> Effectiveness in Changing a Primary School's
> Culture: A Case Study

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I certify that this thesis entitled

> Effectiveness in Changing a Primary School's
> Culture: A Case Study

and submitted as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Educational Administration, is the result of my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this research paper (or any part of the same) has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Signed: *A. Joyce*　　　　　　　Dated: 16 November 2000

"Inability of those in power

to still the voices of their own consciences

is the great force leading to desired

changes"

(President Kaunda of Zambia, 1975, "A Dictionary of Modern Quotations", p.120)

Abstract

Change has been a constant feature of contemporary educational organisations since 1989 and the instituting of *Tomorrow's Schools*. However, knowing that change is required is one thing, achieving 'real change' is quite another. Contemporary educational writers and researchers strongly suggest that an organisation's culture, effectiveness, improvements and leadership are the major, interconnected, concepts that enable an organisation - whether it be educational or a corporate business - to initiate, manage, maintain and monitor real change. This research study, using ethnographic approaches of participant observation, interviews and document collection, attempted to view an educational organisation in the throes of re-establishing itself from an 'historical culture', to a more 'contemporary culture'. The research indicated, by comparing historical and present ways of doing things, that organisational concepts - culture, effectiveness, improvement and leadership - were interpreted in different ways to produce quite contrasting sets of beliefs and assumptions, norms and expectations. The research also highlighted the fact that leadership was at the 'heart' in influencing the way/s in which - both historically and in the present - culture, effectiveness and improvements were to be implemented and shaped. This research concluded that the concept of *organisational culture* (as an umbrella for defining how things are done, effectiveness, improvements and leadership) was useful in developing an understanding of what creates real change in an organisation. This research study, in adding to current debate and research, implies that, in identifying beliefs and assumptions, norms and expectations, an environment could be prudently positioned to design and change systems, rather than merely to identify systems that are possibly inadequate to meet contemporary educational (or other) challenges.

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Contents

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1   :   Thesis Background - Justification

Change is a constant feature of education. Questions concerning decentralisation, new curricula, accountability, autonomy, reviews, community ownership and involvement, technological advances, efficiencies, closures, amalgamations and funding - to name but a few topics - are continually being raised. These questions have developed to a stage where, if an educational organisation remains unchanged, it gives rise to a suspicion that there is a lack of quality education occurring (Deal & Kennedy, 1982).

Educational organisations, therefore, are surrounded by a climate of constant change. However, having the knowledge that change is required is one thing: achieving change is quite another - and the process often involves challenging deep-seated norms and expectations of 'what happens around the place'.

"A happy life is spent in learning ..."

(B.M. Conny, "Gentle Thoughts," 1993)

The changing of 'what happens around the place' became an intriguing statement for me as a result of moving from one educational organisation to another in 1997. In becoming familiar with the new organisation, its habits, expectations, and people, I became interested in what was being said. Teachers, parents and children would say, "This school has changed." When asked, "How has it changed?", the tangible things – that the school had been painted, the office building revamped, the new equipment and resources provided, and how the children's behaviour had become more respectful - were mentioned. When asked, "What do they think has caused these changes?", the reply was, "Oh, that's because of the new principal!"

Thus my inquiry began: What had been done to bring about change? Why was change needed? Had these changes gone further than just what could be seen? Could it be that the school's whole culture had changed? Was it really for the better? Had change brought about a more effective and improved environment for the school's community (teachers, children and parents) and their educational outcomes?

My instinctive response to these questions was 'culture'. This person, the new principal, was developing a new organisational culture - 'a new way of doing things around here!'

1.2 : Thesis Questions

As I formalized my initial maze of thought, my focus fell upon three questions; namely:

- When working towards improving a school's organisation, what elements were involved in developing change – culture, effectiveness, improvement and leadership?

- What changes in the school's organisational culture do teachers, students and parents consider have occurred?

- Have changes to the organisation impacted on educational effectiveness and resulted in improvement for teachers, students and parents?

1.3 : Thesis Aims and Objectives

In designing this thesis, I was guided by the following intentions:

- To apply the concept of organisational culture to a primary school setting in order to explore and interpret how effectively, or ineffectively, the school had adapted to change.

- To contribute to current research and debate on what determines effective and improved educational environments.

- To heighten the awareness amongst teachers, students and parents of the importance and influence that organisational culture has on the effectiveness and improvement of educational environments and outcomes.

1.4   :   Summary

Organisational culture is a phenomenon that is linked to effectiveness, improvement and leadership (Deal, 1985; Deal, 1987). This thesis endeavours to provide a means of exploring and interpreting how changes occurred in the sample school and how effectual - or otherwise - these changes have been in increasing the effectiveness of, and producing improvement in, educational outcomes for the community of the sample school - teachers, children and parents.

The research scene is set through the exploration of literature. Chapter 2, *Literature Review,* considers current thinking concerning behaviours, culture, effectiveness, improvement and leadership, and their entanglement, that create real change in educational organisations. This chapter also demonstrates that, when considering cultural norms and assumptions, behaviours and characteristics, educational environments can benefit from the experiences of corporate business entities. Although education and corporate entities differ in conceptualization, they share shapes of unconscious thought.

Chapter 3, *Methodology,* contains the foundations of thought and action adopted by the researcher. The methodological processes and ethical considerations are discussed and legitimised through

documentation and literature that associates case study and ethnographic data collection techniques with the theory of organisational culture.

The next two chapters report, and then discuss, the 'thick description' of the research. Chapter 4, *"Thick Description" - 'The Portrayal of the Cultural Situation,'* collates the researcher's data, using the major headings of *culture, educational effectiveness, improvement* and *leadership*. These data were synthesized, during which process recurring functional words and ideas were categorised and three major themes – *change, vision and focusing* and *leadership* – emerged. These themes provide the focus for discussing the 'thick description', the snapshot, of the changing culture of the sample school.

Chapter 5, *Discussion*, integrates the emerging themes and literature to establish the effectiveness – or otherwise - of the sample school's ability to adapt to change, and links their relationship to the components of organisational culture. This chapter also answers the researcher's questions and addresses the aims and objectives of the thesis.

Finally, Chapter 6, *Conclusion,* completes the cycle in the researcher's quest for meaning. It commences by reviewing the usefulness of ethnographic research in developing the researcher's quest for meaning, and summarises the research questions, aims and objectives by pulling together the threads of data contained in the thesis. The Chapter then, taking into account the constraints of this research (including its size and the inexperience of the researcher), provides recommendations for possible future research contexts of *comparative studies, leadership roles* and *time factors.* Finally, in summarising the Chapter, the researcher acknowledges her journey of enlightenment – her journey of putting theory into practice.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1   :   Introduction

Literature reviews endeavour to provide research projects with integrity and direction. They take the issues, questions, statements and establish an assembly of theory and research (Bouma, 1996). The researcher then uses this assembly of information as a foundation upon which current thinking and research can be examined and used as a catalyst for viewing, questioning and, ultimately, making a critical assessment of both thought and practice.

In travelling along this literature path the researcher, initially, envisages that a base of current information will be developed through the examination of definitions and behaviours which are creating real change in organisational cultures, educational effectiveness, improvement and leadership. This is followed by the researcher's considering the ways in which real change evolves through the interaction of these factors.   Finally, due to the praxis involved in developing change, there is a discussion on the alignment of

> "... literature is simply language charged with meaning
>
> to the utmost possible degree"
>
> (Ezra Pound, 1975, A Dictionary of Modern Quotations, p.180)

organisational cultures between corporate business environments and educational environments. From this information base, it is envisaged that the research questions will be channelled for exploration and, ultimately, that the information will be used in collating conclusions to align theory with reality.

2.2 : Definitions and Functions

2.2.1 Change

Foster (1986) argues that there is not one model of change that fully explains how or why changes occur in organisations. Nevertheless, it is agreed (Owens, 1995; Dalin, 1993; Neville, 1992; Fullan, 1991; Foster, 1986) that, although change is a complex element, it is essentially about transformation that alters form or function, and is a process of mutual adaptation and development. Change enables an organisation, and its participants, to cope with external and, fundamentally, internal pressures. Bolman and Deal (1991) consider that it is the external forces which apply the most pressure on patterns and practices. Globalization, deregulation, information technology and demographic changes - in effect - postmodernity, are but four external pressures to which organisations must respond in order to adapt to an ever-changing world.

> Change is "... tomorrow's steady diet".
>
> (Wixom, 1995, Recognising People in a World of Change, p.65)

Globalization and *deregulation* imply world market needs, wants, attitudes and skills; *information technology* implies electronic skills and possible power shifts; *demographics* imply people changes and population tends; *postmodernity*, as described by Hargreaves (1994), implies social conditions in which economic, political, organisational - and even personal - life, come to be organised around very different principles from those of social bureaucracy. "Postmodernity is fast, complex, compressed and uncertain," (Stoll & Fink, 1997, p.3).

Educational organisations are not immune to these external pressures. Rather, educational organisations are often viewed as a catalyst through which society addresses its current and future needs and wants. Education, as it is viewed today, evolved in response to the era of industrialisation, where basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic became prerequisites. The result was that the State established compulsory schooling for all children. As education evolved, it took on the effects of modernity, namely: stability, predictability, departmentalisation and bureaucracy (Stoll & Fink, 1997), all of which provide people with a set of rules for conduct that incorporate familiarity, comfort and a sense of security. For the researcher, these rules of conduct suggest that the sample school in this research study inevitably had its familiarity, comfort and security challenged.

"Patterns of work and living have to, and will, change" (Stoll & Fink, 1997, p.3). In this postmodern era people are, again, working from home - which is a direct result of technological innovations.

Bureaucracy is being eliminated in both the private and public organisational sectors. And the idea that a person will be employed by one organisation for the whole of their working life is being replaced with the view that people require "... skills and competencies to enable them to fit into a flexible and dynamic system" (Stoll & Fink, 1997, p.3).

