from my experience and may be equally relevant in a Scottish context.

They are often easily bored, restless and hard to control. They are less attentive and respectful, and far less interested in their school world. They are apathetic and disengaged when in class, turn on mainly with their peers and seem to get their pleasures, find their identities and, indeed, live the important parts of their lives elsewhere – out of class, out of school (Kenway and Bullen, 2001:1).

This negativity and lack of engagement of children in school is counter to some of the experiences children seem to enjoy outside school. The restriction of responsibility in school would appear to be at odds with the increasing exposure outside school to, for example, global media images which provide access to many controversial and interesting social, political and humanitarian issues. Maitles and Deuchar, (2004) note how the availability of information outside of school presents a challenge to provide a similarly exciting learning environment in school. This current generation of children, have enjoyed unprecedented access to information and are described by Kenway and Bullen as the: 'Supermarket Generation, the Computer Generation, the Nintendo Generation, Techno-kids and Cyberkids' (2001:55-56). Today's children probably have greater independence outside of school through their access to and use of mobile phones, music systems, social networking sites, portable personal computer devices and games consoles that combine to create for children access to computer skills that allow them to communicate with each other and the wider world in ways that are unfamiliar, if not alien, to many adults. James and Prout refer to sociological research that presents an image of young people as '... accomplished actors in their own world' (1997:ix). I would, by contrast, question how many of the children in the schools I have experienced in recent years would identify with being accomplished actors in their school world. What emerges from the recent passages is a contradictory interpretation of children's capabilities and experiences exemplified through evidence of their ability to gain access to information and to communicate effectively in a variety of genres that they control outwith school.

The second section of this chapter builds on the issues raised above to consider children's involvement in decision making processes. LaFollette cautions that if children are not nourished to be included in some decisions there is a danger that we '... hamper their becoming fully responsible, autonomous adults' (1998:1) but

he limits that view by suggesting that very ‘... young children do not have the experience or knowledge to make informed decisions’ (1998:1). A significant factor in a consideration of children and their place in relationships in school is understanding that children’s voices are often absent from many, if not all, of the decisions that shape their lives. Giroux acknowledges that: ‘Children have fewer rights than almost any other group and fewer institutions protecting these rights’ (2003:1). The lack of participation for children in decision making is substantiated in research by Osler and Starkey which indicates that despite pupil participation being ‘... strongly represented in literature’ it is ‘... under researched and under theorised’ (2005:25). Furthermore, Fielding (2004) highlight adults’ impulses to control any participation with Hart (1997) warning that we must identify whether participation is really children or adult initiated. Ross et al. draw on Hart’s (1997) ‘ladder of participation’ which described children’s involvement not as participation but ‘manipulation, deception, decoration and tokenism’ (2007:239). Perhaps not surprisingly they suggest that participation that is child-initiated and child-directed is very rarely observed. The participation described above would appear to be less a move towards emancipation or radicalism as seen through Freire’s (1970) or Fielding’s (2004) eyes; rather it is more like a system of control.

There is, however, some room for optimism with respect to a change towards increased participation in decision making. Signs of increasing democracy for children are, at least, evident in current educational discourse in the shape of the children’s rights movement, described by Franklin and Franklin as having a ‘... rich and substantial heritage’ (1996:96). Deuchar (2008) states that at the beginning of the 21st century, the education for citizenship and democracy is firmly placed on the policy agenda. Furthermore, Articles 12 to 14 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child affirm the right for pupils:

To freely express an opinion in all matters affecting him/her and to have that opinion taken into account...and to meet and form associations
(Maitles and Deuchar, 2006:250).

Notably the Convention departed from previous dominant Western ideologies which stressed children as incompetent and vulnerable and moved towards what Ross et al. describe as encouraging ‘... a model of active citizenry for childhood’ (2007:240). Advocates of increasing children’s democracy should be further encouraged by Deuchar’s claim that ‘... a participative approach to school

organisation is now recognised as a priority' (2008:19). Flutter and Rudduck (2004) note, too, that in recent years there has been an increasing move towards listening to the voices of students in schools and colleges. However, in addition to the need to listen more to children, the journal extract below considers other problems associated when attempting increased pupil participation. At the centre of the argument here, on relationships, is a deeply held belief that some teachers still under-value, under-estimate and misunderstand children.

Earlier today I chaired the school's pupil council. Although I always eagerly anticipate these meetings, often by the conclusion of their business I am left underwhelmed by the response and quality of the pupils' involvement. I reflect that at least some of the children involved are enthusiastic during discussions; they are keen to be involved and to make suggestions. However, too often I judge they have limited, unrealistic or irrelevant ideas. Part of my frustration may be that I want them to be more challenging of the school's structures. Too often we do not seem to be involved in what I would regard as meaningful dialogue that, for instance, may question the existing processes in the school. Personally I am looking for the members of the pupil council to be more active and critical of how school is structured and managed. Invariably I feel I have to attempt to goad these children to react.

I am, in my more reflective moments, mindful that I should have more realistic expectations about just how primary school children can be expected to question the adult world that so often appears to control them. I should appreciate that it is, after all, difficult for most adults to be critical of the processes that influence and control them. Why should I expect it to be different for children? There is an irony in that I believe that children should have increased democratic practice and I want to give them the voice to alter the status-quo, while they quite naturally seem to mostly remain blissfully ignorant of this situation. Having been responsible for pupil council arrangements in my previous schools, the seemingly fixed agenda, over these years, of children only being concerned with improving school dinners, picking up litter from the playground and requests to change the school uniform to nicer colours, is wearing a bit thin. I do, however, recognise from discussions with children that previously they have not been encouraged by the successive teachers leading pupil councils to participate more effectively in matters outwith those described above.

Reflecting on the above extract leaves me a little disturbed that I have been too critical of children and frustrated by their passive involvement in pupil councils. The journal extract also highlights the reality that children often have different worries and priorities from adults. Are children thinking and acting as they choose and not as I may wish? Against these doubts, my anxiety over the lack of

involvement from children in decision making remains. I have in recent years, assumed responsibility at three schools for pupil councils and the journal extract captures my exasperation. Reflecting further on the extract above it seems possible that my frustration should be directed at the adults who have previously led these pupil council and have either paid only lip-service to children or ensured that significant school matters have been sidestepped or ignored. There is also the possibility that pupil council members are subjected to what Maitles and Deuchar refer to as management style pupil councils in which children are '... merely consulted and informed, or at worst, experience tokenistic forms of participation' (2006:251). The danger with these arrangements is that although it would appear that children have some form of voice, the school hierarchy remains unchallenged and is consistent with Freire's description of much schooling as being '... oppressive and a manifestation of banking method of education' (cited by Au and Apple, 2007:460). What appears to be missing from pupil councils and other facets of school life is outlined by Freire. The teacher should not be the only one who teaches but there should also be dialogue with the students and that process should mean students and teachers '... become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow' (1974:67). It is this dialogue and shared responsibility referred to above that appears to be missing from existing processes such as those in pupil councils.

The previous journal extract appears, too, to reflect the claim of Ross et al. who found, through research on pupil participation, that the process of engaging children '... was strikingly missing from the vast majority of case studies on pupil councils' (2007:247). When I have assumed responsibility for pupil councils it was evident that active participation, described by Anderson (2000) as an essential element in challenging existing school ways of doing things, appears to be limited. Another possibility, and perhaps more likely in my experience, is that teachers have consistently failed to encourage children to engage in decision making processes, a situation described by Covell and Howe (2001) as school authoritarianism. When considering the journal extract above I wonder on the prospects of what Rudduck and Flutter refer to as, the need for educators to '... realize the transformative potential of pupil voice' (2004:139). Reluctance from teachers to engage children may be another consequence, highlighted in the 'Policy chapter' in this dissertation; of the pressures they face themselves from the

attainment agenda and the prescriptive curriculum (Nicol, 2000). There may be further additional factors that have created this situation. As the journal suggests, children may not be capable of dealing effectively with the complexities of decision making in schools. Perhaps children are not particularly interested in such matters and would prefer to engage in decision making in other ways.

Perhaps teachers are unwilling to give pupils their voice because they consider that many children experience enormous hardship and find it difficult to develop sufficient skills to allow them to operate with any realistic expectation of articulating their voice in the school environment. It is important to recognise that it does take time for many of our pupils to develop confidence. Mullis highlights how she encouraged her high school pupils to be more confident in planning lessons with her but that it had taken '... two years to train students to become more independent' (2002:3). There is, in addition, the difficulty in any school of the varying needs of the pupils. Some children are comfortable with dependence on their teacher. Rudduck highlights a teacher's frustration at a sixth form class who demand: 'Sir, Sir, open our mouths and shovel in The Truth and we'll regurgitate it in the A level' (1991:43). Anderman and Maehr (1994) claim that significant research shows autonomy as a key factor in pupils' commitment to learning in school but notes that many students are not in a position to question the teacher's authority and '... see teachers as the expert' (Rudduck and Flutter, 2004:84). Such situations locate teachers as the dominant group in school.

An alternative opinion, and at odds with notions of children being needy in the school environment, is presented by Gilbert and Robins as they urge policy makers at national and school level to be more in touch with the reality of young people's lives. They criticise the

Numbing and ineffective standardization in schools...the remedy for this is the inclusion of the student perspective in policy creation (Gilbert and Robins, 1998:3).

One area of inclusion that may satisfy Gilbert and Robins' demand is to include the student perspective in an attempt to improve the ineffectiveness of the current curriculum. Perhaps, as alluded to earlier in this chapter, opportunities to engage with and access information, often technologically and interactively, outside of

school has made schools appear to be dated by comparison. Levin emphasises, from research on increasing pupil participation in decision making, that children '... want to have something to say about how they learn, when they learn... discussions that are critical to learning' (1999:13). The necessity to include children is consistent with the calls of Freire (1974), referred to earlier, for greater dialogue and shared responsibility between teacher and student and Rudduck (1998) is clear that children are capable of analytic and constructive comment. My experience is consistent with research by Wyse on children's involvement in decision making in school.

There was no evidence that children were consulted in any way in relation to their views about the nature of their teaching...no attempts by teachers to encourage students to evaluate the quality of the activities (Wyse, 2001:210).

Fielding, similarly, argues that any evidence of consultation in schools with pupils is invariably framed by teachers for teachers and that '... teaching and learning remain largely forbidden areas of enquiry' (2001b:101) while, Burke and Grosvenor highlight the danger that children '... perceive the curriculum in schools to be too limited and inflexible' (2003:58). Wragg (2002) claims that '... classrooms should be creative and dynamic places, not graveyards of dry prescription'. This is reinforced by Whitehead writing decades previously.

For successful education there must always be certain freshness in the knowledge dealt with...knowledge does not keep any better than fish (Whitehead, 1929:147).

The evidence from recent passages would support Osler's (1994) argument that we need a complete reassessment of roles in schools with implications for individual teachers and schools as a whole. The need to include children more often in decision making is reinforced in Hodgkin's (1998) advocacy for increased awareness of the potential of pupils' contribution to policy and his suggestion that legislation will be seriously weakened if it fails to recognise the importance of this. It is the lack of active and genuine participation that I determine from numerous discussions with children which most disaffects them. The necessity for active participation is certainly not a recent phenomena Dewey (1916) is adamant that people must live and experience democracy to appreciate its complexities but nearly a century later Rudduck and Flutter (2004) note that there is insufficient

attention to participation in the community of school. Dent cautioned that pupils would only learn by living civics as opposed to talking about it.

Every child might live his school life in his miniature State...and then pass out into the greater State with a developed and sane comprehension of how the affairs of a community are managed (Dent, 1930:15).

The challenge for education remains the nature of participation for children and what parameters there should be for democracy. Maitles and Deuchar (2006) reinforce the benefit of active and genuine participation when arguing that, to be effective, democracy is best learned in democratic settings. My own experience is that schools mostly fail to comprehend or embrace the notion that democracy should be practised and not just an add-on to the curriculum taught as a separate entity. Freire (1996) highlights the danger of turning people into objects through the process of alienating them from their own decision-making and Young argues that a basic expectation in a democratic school should be that '... all persons should have the right and opportunity to participate in the deliberation and decision making' (1990:91). Similarly, Apple and Beane (1995) suggest democracy in schools should be a genuine attempt to honour the right of people to participate in making decisions that affect their lives.

Although my experiences with respect to genuine democracy have to date been anything but positive, there has, as noted, been some recognition of the need for children in Scotland to be more active and responsible citizens. Learning and Teaching Scotland reflect on the need for children to be '... thoughtful and responsible participants in public life' (2002:7). This vision of young people as citizens is further emphasised in CfE through the development of 'responsible citizens' as one of its four capacities underpinning the curriculum (Scottish Executive, 2004a:1). Despite such changes or aspirations in these initiatives for increased responsibility, the possibility of altering the existing relationships between teachers and children may, however, continue to be under threat from those who hold traditional views on relationships. And so it is to the third and final section of relationships that I now turn.

Children are generally positioned relative to the dominant adult group and one influential aspect of this relationship is domination through controlling dialogue and

communication. The journal extract below illustrates the point that despite claims for change toward increased participation from children in schools, most ‘... young people still lack the power to influence the quality of their lives’ (Rudduck and Flutter, 2004:4).

I always seem to worry about the nature of the relationship between teacher and pupil. For some teachers the thought of giving pupils increased democratic opportunities is an anathema. One reason why even the prospect of this is difficult to envisage is the imbalance in communication in many primary schools. Typically my experience of a significant number of teachers is that they would rarely involve themselves in any dialogue with children outwith the parameters of learning and teaching. How can democracy flourish if children are unable to communicate with adults? I have always considered it rather strange that many teachers feel it unnecessary or even inappropriate to establish any meaningful relationship with pupils. I am amazed and frustrated when I observe teachers who are unwilling to even look at children as they pass them by in the corridor or dinner school. I wonder of the impact on a child when their teacher walks passed them without even a glance in their direction? To me it sends out a message to these children that they are not valued by teachers. I think that too often we simply don't take enough time to think about children and their feelings and needs. A basic element of any effective relationship should be a willingness to have dialogue and to communicate in an equitable fashion.

When I reflect on the extract above one of the fundamental objections I have with regard to relationships is what appears to be a lack of genuine warmth, affection and interest amongst some teachers towards children. The sometimes unsatisfactory nature of the teacher and pupil relationship is exemplified in the ease in which children can be ignored and treated as though they are insignificant in school. Mitchell and Sackney suggest a root and branch change of the perception and practice of our education system, to one which is characterised by ‘... metaphors of wholeness and connections, diversity and complexity, relationships and meaning, reflection and enquiry and collaboration and collegiality’ (2000: 6). Experience convinces me that the sort of changes referred to by Mitchell and Sackney should focus, in particular, on the relationships between children and teachers. The extract above indicates that there is evidence that the elements regarded as necessary for building effective relationships with children are not evident in many schools.

The journal extract below illustrates how relationships between teachers and pupils can create problems whilst suggesting that many children are aware that the teacher is the dominant authoritative figure. This factor appears to inhibit the prospects for establishing appropriate relationships necessary to develop increased democratic practices in primary schools.

From the moment the bell sounds in school there is an expectation of silence, "line up, straight line, and face the front, one behind the other". There is often a regimented expectation of pupils from teachers. I always find this ritual almost farcical. When else in our lives, outwith military service or incarceration, would there be an expectation of such practice? Further reflection on the observations and dialogue in schools forces me to question the very limited opportunities that children have in a primary school environment to speak with any freedom. Adults to a large extent control any dialogue, although it is important to recognise that, partner work, pair and share, circle time and group work do afford children the chance to communicate more frequently than in the past. Typically, children can talk with partners or in a group about an aspect of their lesson, in addition, personal and social development lessons such as circle time develop both listening and talking skills. Mostly though it is the teacher who controls classroom talk. As I moved about the school it occurred to me that there is something unnatural about a class of children waiting their turn to speak, hands raised or thumbs up, eagerly trying to catch the teacher's attention. Typically throughout a school day there would be only be a few opportunities for children to speak as they choose. What they actually speak about is also an issue. Mostly discussions will be focussed, quite naturally, on curricular areas. When they are in the school playground or in the dinner school they can experience the wonder of communication without restrictions, but when the bell sounds, it is time to conform to school expectations.

The extract above raises a number of issues that require to be considered in the context of the relationship between teachers and pupils. The extract focuses on the imbalance in communication between the two groups and shows that the teacher dominates the nature and timing of dialogue in class. In the 'Structure and Control' chapter I considered normalisation and, again here, raise Sarason's (1971) questioning of norms in school and the regimes of language use and voice, in particular, who speaks to whom and when. Robinson and Taylor recognise that communication as dialogue is fraught with complexities but are clear that consultation and participation are to be regarded as '... the two key terms of student voice' (2007:8). It is important to note that regardless of words such as communication, consultation, debate, dialogue or even deeper reciprocity

(Fielding, 2006), the relationship in dialogue is crucial. Rudduck (2006) acknowledges a danger that some communication may be perpetuating hierarchies when pupils only contribute when authorized to do so by teachers. Conversely, another aspect of this hierarchy between teachers and children is the right of the child to remain silent. Shor and Freire refer to this right as one of three fundamental rights within the dialogical process

... to feel pressurised to speak even when (the participants) have nothing to add creates a false democracy, a fake moment of discussion. It is a sign of critical thinking and decision-making (I chose not to say anything at this time) (Shor and Freire, 1987:102).

Whilst recognising the complexities of communication and the hierarchy that often exists, it is important to highlight a specific group of children who are perhaps most disadvantaged in any process. At the heart of effective democracy there is a necessity to include those normally excluded.

Developing democracy in primary schools requires including the voice of difference and not just exclusively those endowed with the necessary attributes to engage effectively. Fraser describes this as: 'The inclusion of subaltern counterpublics' which she argues is necessary if we are to '... prevent the prevalence of the more powerful voices over others which are less so' (1992:123). The multiple voices that would require to be listened to include as many children as possible, regardless of the capacity to speak and gender, ethnicity, disability, behaviour and socio-economic background. The practice of excluding any children from effective communication reinforces the accusations of tokenism and what Robinson and Taylor (2007) describe as institutional exploitation of student involvement. My own experience would lead me to suggest that the children who enjoy participation and voice are mostly the ones who are articulate and able. These tend to be those children who already possess what Bourdieu (1977) refers to as 'cultural capital'. Bourdieu (1977) states that each social class possesses its own cultural framework or habitus. He further claims that language plays an important role in the reproduction of habitus and that different social classes draw on their own linguistic codes. He believes that children with a similar linguistic code to that transmitted by the school are most likely to achieve, to be listened to and to be involved in pupil voice work. Bernstein (1971) holds similar beliefs about the significance of language. He argues that children from lower social classes are disadvantaged as

'... their orientation to language and narrative is not privileged by the pedagogic communication of the school' (Robinson and Taylor, 2007:11). Similarly, Bernstein refers to the sequencing of rules of a visible pedagogy which he describes as the explicit expectation of the child. He cites the example of the stratification of reading and what a child should be able to read at a specific age, however, if the children '... cannot meet the requirement of the rules ... then these children, often of the lower working class, are constrained' (Bernstein, 2003:204-205). Accordingly, the language used by pupils can affect the relationship between staff and pupils and the expectation placed on pupils by staff. This in turn impacts on the level and ways in which pupils participate in the life of the school.

There are numerous examples of language being a barrier to pupil expectation of achievement. For example, I would be confident that I could successfully identify those children who are involved in the various committees and areas of responsibility in most schools in an area of challenging socio-economic conditions. A visit to each class will invariably see those children who possess the correct cultural capital selected for duties to the exclusion of the most vulnerable. There is a danger that failure to engage and include children who do not enjoy cultural capital in dialogue, communication and more positive relationships has the potential to inhibit their chances of empowerment throughout their time in school and beyond in later life. Robinson and Taylor refer to the subtle and durable power relationships in schools and suggest the need to:

Recognise that power inhabits all processes of social communication and that different social groups have differential access to, and in some cases privileged access to, forms of communicative and institutional power not equally available to all (Robinson and Taylor, 2007:12).

Too often it is children from challenging socio-economic areas that suffer in the sort of relationship power struggles referred to by Robinson and Taylor. The journal extract below shows that children can engage effectively in dialogue and that cultural frameworks and cultural capital can result in children benefiting when the education context changes to one that is, perhaps, unconventional in relation to the existing context of many schools.

Today I was struck by the reaction of many of our children to a visitor to our school. The person, who came to teach a lesson, spoke in a strong local dialect, not normally a feature of adult communication in my

school. Certainly no adult would use the occasional slang and colloquial language which this visitor used. As he began to engage children, who normally sat rather passively during lessons, I sat mesmerized by the reaction of the children. At the outset they displayed little enthusiasm for the content of his lesson. Yet, soon a combination of the manner in how he interacted with them, his appearance, casual shirt and denim jeans, and his language became a source of great interest for the children. Those children who would normally have little interaction with other adults in the school seemed to engage enthusiastically with this adult. Initially I wasn't sure why these normally reluctant children were engaging, perhaps it was because they just instantly realised he was different; certainly he wasn't the typical figure of authority that they were used to teaching them. Here was someone who spoke their language and dressed unlike the other adults who would normally teach them. Another factor that encouraged the children was that he appeared to allow the children some degree of autonomy with respect to what they wanted to study and learn. The children were more interactive and mobile than a typical lesson. Part of his lesson was outdoors and I noticed that the children moved freely between different groupings and in a wider area than would normally be permitted by a teacher. Actually, as I watched his interactions it occurred to me that some teachers in my school would most certainly have been critical of this man because of his manner, language and apparent lack of control. Without doubt he did not fit into the traditional expectation of a teacher. Perhaps that is why the children enjoyed and engaged so much? For me it was so refreshing to hear this man speak and act so differently from normal school practice. Although visitors to school are often treated more enthusiastically by the children, this encounter was different. He still insisted on clear rules for engagement and highlighted to the children his expectations of appropriate talking and listening skills. It wasn't a free for all and the children didn't treat it as such.

When I reflect on the extract above I am struck by how different and effective the relationship between the visitor and children was from what I normally experience in school. As I observed the interaction between the two I was puzzled as to why the dialogue and interactions seemed very different from normal practice in school. The extract signifies that the visitor appeared not to be viewed as an authority figure by the children. Although he set clear guidelines to the children at the outset of the lesson, throughout he spoke to the children in a respectful pleasant way and managed to create an informal communicative atmosphere. The extract forces me to consider the ways in which the informal effective atmosphere in this scenario, and similar encounters with other visitors to school, contrasts with many normal primary school interactions. I believe that the visitor demonstrated a level of trust, respect and interest not normally afforded to children in primary schools. I highlight this because, despite being impressed by this experience, my final

reflection on the extract would be my own reluctance to allow children the freedom to move around and investigate in ways as free and as uninhibited as offered by the visitor. There are mitigating circumstances for teachers; the fear of moving outside of the prescriptive curriculum, the spectre of the time consuming audit and accountability or worries over behaviour or even the stark reality of our risk adverse society.

The positive experience and outcomes of the visit encourage me to think about the possibility of adopting changes in relationships leading to more genuine democratic processes. Perhaps not surprisingly Davis warns that a democratic agenda is a tough option for schools, requiring:

A continuous political process whereby the operations of decision-making are transparent and open to challenge; whereby rules and laws are consensually drawn up and members agree to abide by those contractual rules...and the human rights of all participants are upheld (Davis, 1999:39).

For this process to occur, relationships in schools require to be more equitable than at present. Similarly, the journal extract below would seem to indicate that prospects for alternative practice and reassessment of existing roles and relationships or even an openness to challenge existing practice are not, yet, features in my school.

One of the most difficult tasks I face is to reflect how far I should expect democracy to go in school. When does it stop? Is it inevitable that there must be compromises? Who decides when it has gone too far? These questions are not just theoretical but have a significant bearing on my practice on a daily basis. At times I feel I could easily dismiss democracy as a bad idea. On days like today I spend considerable time worrying about how I keep a balance between all the factions in my school who all seem to want to gravitate towards some form of hierarchical system. Over the last couple of weeks I have been involved in some disputes in the school that have led me to question where the boundaries of democracy should be placed. Recently a group of children were presenting to the whole school assembly, as part of their presentation they became slightly critical of a visiting teacher they had worked with. I immediately stopped them and advised them later about appropriate behaviour. Although they accepted that it was unfair to criticise someone who wasn't present, they did voice a concern that generally there weren't any processes in the school for them to be critical or to voice any type of grievance about staff. Having considered this I later raised the prospect of some sort of forum or similar, to discuss such possible grievances, at a staff

meeting. The teachers were appalled at this prospect. They were adamant that this was a step too far. Essentially their view was that they were affronted that any pupils should be in anyway critical of a member of staff, or that we should provide the platform for such criticisms. Personally I thought the children should have a means to be critical of teachers.

The journal extract above raises a number of issues that have previously been considered; the difficulties many teachers may cite with respect to developing democracy in schools, for instance, that it could lead to children being too critical and the reality of a hierarchical system. The extract also details the outrage amongst teachers that children should be afforded any platform, public or private, in which they might be critical of staff. This is consistent with how some in the teaching profession regard the value and place of children and themselves. This short journal extract demonstrates a great deal about the type of relationship that exists between some teachers and children. The reaction of the teachers from the journal extract is typical of the attitude and practices that lead to a strain in relationships between teachers and pupils. As I have already noted, Freire (1974) considered the teacher-student relationship in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, proposing instead a pedagogy that challenged the notion that teachers have the 'correct' knowledge.

Effective and more equitable relationships between teacher and pupil are crucial if there are to be advances in developing children's democracy in primary schools. Another consideration, from the extract above, is the impact on teachers' approaches to democracy with respect to social and psychological factors. In time CfE may change the dynamics of relationships and perhaps, ultimately, how the profession view children. However, I referred previously, in the 'Structure and Control' chapter, to the way teachers currently use structures to control children as they see appropriate. This controlling nature of the relationship between adults and children, emphasised in some recent journal entries and passages, is also evident in research highlighted by Evans (2005) which shows that when communicating with children teachers almost exclusively refer to concrete norms that are often regarded as school conventions. Abstract norms such as honesty, honour, effort, respect and responsibility were rarely part of classroom discourse. This creates a situation where school normativity becomes authority at a time when politicians, according to Evans, highlight the role of schools in:

... fostering public morality and social values such as respect, justice and democracy, the traditional pedagogy and organisation of schools round behaviours such as staying seated, still and attention to teachers could be powerful obstacles (Evans, 2005:64).

When considering the research of Evans we need to acknowledge that some in the profession may believe that often children are not fully equipped to cope with all of the challenges that engagement with democracy presents. Other teachers may argue that democracy is not necessary or indeed appropriate for the effective running of a classroom or school. I have highlighted previously the view held by some teachers that democracy is at best peripheral and that education has at its core teaching and learning with a focus on increasing attainment and achievement. Others may see dangers of developing democracy in a school environment if at home children may not experience the same culture of democratic advancement, thus leading to potential conflicts between school and parents. Some may worry that increasing children's expectations of democratic options merely raises expectations that may not be sustainable throughout the rest of their life time. There could also be concerns that democracy will result in the most articulate and vocal children dominating decision making and dialogue at the expense of those children less confident and vocal. The extract raises the possibility that there is a concern over limiting democracy once established and that its advancement may impact on teachers' perceptions of their ability to teach effectively.

I conclude this chapter by returning to an earlier point about the role of teachers in the democratic process. Rudduck and Flutter note there is an opportunity for the profession to: 'Restore to centre stage the key professional relationship of teacher, pupils and learning' (2004:145). It is clear from my own experience, however, that this aspiration will not be easily realised. Jerome (2001) describes such engagement with pupils as daunting and not for the faint-hearted. It is, though, surely a worthwhile aspiration if it is appropriate to expect a democratic school to be, as Dewey describes it, '... as a miniature community, an embryonic society' (1962:18). This task would be made easier if the profession was more inclined to communicate and engage in dialogue and listen to our pupils more often. In the chapter that follows I detail aspects of an alternative approach in which

relationships play a crucial part in creating what appears to be an effective school environment.

Summerhill: An Alternative Model?

In this chapter I focus on the potential to develop democracy by learning from a school called Summerhill in which relationships, mentality, structures, attitudes and communications between adults and children are such that democracy appears to be a natural and effective feature of school life. I compare this model of schooling against what I believe to be the restrictive expectations of government for democracy in primary schools and look, in particular, at current conceptions of citizenship education. In many respects the use of citizenship education by policy makers exemplifies many of the challenges facing advocates in favour of increasing democracy for children. Although it is important to emphasise that this policy area is not specifically about improving democracy, it is the policy area closest to democracy containing aspects of increased participation, responsibility and increased social awareness that could, conceivably, facilitate the development of democracy. For Deuchar, the education for citizenship agenda in Britain has brought about a new expectation for schools to ‘... involve pupils in making choices about the issues that they would like to discuss’ (Deuchar, 2008:20). That view bodes well for democracy and links it closely to citizenship as a potential vehicle for its development in our schools.

An additional reason for my focus on citizenship comes from a concern that attempts to develop democracy by policy makers have been more inclined towards issues of manipulation, control and reproducing existing inequalities that maintain the status quo rather than seek to transform education moving by developing children’s voices. The education system thirty years ago was described by Stenhouse as a means of reducing pupils to ‘... standard deviations’ (1979:46). How much has changed, if anything, today? A focus throughout this dissertation has been the plight of our most vulnerable children. I conclude this chapter by focussing on the need to develop democracy for these children in society and highlight some of the challenges they face in Scotland today.

Policy makers in recent years have used citizenship education as a vehicle for developing greater social, moral and community based values in the primary

school curriculum. Government through its National Priorities (Scottish Executive, 2000) and the Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Executive, 2004a) features citizenship prominently. Specifically, in Scotland, the responsibility for the development of citizenship in education falls to Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS). This situation is mirrored in England through the National Curriculum which advocates aspect of civic engagement, social and moral responsibility and encourages pupils to 'make themselves effective in public life through engaging in decision-making at local, national and international levels' (Kerr, 1999:275-284). In addition, the values of '... truth, honesty, justice, trust and a sense of duty' are encouraged by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) (DfEE, 1999:10). Aspirations of policy makers for citizenship throughout the United Kingdom were typified through deliberation of the 1998 Report of the Government's Advisory Group, Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools (known as the Crick Report) which stated the following

We unanimously advise the Secretary of State that citizenship and the teaching of democracy... is so important both for schools and the life of the nation... Unless we become a nation of engaged citizens our democracy is not secure (Crick, 1998:7-8).

The report goes on to highlight the benefits of democracy and citizenship education yet, crucially, when it refers to empowering children, it is to enable them to participate in '... the state... in society... and in future outside of school' (Crick, 1998:9). It is, in part, this adoption of citizenship education as empowering children for the future as opposed to the present that results in criticisms from some quarters. Experience would indicate that, since Crick, little has changed with respect to government's philosophy on citizenship education. More recently, Ofsted researched the impact of citizenship education in schools and found, 'In most schools visited, pupils made a strong contribution to the school community' (2010:41). There does appear to be, throughout the United Kingdom, an emphasis placed on community and environmental aspects of citizenship. Further comment from Ofsted suggests that the strength of the citizenship programmes they observed was such that '... pupils achievement in citizenship included their understanding of rights and responsibilities, the environment and sustainability' (2010:40). Citizenship education in the United Kingdom appears to place some emphasis on participation but concepts such as diversity and democracy are not as explicitly addressed. Kiwan claims there must be a sense of belonging or

identification before people will participate and unless policy focuses on people's diversity of identities '... the dominant model of participatory citizenship will not achieve an inclusive empowerment for all' (Kiwari, 2007:224). It is the lack of genuine participation and notions such as lack of diversity that appear to be the Achilles heel of citizenship education, leading to further criticism that policy makers have manipulated its use to their own narrow ends Apple's (2008) 'sliding signifier', occurring when particular words have no essential meaning and, like a glass, can be filled with multiple things, has some relevance here. The language used in citizenship policy has clear expectations of encouraging attributes in children such as becoming, knowledgeable citizens; bringing about social change, making informed decisions, thinking and acting creatively and being enterprising in their approach to solving problems. Criticism from a different perspective is seen through unease over bias and authenticity. O'Neill in her 2002 Reith lecture stated that: 'I might trust the schoolteacher to teach my child arithmetic but not citizenship' (2002:9). Despite these reservations the citizenship agenda brings a sense of optimism for the future development of democracy in primary school education. The journal extract below substantiates this indicating that citizenship is having an influence and that, in some respects, there are benefits to be gained from its continued implementation in the curriculum.

Today I received an email from our local Member for Parliament (MP) who had recently visited our school to participate in a question and answer session... At the time I was impressed with how able our children were at articulating their views to the MP. Certainly a feature of my work in recent years has been organising visits from local and national elected representatives to speak to children in school and some of our children seem reasonably confident when speaking to them. Although admittedly it is the more able and articulate who will typically interact and ask the questions. Another aspect of the citizenship programme is the significant experience our pupils have of organising events for other members of our community, especially social events for senior citizens. In addition, environmental awareness and other enterprise initiatives such as creating and maintaining local gardens, arts initiatives for community events and in particular extensive work on anti-sectarian projects combine to provide greater sense of citizenship for our pupils. Despite these successes in citizenship and my initial belief that it may evolve into wider democratic opportunities, I have been thinking recently that I am not in any way certain about how democracy in a wider sense will develop through citizenship. Although it is important to recognise the active and more participative nature of citizenship type learning it is necessary to question how this change in practice can realistically expect to facilitate

genuine advances in democratic opportunities. I fear that the recent changes in policy such as CfE, Citizenship and Enterprise education and Determined To Succeed (DTS) are nothing more than peripheral with respect to what I would describe as genuine democracy. Essentially I don't believe that policy makers view developing democracy as an important aspect of education and therefore are unlikely to make the changes that would facilitate significant democratic practice for children in primary school education

Reflection on the journal extract above presents a mixed picture of some positive social and community building achievements for pupils against a deeper scepticism, over possible futures with respect to democracy. The journal extract also alludes to the fact that often it is those children commonly referred as the more able who engage with and benefit most from citizenship and enterprise initiatives. Our most vulnerable children are often peripheral to policy initiatives such as citizenship. The extract reinforces the citizenship programme's worth and raises the possibility that increased involvement with elected representatives, together with and as part of good citizenship, could lead to advances towards more democratic participation in schools. The journal extract also highlights initiatives such as Determined To Succeed (2002, hereafter DTS) in Scotland, which places an emphasis on both economic development and social renewal. Young people are '... encouraged to have the self-confidence and belief in their ability to succeed in whatever they choose' (Scottish Executive, 2003:3). Davis (2002) links the DTS enterprise education of the 21st century with citizenship suggesting that, its broader perspective implies a willingness and ability to be innovative in many different ways and that '... contexts within a democratic framework may relate very positively to valuable forms of citizenship' (Davis, 2002:124). Despite the positive aspect of citizenship as described by Davis its potential to develop democracy is, however, questionable.