In challenging familiarity, comfort and security, the realisation that participants in the sample school which was the subject of this research had become uneasy or tense struck the researcher with a hard core sense of realism. However, the historian Gustavson (1955) suggests that people are afraid of drastic innovations (change) because they prefer familiarity, they like the 'passivity that keeps the machinery running'. Invariably, change will create unease, distrust, tensions and, in extreme cases, conflict. Bolman and Deal, (1991, p.401) suggest that "... (change) creates winners and losers ..."; where some people benefit more than others. Research highlights the fact that educational organisations are not exempt from this outcome - for example: "He is unwilling to consider new teaching methods." (Ediger, 1997, p.39); "Significant tensions resulted within the school as a result of ... change." (Littledyke, 1997, p.252); Splinter groups of staff were created, new staff worked well, one staff member took early retirement. In general, the atmosphere was unhappy and fragmented (Littledyke, 1997); "Conflicts arose when teams worked closely together." (Stoll & Fink, 1997, p.23). Without fail, it is *how* change is implemented that generates the degrees of conflict, tension or nervousness of participants.

Change does not refer only to major macro-innovations, such as those witnessed in the past decade within New Zealand's education system - primarily the implementation of *'Tomorrow's Schools 1989'* and the new National Curriculum Documents for all of the seven essential learning areas. Changes within organisations can, and do, occur on a day-to-day basis, and can be as minute or as large as the maker of change wants them to be.

'Change maker' is a term given to the person(s) "... inside or outside (a) system who has the motive to make something happen" (Schein, 1985, p.299). Donahoe (1993) uses the term 'change agent', which describes an external agent who helps educational organisations through the traumas of change. However, there are similarities of form and function between change makers and change agents. Primarily, makers and agents are held responsible for creating an environment that enables and motivates people to change by providing sanction, protection, capacity, knowledge, resources and opportunities. These forms are then combined with set expectations and sensitivities to enable change makers and change agents to know in which direction, and how hard to push (Donahoe, 1993). In essence, change makers and agents are the vehicles through which outside and inside pressures are delivered to an organisation. For the purpose of this research, the researcher has chosen to use the term *change maker*, as it has more significance in its ability to be someone either inside or outside the organisation and thus may have more relevance to this researcher's quest for meaning.

In motivating change, the change maker needs to understand how it is that change can be accomplished within the organisation. Traditional paradigms of change have been perceived as being hierarchical, bureaucratic and authoritative in nature. These models of change are, generally, administered and implemented by force; often ignoring the fact that an organisation is a living 'organism' that consists of human beings. In this context, change brings deliberate alterations of power relationships and structures (Owens, 1995) that, on the one side, can result in scepticism, apathy, and disgruntlement, and, on the other side, can lead to outright resistance and sabotage of the change proposals by the organisation's participants (Neville, 1992). It is only the human subsystem of any organisation that has the capability of resisting actions of change (Owens, 1995). Using a pressurized approach often results in either the failure of the changes, or – as the pressures are relaxed from the bureaucratic management – in a retreat by the organisation to its 'old ways of doing things around here!' In their writings, Owens, (1995), Bolman and Deal, (1991) and Schein, (1985) enlighten the reader with cases, in corporate as well as educational organisations, in which the hierarchical approach was evident and resulted in a significantly low rate of real change occurring.

Bolman and Deal (1991, p.397) write that changes:

- Cause people to feel incompetent, needy and powerless;
- Create confusion and unpredictability throughout an organisation;

- Generate conflict;

- Create loss.

In reviewing these points, it becomes clear that change and people are inextricably bound together; one does not happen without affecting the other. Therefore, in developing strategies to implement real change, organisations need to turn to different ways of thinking and perceiving change.

In their writings and reviews of cases in which change was conceptualised as an entity (that which has a real and distinct existence) researchers (Littledyke, 1997; Owens, 1995; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Schein, 1985) suggest that the cases consisted of people who made valued and trusted contributions which enhanced collegial and collaborative (Sergiovanni, 1992) approaches towards implementing change. Such approaches highlighted the fact that change was being accomplished more readily, and resulted in a higher level of acceptance and more rapid implementation rate of change for the organisation. This meant that the organisation was more able to cope with the on-going real changes required to meet the continual external and internal pressures for adaptation in the future.

Research (Littledyke, 1997; Donahoe, 1993; Neville, 1992) supports this participative approach as an essential ingredient in the instigation of changes from the inside-out and bottom-up. Littledyke's (1997) research indicated that collaboration developed as existing structures were used to elicit ideas and develop consensus

decisions from staff.   Staff morale increased significantly during this period and collegial discussions were much more prevalent. Donahoe's (1993) writing suggests that, by investing in educators who make education a collegial and collaborative effort, schools will produce people who can conduct themselves as citizens for the future. These research studies imply that collaboration values individuals and promotes openness, interdependence and trust - sets of qualities which promote the exchange of ideas, develop good morale and result in better performance than in autocratic practices.   These sets of qualities raised a question for the researcher: What is the practice in the sample school which is the subject of this research?

Paradigms that stress the importance of developing and using people in organisations for making decisions, then having those participants' implement the outcomes, empower people to adapt the new ideas to existing structures and result in participants taking ownership (Owens, 1995; Bolman & Deal 1991; Kemp & Nathan, 1989).

In essence, change - as an entity - provides those who are responsible for implementing the change with a sense of ownership of the ideas and processes, which involves trust, openness and co-operation, as well as challenging participants to review their needs, skills and attitudes.

Another factor which is influential in implementing change, is time. Stoll and Fink (1997) and Donahoe, (1993) allude to the idea that time is intrinsic to the way people structure their behaviour and actions. Historically, as society's bureaucratic system evolved and brought into

existence the factory model, namely, departmentalisation, assembly lines and standardisation, time became bound and entered into the consciousness of organisations. Educational environments are not immune from either time bounds or consciousness. Schools, in modelling the bureaucratic economy, have developed definite time cycles and patterns. The questions that arise are: Do traditional time cycles enhance change? Do participants in change have time to digest, develop and then implement change?

Stoll and Fink (1997) and Donahoe (1993) would argue that, under a traditional time bounded system, participants believe that they do not have time to take change on board in the most advantageous manner. Change is viewed as the added extra component to an already busy schedule. Nevertheless, change needs time for collaborative and collegial discussion, planning, implementation and reflection. If allowed, time can enable traditional barriers of resistance to be broken down.

Force, entity and time are but three concepts within the notion of change. Concepts that suggest actions wield strong influences on how people perceive, interpret and respond to the behaviours, interactions and structures (Owens, 1995) which entwine to create the social norms and expectations, values and beliefs that make up an organisation. In addition, force, entity and time give rise to the powerful and influential organisational principles and practices that affect how people think, feel and act, which, according to Owens (1995) - can be defined as a *culture*.

Schein (1985) suggests that these cultural patterns (invented, discovered, or developed) are the way that an organisation's group of people learn to cope with their problems of external adaptation and internal integration. If the cultural patterns work well for the people in the organisation, then they are considered to be valid and are taught to new members. If they are not, then they are met with outright resistance, apathy and, ultimately, sabotage, or - for those who continue to resist - the ultimate answer would be to resign from the organisation, thus enabling it to actively recruit those who would support its ideas of change (Bolman and Deal, 1991). For the researcher, this was a very strong opinion as the sample school had undergone major staff changes, of which the researcher was one by being an *arrival* to the school, made possible by the *departure* of someone else.

Real change can represent a sequence of personal and collective experiences and processes which bring disharmony and suspicion to the organisation's people. Conversely, if real change works, then there develops a sense of mastery, accomplishment and growth. The anxieties of doubt and the joys of proficiency are central to the meaning of real change's success or failure (Fullan, 1991).

Research (Ediger, 1997; Littledyke, 1997; Owens, 1995; Donahoe, 1993; Neville, 1992; Poskitt, 1990; Schein, 1985) indicates that culture underpins and is an essential key in determining, providing and managing processes and experiences that create real change. It is culture (Bolman & Deal, 1991) that solves problems and contains and

reduces anxieties within an organisation, by giving an organisation meaning, character and a means of creating adaptation potential. It is not the organisation per se (Deal & Kennedy, 1982) but, rather, it is the way people inside the organisation behave and identify with new role-models, tell different stories about what happens around the organisation and/or perform day to day tasks differently that manifests real change.

This does not mean that superficial changes (the changes that alter systems and departmental compositions, also the roles and functions of people) cannot occur successfully without the deeper assumption of cultural change happening. Superficial changes that are successful, more than likely, will have used existing cultures to drive the process of change (Schein, 1985).

Real change, therefore, involves:

• Changing deep cultural assumptions;
• Using existing cultural assumptions to adapt to superficial changes;
• Using a combination of cultural and superficial adaptations to bring about change.

In addition, Donahoe (1993) suggests that real change requires a system that has the qualities of being dynamic, open, self-examining, and interactive. These qualities illustrate a system, a culture, that provides a focus for determining what, or if, real change has occurred

in any, organisation – including the sample school which is the subject of this research.

2.2.2   Culture

Culture has its origins in social anthropology. It is used to understand the shared meanings that people in societies have during their interactions (Geertz, 1973). Essentially, culture defines the bindings, the 'conceptual glue' (Donahoe, 1993; Poskitt, 1990; Marsh and Beardsmore, 1985) that connects people. It is shaped by a variety of visible (tangible) and invisible (intangible) forces - the meanings, the attitudes, the values, the norms - that are assembled, continued and generated by people in their social contexts (Zaharlick, 1992). Culture, therefore, is 'captured' through the study of people in social environments.

There are many definitions of culture to be found in the literature, (Owens, 1995; Donahoe, 1993; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Poskitt, 1990; Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1989; Deal, 1985). However, there is an agreement between the definitions that culture can be characterised as "... the shared philosophies, ideologies, values, assumptions, beliefs, expectations, attitudes and norms that knit a community together" (Owens, 1995, p82).

In likening culture with organisational environments, it can be observed that organisations consist of people in settings, who have invisible characteristics - styles - ways of doing things. Culture can be successfully used to describe how organisations work, as well as

being an entity - something which all organisations have (Brown, 1995). Culture is the screen, the lens, (Stoll & Fink, 1997) through which an organisation is viewed and defined by its members. Ralph Kilmann (1989, p.50) writes "... culture to (an) organisation (is) what personality is to (an) individual - a hidden yet unifying theme that provides meaning, direction and mobilisation."

In order to understand the personality, the spirit, the culture, researchers need to journey below the surface features of organisations and search for the forces that move, motivate or galvanise people into action. Stoll and Fink (1997) liken this process to peeling an onion. Under each layer lies an influence, a force that drives the personality.

In defining cultural forces, Leithwood, Begley and Cousins (1994), Bolman and Deal (1991), Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1989), Marsh and Beardsmore (1985); and Deal (1985) provide four common features:

- <u>Shared things - symbols - visuals</u>. These are the physical symbols, including decor, manuals, rules, logos, dress, equipment, certificates, trophies.

- <u>Shared sayings - slogans - verbals</u>. These are the statements typically heard around the place, the language patterns, both verbal and non-verbal manifestations, which people inside the organisation repeatedly use.

- <u>Shared activities - actions - rituals</u>.   These are the things that happen; that people are involved with; which become the behaviours, the regular ways of doing things that define the organisation through meanings and actions.

- <u>Shared feelings - climate</u>.   This is how it feels to work, be part of, the organisation.   It is the morale, the energy level, the teamwork, the excitement, the good and the bad.

A danger for researchers in separating, analysing and defining cultural forces as entities, is the risk of destroying the total character, feel and being of the organisation. Nevertheless, cultural forces, the behaviours, beliefs, customs and habits of the organisation's people, become the 'wellsprings' (Owens, 1995) from which the organisation's values and characteristics, norms and assumptions emerge.

Norms are the ways in which the organisation's culture influences the standards of the social system. They are the rules of behaviour that express the beliefs and values of the organisation as to whether something is appropriate or not. They are often unwritten rules; nevertheless, they can easily be put into statements of the 'should' and 'should not' do.

Assumptions, on the other hand, are the 'backbones' upon which the norms and all other aspects of culture (values, beliefs, behaviours) are constructed.   Assumptions are what is accepted within the organisation as being true or false, possible or impossible. They are

rarely talked about or considered. They are implied and they are clear and powerful influences on what will be perceived and defined as the environment's (Schein, 1985) reality, truth, nature, activity and relationship.

Research indicates that the most influential factor in bringing about change to an educational organisation is that of culture. "School culture is the main support upon which curriculum development is supported...." (Marchesi, 1998, p.31); "School cultures need to be developed whereby teachers and administrators discuss and evaluate new trends in education." (Ediger, 1997, p.36); "Development ... halted when the collaborative, consensus-seeking school culture ... disappeared ...." (Littledyke, 1997, p.258); "If culture changes, everything changes." (Donahoe, 1993, p.305); "Analysis of the school culture led to the theory that the underlying sacred ... values defined ... what changes would actually occur within the school." (Poskitt, 1990, p.11).

In developing the research questions for this study, the notion that culture was a factor in developing change was very much at the forefront of the researcher's thinking. However, Stoll and Fink (1997) have extended this thinking to incorporate the idea that culture is both a product and a process. Stoll and Fink (1997) suggest that culture, as a product, manifests the amassed wisdom that exists. As a process, culture is renewed and recreated when new members arrive. Culture, therefore, is both fixed and active.

If people create culture, then inevitably the culture of an organisation must change as people change. Ediger (1997, p.36) suggests that culture "... change(s) rapidly, or slowly and surely ..." depending on what is happening in an organisation. In extending the researcher's thinking, therefore, what happened in the sample school which is the subject of this research? Were changes rapid or slow and sure? Were there elements of the school's culture that remained stable? And, who was driving these changes?

In pursuing culture as a research area, it is significant to note the responsibility that exists if culture is perceived solely as an objective entity; namely, the concepts that culture can be perceived as something that is independent of people and that there could be an absolute and unquestionable definition of a particular culture. This formation of culture is disputed. Ott (1989, p.50) argues that culture is "... a concept created in people's minds ...". Therefore, it cannot be accountable to a distinct meaning of actuality. At a culture's core are the shapes of unconscious thought, mirrored and strengthened through behaviours that depict systems of knowledge, beliefs, customs and habits of people. It is important to keep these issues at the fore when developing and interpreting any research information, as this information should be observed as one of many feasible portrayals of an organisation.

2.2.3 Educational Effectiveness and Improvement

At the core of educational effectiveness and improvement is the belief that 'schools can and do make a difference' (Hopkins, Ainscow &

West 1994; Sackney, 1991). Essentially, educational effectiveness centres around students and what they learn, while educational improvement focuses on the concurrent and recurring processes which, happen uniquely within an educational environment.

Educational effectiveness and improvement go far beyond academic records. In linking the fields of research, effectiveness and improvement, researchers and practitioners can join outcomes with processes to implement change more effectively (Stoll & Fink, 1997). However, in defining educational effectiveness and improvement, there is a lack of consensus between researchers. Stoll and Fink (1997) suggest that researchers, in defining effectiveness and improvement, clearly affect their orientation to a study, which, in turn, will impact on the results of that study. For this study the researcher suggests that effectiveness and improvement encompass and entwine all the activities that comprise an educational organisation.

Research (Stoll & Fink, 1997; *Good New Zealand Schools*, 1994; Downer, 1991; *Effective Schools*, 1981) suggests that educational organisations that display a mixture of attributes that incorporate:

- Student achievement and character development;

- Teacher characteristics and behaviour, good home, school and community relationships;

- Clear goals, objectives, missions, collaboration, high expectations;

- Tightly, as well as loosely, coupled environments where broad school contexts are agreed upon but where there is freedom in implementation;

- Strong cultures - shared meanings, mottoes, symbols, myths, rituals, informal networks;

- Strong leadership;

are on the road of continually embracing educational effectiveness and improvements.

These attributes cannot be successfully prescribed through rules and regulations (Stoll & Fink, 1997). For effectiveness and improvement to occur, it is necessary for these attributes to be internalised as requisite values, standards, procedures and behaviours (Finn, 1984). This depends on how people work, relate, distribute resources and time, and develop and use their strengths and overcome their weaknesses. In addition, these attributes relate to decision-making (Parlet & Hamilton, 1972) - reflection upon what has transpired and evaluation what has still to transpire. They also provide educators with a means, a process, that will help improve the routines and results of education (Worthen and Sanders, 1991).

Despite the excitement of defining attributes that enhance school improvement and effectiveness, criticism of the research (Walker & Evers, 1997; Sackney, 1991) suggests:

- That the attributes outlined above have been essentially interdependent rather than causal.

- That it is difficult to know whether the attributes have equal influence or whether some encourage more effectiveness and improvement than others.

- That research studies have been narrow, with relatively small sample groups, suggesting that the attributes have been identified more by chance than by design.

- That language, which includes work such as *culture* and *leadership*, is 'fuzzy'.

- That effectiveness is too narrow a concept.

Nevertheless, attributes such as educational improvement and effectiveness provide a step towards the awareness that improvement and effectiveness lie in the accumulation and assimilation of many factors - all of which take time, foresight, practice, evaluation and decision-making. They need to become inherent within the educational organisation, otherwise improvements

and effectiveness can become superficial and, in some cases, collapse (Donahoe, 1993). Culture (as discussed earlier) and leadership, which will now be considered, are two notions that enable effectiveness and improvements to become inherent to an organisation. However, both culture and leadership need to be strong to bring about real change in effectiveness, and improvements.

2.2.4 Leadership

Research (Sashkin & Walberg, 1993) suggests that educational environments, that are consistently highlighted as being 'effective', have leaders who are: strong 'programmatic' leaders; leaders who build the school's culture; and leaders who are not simply administrators. In essence, effective schools have effective leaders who create visions, values and excellence (Sashkin & Walberg 1993).

Thomas Sergiovanni (1992) suggests that effective leaders are also moral leaders; leaders who have attitudes and values that are influenced through a cumulative set of beliefs that include individual, community, political, cultural and educational perspectives. These perspectives evolve into codes of ethical and moral understandings which become the foundation, the driving forces behind the practices of the leadership. At the base of this assumption is the analogy of 'The Heart, The Head, The Hand' (Sergiovanni, 1992). Essentially, the heart states the beliefs, the head transforms the beliefs into mental pictures or visions and the hands transform the visions into actions and practices. This approach views leadership as the function that

transforms the unique beliefs and values of people in the educational community into prescribed needs, wants, visions and goals.

Foster (1994) continues this argument by suggesting that, ideally, successful leadership should be about the ability of humans to: relate to each other, share ideas, share responsibilities and find meanings. Leithwood, Begley and Cousins (1994) expands these phenomena, like Thomas Sergiovanni, to mean transformational leadership. This view advances individual and collective problem-solving capacities, which are used to identify and achieve the goals of an organisation by shaping and motivating the members of that organisation.

In educational organisations, education is about learning, learning is about leading - the leading of all learners along a path of discovery. Contemporary leadership writers (Foster, 1994; Smyth, 1994) use 'transformative' leadership in realising this discovery path. They suggest:

> Leadership is a consensual task, a sharing of ideas and a sharing of responsibilities, where a 'leader' is a leader for the moment only, where the leadership exerted must be validated by the consent of followers, and where leadership lies in the struggles of a community to find meaning for itself. (Foster, 1989, p.61)

Leadership, therefore, lies in helping people perceive themselves and their environment. In doing so, leadership enables people to make changes by questioning their behaviours and using their talents and energies to overcome hindrances in their advancement towards effectiveness, and improvement (Smyth, 1994).