When contemplating the potential to develop democracy in school through citizenship education it is important to recognise the political elements influencing the citizenship agenda in education. Citizenship education, according to Ahier et al. has previously suffered '... decades of neglect or half-hearted commitment' (2003:164). Ahier et al. suggest that government are now using citizenship as a convenient way of '... adding social gloss to an education system which was being reshaped structurally in ways that reinforce individualistic instrumentalism' (2003:164-165). Rudduck and Flutter express a more cynical and damning

assessment of how government use citizenship education, namely in an attempt to stem apathy among young people ‘... in the hope that a way can be found of re-igniting their interest in matters of governance’ (2004:122). Deuchar states that citizenship education has emerged from

A wider political backdrop where New Labour has opted to create a ‘third way’ ...Blair was keen to project an image of communitarianism, with equal emphasis on individualistic and collective principles (Deuchar, 2008:21).

What has transpired is an eclectic term: ‘enterprising citizenship’. Claire claims this approach is centred upon pupil empowerment, where they learn how they can ‘... participate, influence and develop a clear vision for a *better world*’ (2001:106). It is clear that this values-based participation begins with children articulating their own values in relation to issues that affect their lives (Rudduck and Flutter 2004, Holden, 2006). What is developed in children is social and ethical awareness over issues such as the environment, poverty, injustice, global issues, together with values about behaviour and attitudes such as respect for other people’s humanity and increased tolerance. This is all well and good but there is, all too often, a lack of attention to participation in citizenship education. Crucially, for values-based participation towards social activism to be effective, it requires active involvement in social issues. Claire claims ‘doing citizenship’ involves pupils being actively involved in issues so they feel they can make a difference through participation and ‘... debate and decision-making and a follow-through with action’ (Claire, 2001:108).

What is currently missing from the citizenship agenda is the emphasis on children being afforded the opportunity for genuine access to participation in decision making. The journal extract below reiterates that whilst successful in its own right there are few examples of the experiences that children enjoy from the citizenship agenda which include practising democratic processes.

Today I received a phone call from a member of the public to congratulate one of our classes who had helped out at a senior citizens social event. The primary seven pupils served food and drinks and generally looked after the group at a social event. When I think about the involvement of our pupils in this type of experience and learning, I do feel a sense of achievement that their education is not just as narrowly focused as might be expected in this performativity climate. I do ponder whether this type of learning and experience is significant

enough to anticipate further developments - for instance, towards both increased social awareness and even to influence with regards to increasing their enthusiasm for democracy. While thinking about this it occurred to me that perhaps there isn't a specific path towards a more genuine democratic environment in schools and that a number of developments and shifts in current practice in education may be necessary to eventually facilitate significant awareness for children to enable the development of democracy. For instance, the emergence of CfE may also create a sense of potential change although I also worry that there is too much emphasis placed on CfE providing solutions to the many problems that currently exist in primary education.

The extract above invites further consideration of the potential for the emerging CfE to become a vehicle that will facilitate changes in relationships between teachers and pupils and, perhaps, create an opening for increased democracy and I will deal with this issue in more detail in the 'Towards a Conclusion' chapter. For the moment, further contemplation of the journal extract above raises possibilities that children's engagement in the citizenship agenda could at some stage be the catalyst that triggers curiosity and an appetite for more democratic engagement. However, to date there is little concrete evidence that policy makers regard these initiatives as avenues for developing democratic practice in primary schools. With respect to citizenship, Fielding (2006) claims that not only has it failed to challenge fundamental injustices but that furthermore the performativity climate has co-opted the student voice into management agendas. This raises a suspicion that essentially the policy initiatives of recent years, such as citizenship education, are predominately designed to further policy direction with respect to attainment and the political agenda rather than to increasing democracy.

What is necessary is to question the aspirations of policy makers for citizenship. Robinson and Taylor advise that: 'There is currently an urgent need for a theoretical consideration of student voice work' (2007:7). They cite two reasons for this, firstly, to combat what Rudduck (2006) sees as the danger that young people may be consulted, not for any sense of active membership or personal and social development, but in order to raise standards. Secondly, such consideration is required in order to facilitate a better understanding of the values that informs student voice work. There is further scepticism over the potential of citizenship to deliver genuine participative democracy for children in Apple's (2008) reference to the need to be very cautious of accepting what may seem to be meritorious intentions of policy makers at face value. Apple further states that progressive

educators have employed what in cultural theory is called ‘... the act of repositioning’ (2008:244). Essentially this involves viewing the impact of any set of institutions, policies and practices from the view of those who have least power. If we think about the impact of increasing democracy for children in education it is likely that those who already have appropriate cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977 and see the Relationship chapter here) are most likely to be heard and to benefit. The journal extract below highlights some of the frustrations that are evident when those children who are in most need appear to be excluded from the impact of policies around citizenship.

I have recently been reflecting on one of the recurring fundamental questions for me with respect to improving the experiences and democratic opportunities for children in my school. I often doubt whether schools can realistically impact on children’s democracy for our most vulnerable children. Essentially the basis for this view is the belief that I question whether policy makers genuinely want to develop democracy for children in schools. At times I view this question favourably and think we can make positive changes to existing practices. Mostly, and on days like today, I feel I am being manipulated by policy makers and by my local authority. Are citizenship education and enterprise measures such as Determined to Succeed and CfE anything other than tokenism? Who actually benefits from these initiatives? My experience is that those children who actually require support and development to help break the cycles of inequality are least likely to benefit from such policies. I reflected on this fact today after I had completed an annual return for my local authority on Enterprise and Citizenship education. Each school completes the online return detailing information of their involvement with Enterprise and Citizenship activities. I successfully negotiated my way through the various sections without much feeling of achievement and no feeling of pride. I wondered what the purpose of this exercise was for my pupils. Admittedly our school will receive an invitation to a ceremony at the city chambers for citizenship achievements. There will be media coverage with a presentation at which two pupils will represent each school in the city who have participated in an enterprise or citizenship initiative and a fulsome lunch will finish off the celebration. I question if this is a celebration of democracy and equality or just a manipulation of the curriculum by policy makers? Does this represent or even demonstrate democracy in any way or will the vast majority of our pupils remain either ambivalent, unaware, excluded or feeling alienated from such processes? I reflect that I do not want to be too sceptical about CfE. But I am worried that it won’t be radical enough and that all the barriers to democracy that I have highlighted previously will remain, regardless of the new curriculum.

The extract above questions whether policies and curriculum initiatives on citizenship are having any significant impact on improving democratic opportunities for children. Further reflection on the journal extract raises the possibility that the fanfare of policy initiatives can be misleading and that policy can be distorted to imply progress in specific areas when in fact closer inspection would confirm that impact is less obvious or widespread. The extract is further evidence of Apple's 'sliding signifier' and, indeed Apple (2008) cautions that the word democracy is one of the best examples of a 'sliding signifier'. As highlighted in the 'Policy chapter' this manipulation of democracy is exemplified by Apple when describing '... recent neo-liberal attempts to redefine democracy as simply consumer choice' (2008:245). Smith et al. (2004) analysed numerous educational reforms and discovered that time and again the democratic language used by policy makers to promote a reform was often at odds with the functioning of these reforms which often exacerbated problems of inequality. When policy makers refer to democracy we need, therefore, to analyse their interpretation of its meaning. The journal extract above highlighting the celebration of children's achievement through the Enterprise and Citizenship awards is perhaps an example of policy makers directing schools towards their own interpretation of democracy. The most alarming aspect of the journal is the suspicion that this policy initiative is doing little more than achieving and maintaining existing preset agendas as opposed to forging new directions.

Research carried out in Scotland regarding pupil participation in decision making, by Ross et al. found that schools supported: 'Pre-existing objectives rather than being understood as having alternative, emancipatory, or any inherent goals' (2007:238). In addition, Ross et al. recognised this propensity for the more formal mechanisms in schools such as, pupil councils, to improve curriculum, school environment and facilities as opposed to '... any idea of the development of political literacy and of asking questions about the legitimacy of the systems in the first place' (2007:248). It is evidence of the prescriptive and limiting nature of school initiatives and my experience of the passive nature of the citizenship agenda that leads me to seek alternative practice that may result in more democratic schools.

Having considered the positioning, control and direction that policy makers exert with respect to citizenship it is worthwhile comparing some of the philosophies and practices of A. S. Neill's Summerhill (Croall, 1983) against the citizenship education agenda previously described. It is not my intention to suggest that Summerhill's approach offers an alternative to citizenship education. It could, however, be viewed as an alternative approach to or model of education that could facilitate citizenship principles in children and have positive implications for developing democracy.

My interest in Summerhill dates back to a number of years before I entered teaching. It was reading about the controversial school in a book by Croall (1983) that, in part, influenced my eventual change of career and my move into education. I was attracted to and fascinated by what I considered the maverick and rebellious attitude of A. S. Neill and I marvelled at the freedoms enjoyed by the children at Summerhill. Years later, when I entered the teaching profession, it was Neill's Summerhill and in particular its positive view of children and a determination to give children power over their own lives so they could develop more naturally and to grow emotionally within a more appropriate and happier environment that inspired me. I have always considered Summerhill to be an appropriate educational environment for children. It is, nevertheless, important to appreciate that the school has been subject to considerable criticisms. Since its foundation in 1921, Rampton (2008) claims it has been relentlessly attacked by traditionalists who believe '...it represents the worst kind of hippy-dippy, touchy-feely bunkum'. Much of the criticism, initially at least, was centred on Neill himself. Barrow (1978) claimed Neill's philosophies were too reliant on his own experiences and observations of individual children and that '...a marked feature of Neill's style is his willingness to extrapolate from isolated and individual cases some universal principle' (186). Further criticism of Neill comes from Darling (1994) who is doubtful over a basic tenet of Summerhill, namely, that one's ability to love our children depends on whether we love ourselves and that this, in turn, depends on how we were brought up as children and he questions how, if true, this cycle is ever broken. Direct criticism of Summerhill has often come from the media with articles about the school carrying headlines such as, in 'The Telegraph' in 2008, 'The school where lessons are optional' (Rampton, 2008). The media have often been scathing in their attacks on Summerhill and would no doubt cite

the numerous school inspections by OfSTED as evidence of the school's failure to educate appropriately. Summerhill has, almost since its inception, been subjected to critical official inspections, perhaps most notably when OfSTED (1999) raised a number of concerns including '...the school allows the pupils to mistake the pursuit of idleness for the exercise of personal liberty' (11). Furthermore, the chief inspector, Grenyer, was concerned for pupils at the school, claiming in his final report '... their education is fragmented, disjointed and likely to adversely affect their future options' (60). The OfSTED report referred to here confirmed what many believed to be fundamental flaws in the school's philosophy and, more generally, others considered Summerhill as a place of naivety with unrealistic idealism, or even downright moral indifference. Importantly, in 2007, the latest OfSTED report is less critical than previous ones, viewing the quality of the curriculum at Summerhill as satisfactory, teaching as good and the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils as outstanding. Perhaps this report (OfSTED,2007) comforts those who view Summerhill as a shining beacon for children's democracy.

One of the key features of Summerhill is its emphasis on emotions and A.S. Neill viewed citizenship in an emotional context noting that 'I started a school in which the emotions would be primary' (1971:118). He also suggested that

By neglecting emotional development...the teachers should see that they are neglecting what should be their chief work – the development of the whole personality, head and heart (Neill, 1939:138-139).

Summerhill is, of course, interesting for more than its approach to citizenship with its practices revealing an approach towards democracy that is distinct from that usually found in mainstream education. Neill was an outspoken critic of an educational system that he considered fundamentally flawed because, in his view, it could be seen as a process of separating winners and losers. The school he created, Summerhill, is a predominately residential fee paying school describing itself as '... the oldest child democracy in the world' (Stronach and Piper, 2008:6). The easiest way to assess Summerhill is to consider what makes it different. Stronach and Piper claim it to be democratic while other schools are generally autocratic: 'There is an egalitarian relationship between adults and children' (2008:10). One of the successes of Summerhill is the emphasis placed on building

relationships. Further successes can also be apportioned through its ability and willingness to self-regulate. Stronach and Piper highlight how ‘... the school has weak boundaries where conventional schools have strong ones’ (2008:17). However, the weak boundaries of Summerhill actually allow for negotiation rather than prohibition or permission, although Stronach and Piper stress that Summerhill is not completely equal and that there ‘... are distinctions between adults and children’ (2008:17). Despite this, Stronach and Piper (2008) emphasize its democratic procedures are more effective than any conceivable transparency of procedures. The panopticon of Summerhill makes everyone visible to each other ‘... whereas accountability offers only the bureaucratic deception of a world made transparent by indicators (Stronach and Piper, 2008:29). Further analysis of Summerhill’s success is its willingness to establish and maintain positive relationships. I immediately recognise how its practices differ from other schools: Summerhill would appear to be more flexible and rely less on orthodox boundaries and regulation. Not surprisingly, Neill had a clear vision for the purpose of education which he put into practice in Summerhill.

I want to teach my bairns how to live; the Popular Education wants to teach them how to make a living. There is a distinction between the two ideas (Neill, 1917:46).

The philosophy at Summerhill is quite different from that described by Frowe when he cautions that often the present climate in education can be profoundly dehumanizing and mechanising: there is little time for genuine open conversations ‘... through which children may have opportunities to develop their understanding and learning’ (Frowe, 2001:96). This situation is at odds with Summerhill’s openness and what Stronach and Piper refer to as the concept of relational touch wherein Summerhillians learned to relate to themselves, ‘... to others and to intuit boundaries. All of these things were an education of the emotions’ (Stronach and Piper, 2008:28).

Another aspect of Summerhill that differs from mainstream school is ‘The Meeting’, described by Stronach and Piper as the core of the school. They continue, everything goes to ‘The Meeting’ and is spoken about and sorted and students and staff, on a one person one vote basis, decide how to run their school (2008:7). One of the significant features of Summerhill is its description as an almost perfect

panopticon and 'The Meeting' contributes to this. Stronach and Piper claim 'The Meeting' also

...scrutinizes breaches of the culture, and legislates for and against transgressors. All adults and children are equally entitled to participate in discussion, criticism, and voting. The Meeting has the power to make law, and indeed to abolish any or all laws (Stronach and Piper, 2008:13-14).

The journal extract below would indicate that a meeting such as those that take place in Summerhill where all issues are discussed at length and resolved, mostly to everyone's satisfaction, is still some way from being accepted in current structures of most schools.

I have agreed with staff, children and parents a new range of activities for Golden Time on Fridays. Previously Golden Time resulted in children participating in various activities in their own class. The new arrangements involved children choosing an activity, for a six week block, from a list of options. Not only does this allow children some choice of activity but in addition they can decide which teacher they work with. When I initially suggested this idea to the staff a significant number of them intimated that children should not be given the option of activities. Many of the staff thought it unnecessary for children to be given a choice of activities far less which teacher they could work with. When I thought about this later it concerned me that something as trivial as this would raise such objections from staff. My aspiration of a school where issues can be discussed in an open manner by everyone, including children and where there are democratic processes to resolve differences seems light years away. I believe changing Golden time may be the pinnacle of our possible achievement at the moment.

Reflection on the journal extract above allows me to think about my experience and compare it with those in Summerhill. Further reflection highlights the different mentality and practices in mainstream education compared with structures and attitudes seemingly prominent at Summerhill. One of the reasons for Summerhill's success is the role communication has in maintaining democracy through, for instance, facilitating debate and voting on rules. This principle of democracy is reinforced by Trafford when he suggests that empowered children '... tend to speak out rather than becoming alienated. They will readily condemn bullying, racism or other unkind behaviour' (1997:90). Another feature that distinguishes progressive schools, such as Summerhill, from many conventional mainstream schools, is their willingness to treat children more respectfully, not necessarily as equals in the school processes but as near as possible to make little difference to

the children. Noddings perhaps captures my own opinion, highlighted earlier in this chapter, when claiming that she was not in support of everything associated with Summerhill whilst stressing that one significant feature of the school worthy of support is that '... happiness ought to be an aim of education' (2003:4).

Happiness seems to be a feature of the Summerhill experience and further reflection of the journal entry above reinforces another success of Summerhill, and at the same time a significant flaw in many other schools. Stronach and Piper (2008) cite the ability 'Summerhillians' have of putting themselves in other minds and more importantly putting others minds in themselves, reinforcing this notion through the distinction between a liberal expression of difference (they are just like us) with a more radical insight (we are just like them) as expressed by Nadine Gordimer (1958). Importantly, too, Osler and Starkey (2005a) urge those interested in democratic development to re-examine the insubstantial nature of progress in contrast with the practices that characterise Summerhill. Greater awareness of others' needs is something that could help create a more equitable and democratic environment, to the benefit of our most vulnerable children in particular.

I have used the practices of Summerhill to indicate that schools can be more democratic and because I doubt whether current policy, or future policy, will cater adequately for the democratic needs of children. I now turn my focus to those children living in challenging environments. Their disadvantages are such that there are numerous hurdles for them to overcome and prospects of developing democracy may appear trivial by comparison. Typical of the issues that blight their lives, and often a feature of many schools in areas with challenging socio-economic conditions, is behaviour. I will consider some of the difficulties associated with behaviour in the following chapter.

Behaviour

In this chapter I focus on policy and practice with regard to behaviour in primary education. I look at 'Better Behaviour Better Learning' (Scottish Executive, 2001) guidance and policy with respect to inclusion. Whilst I do not deal in any significant depth with the merits or otherwise of inclusion, or the most appropriate strategy for dealing with behaviour, I will highlight some of the consequences of recent policy in Scotland in this respect and note how they pertain to democracy. Throughout the chapter I explore the link between behaviour, inclusion and democracy by considering, in particular, some inconsistencies in policy on behaviour within an inclusion agenda. In particular, I focus on the impact that behaviour and policy have on the profession including attention to some of the complexities of working with other agencies. I conclude the chapter by considering the typical environment of schools in my city and the difficulties this presents for behaviour and for developing democracy.

When considering democratic experiences of children it is important to acknowledge that challenging behaviour or the behaviour of children experiencing social, emotional or behaviour difficulties (SEBD) is often seen to need attention before learning can take place. Head (2007) cites 'Better Behaviour Better Learning' (Scottish Executive, 2001) as evidence that there has been a predominance of policy guidance in recent years which substantiates the view that '... a range of programmes has been used to support pupils, principally through strategies aimed at behaviour modification' (94). An alternative to the deficit approach to dealing with challenging behaviour is advocated by Head (2007) in 'Better Learning – Better Behaviour' where he suggests that SEBD should be categorised as a learning difficulty and, furthermore, that the rights of children suffering from SEBD should be considered as co-terminus with, rather than in competition with, the rights of other learners. For those such as Head, the tendency to focus on children's behaviour as though it and the children are the problem, rather than firstly considering learning as a priority, is a fundamental weakness and a discriminatory practice. The treatment of children with SEBD and discussions around challenging behaviour in schools has relevance with respect to democratic experiences for all children in school. Similarly, the reaction of parents

and teachers to some of the issues that arise as a consequence of school policy relating to behaviour has implications for democracy across the school. Journal extracts in this chapter will indicate that there can be a conflict related to inclusion when consideration is given to the needs and rights of other children in a class or school setting over and above or against the particular needs and rights of individual children with challenging behaviour. This connection between democracy and individual rights can be seen in Porter's (2000) complex matrix of relationships involving pupils, teachers, schools and parents that can result in disruption when '... students' emotional or relationship needs are not being met' (11). Head (2007) suggests that greater awareness of difficulties, as described by Porter, should be referred to as a democratic approach to behaviour. Better Behaviour Better Learning, (Scottish Executive, 2001) places behaviour firmly within the context of social justice and the rights agenda when referring to equal worth, entitlement to respect and no place for discrimination.

Schools must ensure equality of opportunity and access to education for all young people with particular regard being paid to those learners with disabilities and special needs.
(Scottish Executive, 2001:8).

I will, throughout this chapter, acknowledge that whilst such views are laudable, the potential to develop such democratic practices in schools in which pupils exhibit challenging behaviour is particularly difficult. Experience shows that the development of democracy is affected when there is difficult behaviour in school because a consequence for the school environment, especially in areas with challenging socio-economic conditions. A point of emphasis in this chapter is that control of behaviour is time consuming; it is stressful and affects the morale and confidence of teachers. Westling researched the effects on the teaching profession of challenging behaviour reporting that teachers thought of themselves as ineffective and lacking support and they '... continue to struggle with many of their students who exhibit challenging behaviour' (2010:62). This is despite the attention given to behaviour in recent years from policy makers.

'Better Behaviour Better Learning' (Scottish Executive, 2001) is an essential element of most schools' behaviour policy. Using the Scottish Executive's National Priorities (2000) as a benchmark, its emphasis is on making a positive response to behaviour. The document highlights the complex nature of indiscipline and

concludes that ‘... there is no single overall solution which can solve all problems’ (2001:7). Furthermore, it reinforces the need to include all stakeholders in the decision making process. The report recognises the difficulty of balancing the need for young people to enjoy education ‘... free from distraction and disturbance’ and for the need to support young people who ‘... for understandable reasons, feel alienated and whose behaviour can often disrupt’ (2001:1). This balance, linking behaviour policy with inclusion policy, creates tensions in primary schools and I will deal in greater depth with these shortly. Suffice to say, presently, that on the one hand we are reminded that denial to education results in the potential failure to gain qualifications which ‘... reinforces disadvantage in our society’ (2001:8) and, on the other hand, that ultimately schools are faced with a choice. The, Inclusive Education Reference Group of Learning and Teaching Scotland, is clear.

If pupils’ behaviour is so bad that other children’s education is disrupted or even prevented, there is no question about it, those pupils should be excluded (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2006:27).

Inconsistencies within policy mean that despite what seems to be unequivocal advice to exclude if ‘behaviour is so bad’ there is a feeling in the profession that there are mixed messages from policy makers. Many teachers feel that they are expected, at all costs, to include with respect to behaviour in particular.

It is important to note that the main emphasis on promoting positive behaviour within inclusion has in part grown out of the wider international “rights of the child” agenda, in particular through The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and Human Rights Act (1998) which connects the European Convention of Human Rights within the Scottish framework. Despite the presence of a wider international policy interest, there is a feeling amongst some in the profession that sometimes the rhetoric from government is inconsistent with the message that comes from local authority hierarchy, especially with regard to issues of suspension. It is also pertinent to acknowledge that behaviour provokes considerable debate in education and in schools. Typical of behaviour policy is the view expressed by the Inclusive Education Reference Group, within Learning and Teaching Scotland, who state: ‘School is a place for everyone – not just the best behaved, or members of acceptable groups’ (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2006:16). This view represents a shift from previous practice and from its

presumption that the child should fit into the school, the “integration” approach, to the current expectation of “inclusion”, where the school adjusts for the child.

In Scotland, behaviour and inclusion policy measures such as ‘Restorative Practices in Three Scottish councils’ (Scottish Executive, 2007) is consistent with measures designed to impact on behaviour practice in schools. The Scottish Executive’s summary report on restorative practice refers to it offering ‘A powerful approach to promoting harmonious relationships in school and to successful resolution of conflict and harm’ (2007:2). Other aspects of policy that reinforce the inclusion agenda are contained in the principles of ‘National Priorities’ outlined in section 4 of The Standard in Scotland’s Schools Act (2000)(Scottish Executive, 2000) which highlight inclusion and equality as an integral element of policy. In addition, The Standard in Scotland’s Schools Act (2000) has a clear expectation of inclusion when it refers to ‘... the right of every child to an education’ (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2006:7). In Scotland this policy direction has partly been shaped, reinforced and influenced by the following: Count Us In: (Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Education) (HMIE, 2002) and The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (Scottish Executive, 2004). The focus for policy is towards support for the individual child. There is, for example, a national programme, ‘It is Everyone’s Responsibility to Ensure that I am Alright’, and ‘Getting it Right for every Child’ (Scottish Executive, 2007a). What has transpired in primary education is an appreciation of the expectation that through legislation such as, The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, it is the duty of local education authorities to support every child through the recognition of the need to remove barriers to educational inclusion and the need to challenge traditional attitudes and understandings that some children don’t fit. Crucially with respect to behaviour, Section 15 of the Standards in Scotland’s Schools Act 2000 introduced a presumption of mainstreaming stating that ‘... all children and young people will be educated in a mainstream school, unless there are certain exceptional circumstances’ (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2006:7).

There has been an impact on schools as a result of the inclusion agenda; there are children now attending mainstream schools who previously would have been educated in special schools. A report by Pirrie, Head and Brna (2006) between 1998 and 2001 shows that there appeared to have been a modest increase in the

'... number and percentage of pupils with SEN in mainstream primary and secondary schools in Scotland' (Head and Pirrie, 2007:91). They continue that one of the changes enshrined in the, Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004) is the adoption of the term additional support needs which is considerably wider in scope than its predecessor. This change in nomenclature signals a general recognition amongst policy makers that '... *all* children or young people may have additional support needs at some stage in their school career' (Head and Pirrie, 2007:91). The adoption in schools of practice to facilitate additional support needs has resulted in a more suitable framework in mainstream education for teachers to deal more effectively with pupils' additional support needs.

This shift presents challenges with McLeskey and Waldron stating that inclusion requires substantive change '... that influences every aspect of a school and challenges traditional attitudes, beliefs and understanding' (2000:17). Typical of the change referred to by McLeskey and Waldron is Restorative Practice (Scottish Executive, 2007), just one of a plethora of guidance measures that underpin the promoting of positive behaviour through 'Better Behaviour – Better Learning' (Scottish Executive, 2001). Even a cursory look at this one measure in some way highlights the complexity and magnitude of managing behaviour in the inclusion agenda. The main principle of Restorative Practice involves consultation with children about their behaviour. Restorative Practice looks to produce positive closure on disputes and is premised on reflection from those involved to determine the impact of a specific incident. At the time of its launch, Restorative Practice was defined as an attempt to restore good relationships when there had been conflict or harm, in an effort to '... develop school ethos, policies and procedures to reduce the possibility of such conflict and harm arising' (Scottish Executive, 2007:2).

The use by, the then, Scottish Executive (Scottish Government from May 2007) of Restorative Practice is recognition of some of the serious behaviour difficulties facing schools. There are, however, criticisms of this initiative, not least that, in practice, it is time consuming and the emotional commitment given to implementing behaviour measures such as Restorative Practice can often drain teachers of energy. This reduces the likelihood of them being able to devote time to implementing measures such as developing democracy. In some ways

Restorative Practice exemplifies the inconsistencies between policy makers' perceptions of life and the reality for children and teachers working in areas where socio-economic conditions are difficult. It is not always obvious to children from such environments, even when they are committing violent acts, that they are to blame. Many of the children at my school have a strong sense of injustice and this manifests in them often blaming everyone but themselves for any incident. Crucially, for Restorative Practice to be effective it requires children to have a sense of responsibility for their actions. Experience of using Restorative Practice would indicate that the complexities of children's emotions, attitudes and realities are such that they find it difficult to engage with its principles. Government encourage schools to adopt positive restorative type approaches in an inclusive environment but this appears to be inconsistent with some policy movements outside of school. For instance, successive antisocial behaviour legislation throughout the United Kingdom in past years has looked to disperse groups from certain areas at specific times. In addition to issuing Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), the Scotland Act 2004 introduced further measures for antisocial behaviour such as electronic tagging of children. The clear focus of this type of legislation is according to Tisdall:

... about the child's behaviour and not the child's welfare therefore it seeks to stop and prevent behaviour and not to provide support and service (Tisdall, 2006:105).

Schools, then, appear to be expected at all costs to include children and manage or even alter their behaviour whilst in society at large there is an expectation that certain behaviour will not be tolerated.

There are genuine criticisms over Scotland's approach to managing behaviour, with suggestions that there needs to be an evaluation of what works and what does not work. Buie reports that Katherine Weare, described as one of England's foremost experts in pupil behaviour, told a behaviour conference that Scotland may be employing too many discipline strategies to be effective and that '... its approach might be too eclectic and not sufficiently integrated' (2008:TESS). There is a danger that the accumulative effect of the successive legislation has altered perceptions and attitudes regarding how behaviour should be dealt with in primary schools. My experience is that there are now numerous examples of positive behaviour for teachers to embrace and schools to

implement but that behaviour management is not an easy road to journey. Despite the plethora of recent legislation and the best efforts of the profession to embrace multi-agency working, positive behaviour and inclusion, in reality behaviour is probably the single most energy sapping, morale busting and time consuming issue for staff in many urban primary schools. The journal extract below emphasises the manner in which inclusion has presented the teaching profession with examples of behaviour that conceivably would have previously resulted in exclusion.

Today one of our pupils was very abusive to a number of staff. This child refused to remain in class and decided instead to walk about the school. He swore constantly and acted in an aggressive manner. Often his language was of a sexual nature. It was clear that many in the school felt threatened or at least uncomfortable by this child's behaviour. Later a number of staff expressed concern that they had been subjected to rude sexual gestures. Staff have been advised to follow a policy of ignoring such behaviour and to use only positive language when speaking to children behaving in this manner and consequently no disciplinary action of any type was taken against this child. I am aware that staff are particularly displeased that this child's actions went unpunished. The 'ignoring strategy' is not popular with staff, children or parents.

Reflection on the extract above would indicate that staff, at times, have some difficulty endorsing aspects of promoting positive behaviour. The incident above is not uncommon and such incidents typically cause great stress for many people at school. I have been subjected to physical and verbal abuse and these attacks do leave you feeling vulnerable and upset. Previously these incidents would have resulted in some punitive measure against the perpetrator. When I reflect on the many journal entries I have completed, they underline the real difficulties faced, on a daily basis, in the teaching profession in many schools. Aggressive behaviour through verbal abuse, fighting, bullying, general disobedience and disorder is commonplace. The inclusion policy and associated behaviour management advice have had some dramatic implications for the profession. Consider the challenges of working in a primary school where personal threats are common, personal attacks are a regular occurrence and where children leave class without permission and sometimes even leave the school grounds. In addition there can be vicious verbal abuse between pupils, verbal abuse of staff, and other acts of violence. A single violent incident can be upsetting, time consuming and disruptive

to the running of the school. When these incidents occur many times daily over many weeks and months they start to have a dramatic and deteriorating effect on everyone in the school. The journal extract below highlights anxiety amongst staff over the effect that emphasis on promoting positive behaviour is having on general discipline in schools.

I have been considering today the reaction of staff following an announcement that the local authority highlighted reduced exclusion figures at my school. No one actually challenged the validity of the statement. They didn't need to speak because the pictures on their faces spoke volumes. Practically everyone present during this meeting had been verbally abused and even physically attacked during this school session. Almost weekly, assembly time had been interrupted as some children took it upon themselves to be disruptive through inappropriate behaviour, such as playing on the piano or by running onto the stage shouting abuse randomly at teachers and other staff. I have witnessed and spoken to teaching staff seemingly close to breakdown as a consequence of these incidents. I have regularly walked into classrooms at the end of a day to find teachers in tears because of aggressive behaviour and as a result of how they had been spoken to by some of our pupils. Very few of these children were punished and no-one was suspended. The worry for teachers is that they are increasingly feeling vulnerable and isolated. This is a genuine worry in the profession that behaviour is at times outwith their control. I have attended management meetings where the school have been congratulated because it has submitted a good return to the local authority which showed zero suspensions of children. At what cost I asked?

Contemplation of the above extract only begins to describe the problem the profession face controlling behaviour whilst trying to uphold the inclusion agenda. The journal extract highlights what can best be described as a fear in the profession of challenging pronouncements from either the local authority or even school management. The extract reinforces the point made in the 'Policy chapter' that often the environment in schools is not conducive to open discussion. In addition the extract highlights some scepticism over claims by policy makers that behaviour is being controlled. There is clear expectation and pressure from the local authority for schools to pursue an inclusion policy with a minimum amount of exclusions. Munro highlights criticism recently when Maureen Watt, the Schools Minister, said that 'The significant drop in exclusions is a clear indication that the range of approaches and provision available in and beyond school is working' (2009:TESS). In the same article, Jim Doherty, acting general secretary of the

Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association, suggested that the drop in exclusions could be as a result of pressure on schools by local authorities to drive the exclusion numbers down. The most significant aspect from the journal extract above relates to the potentially serious impact that behaviour is having on the teaching profession. I allude to the fact that I have felt it necessary to spend substantial time and energy reassuring staff that they are still good practitioners following a total loss of confidence over behaviour. Announcing a drop in exclusion figures to the media is in some respects a disingenuous action as it betrays the problems faced by schools in achieving such returns in the first place.

Behaviour is a serious problem for many schools in Scotland. In a report regarding behaviour issues in the United States of America the situation in Scotland was highlighted by Little (2000) who reported that ten teachers were attacked every day in Scotland. Henderson suggests that teachers '... should be encouraged to redefine what they find acceptable and unacceptable' and that rising violence against teachers is contributing to '... increased frustration and lowered morale among teachers and disturbing levels of stress' (2003:TESS). A survey carried out in 2009 by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) in England and Wales, confirms that there '... primary school teachers are suffering from stress, a lack of confidence and even physical harm because of disruptive pupils' (Frankel, 2010). Westling referring to research carried out in the United States of America claims

A variety of reports have indicated that teachers feel that they have not been sufficiently prepared to deal with challenging behavior, that they perceive themselves to be ineffective, that they often lack support, and that their students' behavior often leads to increased stress (Westling, 2010:48).

These examples from other countries are consistent with the problems that colleagues have raised with me in my practice. The journal extract highlights what for many people would surely be an unacceptable level of disruption at assembly and on a daily basis in other learning environments. Many staff are confused about how they should deal with behaviour in the inclusion environment. They feel vulnerable about physical attack and they worry that school management and local authority do not support them enough. The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) have cautioned that much was still to be done to improve safety in Scotland's schools (TESS, 2008). This unease over behaviour was reiterated in dramatic fashion when, at a teaching union conference in 2008, there were fears raised that

there could be another Dunblane, in reference to events of March 1996 when 16 pupils and a teacher were killed in Dunblane primary school (Hepburn, 2008). There does appear to have been growing challenges in education over behaviour and violence as highlighted by Debarbieux who cautions that: 'Throughout the world there has been growing anxiety in recent years about the increasing level of violence and disorder in school' (2001:127).

The recent journal extract highlights the significance that policy makers place on positive behaviour and a consequence for education has been increased involvement with multi-agencies. The emphasis by government on multi-agency collaboration in education is evident from policy literature that focuses on the need to co-operate, integrate, work jointly, consult and share. The Scottish Executive's (2004b) 'Closing the Opportunity Gap' document placed considerable emphasis on collaborative multi-agency partnership in education. Connelly (2008) notes that the Scottish Executive identified seven key elements in amongst which the theme of multi-agency working is clearly evident.