In contrast to conventional leadership, which is characterised by bureaucratic, top-down exchanges (Angus, 1994), transformational leadership has a reliance on the organisation's core leader(s). Research (Coleman, 1994) suggests that an important factor in the success of effective and improving schools lies in the quality of the core leadership and the ability of such leader(s) to relate and communicate to others. It does not suggest that core leaders hold the keys to the challenges of achieving enhanced educational effectiveness. Rather, they are the custodians of the organisation's vision and ethos from which keys can be derived collaboratively and collegially. Ediger (1997) and Donahoe (1993), in researching educational organisations, suggest that it is the principal who is the key person, a core leader, in stressing, assisting and generating influences that bring about change in educational organisations. If the principal is an ineffective leader, then good performances in effectiveness and improvements will not develop. Strong core leaders, on the other hand, can communicate and cultivate an influential school culture, which will enhance effectiveness and improvements. For the purpose of this study, the researcher questioned the roles of the past and current core leaders, namely the principals of the sample school, in effecting real change.

Downer (1991) suggests that core leaders need to show depth in their ability to:

- Portray curriculum expectations and changes;

- Strive for student achievement and happiness;

- Centre teachers on the task of improving the school's programme.

Strong transformational leadership also incorporates the view that educational organisations are not machines but are social systems (Southworth, 1993) that have instrumental (task orientations) and expressive (pastoral) sides that are necessary in creating an educational culture which fosters educational effectiveness, improvement - and real change.

Transformational leadership is a model that lies comfortably within the philosophy of this researcher. It is a leadership model that demonstrates an understanding of the process of change, embraces collegial and collaborative actions to achieve shared visions and shapes cultural beliefs through leading by example. Stoll and Fink (1997) have extended the researcher's thinking by suggesting that transformational leadership is somewhat idealistic. That transformational leadership is a model that does "... not capture the character and nature of leadership in action." (Stoll and Fink, 1997, p.106).

In reality terms, research (Stoll and Fink, 1997; Southworth, 1993) suggests that core leaders, primarily principals in educational organisations, are people who must "... staff schools, meet pupils' needs, attend to staff personal and professional problems, keep open lines of communication to parents and the community and, of course, handle the paperwork ..." (Stoll & Fink, 1997, p.107).

The transformational leadership model does not provide guidance to core leaders in dealing with these issues. Stoll and Fink (1997) suggest that an invitational leadership model provides core leaders with more scope to deal with reality. They suggest that leadership is about communicating messages to individuals and groups in order to build, and act on, shared and evolving visions which enhance educational experiences for pupils, therefore, invitational leadership is centred on four basic premises:

- Optimism. People choose their behaviours. They can choose to realise their potential. Leaders, therefore, can hold high expectations for others.

- Respect. Individuality is respected through behaviours of civility, politeness, courtesy and caring. Respect can be manifested through discussion and dissent.

- Trust. Humans are interdependent; therefore, trust becomes a high form of motivation.

- <u>Intentionality</u>. This is demonstrated in actions of support, caring and encouragement - not in ways that convince, coerce or manipulate but rather in ways that aid policies, practices, programmes and structures that create environments which provide opportunities for participants to function.

Within these premises invitational leaders invite themselves and others, personally and professionally, to take part in pursuits that develop improvements and effectiveness.

Invitational leaders are proficient in communicating, decision-making, conflict resolution and planning; yet they take time to understand the perceptions of others before following a path of action. As Covey (1989, p.235) says, "...seek first to understand and then to be understood."

For the researcher, as for Stoll and Fink (1997), many of the strategies discussed in transformational leadership are employed in the invitational leadership model. The main distinctions which arise are that invitational leadership is open-ended, brings in the reality of actions and unites collegiality and collaboration in the pursuit of educational effectiveness, improvements and real change.

For this research study, the transformational leadership model remains the foundation upon which analysis of data on leadership will be conducted. However, invitational leadership will provide a broader understanding of the actions undertaken by the core leaders.

2.3 : The Entanglement of Change

From the foregoing discussions, it can be inferred that change ultimately depends on 'what happens inside an organisation'. It equates to how people: organise themselves, relate to one another, apportion time and resources, increase their strengths and conquer their weaknesses (Finn, 1984). These phenomena are driven by the behaviours of culture, leadership and the desire for improvement and effectiveness.

Culture determines 'how things are done around here'. It incorporates the rituals, the mottoes, the values, the language patterns, the visual contents of an organisation. These, in turn, are directed and influenced through leadership. Stoll and Fink (1997), Ediger (1997), Donahoe (1993), Sergiovanni (1987), Schein (1985) and Deal (1985) infer that there is a strong correlation between culture, leadership and, ultimately, improvements and effectiveness in organisations. The direction taken by the leadership shapes the cultural behaviours which, in turn, impact on the organisation's effectiveness and improvement in developing and delivering programmes, practices and outcomes. For educational organisations, therefore, the challenge lies in being able to synthesise these concepts thereby developing an expanded panoramic knowledge base from which to develop genuine - real - change. Viewed separately, the behaviours are less effective. However, understanding each behaviour's knowledge base provides a foundation upon which to synthesise the concepts and derive a greater power base from which to centre the data analysis of this research.

2.4 : The Alignment between Corporate and Education's Concept of Organisational Culture

It has been suggested (Bottery, 1994) that issues encountered by educational organisations are often the same as those encountered by the corporate world and that there is valuable knowledge to be gained by rising above territorial conventions. Organisational culture is one such issue.

Interest in organisational culture developed in response to the dissatisfaction experienced by corporate management with regard to organisational problems, the expanding awareness of the dynamics, power and politics of people (Brown, 1995; Ott, 1989) and the serious competition western businesses faced from their Asian opponents.

In response the concept of *culture* was being used to explain the success of Asian and, specifically, Japanese firms through their highly motivated workforces who were dedicated to a core set of assumptions, values and beliefs. Writers (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Peters & Waterman, 1982) highlighted the persuasive correlation between successful performance and the cultural traits of corporate organisations. Nevertheless, Kotter and Heskett (1992) and Beardsmore (1985) argue that powerful and inflexible cultures can be a disadvantage in that they are unable to meet today's constant mode of change. To be successful, they suggest, an organisation needs to have a culture that provides a good 'fit' between what happens around the place and the organisation's strategic direction and

purpose. This would suggest that each organisation is unique and that each organisation's culture is, therefore, unique. What works in one situation may not work in another! This suggests that research into organisational culture does not provide a set of 'golden cultural rules' on how to make a successful organisation. Rather, research provides an insight, a snapshot of the principles, the behaviours, the concepts at work (Ott, 1989)

Although education and corporate entities differ in conceptualization, both share the shapes of unconscious thought; shapes that develop meanings; meanings that develop behaviours, incorporating skilled leadership; behaviours and leadership that develop flexible, progressive cultures; cultures that develop improvements and change. Studies (Owen, 1995; Edwards, 1988; Deal, 1985; Hargreaves & Hopkins, (no date)) indicate that educational environments which display progressive cultures have, as their shapes of thought: coherent instructional goals, a strong commitment to teaching and learning, an emphasis on collegiality and support, celebration of achievement and promotion of intellectuality, open communication and collaboration. In aligning culture, leadership, improvement and change, it can be inferred that educational organisations should operate as learning communities (Jalongo, 1991; Barth, 1990) where teachers engage in professional collegiality by observing and discussing curriculum development and each other's teaching practice.

Research (Ediger, 1997; Littledyke 1997; Staessens, 1993; Poskitt, 1990) highlights the point that the type of school culture correlates

with the amount of innovation and change that occurs. Schools displaying values and beliefs of professional collaboration and collegiality as the nucleus of their culture were the most innovative and receptive to change.

There is no difference in using the notion of *culture* to enhance effectiveness and foster improvements to an environment - whether it be corporate or educational. The alignment highlights the point that those environments which have cultural assumptions and norms, behaviours and characteristics, outperform those that do not (Owens, 1995). Essentially, culture is a concept for a system that transmits both tangible and intangible manifestations through behaviours. It can be influenced and steered (Edwards, 1988) through what a leaders says and does. Culture is a concept about which all leaders need to be vigilant in promoting effectiveness and improvements and, ultimately, bringing real change in <u>any</u> organisation, including the sample school which is the subject of this research.

2.5 : Channelling the Research Questions

As stated in Chapter One, the questions raised in this research, namely:

- When working towards improving a school's organisation, which elements were involved in developing change - culture / effectiveness, improvement / leadership?

- What changes in the school's organisational culture do teachers, students and parents consider have occurred?

- Have the changes to the organisation impacted on educational effectiveness and improvement for teachers, students and parents?

were formulated when the researcher formalized an initial maze of thoughts centred around what had occurred in an educational organisation and, in particular, the organisation in which the researcher had just become a member of staff. In reviewing and discussing literature on change, culture, educational effectiveness, improvement and leadership, the researcher called upon personal philosophies as a foundation upon which to initiate this study. However, the researcher was not bound by personal constraints and was encouraged to expand and also incorporate the beliefs and thoughts of researchers and writers in the fields of change, culture, improvement, effectiveness and leadership within both educational and corporate entities. In doing this, the researcher encountered a deeper context within which to channel and focus the research questions and thinking. The result has seen the research data being analysed and interpreted upon the foundations of current, post-modern, thinking. This has enabled the researcher to form opinions in the quest to understand 'what happened, and is happening, around the research school,' as well as to reflect on the broader enigmas involved in creating real change in educational organisations.