Integrated Children's Services Plans, Quality Improvement Framework for Integrated Services For Children and Young People, Integrated Assessment and Information Sharing, Joint Inspection of Children's Services, Workforce development, Consolidated funding streams for children's services and Implementation of Getting It Right For Every Child (Scottish Executive, 2005) (Connelly, 2008:6).

The seven elements referred to above demonstrate the commitment by government to implement partnership between agencies and there are many benefits from such arrangements but there can, at times, be tensions. One difficulty is the expectation for schools to adjust to the demands of the many voices of stakeholders and partners in education. In some respects it could be argued that this engagement with 'many voices' is evidence of democratic process. However, the pressures on schools to implement partnerships with agencies is another strain on an already hectic timetable and the time devoted to agencies for behaviour issues further reduces the likelihood of the profession finding even more time or energy to consider developing or implement democracy for children. The following journal extract is indicative of some of the practical frustrations of dealing with behaviour and in particular the time consuming consequence of multi-agency involvement.

I am becoming wary of the number of meetings I attend about behaviour. I think they can be very time consuming and they do not always produce any significant progress. Only last week a parent protested when I informed them that I had to convene a meeting to discuss their child's behaviour progress. The parent made it clear to me that they found such meetings unhelpful and that they would rather not attend. Typically this parent would do anything to help this child. I recently arranged a meeting for one of our other children about behaviour and there were ten professionals who attended. I wouldn't like to calculate the hours allocated to that particular meeting. Later as I reflect on the outcome of the meeting I struggled to remember anything positive or indeed useful that came from it. I could cite the different roles and responsibilities of stakeholders as an obvious tension. Often Social Work Services place demands on me regarding specific children. Social Work may have a preference for children to remain at school because of turmoil at home. Their prime concern is to protect a specific child. However, if that child's behaviour is too disruptive, I am faced with a predicament. Social services will pressurise me to ensure the child remains safe in school, while parents of other children will complain about unacceptable behaviour and demand that the child be withdrawn. This scenario is not uncommon and highlights the conflicting interests and motivations of stakeholders. In addition the various stakeholders do not always seem to fully appreciate each others' responsibilities and the demands upon them.

There are a number of issues that require to be considered when reflecting on the extract above. For instance, it may be necessary to question the effectiveness of meetings involving multi-agencies. What improvements occur as a consequence of such meetings? The journal extract also forces me to reflect on the significant support that is offered to schools such as mine from other agencies to deal with behaviour. These include support from social workers, psychological services, support from teachers based at schools who work with children suffering from emotional behavioural difficulties and teachers offering expertise in special educational needs. Regularly we will have multi-agency meetings to discuss specific children and typically I would be in contact with these professionals on a daily basis. This emphasis on multi-agency working was reinforced when the Scottish National Party (SNP) were elected in May 2007 with a pre-election manifesto promise that there would be a focus on integrated services for children and families. What Connelly refers to as a move towards a coherent strategy is emphasised through the current government's expectation that '... creating more joined-up services will ensure that children's needs are at the centre of policy and provision' (2008:1).

The journal extract above indicates that although this support is welcomed and encouraged, what is best for one child may not be beneficial to others and this raises the possibility that there can, at times, be conflicts of interest between stakeholders. The priorities that, for example, social services may have for the well-being of a specific child have to be judged against the well-being of other children in school who may be subjected to physical and or verbal assaults from that child. There is also a demand on time as a result of increased multi-agency collaboration. In a recent study of the effectiveness of Scotland's educational authorities, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE, 2009) commented on multi-agency partnership in education and cautioned that: 'In particular, joint working needs to be developed in a way which reduces rather than increases bureaucracy' (2009:1). Despite criticisms of multi-agency workings, the support they provide is often necessary because of the difficulties faced by many schools in areas that suffer from challenging socio-economic conditions.

I concluded the previous chapter by taking into account the vulnerability of many of our children who live and go to school in areas that present challenging socio-economic conditions. Horgan's study examining the impact of poverty on the experiences of primary children found 'How most children experience school is determined by the level of disadvantage they face' (2007:1) and that the experiences of children from poorer backgrounds '... were narrower and less rich' (2007:1). Scottish Government figures on exclusion show the following

Deprivation plays an important factor in the likelihood of exclusion. Rates of exclusions per 1,000 pupils are almost 8 times greater for pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas compared with pupils living in the 20% least deprived (Scottish Government, 2010:4).

The list of incidents is significant and the issues are complex: extremely difficult family circumstances, the prominence of aggressive behaviour in local environments, parents critical of school's values, children with low self-esteem and an inability or unwillingness to conform to any set boundaries. The journal extract below highlights just some of the many factors that combine to present huge problems when dealing with demanding behaviour.

First thing this morning I received phone calls from a number of concerned parents because of some incident that occurred in the local housing estate the previous night. Officially I do not have responsibility for such matters. In reality it is important that I speak to parents and demonstrate an interest and at least some understanding of the consequences of trouble in the local community. Invariably these incidents escalate with others being drawn into the conflict and it inevitably reaches the school gate and playground by morning. I can put my hand up and say, "nothing to do with me", but regardless of what course of action I adopt, such conflicts will regularly affect the environment in class. I must admit that my heart sank when the incident from last night was relayed to me. I am convinced that it is probably impossible for me to detach myself from involvement in the incidents that take place outside of school time. At times some of our children this term have suffered because of police activity including early raids on their houses. Inevitably these incidents are so traumatic for our pupils that we spend time comforting children worried about the repercussions from these events. The reality of the busy curriculum is that teachers do not often have significant amounts of time to care or nurture these children effectively.

The extract above highlights the difficulty that many schools experience as a consequence of incidents that occur outside school time. It raises the issue of parameters of responsibility. This is true not just for behaviour but also with respect to the responsibilities primary schools have, especially in areas with challenging socio-economic conditions, with regard to tending to the immediate needs and wellbeing of these children. Further reflection on the journal extract points to the desperate environments which seem to deprive so many of our children of basic needs such as love, affection, healthy lifestyles and social interaction. Their well-being is at risk. The extract also highlights the role of teachers, regardless of tensions or hierarchical relationships, for it is with teachers that children most often share their problems and worries. Burke and Grosvenor caution that often the street and home can be dangerous places for children and that: 'School was regarded by many as a kind of life boat' (2003: p.107). Certainly for such a group of children school is regarded as a place where they are content, comfortable and cared for. Easley highlights a basic social and emotional need of deprived children who often '... come to school hungry and just weren't interested in what's going on' (2005:166). In recent years there has been an increased expectation from policy makers of the need to nurture children in many urban primary schools (Scottish Executive, 2005). This involves a small number of schools receiving resources and training to establish a nurture class for a group of up to eight children. These children invariably have emotional and behavioural

difficulties and benefit from the peaceful and caring structure of the nurture class. The nurturing of children would appear to meet the demands for schools to become what Kennedy (1999) refers to as the “social anchor” of stability. This nurturing practice has obvious implications for behaviour with Easley highlighting the benefit for behaviour and learning when the classroom comes to ‘... represent a caring, safe and warm place’ (2005:166). George Ross, general secretary of the Headteachers’ Association, claimed that senior management feel they do not receive adequate support from their local authority and that ‘... lack of professional development for teachers on how best to deal with social inclusion added to the problem’ (Ross, 2003:TESS). While recognising the potential benefits of the nurture initiative, there may need to be extensive professional development before the profession feels able to be effective in this sensitive area.

Against the background of the frustrations and difficulties highlighted in the journal extract and text above, I am encouraged by Gramsci’s notion of the ‘... organic intellectual who engages in active participation in practical life’ (1971:9). Gramsci considers that the organic intellectual could function in opposition to the taken-for-granted intellectual as a distinct social category. Gramsci viewed intellectuals as having certain roles in society and considered that organic intellectuals could support those normally excluded. Elliot claims it is the ‘organic intellects’ who could ‘... represent those standing outside the dominant elite’ (2003:415). Such notions from Gramsci could be placed alongside those proposed by Easley’s reference to ‘teachers’ moral leadership’ suggesting this is desirable when ‘... detangling the tensions of those students attending historically low performing schools’ (2005:161). This fits well, too, with Sears’ description of teachers as ‘... curriculum workers who engage in the intertwining of progressive curriculum and social change’ (2004:8). It is the notion of teachers adopting such roles that provides some cause for optimism for future development of more equitable and democratic practices in primary education as does Easley’s claim that teachers naturally move towards moral leadership through ‘an intrinsic desire to make a difference in the lives of children’ (2005:166). There are, of course, tensions with respect to the political dimension of Gramsci’s expectation for those excluded and what many teachers may see as their moral role in supporting children’s development.

Further reflection on the journal extract makes me realise how often I worry about the social conditions of my pupils and how it impacts on controlling behaviour and subsequently on prospects for developing democracy in school. Not only do I despair about the lifestyles and life opportunities of many of our pupils but fundamentally I question whether the extreme examples and experiences of their environment can allow a positive behaviour policy to be effective. McGregor, the general secretary of the Headteachers' Association of Scotland, has stated that:

Schools could only operate in the society they were surrounded by and the pressures created by a more widespread loss of discipline and the breakdown of family (Hepburn, 2007: TESS).

Similarly, Apple and Beane, follow Gutmann (1987) when they caution that '... experiences in school are too easily washed away by life outside the school (1995:11). Apple and Beane argue that the educational landscape is littered with the remains of school reforms that fail '... because of the social conditions surrounding the schools' (1995:11). The journal extract below reinforces those points. There is a reality that life outside of school does impact on behaviour inside. How can we ever expect to square this circle?

I think the reason that behaviour taxes me so much is because I consider children to be victims of their environment. I do often reflect and feel sorry for these children, they are so disadvantaged. My frustrations should be aimed at policy makers and politicians who for generations have failed these people. On another level, I feel frustrated and angry and a range of other emotions because I don't know if school can make a difference for these children. Although I always attempt to pursue actions that will result in increased democracy I am not certain that this is indeed a solution to the long term inequalities that blight communities such as my school. Who else do I blame? Where do I start when I view structures that produce children who can be so aggressive and cruel? At times I despair over the manner in which children and their parents treat each other. Schools such as mine can be very negative, aggressive and unforgiving environments at times. Life is harsh for these people and perhaps they develop an uncaring façade to protect themselves. I also at times feel helpless about my inability to influence change. It is difficult to remain positive at times like today.

Reflection on the extract above raises a number of issues that deserve consideration. The impact that children's home and local environment has on their school life cannot be over-stated. Barnes et al. are clear, for example, that: 'Children's housing situation has a profound impact on the quality of children's

childhoods and life chances' (2008:3). The journal extract above captures some of the frustrations of working in schools within social-economic challenged areas including, often, the predominance of negativity that invariably manifests through aggressive behaviour and attitudes. Teaching is an emotional profession and the seemingly constant trials and tribulations of our pupils and their families' creates significant additional tensions for the profession. Hirsch points to recent research that found

... deprived children are more likely to feel anxious about school, difficulties faced by teachers in disadvantaged schools and children complaining that they were shouted at by their teachers ... and students from different backgrounds experience different relationships with teachers and with other adults (Hirsch, 2007:1-7).

When I consider the journal extract in respect to the behaviour agenda and the expectation for schools to manage behaviour, what seems to be missing is the need to have a greater awareness of life outside the school gate. Apple and Beane reiterate '... we must recognise and engage in these conditions to make a lasting difference' (1995:11). In a similar vein, Dewey argues in *Democracy and Education* that we must have

A type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control as well as the habits of mind which secure social change (Dewey, 1916:115).

The difficulties associated with the behavioural environment that has been a feature of this chapter not only impacts on prospects to develop democracy but invite further investigation of the demands for change suggested above with reference to Dewey, Apple and Beane. This points my study towards prospects for change and I now anticipate these prospects in the final chapter.

Towards a Conclusion

Throughout my thirteen years of working in schools I have reflected on experiences through the discipline of my academic studies. From the day I embarked on my new career, I have always been immensely proud, satisfied and aware of my responsibilities as a teacher. I love teaching children and the subsequent thirteen years of studying at university results from my determination to be better informed of and to think through the significant issues in education. My focus has invariably been towards what was best for the children. When I first started teaching, and within a comparatively short period of time, I began to appreciate that there were aspects of teaching and education which disturbed me. My mantra of 'what was best for the children' demanded that I questioned the practices and procedures that caused me most anxiety. Gradually the issues that I have referred to throughout the dissertation, audit culture, increased prescription and assessment, the constantly expanding curriculum, behaviour, inclusion and deteriorating social and economic environments of our pupils have taken their toll. As I search for alternatives to current practice I am always aware of the difficulties of implementing change in the current challenging environment in primary education. Despite this, my overwhelming belief is that the experience of primary schooling for many children is unsatisfactory and that moves towards increased democracy are necessary to enhance the overall experiences and life-chances for children. There is a requirement to have a wider debate about primary education and my input is to argue for increased democracy. The journal extract below exemplifies an important point I first raised in the 'Introducing Issues' chapter, namely, that I have not stepped out of my normal existence to write this dissertation; it is a recounting of my working life in primary school.

As I reflect on the closing stages of my research I consider some of my early journal entries from two years ago. My thoughts are of apprehension. What have I missed out? Will anyone really care about increasing democracy? Have I done enough to provoke debate over the issues highlighted from within primary education? Mixed with this apprehension there is despair at the thought of the exclusion of children from decision-making processes, their control by adults, the unsatisfactory nature of their relationship with teachers and the danger that this treatment sets a precedent for the rest of their life. Experiences in this dissertation have reaffirmed previous concerns over

suspensions that some leaders in primary education have little time for democracy. I am acutely aware of the immense pressures in education to tackle other perceived more pressing issues and I fully appreciate that teachers are overburdened with numerous pressures. I commenced and now complete this dissertation feeling that something isn't right in primary education. This I believe is the case for the majority of children in the schools in which I have taught but it is especially true for our most vulnerable children who will almost certainly suffer from the same cycle of hopelessness that seems to befall people like them. I feel passionate about making a difference for these children and every day of my practice I am regularly reminded of their struggles. I feel as I did at the outset that increasing democracy in school is one possibility for a brighter future for these children and for that reason alone worthy of every second I have spent researching ways of progressing towards such a goal.

When I reflect on the extract above there is, perhaps, a sudden but rapidly growing sense that what I have experienced with respect to increasing democracy should now move forward. Reflection creates and requires new questions. It may be that I am now more confident of the need for change of some description that could move us towards a school environment that will facilitate increased democracy and improved experiences for children. Possibly the most pressing need from the journal extract is to reflect on my recent experiences and to assess some of the broader issues that may be influential in developing or, probably more accurately, in resisting democracy for children in the future.

As I contemplate the future I am faced with the uncertainty of being torn between two contrasting views over the future development of children's democracy. One pessimistic, namely, a doubt over genuine democracy being implemented in the near future in schools. The other, optimistic as expressed by Apple and Beane when they claim we should never doubt that '... a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has' (Apple and Beane, 1995:77). It is, on balance, the optimistic stance taken by Apple and Beane that stirs me into believing that it is possible to effect change, regardless of the opposition to that change. This optimism remains despite fears and any reservations in the profession as highlighted in Waiton's (2001) "Scared of the Kids? Waiton's book detailed deep misgivings in the teaching profession over changes to existing hierarchies and potential changes in relationships between teachers and children. There is a strong personal conviction that teachers have nothing to fear from increased democracy; its introduction could produce

substantial benefits for both teachers and pupils. Better relationships and learning, less teacher stress and increased pupil enthusiasm were some of the substantial benefits confirmed through research, on increasing democracy for children in school, by Fielding (2001a); Flutter and Rudduck (2004); MacBeth and Moos (2004) and Macintyre and Pedder (2005).

As I reflect on and critique the dissertation here I structure this final chapter following three main themes. Firstly I reflect on the experiences and issues that have been highlighted in the previous chapters and refer to the barriers to increasing democratic opportunities for children that I have highlighted throughout. As a consequence of these barriers I assess the likelihood of further engagement in the profession of the issues that I have raised in this dissertation. Other barriers from my experiences include ineffective practices in leadership, restrictive structures in school that are not conducive to change and a control of dominant knowledge. Secondly, having reflected on my experiences I assess my engagement with autoethnography methodology and include here a closer look at the limitations, flaws and attributes of such writing. I reflect on the expectations of academia and how these have impacted on my writings, for instance, considering the use of evocative writing. I consider the challenges of researching the familiar, of using crystallisation and of opening up the research process to others. I question how I might change my journals and reflections were I to re-start the process tomorrow and also consider some implications for my future research and practice. The third and concluding section of this chapter contemplates the introduction of measures that could increase the potential for developing democracy in primary education. Here, first, I focus on CfE, the new curriculum in Scotland, questioning the likelihood of it delivering a more democratic and positive experience for our most vulnerable children. My second focus, is on the necessity for changes in leadership models and here I assess the prospects of current leadership in schools and promote models that are more distributive and democratic. These will typically be models of leadership where there is an emphasis or even a necessity for ‘... shredding status’ (Trafford, 2003:64) and a need to know how to ‘... listen and talk with each other constructively’ (Court, 2003:165). My final focus for the future is on the need to consider engagement with critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970) as a means of addressing existing inequalities and lack of democratic opportunities. An

important aspect of this study is for it to have impacted on my practice and I therefore conclude with a consideration of this.

In this first section, on barriers to learning, when reflecting on the journals extracts included and the remaining, inevitably far larger journal entries, I am struck by the uncertainty and the tone of my writings and how often I have referred to 'barriers to democracy'. The first of what I have referred to as a barrier to democracy is the feeling that I initially highlighted in the introduction to the dissertation that 'something wasn't right in education'. There are many branches that lead from this concern; however its roots are in the nature of the environment that shapes children's lives. Why does a child's environment have such an impact on their life prospects? Research by Hirsch found that:

Educational achievement is strongly influenced by the attitudes of children towards learning...children from less advantaged backgrounds felt less in control (Hirsch, 2007:5).

That research also claimed that these children felt that schools did not provide them with the space to build co-operative relationships with teachers and other adults. One of the most significant counter arguments for those who would dismiss increasing democracy as irrelevant, is the damning reality that one's future prospects are inextricably linked to which area of the country you are born into. Research shows that 16 out of the 20 most deprived areas of Scotland are in Glasgow and that these same areas have the lowest educational achievement (Maitles, 2003). This does not bode well for or signal an equitable society or education system. For children living in challenging environments, democracy is more difficult to implement. The reason for this relates to living, learning and teaching in areas of challenging socio-economic conditions. Often these children possess the 'wrong' cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977) and their standing and relationship with teachers may be, as a consequence, reduced, and with it their ability to access decision making processes in school. The behaviour that is often associated with children from these environments also affects the time that teachers can devote to developing democracy. Not least because the personal, social and educational challenges facing the children can place issues such as democracy on the periphery.

Another of the barriers to increasing democracy in schools is the fear that not enough of my fellow professionals are sufficiently moved by the issues I have raised. Who else will add their voice either for the need to increase democracy for children or to highlight the challenges faced by the teaching profession? In the 'Introducing Issues' chapter I stated that I believed my position in education afforded me a privileged insight into teaching. One of my concerns as I began and as I end this study is that I question the likelihood of others in teaching recording the difficulties and issues that I have outlined here. Perhaps there are understandable reasons for the professions' reluctance to be open about their views and perceptions of everyday life in schools. Too often teachers are fearful about challenging management for fear of a backlash; many teachers are on supply and temporary contracts of employment, probation or with an aspiration to advance their careers into management. Similarly it is difficult for those in management to step out of line and question, as I have, flaws with the curriculum, ineffective relationships, disruptive behaviour, ineffective policy and leadership or lack of democracy for children. Managing a school creates great pressures and enormous workload and mostly those in leadership have their priorities and energy focussed on and taken up almost entirely by issues relating to increasing school effectiveness. Novice teachers reading this study may be able to reflect on and better understand aspects of their practice. Sharing my experiences and challenges will hopefully contribute to their awareness of some of the complexities of school life and at the same time enhance their professional development.

Another barrier to democracy is the type of restrictive environment that appears to prevail in many schools. The journal extract below emphasises this significant barrier, in particular with respect to any form of challenge to authority, and it exemplifies why dissertations with a focus such as mine may be rare.

In my experience it is not unusual for there to be times when there is considerable disquiet over aspects of a headteacher's leadership. At such times staff in various schools I have worked have complained to me about a particular difficulty. I in turn have relayed these issues but mostly any misgivings have been dismissed as irrelevant by various head teachers. These experiences have caused me to reflect on just how difficult it is to question those in authority. I have always been aware that often teachers, in their own space of the classroom and staff room, will complain vehemently about the leadership in school, demands of the curriculum or the latest time consuming initiative from

the local authority. They rarely, if ever, channel demands for a need for alternative practice into official meetings. I have on a regular basis witnessed staff in tears because of the manner in which they were spoken to by someone in a position of leadership but resistance to authority in schools is mostly non-existent. I am aware from my own experiences that despite working closely with those in leadership roles who I disagreed with or considered to be pursuing inappropriate practices, I have been limited in effecting any change. I have obviously throughout my time in leadership challenged and made suggestions and highlighted alternatives. But in any confrontation it is those with most authority who will invariably emerge with their views and practices unaltered. In many schools the power structures are clearly defined and it is wise to know ones place. Children, parents, support staff and teachers are reminded of this hierarchy on a regular basis.

Reflection on the extract above, combined with a consideration of previous chapters, the rest of my journal and personal experience, accentuates the magnitude of the barriers to implementing democracy with existing school structures and practices in place. What the extract appears to indicate is the strength of the barrier to developing democracy in schools through the failure of staff, for various reasons, to challenge those in authority. A further concern is that even if staff have been upset or offended by head teachers they invariably fail to challenge their authority. My own experience would substantiate that the journal extract is, unfortunately, representative of many schools in that it reflects the reality that many in positions of leadership in schools do not welcome open discussion of any sort. What often transpires is a culture in schools where teachers feel intimidated about questioning practices and procedures even when they are impacting on their ability to teach effectively. Research by Somech on participation of teachers in school decision making process cautions that its effectiveness is dependent on relationships in school and that often teachers can feel a strain. Teachers' participation depends on:

... the characteristics of the teacher, the quality of the headteacher-teacher relationship, the characteristics of the school (bureaucratic/organic), and the characteristics of its environment (individualism/collectivism) (Somech, 2010:179)

The repressive nature of any environment seems incompatible with the expectation that teachers should facilitate children in pursuing an agenda toward increased democracy when they themselves find this process stressful or difficult.

One aspect of the restrictive environment in schools is the danger that schools are engaged in the practice of cultivating a perception of a dominant knowledge. This is seen when Apple refers to how schools narrow the range of school-sponsored knowledge to what we might call ‘... official or high-status knowledge that is produced or endorsed by the dominant culture’ (Apple and Beane, 1995:13). This clearly has serious implications for aspirations of developing democracy. Schools can actually silence the voices of those, such as children, who are outside the dominant culture. For Apple and Beane the most disturbing fact is that too many schools have taught this ‘... official, high-status knowledge as though it was truth arisen from some immutable, infallible source’ (1995:13). Apple describes a wider example of the control of dominant knowledge through what he regards as a radical reshaping of common sense of society. It has worked in every sphere, ‘... to alter the basic categories we use to evaluate our institutions and our public and private lives’ (2009:89). Apple and Beane (2007) refer to this as conservative modernization, which emphasises common culture as opposed to an environment that embraces diversity. The question for Apple is whose knowledge is this? ‘How did it become official? Who benefits from these definitions of legitimate knowledge and who suffers?’ (Apple, 2008:241). Having previously highlighted the passive nature of teachers’ resistance to change and the restrictive nature of schools structures it is necessary to question who will challenge gatekeepers of official knowledge. It is important that official knowledge is challenged because it is through accessing such dominant knowledge that doors are opened. Accordingly, Apple and Beane argue that we cannot just ignore it and, instead, our task is to ‘... reconstruct it and employ it to help, not hinder, those who are least privileged in this society’ (Apple and Beane, 1995:17). The scale of the challenge from Apple and Beane to reconstruct dominant knowledge is exemplified in the knowledge that policy makers have previously been mindful of regularly reinforcing dominant knowledge. Apple (2009) suggests that those that now dominate education and society establish relations of power in which some voices are heard and some are not: ‘Many economic, social, and educational policies when actually put in place tend to benefit those who already have advantages’ (2009:91).

The journal extract below is an example of another barrier to democracy and a stark reminder of the magnitude of the difficulties faced with respect to creating the significant changes necessary to challenge existing official authority.

I have on a number of occasions this school session witnessed examples of senior school management and high ranking officers from the local authority actively excluding children from decision making processes. I cite these examples because I believe they were shocking examples of exclusion of children from leaders in education. Although on each of these occasions I was disturbed and extremely angry, the experiences are also in a way typical of school life. Experience would confirm that children's views are ignored or dismissed on a regular basis with little apparent regard for their views or indeed their feelings. It is these experiences and countless other examples of class teachers acting in a similar fashion that lead me to question whether children will ever enjoy anything remotely close to democracy in primary education. Although CfE, may challenge relationships in the existing structure, it remains to be seen if it will have any influence on the entrenched attitudes that can prevail against children.

Reflection on the above extract raises a number of issues that require further consideration. The extract contains three specific issues all of which are vital elements for future prospects of developing democracy; leadership, CfE and existing policy and I will detail each in more depth shortly. The journal extract is also in some respects symptomatic of other barriers to democracy, in particular the manner in which children are often treated by adults in school. I cite the example of the influence that those in authority wield through their control. Freire (1970) has recognised that power is used to exclude minority participation but it may be the majority, children, who are most often excluded in schools. Larson and Murtadha argue that even well-intentioned leaders maintain institutionalised inequality because they are committed to hierarchical logics that '... not only fail to question established norms but keep impoverished citizens out of decision making' (Larson and Murtadha, 2002:146). There is the possibility that those children excluded from more meaningful participation in school life may become increasingly disenfranchised, marginalised and develop a life long lack of trust of those in authority. Such a pattern of exclusion taking place may conceivably lead to lack of trust and a suspicion that their voice is in some way insignificant. Examples here have demonstrated such situations and effects. In the Relationship chapter, I noted the cynical and negative attitude that many primary seven children, aged eleven, have towards school management. Freire highlights an irony in that mistrust is seen, by those in power, as a deficiency characteristic associated with the most vulnerable in society.

The lack of trust poor communities' show to those who lead public institutions can be interpreted as an inherent defect in poor people, evidence of their intrinsic deficiency (Larson and Murtadha, 2002:147).

Further mistrust and exclusion is evident in Humes (2004) encapsulation of the predominant mentality in education when he highlights an incident of a primary seven pupil's contribution to an end-of-term service being banned by the school leadership. Previously the tradition at the boy's school was for primary seven pupils to give a brief speech at the final assembly to mark their time at school. In this instance, the boy's contribution contained a slight criticism of the school and therefore was thought inappropriate. Humes cautions that the story has a significance that extends beyond itself: 'It is symptomatic of the professional culture of compliance and conformity which dominates Scottish education (Humes, 2004: TESS). The incident also reinforces the idea that those in authority will ultimately decide when and what children will be allowed to say. It is further evidence of the ease in which democratic processes in primary schools can be stifled. Surely education would be better served if schools were to encourage diversity and difference in an attempt to assist pupils to explore a range of ideas to shape their voice. Apple and Beane (1995) state that schools persistently shirk this obligation in several ways. If that shirking is not to continue, then a better understanding of the barriers to democracy will provide a useful starting point from which to overcome those barriers and other obstacles that restrict the development of democracy.

Having considered some reflections and barriers to democracy it is to the autoethnographic methodology of this study that I turn my focus. One of the personal and professional beneficial aspects of my research has been the opportunity to develop further my awareness of autoethnography. I savour the intimate nature of the writing and in particular the style of Ellis and Bochner. Their style of emotional and evocative storytelling encapsulates the effectiveness of narrative writing. At times I would read passages from Ellis and Bochner and feel as though I was part of their dialogue. I thought often of the style of Ellis and Bochner as I wrote my journals and was reminded also of Janesick's (1999) reference to Wilde never travelling without his diary because he always required something sensational to read on the train. It was, however, important that my diary would not be sensational and that it would be more than just a good read; its main purpose was to increase my effectiveness as a qualitative inquirer. It is

therefore noteworthy to highlight a frustration through my inability to recreate the Ellis and Bochner style of 'evocative writing' in my journals. When I re-read my journal extracts, both those included and the many more unused, I am reminded of the individual incidents and the characters associated with the specific incidents that I have recorded. Further reflection on journal extracts and a more thorough contemplation of my dissertation makes it apparent that at times many of my journal extracts act as a catalyst that recall such powerful emotion and experiences from school. In some ways each of the chapters on 'Apathy or Resistance?', 'Structure and Control', 'Policy', 'Relationships', 'Summerhill: An Alternative Model?' and 'Behaviour' have been extremely personal. Each, to varying degrees has been a canvas of my daily practice and experiences. I have such vivid memories and strong opinions on the content. Yet, for various reasons, I feel that I have been unable to write with the emotion I would have initially thought possible or appropriate at the outset of my dissertation. I have thought about this for sometime and puzzled over what I regard as a missed opportunity to capture, for others, an emotion and depth of feeling in my journal extracts. I do, however, recognise that there has been a practical reality underpinning the style of writing I adopted. My perceptions of the expectations of academic writing were almost certainly a factor in 'toning down' my use of emotion. The necessity to reinforce the content of my journal extracts with quotes from literature also acted in some respects as a foil for any tendency towards being too descriptive and emotive. As a result of this frustration I am even more determined and excited at the prospect of being able in future to use a modified writing style to describe my experiences more intimately. I would anticipate that my writing will developed in a style that is more emotive and personal, outwith the rather structured and even prescriptive expectations of academia I perceived, rightly or wrongly, to be required by the academy.

The reflection that is a feature of the methodology allows me to appreciate that the journey of discovering autoethnography has provided many twists and turns. The methodology is challenging. It creates uncertainty for the researcher and its tendency to produce more questions than answers may be regarded, by some, as a limitation. Such features force me to provide a more detailed explanation of what was achieved through my use of the methodology as well as exploring its limitations.

As I re-read the journal extracts and experiences, I believe that through my role as narrator I have been able to engage more fully with my study and the issues it raised. I did, in the 'Introducing Issues' chapter, outline how narration within autoethnography allows one to display concerns, fears and limitations as well as hopes. Engagement with the methodology has, following Nussbaum (2001), allowed me to be moved by the plight of others. When I reflect further on my role as narrator I recognise that one of the features of autoethnography is its capacity to allow the narrator to grow throughout the period of the study. This is facilitated through dialogue with oneself, which is a necessary element of the methodology, described by Canetti (1981) as '... a dialogue with a cruel partner' (4). The use of autoethnography has enabled me to develop a clearer understanding of the main issues surrounding my study and in turn has led to increased confidence to pursue dialogue with others around these issues. As narrator, although often uncertain and experiencing what Richardson (1989) describes as the explorative, uncertain and fluid processes of the methodology, being forced to reflect and consider alternative views and practices ultimately helped increase my confidence.

An example of a limitation and difficulty that can arise as a result of uncertainty within the processes of autoethnography is seen in Coles' (1997) challenge to take the reader by the hand to where you have been. How can I know if I have done this? A difficulty for me throughout has been the necessity in making the familiarity of the school 'strange' in the many interactions that are a feature of my everyday experience. Becker argues '... it takes will and imagination to stop seeing only the things that are conventionally there to see' (1971:10). Similarly, Burgess argues that rigid adherence to methods and processes become '... like confinement in a cage' (1984:143), restricting one's ability to slip through the bars and to find out what is really going on. It is this ability to see things differently and more closely that I will continue to endeavour to master. The awareness and use of crystallisation has, for Ellis and Ellingson the potential to be invaluable in any attempt by qualitative researchers to discover a '... radical way of knowing' (2000:30). The attraction of engaging with crystallisation is that it encourages the researcher to interpret meaning through various genres and lenses. Richardson (2000) used the initial framework of crystallisation as means of seeing the bigger picture and not being prescriptive or restricted in our understanding of the world. Just as I anticipate that my writing will develop as I journey through further

research, so too do I require my use of the lenses of crystallisation to become more effective. Cugno and Thomas, however, warn that its use is complex and requires considerable practice because ultimately, researchers are left to ‘... develop a pathway to crystallization, as there is no formalized design that exists’ (2009:113). Typical of my pathway was the relationship between my personal writings and the demands of the academy. My journals and extracts describe my reality and of an environment where I am confident and comfortable and which I know well. The theory that I have used in this dissertation represents, in some respects, the opposite of my school experience but, also, in some ways it provided me with ‘academic’ confirmation of my experiences. I have used both the extracts and theory together and the challenge here has been to marry the different genres of the cathartic informal journal extracts with the more formal studious theory.

Further reflection on my methodology forces me to consider why I felt it appropriate to use autoethnography to focus specifically on my own experiences of school rather than researching the experience of others. Once I had decided on autoethnography, it was not appropriate to use others’ words, from conversations or meetings for example, in this dissertation. Doubts over the duration of my headship post and the prospect that I may have had to move to a different school during the period of the study, created an air of uncertainty. This, in addition to my keenness to tell the story from my perspective, also led to the decision not to apply for ethical permission to include others. Throughout my study I was often privy to discussions from colleagues and others that provided me with invaluable insights. What became evident was the willingness of people to share their opinions and experiences freely. It is this exclusion, from this dissertation, of this fascinating material that creates a temptation to include as many voices as possible in my future writing. For ethical reasons it would not have been appropriate to include many of the insights shared with me for the risk of identifying colleagues. Despite the availability of the information from others this study is of my experience and it was important that it remained so.