2.6 : Summary

This literature review has set the scene and provided a foundation of current thinking on the entanglement of behaviours - culture, effectiveness, improvement and leadership - that create real change in organisations, whether they are educational or corporate business entities.   It is necessary to deal with all of these, because each behaviour, if viewed separately, tells only part of the story. However, exploring and expanding each behaviour's knowledge base provides a foundation upon which to synthesise the concepts and to derive a greater understanding in exploring and interpreting how effective at least one primary school has been in creating 'real change' within its organisational culture.   This literature review has enabled the research questions to be channelled and focused in such a way as to specifically address the researcher's quest for meaning.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 : Introduction

This research lent itself to a 'qualitative' approach. This enabled the researcher to design a study around an inquiry process, based on a complex, holistic picture, moulded with words and views from participants and conducted in a natural setting (Creswell, 1994). In examining methodological processes, it became apparent that, for this research, case study was the most appropriate methodology as it provided the researcher with a foundation from which patterns, of interconnected thoughts, relationships and sets of ideas emerged (Creswell, 1994). Case study provided the researcher with a means of explaining what happened in the organisation.

This section, through the use of contemporary literature and research, describes and provides background information on, and justification for: the research site, the type of methodological design, and methods of data gathering. The final part of this

> "You know my method. It is founded upon the
> observance of trifles."
>
> (Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 1975, A Dictionary of Modern Quotations, p.63)

section provides a discussion on ethical considerations, and procedures that were considered and implemented to protect the anonymity of both the research site and the participants.

3.2   :   Research Site Approval

The research setting is a contributing primary school that caters for children in the junior (school entry to year three) and middle (years four to six) years of their education. The area has a Statistics Department decile rating of three (on a scale of 1 to 10, one being the lowest). The setting, which caters primarily for working class families - with a small percentage of identified Maori and Pacific Island students - has a teaching staff of nine, including the Principal (non-teaching) and a part-time Reading Recovery Teacher. The Board of Trustees consists of five people. Qualifications held by the teaching staff include: Diplomas of Teaching (eight); Bachelor of Teaching degrees either completed (one) or partially completed (one); Reading Recovery trained (four).

In pursuing approval for the above setting to be used in this thesis, the proposal was first introduced orally to the Principal of the school, then to the Board of Trustees at a Board meeting, and finally to the staff at a staff meeting. The Principal and Board of Trustees gave oral approval, which was granted on the understanding that a written summary would be submitted, detailing what the research was to cover, how much time would be involved, and including a copy of the formal consent form to be signed by participants. Following the staff

meeting, each staff member was individually approached and oral approval sought. Some staff members had questions and concerns covering: confidentiality, what was actually required of them and what type of information they would be required to provide. Again, a written summary of the proposal was given to each staff member along with a formal consent form.

During these initial meetings and individual discussions it was made quite clear that, at any stage during the research project, participants had the right to withdraw. Staff were also given the opportunity to discuss the research proposal with the Principal without the researcher's being present (Appendix A).

Parent and child participation in the research was sought through invitation. Parents were invited through the school's newsletter (Appendix B), and children by their classroom teacher (not the researcher). All parties, including children, who indicated an interest were given an information sheet and consent form (Appendix C).

3.3 : <u>Research Design - A 'Case Study'</u>

As a chosen methodology, a case study provides an in-depth 'snap shot', a view, a look at an individual, group or phenomenon. It is based on the understanding that human systems develop a typical whole or existence which simply cannot be a loose collection of traits. Researchers (Sturman, 1997; Stake, 1980; Adelman, Jenkins &

Kemmis, 1976) suggest that the task is to explain 'why things happen as they do'. Case studies require in-depth investigations of the interdependencies of parts and patterns that emerge. These, in turn, provide opportunities for researchers to predict and/or explain, as opposed to simply describe.

Over the years, opposing beliefs, controversy and conflict (Walker & Evers, 1997) have pursued all methodologies, justifications, meanings and truths. In recent times, there has developed a recognition of the value of blending different methodologies (Struman, 1997, Walker & Evers, 1997) for which a 'case study' provides a favourable encompassing umbrella.

Increasing amounts of educational research have been accumulated under a case study umbrella, even though a case study research has been regarded with some scepticism and animosity (Adelman, Jenkins & Kemmis, 1976). Nevertheless, a case study services various disciplines due to its ability to address both personal and social complexities. A case study can be used to build understanding, draw conclusions, and to allow interpreters to make up their own minds (Stake, 1980). Stake (1980, p.5) observes, "a case study ... is not a specific technique; it is a way of organising social data so as to preserve the unitary character of the social object being studied."

The main contrast between a case study and other research studies and methods is that a case study (also known as the *bounded system*)

is focused on the search for understanding and meaning of its characteristics and complexities which are relevant to the research problem at the time; and from which "... patterns may emerge in various ways, for example: as a contingency, as one thing consistently depending on another; or as a repeated sequence of action" (Stake, 1980; p.6). Case study researchers are concerned primarily with pattern explanation (Sturman, 1997), due to the relevance that patterns have when there are various factors with particular relationships. This requires an accurate portrayal of the case, which takes into account an in-depth comprehension of the relationships that exist within the study. The process is qualitative by nature and provides a cognitive experience which is more easily integrated into an interpreter's experience than a quantitative record would be (Stake, 1980). Nevertheless, a case study, as a multi-methodology medium, can complement, and assist in interpreting findings from quantitative research methods (Sturman, 1997).

Case Study Criticism

A case study, like other methodological designs, faces criticisms. One of the enduring criticisms relates to the interpretation of patterns into generalisations that can then be connected to other cases or settings. Sturman (1997) maintains that a case study lends itself to a process of naturalistic generalisation - a way of knowing based on experience of how things are, why they are, how people feel about them, and how they are likely to be, either later on, or in other places which are familiar. This is in contrast to the scientific,

formalistic generalisations which enable understanding to be reached through experimentation and induction.

Atkinson and Delamont (1985) contend that:

- <u>In Defining A Case Study</u>: It is extraordinarily difficult to provide an adequate definition for a case study due to its being viewed as a model without the requirements of a model – agreed subject matter, methods, theories or exemplars. The result is that a case study definition is unusually ambiguous and symbolic.

- <u>The Methodological 'Cop-Out'</u>: A Case study research is deficient in methods and methodological self-awareness due to its obscurity of purpose, loose relationships between concepts and observations, indifferent or absent conceptual structure and theory – and weakness in implementing research methods.

- <u>In General</u>: The shortcomings of a case study approach imply that its proponents are limited as practitioners, will be unable to progress and generate a coherent cumulative research tradition, and that they are merely substituting one variety of theoretical findings for another.

A case study methodology challenges these criticisms by:

- Being strong in reality.
- Being a way of sanctioning generalisations.
- Recognising the complexity of social truths.
- Collecting data using a variety of methods.
- Presenting data in a more publicly accessible format.
- Servicing a multiple audience.
- Enabling the reader to judge the implications of the study for themselves.
- Being a step to action.

(Adelman, Jenkins & Kemmis, 1976)

In choosing to use a case study as a methodological design, the researcher overcame criticisms by establishing:

- A philosophical foundation (refer pp.47-52) from which this case study research can be sanctioned.

- A clear outline of the subject matter to be researched by initiating a clear set of research questions, aims and objectives (refer pp.4-5).

- A multiple set of data collection methods (refer pp.55-63) that enabled the researcher to crosscheck information during data synthesis.

- A sensitivity to the social consequences of the research in terms of truth-telling and the effects of the research on the life and circumstances of those in, and around, the setting.

A case study does not claim its authority. Rather, it demonstrates it (Kemmis, 1980) through cherishing the mysteries of social life by inviting the researcher to write a justifiable account of the 'way of life, behaviours and actions'.

In attaining genuine understanding, a case study illuminates (rather than exposes) social life. A case study creates platforms for understandings and for actions, it uses social life as its objects, with its reflective gift as its aim (Kemmis, 1980). In essence, a case study research is naturalistic, reflective, emancipatory, political and strategic. As such, critical theory provides a philosophical justification that empowers a case study to be a trustworthy form of research.

Philosophical Justification

Jurgen Habermas's critical theory, 'knowledge-constitutive interests' (addressed by Carr & Kemmis, 1986), rejects the notion that knowledge is an unadulterated intellectual accomplishment in which an aware subject is disinterested or detached from everyday happenings. Habermas suggests that, if this were the case, then human beings would have no interest in acquiring knowledge. He, therefore, defines *knowledge* as *the outcome of human activity motivated by needs and*

interests. Human activities become intuitive and accepted as cognitive acts that constitute methods of thought through which reality is composed and executed (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Habermas' perspective suggests that there are three primary, yet separate, forms of knowledge-constitutive interests:

- <u>Technical Cognitive Interest</u>: This manipulates and controls the physical and social environments and focus on the means by which individuals master their environments.

- <u>Practical Interest</u>: This determines the meaning and validity of statements of the cultural sciences that describe and explain the meanings people have which shape their language, social existence, norms, acceptances and practices.

- <u>Emancipatory Interest</u>: This forms the nucleus of critical theory as it enables transformation and self-actualization to transpire by providing a means of liberation from the mechanisms and processes that were formerly hidden. It is the power of self-reflection.

(Clark, 1997)

What actually constitutes critical theory is ardently debated by post modern, natural and empirical driven social and educational theorists. These theorists question "... the connection between knowledge and political action, the role of science and hermeneutics in critical inquiry ..." (Clark, 1997, p.45). They suggest that critical theory has

no congruent set of principles. Nevertheless, contemporary critical theorists (Bronner & Kellner, 1989; Foster, 1986; Prunty, 1985; Giroux, 1983; Bates, 1983; Apple, 1982) argue that critical theory provides a philosophical foundation that:

- Is more useful and is a politically relevant alternative.

- Is a corrective framework, due to its non-dogmatic stand for emancipation from all forms of oppression.

- Provides a base from which to pursue a more socially just educational and social environment, in both practice and in theory.

Thus, critical theory questions the philosophical framework of how people organise their lives or how their lives are organised from them. It investigates the 'taken for granted' assumptions and human relationships - especially those of class, power, domination and repression. Critical theory asks participants to examine and analyse, to hold up what they believe in and ask for those beliefs to be considered more fully (Foster, 1986).

As a philosophical justification for a case study, critical theory offers a perspective that is not entirely empirical or interpretive. However, it is one that offers participants a central role in understanding the conditions that shape, limit and then determine actions to bring about change (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

Nevertheless, critical theory is not beyond judgement and critics (Clark, 1997; Lakomski, 1997; Carr & Kemmis, 1986) raise substantial questions about the qualifications and weaknesses of the philosophical basis of critical theory for researchers. Clark (1997) highlights three major objectives as:

- <u>Knowledge-constitutive cognitive interests</u>: It is argued that the explanation of these interests does not provide a clear understanding of what *cognitive interests* means.

- <u>Knowledge differentiation</u>: It is argued that it is fiction to suggest that there are different types of *inquiry and knowledge*.

- <u>Communicative competence</u>: The argument here lies in the question, *'When is a consensus rational?'* Lakomski (1997) proposes that it is difficult to ever suggest that a consensus is rational, because the questions which then arises is, *'What is rational?'* If the response is further dialogue, then 'rational' can become a continuous occurrence and thereby a consensus can never be reached. It becomes an infinite action which rules out the possibility of making true statements about reality (Lakomski, 1997).

Another major concern of critical theory lies in the gaps that exist between its concepts and its concrete practical consciousness -

which can be a source of considerable frustration to those who use critical theory as praxis (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

Critical theory has crucial practical and philosophical problems which, according to Lakomski, (1997, p.172), "... need to be resolved if the critical theory of society is to be relevant for this world ...." Nevertheless, in supporting critical theory as a philosophical foundation for a case study researcher, it must be said that critical theory is, in itself, open to evolution and modification. Inherently self-critical, it offers an opinion for discussion on social and educational reality. Critical theory is different from postmodern theories which assault all forms of thought. Against all the allied and rebel excesses, critical theory seeks an emancipatory alternative to the existing order (Bronner & Kellner, 1989) in which a case study researcher can play a role of either maintaining or challenging the status quo.

Critical theory assists a case study researcher, in their endeavours to promote a socially just and equitable society, by providing them both an umbrella that enables in-depth investigations and a means to predict and/or explain and act, as opposed to simply describing 'ways of life - behaviours - actions'.

In choosing to use critical theory as the philosophical foundation for this research, the researcher could relate to the manner in which critical theory is open to, and encourages, in-depth investigations,

discussions and self-reflection. In using these actions the researcher believed that critical theory would provide a means to question the conditions that were shaping and limiting the existence of the sample school which was the subject of this research. In doing so it was envisaged by the researcher that critical theory would provide an insight as to how the changes perceived by the participants were being adapted and adopted in the sample school.

3.4   :   Research Methods

3.4.1 Theoretical Approach Underpinning the Methodology

As a methodological data gathering package, a case study is not a standard package. Nevertheless, it can establish the form that a specific study may take (Adelman, Jenkins & Kemmis, 1976). Sturman (1997) defines four forms of a case study methodology as follows:

- Ethnographic - which involves a single in-depth study.

- Action research - where the focus is on bringing about change in the case under study.

- Evaluative - involving the evaluation of programmes.

- Educational - which is designed to enhance the understanding of educational action.

Researchers attempting to interpret and understand organisational, social or ethnic culture have sanctioned ethnographic research as being the most readily applicable (Wolcott, 1988) because of its characteristic of being able to relate to the wider spectrum of qualitative research. It is an approach that aims to describe and interpret human behaviour in a naturalistic setting, and one which has evolved due to dissatisfaction with quantitative methods used in social science research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

Ethnographic research is the 'quest for meaning' (Lutz, 1984). Freel (1995, p.3) defines it as "... (the) scientific quest for meaning ... (the) quest to understand the human condition... (which) offers a systematic avenue for discovering the connections among the various factors that encompass the lives of people."

Ethnography is the 'thick' description (Lutz, 1984; Geertz, 1973) from which researchers attempt to build an archetype of the important and recurring variables which describe the way of life, through the sensitive interpretation of what is observed and collected, with the ability to get beneath the surface meaning.

Over recent years, educational settings have welcomed ethnographic research as an alternative way of looking for, and inquiring into, that 'thick description' about what is happening in education and educational settings. Examples of ethnographic research in practice are Littledyke (1997), Poskitt (1990) and Doyle (1972). These

researchers used ethnographic research to analyse events and identify patterns of meaning as well as taking account of the wider socio-political context, including personal biases, about the people and the issues being studied.

It would be egotistical and unrealistic to claim that the present research is unfailingly ethnographic. Nevertheless, as a premise, this researcher adopted ethnographic wisdom and approaches. This is due to the close relationship that the techniques used in this research demonstrate to those used by sociologists and anthropologists studying human behaviour in terms of cultural contexts (Wolcott, 1988). However, from a realistic perspective, this research has been confined by the requirements of the researcher; namely:

- To balance the collection of data around normal employment commitments. In a normal study, the duration of fieldwork is at least a year (Zaharlick, 1992; Lubeck, 1985,). However, in this study, the data collection occurred over a three-month period.

- To define the roles of being both a member of the teaching staff and the researcher.

- To adopt a careful position with regard to the ethnographic method due to the inexperience of the researcher with this method. Sensitive interpretation takes practice (Wolcott, 1995).

3.4.2 Research Techniques

Research techniques used in this case study were centred in the tradition of sociological and anthropological fieldwork, which stresses that ethnographic research, unlike other research methods, does not only use one research technique, one instrument or one encounter upon which to base a study (Adelman, Jenkins & Kemmis, 1976). By using multiple sources of information, the researcher was able to crosscheck (Creswell, 1994) information during data synthesis. As a result the following techniques were used.

Participant Observation

Participant observation can be described as "... a period of intense social interaction between the researcher and the subjects ... during which time data ... (are) unobtrusively and systematically collected" (Bogdan, 1972, p.3). It permits the researcher to experience ways of life as they happen by being among the members of the group being studied. Wolcott (1988), defines three types of participant observation, namely:

- 'Active participant' - where the observer is totally involved in the setting.

- 'Limited observer' - where the researcher is partly involved in the setting, but has not been totally assimilated.

- 'Passive observer' - status where the researcher is not involved in what is happening, but is standing back and looking.

Wolcott (1988) observes that being a full-time member of staff makes a genuine participant observer study possible. However, it can also divert from the research effort the energy that full-time work demands. Nevertheless, the advantages of being a participant observer are that there is built-in validity and that the researcher is both an insider and an outsider in relation to the setting (Wiseman & Aron, 1970).

As the researcher of this study was also a member of the research setting, the active participant status was undeniable. This did not mean that disadvantages were not conceivable. The 'notion' of the site and the fact that its members were part of a research study had the potential to alter the dynamics of the participants. In addition, having a familiarity with the mundane, everyday events, could have diminished the sensitivity of the researcher to these being at the core of the school's culture. It is impossible to guarantee that being an active participant, with the knowledge that the school's culture was being studied, did not have an influence on the life of the school. However, the researcher is of the opinion that life continued very much as usual during the research period, primarily because the researcher <u>was a member of the staff</u>. A review of the research data showed that there was no indication by the participants (either parents, teachers or children) that 'life' changed around the research

site during the data collection period. However, the researcher acknowledges that this aspect was not raised as part of the research.

In undertaking a participant observation study, the researcher used unstructured (ethnographic) observations rather than structured (systematic) observations.

Structured observations are the processes whereby an observer contrives a systematic set of disciplines for recording and classifying events. The reports are frequently recorded in numerical or quantitative terms and form the foundation for statistical analyses. On the other hand, unstructured observations are where observers arrive at an understanding of the meaning of social relations and processes in events which are conveyed by narratives and field-notes (Croll, 1986). Each of these methodologies has its own particular purposes:

- Structured observations furnish studies with a methodology that can provide a descriptive overview of specific features of events and systems, measure the effectiveness of different approaches to events and systems, and measure the impact of one aspect of process on another, such as attitude and test scores.

- Unstructured observations, (ethnographic approaches) on the other hand, provide a picture of a "... way of life ..." (Wolcott, 1988, p.188). Their significance is acquired by noticing how

ordinary people, in particular settings, make sense of their experience.

In undertaking observational research, there are advocates who speculate that each process, structured (Croll, 1986) and unstructured (Wolcott, 1988), is quite unique and, as such, needs to be kept distinctive. However, there are examples of New Zealand case studies (Jones, 1988; McCausland & Hall, 1985; Halliday & McNaughton, 1982) where research has incorporated elements of both structured and unstructured observational methodologies. These examples highlight how each process, in forming a unity, can complement the quest for deeper understanding, truth, justice and knowledge.

Due to the time constraints and commitments to full time employment, the researcher used unstructured observations to collect data. These unstructured observations were made over a five week period, during the second term of the school year. In collecting the data the researcher did not go around the school with a pad and pen overtly taking notes. In the evening, the researcher would write a reflective account of that day's observations, noting times and events. These observations were then characterised under the headings of *culture* (further broken-down to *norms* and *assumptions* with sub-headings of *visuals, verbals, rituals* and *climate*), *educational effectiveness, improvement* and *leadership*. These heading were defined (in Chapter

Two) as being the behaviours that create real change. The reflective diary was used to crosscheck, with interviews and document data collation, the community's beliefs of 'what happens around this place'. (Appendix D - example of diary - reflective note keeping and characterisation into headings).

Interviews

In establishing what the school's community (teachers, parents and children) believed the school's culture was and how - if indeed - it had changed and improved educational outcomes, interviewing offered an effective means to develop a broad understanding.