With the benefit of hindsight I may be persuaded in future to think about the use of dialogue to enhance the effectiveness of my writing. I believe that dialogue could encourage a more intimate and dynamic style of writing. The use of others is consistent with a long held intention of mine to be more participative in my writings

and I subscribe to the view that it is incumbent upon the researcher to open the possibility for their interpretation to be challenged. Perhaps what is required for this to occur is a similar mentality, as described in the, 'Introducing Issues' chapter and Nussbaum's reference to '... an openness to being moved by the plight of others' (1990:162). This willingness to be challenged and open is also evidenced in the work of some feminists who have gone as far as making the interpretative process one of shared control in an effort to breakdown hierarchical relationships (Chase, 1996). Berger refers to the need to be '... as open and honest with participants and to include your own stories to increase rapport with participants' (2001:505). Further evidence of the breaking down of such barriers in relationships is the move to joint productions between researchers and participants (Ellis and Bochner, 1996: Coffey, 1999). The most fascinating development of this scenario comes from Matsumoto's (1996) work in which she involved participants in her research design and she shifted observation from being a method to a context for interaction and research collaboration (Angrosino and Mays de Perez, 2000:676). Increased collaboration, however, can present extensive difficulties. It was necessary for me to write a singled authored dissertation for this EdD. This study is specifically about my experiences but even if I was to have somehow included others the degree to which one opens up is also a delicate process and Angrosino and Mays de Perez note that: 'There may also be a risk of the researcher being too open and disturbing the relationship with a participant' (2000:679). The alternative view in feminist methodologies is of too much reflexivity. Patai (1994) refers to an obsession with self-reflexivity, while Aker (1994) is concerned that 'bonding' with subjects somehow compromises the researcher's efforts to undertake adequately critical research. These factors were considered throughout this study and did undoubtedly have implications for this dissertation and for future studies as I question my ability to be critical, honest and open about the actions of people with whom I have a professional and personal relationship. Would I compromise my writing or integrity? Would I be honest enough to be critical in such circumstances where individuals could be identified? Ultimately, I believe it is important that I remain as open as possible because it is this tugging of emotions that attracts me to autoethnography. In reality, the evolving and flexible nature of the methodology allows researchers to grow and develop through each experience and therefore it is difficult to predict with any certainty how autoethnography will, in the future, shape me as a researcher or as

a practitioner. Ultimately I believe that the nature of writing and reflection involved in autoethnography will assist me towards what Brewer (2000) describes as being flexible and unstructured and avoiding pre-fixed arrangements or notions on what people do and say.

In the 'Introducing Issues' chapter I subscribed to the view that it is not enough just to describe or to make sense but to view my research as Burgess describes it, as an '... advocate research model' (1984:20). Consequently, it is important that having reflected on my journal extracts and experiences I am able to, as Brewer suggests, '...intervene and improve the position of the people studied' (2000:147). In some respects my greatest fear is my inability to determine my effectiveness. Have I created an advocate research model? I can, at this stage of the process, only speculate on what my intentions have achieved with respect to intervening and improving the conditions of those I studied. This uncertainty once again highlights significant aspects of the features of autoethnography. I can state that I am determined to generate dialogue and attempt to engage others in my study but the nature of the methodology does not allow me to control next steps. Nevertheless, having considered some of the barriers that I believe impact on moves to increase democracy for children and having reflected more generally on what has been achieved and limitations within my methodology, it is now appropriate to look forward.

When I anticipate the most likely avenues for increased democracy in primary schools there are three issues: CfE (Scottish Executive, 2004a), changes in leadership models and movement towards a philosophy of education based on critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970) that provide prospects of change from the current restrictive environment. I now look to detail these as future alternatives that could change schooling for children towards practices and experiences that are more democratic and rewarding.

The first of these issues is the potential of CfE and the glimmer of hope for the development of democracy with the creation of the new curriculum in Scotland. I consider some of the expectations, features and criticisms of CfE as well as a brief look at the government's interest in the experience of curriculum change in Finland

and Sweden. The implementation of CfE raises the expectation that schools are providing a 'coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum firmly focussed on the needs of the child' (Scottish Government, 2008:3). Initially it is important to think about some of the reasons why there is excitement, anticipation and speculation that CfE will deliver experiences and outcomes that will facilitate increased participation for children in schools. An objective set out by the Scottish government for CfE is the expectation:

That children will have increased opportunities to participate responsibly in decision-making, to contribute as leaders and role models, offer support and service to others and play an active part in putting the values of the school community into practice (Scottish Government, 2008:20).

In addition to increased involvement in decision making the Scottish Government confess to a failure of education for our most vulnerable children when they recognise a continuing issues of inequality in which '... children from poorer communities and low socio-economic status homes are more likely than others to underachieve' (Scottish Government, 2008:9). This admission resonates here because of the emphasis in this dissertation on the necessity to cater for the needs of our most vulnerable children. Wood (2008) reminds us that, in part CfE is as a result of a report by the organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2008) which was critical of Scotland's record of failing children from more deprived areas. CfE has as one of its objectives '... raising attainment in areas of social deprivation' (Wood, 2008: TESS). It is against this backdrop that I assess the prospects of CfE in the knowledge that the Scottish Government also accept that the gap associated with poverty and deprivation in local government areas appears to be very wide and that '...a more successful Scotland can only be created by developing the talents of *all* Scotland's children' (2008:9).

It is still not clear how the new curriculum will facilitate change although much of the language contained in the literature surrounding it does encourage and highlight an expectation from government of changes in the dynamic and relationships between pupils and teachers. For instance, the government encourages children to contribute to the life and work of the school and '... to exercise their responsibilities as members of a community' (Scottish Government, 2008:20). The government has as one of its objectives that every young person is entitled to personal support but suggest that they should also be '... active

participants in their learning and development' (Scottish Government, 2008:17). It is the use of such positive language that has encouraged me to speculate that CfE could have a dramatic change with respects to relationships and responsibilities in school and consequently for the prospects of developing democracy for children. A cornerstone of CfE is the 'four capacities' which are now embedded in schools and should assist children to become, as the Scottish Government has anticipated, '... successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors' (2008:11). Another fundamental element of CfE is the implementation of its 'seven principles', one of which is 'personalisation and choice'. The seven principles of CfE create a further expectation of increased involvement from children and so, for instance, with respect to the vital area of assessment, the Scottish Government claim that:

The active involvement of children and young people in assessment is essential to ensure they have a well-deserved sense of ownership of their learning and help one another (Scottish Government, 2010:6).

Such reference from the government to ownership encourages thoughts of a shift towards more democratic opportunities. When viewed positively CfE may encourage the development of individual autonomy, confidence and facilitate increased expectations from pupils, and others, for increased democracy in school. Erickson and Schult identify a need to develop voice to help pupils form '... critical awareness of their own needs' (1992:481). Similarly the previously referred to principles of CfE may facilitate what Rudduck and Flutter refer to as the need for children '... developing identity to express in their own voice their perceptions, feelings and insights about school' (2004:101). The previous chapters in this dissertation have highlighted a necessity for many of the developments that appear now to be a feature of CfE. Martin describes CfE as a golden opportunity to '... advocate the very learner-centred, democratic and inclusive approaches to teaching and learning that have been frozen out by 5-14' (2007: TESS). Boyd is similarly optimistic, referring to the new curriculum bringing '... a coherent set of aims for schooling' and adding that it will facilitate a discussion with everyone who has an interest in education '... including young people' (Munro, 2006: TESS). The features contained in CfE appear to have the potential to have a dramatic impact with respect to developing democracy.

Despite its potential, however, there has been criticism that there is little substance to CfE and therefore it is difficult to know how the curriculum will evolve. Hepburn highlights concerns from the EIS General Secretary Smith, who argues that currently with respect to CfE 'Teachers are being asked to create something out of nothing which was no basis for the transformation expected' (2009:TESS). Additionally, Wood argues that many of the principles are mutually contradictory and furthermore the proposals most fundamental flaw is their fuzziness although 'The long list of desirable characteristics seem to be preferred to brief, focused objectives' (Wood, 2008). Further criticism is provided by Humes and Priestly who argue that the Scottish Government (2008) CfE publication 'Building the curriculum 3', the seminal document used by schools to assist in their implementation of CfE, is '... littered with generalised references to skills development and active learning but there is little specific detailed guidance' (Hepburn and Buie, 2010:TESS). Buie claims that '... education directors, head teachers and teachers have mounted a scathing attack over its' implementation, claiming it lacks clarity, cohesion, leadership and resources' (2008a: TESS). A previous vocal advocate of the new curriculum, Ronnie Smith, General Secretary of the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) argued that CfE will actually fail if schools and teachers are left to deliver it on the cheap '...teachers are being asked to make radical changes despite an acute absence of support, resources and development time' (Hepburn, 2009:TESS).

A further note of caution is to question how those children currently excluded will suddenly find themselves as part of CfE decision making processes. The journal extract below reinforces an overall sceptical stance that questions the likelihood of our existing educational structure delivering a more democratic and equitable system.

I have spent much of this week attending conferences and meetings regarding the implementation of CfE. At times when I am out of school at such events I feel I am in a different world. I do admittedly enjoy attending these conferences because they are informative but occasionally find myself being distracted by what may be happening back at school in the real world. The idea of CfE is clearly presented and its aims are laudable. Unfortunately the practice in my own school is far removed from the expectation as outlined in the new curriculum. I worry that CfE is just another attempt by policy makers to window dress policy as they see appropriate for their means. Today I feel a bit deflated when I think about the time I have spent on the new curriculum

considering if it will in actual fact impact on developing democracy. I base this pessimism from my continued experience of adults and structures in school. Too often children are treated with little respect and often in a dismissive and negative manner. Will CfE alter this? Although I am encouraged by the anticipation of CfE, my actual experience on a daily basis tempers any unrealistic expectation that effective genuine democracy is just around the corner for children. I am unsure whether CfE is the appropriate vehicle required to implement increased democracy for children. My own opinion is that if educators are not genuine in their attempt to increase democracy for children then the current curricular changes are pointless and even counter-productive. For CfE to have any positive impact on increasing democracy it must be a genuine attempt by policy makers to listen to and allow participation from children.

Reflection on the extract above reaffirms policy makers' great expectations for CfE. They have provided additional staff in-service training days to overcome both fears and criticisms that the new curriculum is too vague and that it has little substance to it. The journal extract does, however, question whether CfE is just another policy initiative that will do little to alter the existing relationships and attitudes that many adults display towards children. My own aspiration remains that the principles behind CfE may eventually create a curriculum that is more child-centred; in addition, that relationships between adults and children may change to ones that are more equitable. However, to date I have been involved in many in-service days and other professional development events for CfE and there has been no emphasis placed on the need to alter relationships and no mention of the need to develop voice and democracy for children. I also question the likelihood of CfE removing the obstacle of teacher workload, pressures of accountability, and the performativity and audit culture referred to throughout this study. Without such changes to the current practice of the profession it is difficult to imagine how CfE can be effective with respect to facilitating increased democracy for children.

When I focus on the prospects of democracy being developed, I consider what Deuchar (2005) describes as perceived hypocrisy: the scenario where pupils learn democracy only in certain controlled and isolated situations. It would appear that Deuchar's description is and will continue to be an accurate assessment of the reality in many schools. I fear that children will be encouraged to learn about democracy but only in the parameters set by policy makers. Further reflection on the above journal extract would deduce that it would be foolhardy to assume that CfE is some kind of silver bullet. Possibly the most damning criticism levelled at

CfE has come from what Hepburn and Buie (2010) describe as two of Scotland's leading academics, the previously mentioned, Priestley and Humes, who recently reported unremitting criticism of the new curriculum. The authors of the report stated that the initial potential of the principle of CfE, which they claimed looked capable of breaking the mould of Scottish Education because of its emphasis on what young people could do, seems to have been constrained '... potentially reducing the freedom and creativity of teachers and learners rendering the classroom predictable, limited and uncreative' (Hepburn and Buie, 2010: TESS). The views of Priestly and Humes place some doubts over the potential of CfE to facilitate change.

Similarly I am in some respects apprehensive over CfE in the knowledge that the government appear to have recently taken a particular interest in Scandinavian examples of curricular change. Early 2010 saw the Scottish Education secretary, Michael Russell, visit Finland and other Scandinavian countries in an effort to assess their education systems. Despite the undoubted success of Finland's education system it is important to highlight there do appear to be cultural differences between Finland and many other countries. In Finland there is a culture of parents taking a close interest in engaging with schools, parents tend to read more often with their children, teachers are highly valued and teaching is of a high standard with low immigration in Finland (Howson, 2009). Recently the Finnish academic, Sahlberg, urged Scotland and a host of other countries not to copy Finland's education system, stating that '... its education system is inextricably linked to its culture' (Seith, 2009: TESS). At the conclusion of his visit to Scandinavia, Education Secretary, Michael Russell, argued that '... trust was the key to Finland's success' (Seith, 2010: TESS). However, on the same fact finding mission, Russell met with Sweden's Director General of Education, Peter Thullberg, who argued that trust was the *downfall* of his country's education system. Seith (2010) explains that during the educational reforms of the 1990's Sweden provided its teachers with a large degree of freedom to interpret the curriculum. However, Thullberg argued that the space provided for professional interpretation during the introduction of the new curriculum resulted in many teachers '... being left with a document that was too philosophical and this has had a bad impact on teachers' (Seith, 2010: TESS). My previously stated apprehension is that reflection on the previous criticisms of CfE creates some

anxiety that this scenario could occur in Scotland. If CfE is to be effective and, with respect to my focus, to facilitate the development of democracy, the Scottish government would be well advised to heed the rather confusing and contradictory example of recent educational experiences and in particular the warning over Sweden's apparent lack of direction to the teaching profession with respect to curricular change.

Having considered the potential of CfE I now focus on the necessity for a change to the philosophy on appropriate models of school leadership as the second of the three issues that may facilitate the development of increased democracy. I am convinced from experience that there is limited prospect for change of any description in schools if there is resistance from headteachers. Their status and role is further emphasised in Blackmore's question: '... if school leaders are not going to argue for social justice and lead to reduce inequality, who will?' (2006:103). It is the head teacher who dictates, creates and maintains the nature of the environment in primary schools. I suggest a move towards distributive and democratic leadership models as a prerequisite for increasing democratic experiences because these appear to have the greatest potential to foster more equitable and positive relationships in schools.

Such is the complexity of models of leadership that it is not realistic for me, in the limitation of this chapter, to make distinctions between the various models. There are of course differences too, between the notion of distributive and democratic leadership. For the purposes of this dissertation it is appropriate to highlight only that there requires a move towards models of leadership that are more distributive *and* democratic. I will however assess the benefits, characteristics and difficulties associated with changes in leadership models. Kelly states that models of leadership look to education to provide pupils with the skills necessary to see their problems '... in a reflexive perspective and thus enable them to gain some control over their own destinies (Kelly, 1995:81). I would caution that experience would suggest that mostly the environments as described by Kelly are not yet evident in many schools. Despite this, I have no doubt that when an acting head teacher I was able to foster, with the support of staff, a positive, supporting, friendly and highly motivating environment with an expectation that ultimately children would be able to benefit from the increased equitable relationships that emerged. The

journal extract below is indicative of an attitude and mind set that is necessary to create positive relationships that hopefully will be the first steps towards the creation of more democratic environments in school. Leadership takes many forms and it does not have to be entirely dependent on ones' authority.

Today although bogged down with paper work I was able to help a number of teachers sort out a problem. This is what I love; being able to help. I need contact with others and the feeling that I am of use to them. I enjoy helping others and it gives me great satisfaction knowing that I am of some assistance. I could easily have ignored the pleas from teachers and waited for someone else to sort out the computer problem. The teachers that I helped were so grateful and insisted that I should have more important things to bother me than sorting out computer access. For me it is a significant aspect of my role as headteacher that I am able to build relations and be seen as someone who is useful, a team player and helpful and not detached in my office.

Reflection on the journal extract above highlights it can be too easy for someone in leadership to disappear into their office and delegate tasks for others to sort. Headteachers have an enormous amount of work and significant responsibility and there is a danger that they retreat into their own space and become managers of schools as opposed to leaders. Greenleaf (1970) refers to "servant leadership" as someone who has a desire to help others. I can identify with this view and state that as acting headteacher I didn't see myself as having power. Ardent (1972) refers to the feminist notion of having 'power with' rather than 'power over'. It is the idea seen through the notion of Blackmore where co-operation and shared leadership with various other interests and concerns, power has '... a capacity to accomplish specific goals' (1999:161). Begley refers to 'authentic leadership' as one where '... there are accepted differences and that improved self-knowledge not alignment, is necessary' (2004:4). Harris refers to leadership that '... empowers those closest to the classroom to undertake leadership tasks and actions' (2002:11). These models of leadership should look to build a 'community of learners' (Barth 2000) and look to be 'transformational and liberating' (Sergiovani 1996). In contrast to traditional notions of leadership which Harris and Muijs assess as when '... an individual manages a hierarchical structure' (2005:28). Distributive and democratic leadership engages expertise wherever it exists regardless of role or position. It allows individuals to guide and mobilize others (Spillane et al. 2001a). Fundamentally, Bennet et al. claim distributive and democratic leadership is not something '... done by an individual to others'

(2003:3). To a certain extent it is a way of thinking about leadership rather than a technique. One facet of such a philosophy of leadership, which perhaps typifies such thinking, is the issue of trust.

Often lack of trust in schools results in a culture of fear amongst staff. The 'Policy chapter' highlighted how fear can have a paralyzing effect on teachers. Often fear is prevalent partly because of the failure of leadership to create anything remotely resembling what Harris and Muijs refer to as a '... no blame culture through a supportive culture with a strong element of trust' (2005:127). Bryk and Schneider (2003) highlight trust develops in school where relationships are strong. Trust can be cultivated through leaders in schools building '... human capacity or social capital' (Harris and Muijs, 2005:90). Typically this would involve valuing all staff through acknowledging their strengths, attributes and development needs. Factors such as lack of trust and the prevalence of fear in the profession only emphasise the importance of establishing positive relationships throughout school and this is best facilitated through leadership that is distributive and democratic.