Ethnographic studies tend to picture interviews in a *"very broad sense"* (Wolcott, 1988, p.194) which encompasses activities that intrude on the research setting with the intent of acquiring information directly from the research subjects. These activities can incorporate:

- Structured Key Informant Interviews: Conducted with people, in whom one invests a disproportionate amount of time because they appear to be well informed, articulate, approachable or available.

- Spontaneous and Informal Interviews: These range from conversations to direct questions.

- <u>Questionnaires</u>: Particularly when working in settings that have either busy people or people who are not easily accessible.

Within this research, parents, teachers, children (in years five and six of their school lives), members of the Board of Trustees and the Principal of the school, were given the opportunity to become key informants.

Interviews were formally arranged and took place over terms two and three of the school year. They were semi-structured in nature and were centred on a conversation as the main data collection technique. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) observe that conversation is a common feature of ethnographic interviews, due to the fact that conversations encourage participants to talk on their own terms.

Each interview generally lasted one hour, with all participants giving permission for the conversations to be audio taped. For parents and teachers, interviews were held at a time and place of their choice. Venues varied from participants' private homes, to the researcher's own classroom, to participating teachers' classrooms, the school's interview room and the Principal's office. Interview times generally occurred between three and six in the evening or from seven to eight o'clock at night. This ensured that a more relaxed atmosphere developed, where the conversation flowed between the researcher and the interviewee. This allowed the interviewer to spontaneously react to the statements, ideas and thoughts of the interviewee's

message, to ensure that it was appropriately interpreted; as well as enabling the researcher to concentrate on the conversation rather than on note taking. Each interview tape was transcribed by the researcher, and returned to each participant for verification before being used in data analysis (Appendix E - example of a mixture of taped interviews transcribed but not yet analysed).

The children's views were gathered as part of their normal school lives and came under the Social Studies curriculum (Culture and Heritage Strand). The researcher, initially, was going to take a small group of children through the process. However, due to the fact that 42 children (from two classrooms) returned signed consent forms, this task become unmanageable for the researcher, and the classroom teachers undertook the data collection process. The teachers were instructed to use classroom discussions/conversations as the prime avenue for collecting information. Information from participating students was collated by the classroom teachers and charted to represent collected views (Appendix F - examples of children's responses to research focus questions in chart form but not yet analysed).

In assisting participants to focus on the school's culture, through reflection on past ways of life compared to what is happening today, and due to the inexperience of the researcher as an interviewer, the researcher developed a set of focus questions. The same set of focus questions was used with all participating groups, including the children,

and originated from the writings of culture 'experts' (Schein, 1992; Ott, 1989). Conversations were not limited to these questions, and this resulted in the discussions' expanding and extending the researcher's thinking. (Appendix G - Sample of 'spring board' focus questions.)

In collating and analysing the data collected from all the interview groups, transcripts and charts were either transcribed, or cut up, and placed on analysis charts. Common words, ideas and comments were organised under the same headings as used in analysing reflective diary data, namely: *culture* (defined as the norms and assumptions, the visuals, verbals, rituals and climate), *educational effectiveness*, *improvement* and *leadership*. (Appendix H - examples of charts of interview data categorised under headings.)

Document Collection

The researcher used the school's Charter, the Educational Review Office's last report on the school's educational position and the school's policies, strategic long-term plan, organisation booklet and curriculum overview booklet, to identify and compare any links (reflective and current) with the community's beliefs and assumptions on life around this place. Key words, ideas and comments were copied from the documents and written under the same headings as for reflective diary notes and interview groups' data. (Appendix I - example of documented data categorised under headings.)

Documents are used as a source of information because it is suggested that written material may provide a reflective link between administration, the setting's development and practice (Wolcott, 1988). While written material is neither unproblematic nor neutral, due to the fact that it is written in social contexts (Delamont, 1992), it does provide a layer of 'analytical' material (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) which this researcher used to crosscheck during data synthesis.

Data Synthesis

The data obtained from unstructured observations, interviews and document collection, were combined using the process of identifying and highlighting common themes, ideas, trends, patterns and words. These common themes were, again, placed under the major headings identified in chapter two - namely: *culture, educational effectiveness, improvement* and *leadership*. (Refer: Taxonomy Chart showing synthesized data, Chapter Four, p.113). The synthesized data enabled the researcher to identify and highlight the major emerging themes that guided this organisation towards creating real change.

3.4.3 Time Line - Research Implementation

The *Thesis Time-Line* chart (refer page 64) highlights the time involved in implementing this thesis.

Thesis Time-Line : 1999 – 2000

Jan/Feb 1999
: Preliminary literature reading.
: Focusing ideas, assumptions.
: Chapter 1 written and sent to
  supervisor.

March/May 1999
: Application made to the Ethics Committee,
  Massey University
: Re-worked research proposal.
: Consultation meetings with
  research site.
: Revised application sent to Ethics
  Committee.
: Approval granted by Ethics
  Committee.
: Chapter 2 – Literature Review (1st draft)
  sent to Supervisor.

June/August – 1999
: Data collection started.
: Children's sessions undertaken.
: Observations – started – written
  daily.
: Observations completed.
: Parent interviews started.
: Chapter 3 – Methodology Written –
  sent to supervisor (1st draft).

Sept/Nov – 1999
: Parent interviews completed.
: Parent transcripts typed and
  given back for approval.
: Teacher interviews started.
: Teacher interviews completed,
  transcripts typed and given back
  for approval.
: Data analysis started.
: Chapters 1 & 2 revised.

Dec/January 2000
: Data analysis continued.
: Chapter 4 – Results written (1st draft)
  sent to supervisor.

Feb/May 2000
: Revised Chapters 1, 2 & 3 sent to
  supervisor.
: Chapters 5 and 6 written (1st draft)
  sent to supervisor.

June/August 2000
: Feedback from supervisor received.
: Rewrite of all chapters undertaken.
: Chapters sent for grammar check.
: Chapters sent to supervisor (3rd draft)

Sept/Oct 2000
: Supervisor revising.

Nov 2000
: Approval given for binding.
: Research participants given
  opportunity to review completed
  thesis.
: Ethics Committee revisited.
: Thesis submitted for marking.

3.5 : Ethical Considerations/Procedures in the Research

The major ethical issues in conducting this research were centred on obtaining the appropriate methods for: informed consent, respecting individual privacy and confidentiality, being aware of the power dimensions of the relationships between the researcher and the participants, and ensuring that the research procedures were adequate to answer the questions being asked (Bouma, 1996).

As ethnographic research is always intrusive, especially in participant observation which intrudes in the life of the participants and where sensitive information is disclosed (Creswell, 1994), the following precautions were engaged to protect the setting and participants' rights and anonymity:

- Research objectives were explained both orally and in written form, so that the participants were fully aware of what the research was about and how it was to be conducted.

- Written consent was sought from participants with the understanding that any participation was voluntary and that the participant had the right to withdraw at any time (Hartley, 1982).

- All transcriptions of interviews and observations that involved specific participants were submitted to the participants for verification prior to being used in the research analysis.

- Research reporting - prior to final publication, the thesis was submitted to the research site and all participants for their review and consent to publish.

- In protecting confidentiality and privacy, all efforts were made to ensure that identities, locations of individuals and the setting were concealed in any published results, with collected data being held in an anonymous form and kept securely away from the research site (Punch, 1994).

Delamont (1992) observes that good research is highly tuned to the inter-relationship of the researcher and the participants. Therefore, in dealing with the power dimensions of the relationship between the researcher and the participants, it was hoped that, in being part of the research setting, Punch's (1994, p.87) "... lone wolf ..." analogy (where the visibility and status of the researcher enable the researcher to blend into the research field) prevailed. However, the participants' trust needed to be gained and retained.   It took the researcher time to break down the social barriers and be accepted as part of the teaching team by all the school's community. This made this researcher conscious of the need to be careful to ensure that none of the participants who had placed trust in the researcher had that trust betrayed.

The possibility that the participants would talk and behave in ways that they thought the researcher wanted was an ethical consideration which could not be discounted and, therefore, must be recognised.

Researcher bias was another ethical consideration for the researcher. All forms of research include personal bias which for this researcher encompassed preconceived ideas, values and assumptions, due primarily to the researcher's interest in the concept of culture and its effects on people and environments. Secondly, the researcher's employment in the research site was established under the 'new' administration. Again, the researcher must acknowledge a bias towards the ethos of the new administration. Highlighting these biases enabled the researcher both to be conscious of, and to differentiate between unfavourable bias (that which corrupts) and moral bias (that which helps get the work done) thereby allowing the researcher to focus on, and arouse interest in, the research (Wolcott, 1995).

In ensuring that this research was ethically sound, the researcher submitted to the Human Ethics Committee of Massey University a copy of the proposed research outlining:

- The objectives, aims and questions of the research.

- Research methodology.

- Information and consent forms.

- That the researcher was also a staff member of the research site.

The Human Ethics Committee expressed three major concerns:

1) Possible Intimidation: The researcher held a management position at the research site. The Committee questioned whether staff members who participated in the research might not feel intimidated because of the position held by the researcher.

2) Impartiality: The Committee discussed the need for the researcher to be impartial, and not allow personal beliefs and prejudices to influence the responses of the participants.

3) Embargo: The Committee questioned the need to discuss issues of embargo at the end of the research to ensure that all parties involved in the thesis are protected.

These three concerns were discussed at length.

The researcher indicated to the Human Ethics Committee that the fact that she was a bona-fide member of the research site was a fundamental component in her initiating, and conducting, the thesis.

The Human Ethics Committee agreed that the researcher, whilst being a bona-fide member of the research site, could also be a researcher. However, this joint role was to be mentioned in the Participants' Information Sheets.

In addressing the matter of impartiality, the researcher identified that personal bias and prejudices will be part of any research study and, therefore, must be acknowledged. Indeed, the researcher questioned whether anyone could be totally free of personal bias and prejudice? As for protecting all parties involved in the project, the researcher agreed that issues of embargo would be discussed at the end of the research with the Human Ethics Committee of Massey University.