Trafford explains that the change necessary for such moves towards democratic leadership requires to be achieved at two levels there was the question of '... changing the working relationship between head and staff as well as that between teachers and student' (Trafford, 1997:7). Positive changes in relationships between teachers and children are more likely if the leadership in schools move towards more distributive and democratic relationships. Without genuine distributive and democratic leadership in schools it is difficult to create relationships and practices that are remotely democratic. A fundamental problem, according to Woods is that '... schools are not conducive to democratic or distributive leadership' (2005:74). Similarly as detailed in the 'Structure and Control' chapter, there are many other facets of schools that militate against increasing democratic practice. Fielding believes schools to contain '... anachronistic cultures and structures' which divide teachers and pupils into separate unequal arenas (2004:309). Woods warns not to underestimate the role of '... hierarchy and bureaucracy' within organisations (2005:36). Clegg (1989) argues that these differences are formed and sustained through complex and not necessarily visible circuits of power. My experience of schools substantiates that there are clear demarcation lines and historical hierarchies that are inconsistent

with genuine democratic practice, one mustn't think or act above one's station! It is difficult therefore to develop distributive and democratic leadership in such an environment.

Another difficulty arises with models of leadership which subscribe to a tone of humility and persuasion as opposed to prescription and messianic righteousness of a normative authoritative leadership. Essentially the former sentiments of leadership don't suit or sit comfortably with many headteachers. There is also, according to Harris and Muijs, an inherent tension in existing cultures of audit, central standardisation and accountability sitting alongside collaborating schools and, they ask, '... can this create authentic partnership?' (2005:3). Perhaps because of such tensions a philosophy has evolved where leaders in primary education view distributive and democratic leadership as being what Elmore describes as being about '... alignment and consensus' (2000:5).

The reality is that the features of distributive and democratic leadership that I have highlighted may be counter intuitive to many leaders in primary schools. Some may have reservations, as I did, with the potential vacuum that can be left when distributive and democratic leadership affords others to peddle their more authoritative styles. The journal extract below exemplifies insecurities leaders may feel through a necessity that they must be strong and seen to be in charge.

As I sit in my office reflecting on my first few months as acting headteacher I realise that I continue to require considerable help from others in school. I worry that some members of staff will be unwilling to embrace a more distributive and democratic approach to managing the school. I even worry over those people in school who I have a strong working relationship with; would they like me to be more assertive and to dictate school direction more forcefully? At the back of my mind is a worry that some staff may start to be influenced by teachers who have strong opinions and that there will be divisions in the school. A number of staff have hinted privately to me that they would like staff who are outspoken to be put in their place! This is a test for distributive leadership. My position is a little precarious; I am acting Headteacher, at times I do feel very vulnerable and unsure about what to do. Do I really believe in democratic leadership? My inclination is to leave matters as they are; I really don't want outspoken members of staff retreating back into their previous passive roles. Is strong leadership allowing others a say or rather, as the majority of staff seem to believe, the headteacher clamping down on dissenting voices? On reflection I think that eventually my difficulty with others will arise if they continue

pursuing an authoritative style. Why should I allow this to jeopardise the progress we have made? I can understand why many headteachers adopt an authoritative stance; they may regard this as the easy route to take.

The apparent struggle of steering a school towards a more distributive and democratic leadership model is one of a number of issues highlighted in the extract above that require some reflection. The journal extract is indicative of how some staff may deem that such models of leadership are weak. Reflection on literature would seem to confirm that there is a perception of how leaders should behave. (Rojo and Gomez-Estaben 2003) refer to 'double voicing' where woman managers who are perceived as 'caring and flexible' are considered weak: efficient and hierarchical leaders are viewed as male and tough. In relation to the above extract I wonder whether there was a perception amongst staff that I should have been tougher when faced with such challenges. Further reflection on the extract above highlights a danger that ultimately people may rebel against distributive and democratic leadership. A feature of distributive and democratic leadership is that it requires time to embed thus creating the difficulty of carrying those who are sceptical of its benefits through processes that are less confrontational and certain, in comparison to leadership which is more authoritative.

When I consider my role in leadership I subscribe to the view that distributive and democratic leaders require to '... relinquish and withdraw from their power and authority' (Blase and Blase, 1999). Nevertheless despite my aspirations for distributive and democratic leadership, I constantly taper any reasonable optimism for such changes through a thudding sense of reality of what actually seems to matter in education. The journal extract below is typical of the many times when I considered that my ambition for such a school environment philosophy was at best naive, and even contrary to any personal aspirations of continuing in school leadership.

Although I do have mostly good feelings about my democratic leadership style I also feel uncertain and in some sense under pressure from my local authority. I know that the authority will be prescriptive and watchful and they will closely monitor the performance of the school with respect to the completion of audits and self evaluation quality assurance reports. These expectations are very time consuming and the few that I have completed leave me mentally exhausted. I have discussed on a number of occasions with personnel

from the local authority my thoughts and practice of leadership. I am left feeling that they are, to say the least, rather doubtful of my views; this is despite the acknowledgement of improvements in morale and staff motivation in our school. I am left in no doubt from these discussions and from dialogue with colleagues while attending headteachers' meetings that effective school leaders are tough and uncompromising. My thoughts on 'servant leadership' seem rather lame when I am in such company. I genuinely feel isolated and I am beginning to doubt the wisdom of espousing my views on leadership to those in authority.

Reflection on the above extract highlights a number of obstacles for those with prospects of pursuing a more distributive and democratic approach to leadership. The reality is that some in education, including headteachers and officials in the education department from the local authority, appear to expect leadership which is uncompromising. This stance is reinforced because governments and others, according to Brundett et al. seem to have accepted and embedded a '... generic or ubiquitous expectation of what a leader is' (2003:5). This is reinforced when the then, Prime Minister, Blair, claimed that '... leadership and vision are crucial in raising standards and aspirations across our nation's schools; we cannot leave them to chance' (DfEE, 1999:2). In a similar vane, Ball (2000) refers to a performativity culture when teachers, leaders and students are fashioned so they become the kinds of people necessary to achieve organisational goals. My experience would coincide with the view expressed by (Hallinger and Heck, 1997) that effective leadership has been inextricably linked to school improvement and quality of schools. In Scotland, there is an expectation that those with aspiration for headteachers posts have completed the Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH) (Scottish Executive, 2002) a qualification which sets out the expectations that government have for those contemplating leadership roles in education. Clearly it would be wrong to place all the ills of education onto the shoulders of such head teachers; it is not my purpose to claim this. I do merely argue that the environment in schools would be more conducive towards increasing democracy if head teachers were more predisposed to distributive and democratic leadership styles rather than the more authoritative style that appears to be predominant.

Having firstly considered the significance of CfE and secondly the need for a change in leadership models it is now my intention to turn my focus to the argument for a more radical approach to education as the third issue that could

offer a more democratic future for school children. There is a doubt that niggles away within me that development of democracy may only be achieved in the context of some form of radical alternative. Bates (2006) suggests concern over social justice has been present in education for a number of years. Opinions of what steps are appropriate have often been extremely varied. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile acknowledging that the lobby for a more radical approach towards education has been and remains significant. I am encouraged by those advocates of a move to democratic schools who argue for a more critical educational theory, for example, the progressive views of Freire. It is not my intention to deal in any significant depth with the educational philosophy of radicals such as Freire, except to highlight Apple who cites '... the best example of this can be found in the city of Port Alegre in Brazil' (2008:251). In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Freire (1970) argues that schooling is actually part of the problem; contributing to the marginalization of minorities and the poor. Furthermore, Freire argued that curricula initiatives shouldn't ignore racism, sexism and exploitation of workers as well as other forms of oppression; because it '... inhibits the expansion of consciousness and blocks creative and liberating social action for change' (Heaney, 1995:2). These views, that describe what I would perceive as a fundamental flaw within education, would also be consistent with Habermas who challenges the, '... givenness of the World' (Heaney, 1995:2). Similar objections are expressed by Papert who claims '... schools are places where you stop learning and accept being taught' (1989:4) and Illich (1973) who initiated the de-schooling debate, when arguing for the abolishing of schools. Despite acknowledging the folly of pursuing any agenda that may be viewed as too radical I am also reminded of the children in my school who appear destined to follow in the desperate footsteps of their parents and carers. Radical approaches have seen various champions such as Young (1971), Bernstein (1975a), Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) and Strike (1982). In particular, Freire (1970) and Apple (1982) are advocates of a radical pedagogy directed in the service of liberation. There are genuine criticisms of such theories and I have in the past engaged with these. For the purpose of this brief section I do not feel it necessary to highlight these criticisms. I cite instead the many references to the plight of our most vulnerable children and the challenging environment in which they live.

Despite any expectation of a move to a pedagogy that is more radical there should be caution from recent attempts by government of reducing inequalities in education through social inclusion. The experience of what could be described as a failure to implement effective social inclusion could apply equally to democracy. Potter describes social inclusion as ‘... central to present (2004) policy’ (Alexander and Potter, 2005:112). The then, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, Blunkett (2000) argued that ‘Education is the single most important factor in creating and sustaining a socially inclusive society’ adding that ‘... it gives people greater control over their lives’ (Alexander and Potter, 2005:113). However, the attempts at social inclusion were derailed by amongst other things the difficulty of squaring liberty and equality. The lesson for advocates of increasing democracy is present through Potter, who highlights ‘... attempts to promote freedom of choice are at odds with efforts to create equal access to these choices’ (Alexander and Potter, 2005:113). I highlight these difficulties to signify that, despite efforts of what Potter describes as centre-left government attempting to redress the educational opportunities of our most disadvantaged, there has been little evidence of success. Potter (2005) highlights tensions between freedom, choice and equality have resulted in the gap between the most successful and least successful pupils growing wider and that since Labour came to power ‘... the chances of a brighter child from a poorer family becoming a high-flyer have worsened’ (Alexander and Potter, 2005:116). This is despite the fact that Labour had a concern, according to (Maguire and Dillon), ‘... to improve schooling for those who have historically gained the least’ (2007:33). This example of the failure of a sympathetic government changing policy direction endorses the view that any enduring improvements for our most vulnerable children may require more than just interventions in school.

Connell reinforces that redressing inequalities and injustice in education will prove difficult. Disadvantage is produced through mechanisms that also produce advantage. The beneficiaries of the current educational order, broadly speaking, have greater economic and institutional power and ‘No-one should imagine that educational change in the interests of the poor can be conflict free’ (Connell, 1994:144). Immediately it is important to express a sobering note of realism when consideration is given to changes that are even remotely viewed as radical, namely that education internationally has two major emphases. These being, firstly the

neo-liberal educational reforms such as pressure towards marketization and privatization and secondly policies of ever-increasing national standards and national testing. A further note of caution is that although I am drawn to the prospect of arguing for a dramatic change in how we educate our children, it is tempered with the realisation that, most likely, few in education would advocate a move towards the views of radicals such as Freire. Nor do I intend, at this moment, to make the argument that a move to a more radical system of education should raise expectation that education should change society. It is not realistic, in light of all the barriers and resistance to increasing democracy that I have highlighted previously, to expect schools in present circumstances suddenly to contribute to a more just society. In any case Apple (2008), who posed such questions, immediately highlights it is perhaps too difficult to answer.

The idea that society is replicated by institutions and that school assists in this socializing is confirmed by Structural Functionalism whose most famous advocate, Talcott Parsons, claimed 'In American Society there is a very high and probably increasing correlation between one's status in society and one's level of educational attainment' (Kellner, 1990:7). Kellner describes Habermas's theory of engaging people with a social conscience, highlighting how the Frankfurt institute '... sought to develop an interdisciplinary social theory' in an attempt to influence social transformation for the European working class movement (1990:2). Essentially traditional theory is seen as doing nothing more than reproducing existing society while critical theory believes that society's problems are rooted in the existing capitalist mode of production. Kellner highlights the objective is not '... reproduction of present society but transformation to a correct society' (1990:9). With respect to Habermas's concerns regarding existing social structures Scimecca sarcastically comments that

Poor children become dumber the longer they stay in school...blame for failure is always laid at the door of the child, with educators concentrating their efforts too often and too long on the individual (Scimecca, 1978:3-4).

These criticisms from Scimecca suggest that what is important is to emphasize the need for change and, for instance, for future learning similar to Dewey's desire to foster children with, 'The ability to inquire, judge and act for themselves' (Fisherman, 1980:64). Dewey doesn't want students to leave classrooms, '...

clinging to rehearsed lines...that just will not do in a world as fluid and uncertain as ours', he challenges teachers to be, '... inventive pioneers, reflective and experimental and to critically examine their classrooms' (Fisherman, 1980:64). Apple and Beane caution that the implementation of democracy requires two lines of work: one is to create structures and processes '... the other is to create a curriculum that will give young people democratic experiences' (Apple and Beane, 1995:9). Despite such aspirations the journal extract below is typical of the feeling of hopelessness that is prevalent and at times dominates environments with challenging socio-economic conditions.

I recently attended a head teachers meeting for my local authority when a contributor spoke of the desperate plight of children in her school and despaired that the majority now suffer from three generations of families in her school community who depended on the state for survival. A number of head teachers sitting next to me joked that the speaker was lucky because their communities suffered from four generations of dependency. Although said in a light hearted manner it also highlights the difficulty of vulnerable children escaping the chains of generations of oppression. The reality of this situation causes me significant stress but is also a drive to consider the need for future changes in education. I seem always to be drawn to seek solutions to this inequality through proponents of any radical change who subscribe to the philosophy of, for example, Freire, who follows a line of human consciousness, from Froebel to Dewey believing that education is for freedom. When I think about such philosophy it is not 'abstract' but rather it replays a constant and disturbing cycle of images of children who I consider have been failed by the current education system. While accepting that a transformational shift towards a more radical agenda is at the moment unrealistic, I on the other hand believe that incremental changes from current structures and practices is not only desirable but essential. I base this premise on the fact that, for many children the current school experience is both inequitable and unsatisfactory. Despite the fact that few teachers or even academics are likely to align themselves with such extreme views, it is important to search for alternatives to the current primary education system.

Reflection on the above extract summarizes previous claims for changes to the existing primary education school system. The journal extract while highlighting an inevitability of life prospects and unsatisfactory school experience for many children also highlights the need to move to a more radical education agenda. Reflection on the journal highlights the depth and severity of current inequalities and lack of opportunities for vulnerable children. A difficulty for me is how best to highlight the need for increased democracy in the hope of improving the

challenging school circumstances of vulnerable children.

Therefore having contemplated the implementation of CfE, changes in leadership models and the need for a move towards alternative radical education agenda it is necessary now to focus on how I can effect change in the primary school environment. It is important to reflect how this dissertation will help shape and impact on prospects for increasing democracy in primary schools. The journal extract below highlights some of my thoughts.

From what I would describe as tentative beginnings there are now few issues in life that I am more certain of than of the need for further moves towards greater democracy in primary schools. I base this on having experienced the positive change that occurred in a school in a culture that encouraged increased genuine democracy. I have witnessed dramatic positive changes in staff, even from those who had previously disengaged, children and parents. Schools do not, despite my fears, become anarchic and unruly. What actually happens is that most people become more confident and positive. There were specific moments that reinforced for me that the democratic approach to leadership was working. At times I record how humbling the experiences were. Staff previously considered by others as truculent, unhelpful or disinterested suddenly became more engaged in school processes and took on responsibilities they had previously shunned. Two years on in my study I am proud of the difference that democratic leadership made in my school. This evidence includes, interactive whole school assemblies, the increased confidence of upper school pupils through increased dialogue in staff and participation in shaping aspects of the curriculum. For example, changes to Golden time where children had influence on what was being taught and discussion on which topic themes they could study and which teachers taught them. Another positive development being the manner in which children are spoken to and treated more equitable by some staff. I have now experienced that increased democracy does improve relationships. I feel confident therefore that children will benefit from the more intimate and equitable relationships that will evolve as democracy develops.

When I reflect on the generally positive message in the extract above I feel satisfied that, if facilitated, the implementation of democracy can ultimately prove to be successful. However, I would rather reflect on the journal extract through comparing it with some of my less positive experiences and observations. In reality, despite my own increasing belief that democracy can alleviate many of the problems in school there is, paradoxically, a fear that the barriers to its implementation are greater than I had first realised. It is these barriers that I must

negotiate if I am to be effective in arguing for increased democracy in primary schools. Drastic changes in the philosophy of leadership, initially introduced by me, resulted in the substantial improvements within my school being dramatically reversed. Within a few months seemingly every aspect of the school deteriorated with the return of leadership which is best described as authoritative and not predisposed to democratic practice. Fear, lack of trust, hierarchies, and previous deep divisions soon permeated once more throughout the school to the obvious detriment of children especially.

The difficulties of implementing increased democracy guide me further towards the view of McGettrick who refers to the timeless question of 'what is education for?' He argues that it is in fact impossible to answer this question but nevertheless attempts to do just that by claiming '... among the purposes of education are to raise the dignity of each child' (Alexander and Potter, 2005:33). He further suggests that education should be about formation and not outcomes and targets which he claims lead to teachers trying to cover the curriculum '... excessive external accountability...is the enemy of thought' (2005:36). I am further attracted to his view of democracy as '... a focus on relationship and process and not on outcomes and products' (2005:36). These views of McGettrick and from reflection on this dissertation and experience of recent years convinces me that the implementation of CfE, changes towards a more radical pedagogy and leadership models that are more distributive and democratic could be significant milestones on the journey to developing democracy in primary schools. Similarly the thought of educators striving to develop the dignity of pupils, while focussing also on their pupils' formation in positive relationships goes some way to addressing my initial worry that 'something wasn't right in education'.

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