To enable the research to commence, the researcher complied with the Human Ethics Committee's request for:

- Copies of staff meeting agenda (Appendix A) informing staff of their right to withdraw at any time from the research and the school's newsletter (Appendix B) inviting parents to participate in the research, be held on file by the Committee.

- Amended information sheets (Appendix C) for all participants.

- Formal written approval from the Board of Trustees of the research site research and Principal (Appendix J and K) for the research to be conducted.

Approval from the Human Ethics Committee of Massey University was conveyed to the researcher in a letter (Appendix L).

3.6 : Summary

In pursuing this research study, the research site was defined, and approval sought and given, by all participants in writing. The methodological processes, through a philosophical foundation, were discussed and legitimised by way of literature and documentation that associated a case study with ethnographic data collection techniques and the theory of organisational culture. It was envisaged that this 'quest for meaning' would bring to light the answers for the research questions. However, as with most research studies, there were challenges: such as achieving a balance between work and research commitments, the newness of the researcher as a researcher, the researcher's ignorance in using and interpreting a case study as a research method and, finally, the time it took to collect and analyse the data, and write the completed thesis.

Having an awareness that ethical issues also were involved when conducting research was a fundamental principle for this researcher, especially as the researcher was an active participant observer in the research site. It was for this reason that careful consideration was given to the possible ethical repercussions of this research upon its participants, and care was taken to ensure not only informed consents were obtained, but also that the issues of privacy and confidentiality, relationships and research procedures were fully taken into account.

"The obvious truth is that the moment any matter has passed through the human mind it is finally and forever spoilt for all purposes .... It has become a thing incurably mysterious and infinite; this mortal has put on mortality." (Chesterton, G.K., 1975, A Dictionary of Modern Quotations, p.41:26)

Chapter Four

"Thick Description" - The Portrayal of the Cultural Situation

4.1 : Introduction

In developing the researcher's quest for meaning, 'thick' description (Lutz, 1984; Geertz, 1973) has been used to portray the important and recurring variables that would enable any changes and improvements to the educational organisation to be defined. In building this description, data were categorised by using the major headings set out in Chapter Two: *culture, educational effectiveness, improvement* and *leadership*. From this information the "...key issues, concepts and opinions..." (Bouma, 1996, p.184), the *norms* and *assumptions*, were identified and they are presented in this chapter. (Refer to the Appendix Section for examples of charts showing data collation and key concepts being identified.)

This chapter begins with an overview of the setting, incorporating a brief history of the school. This is followed by a description of the school's physical and organisational structure, the aim of which is to orientate the reader to the sample school which is the subject of this

> "The (entity) ... has been so completely taken to pieces that nobody is able to look on (it)... again as a whole .... (It) is no longer an individual ... but a jumble of ... data."
> (Kenneth Walker, 1975, A Dictionary of Modern Quotations, p.233:8)

research. Secondly, the data are presented under the umbrella of the major headings, as noted above, with *culture* being broken into four sub-headings, namely: *visuals, verbals, rituals* and *climate*, to enable a more in-depth assessment to be made. The last section synthesises these concepts in an endeavour to identify major emerging themes that will assist the researcher in answering the research questions. These themes will be discussed in Chapter Five.

4.2 : The Setting

This section provides an introduction to the school in which the cultural study is located. It assists the reader to 'get a feel for' and 'build a picture of' the sample school.

Background

In the early 1970's, a large production plant was built which led to an increase in population of the area. As a result, the school was built to accommodate escalating rolls and to meet the needs of the surrounding district. The school was established under the auspices of localised Education Board structures, whereby principals and teachers went through a grading system and applied to the local centralised Boards for positions. It has had two former principals and at its peak, the school had in excess of 350 pupils and a teaching staff of 13 (excluding the principal) plus six auxiliary staff. In the past the teaching staff has had a gender mixture, with at least one male teacher employed at any given time. There were a total of 11 permanent classrooms with one re-locatable classroom brought in

(during the early 1980's) to cope with the expanding roll. Today, the roll stands at around 150 pupils, with eight teaching staff - excluding the principal - all of whom are female, and there are three auxiliary staff. The re-locatable classroom was removed in the early 1990's.

Structure

Physical

The school is set on the fringes of an urban area surrounded by a housing estate - although some sections of rural lifestyle blocks are visible from the school. One of the school's immediate neighbours is the local kindergarten, which is just over the fence. The school is divided into five separate blocks. Block A is the administration block which houses the staff-room, medical room, the centralised art supplies, the clerical office, the interview room and the Principal's office. Block B has four single classrooms (senior syndicate) plus two centralised curriculum resource rooms. Block C consists of two single classrooms (junior syndicate) and one double room which is currently utilized as the school's hall. This block also houses the reading resources for juniors. Block D comprises two single classrooms; one is used to house excess furniture, gymnastic equipment and the school's sporting and cultural uniforms: the Itinerant Resource Teacher of Reading uses the other. This block also has the Reading Recovery room and houses the centralised mathematics resources. Block E has one classroom (junior syndicate), the school's library - and houses reading resources for the seniors. Although there is no purpose built school hall, there is a large greenhouse, which is used for all

indoor physical education activities and some whole school presentations. Recreational areas comprise a large playground which all children use, two concrete areas for all external playing - such as roller-blading, skateboarding, soccer (when the playing field is too muddy) and net ball - with the physical education equipment shed placed in front of the larger of the two areas, and a large playing field at the back of Block C which has soccer, rugby and hockey posts permanently erected. In the front of Block B there are picnic tables, which can have sun umbrellas (for those sunny days) erected. There is limited natural sun-safe shelter in the school, so the school has purchased shading, which the children put out daily during summer. Along a concrete wall that separates the playing field and the classrooms a mural has been painted which depicts the school as a place for 'learning for life'. Overall, the physical structure of the school reflects the design of the 1970's; it would resemble any school built during that time.

Organisational

Visually, the school's organisational structure resembles a traditional hierarchical administration. Figure 1 (refer p.76) shows the school's administrative structure. Figure 2 (refer p.77) provides an overview of the organisational structure, as well as illustrating the relationships between the various parties within the cultural context.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the school, its administration, direction and well being. The Board members, with

the exception of two people, are relatively new to the education administration system and, as such, they rely on the Principal for guidance and direction. This does not mean that the Board are dictated to, however, it does imply that some Board members require assistance to understand, implement and carry out their responsibilities.

The Principal, in managing the school, is responsible for the day-to-day clerical administration, as well as all pedagogic needs, leadership and direction of the school. Job descriptions for Senior Staff indicate that their major responsibilities lie in ensuring that the school's regulations and systems are complied with, and that all curriculum requirements are met. All of the foregoing are outlined in the school's administration booklet, and curriculum folder respectively. Senior Staff are responsible also for providing pedagogic leadership to individuals, a syndicate or whole staff as appropriate, as well as ensuring that all children's needs are met. Teaching staff are also responsible for delivering curriculum leadership in specialised or interest areas during staff meetings. All teaching staff have specified curriculum budgets to meet, with Senior Staff being responsible for the majority of curriculum areas such as mathematics, language, science, social studies, technology and music.
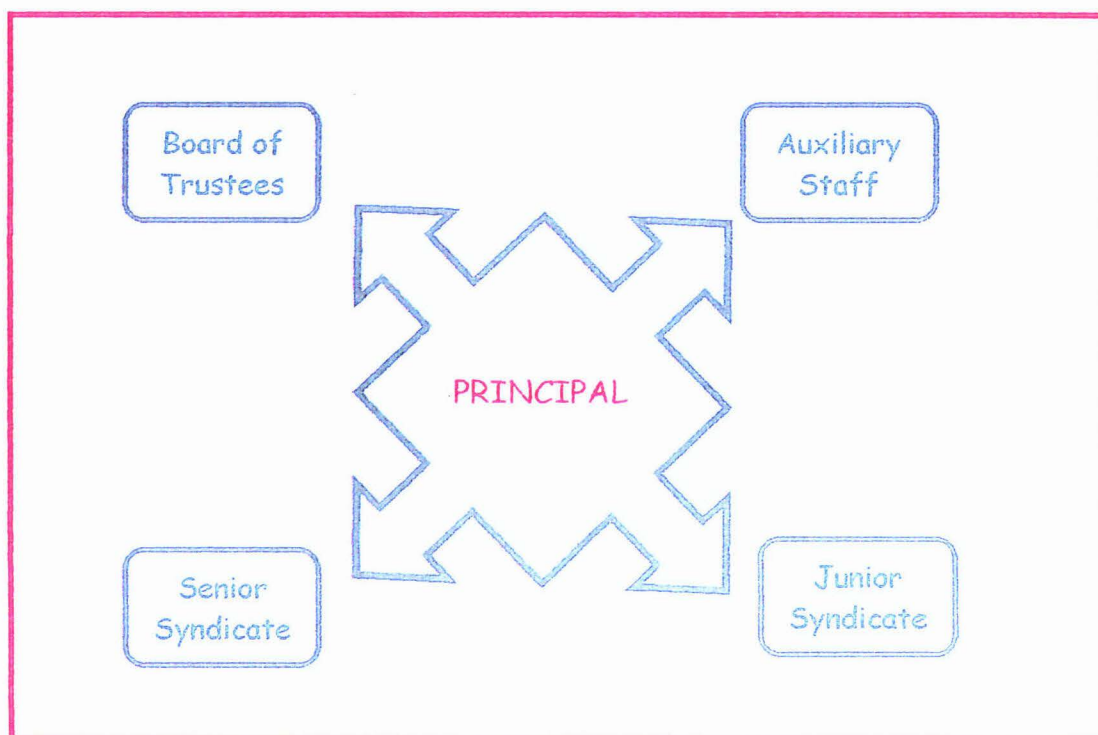
Figure 1
School's Administration Structure

Figure 2
Organisational Structure and Relationships in Cultural Context
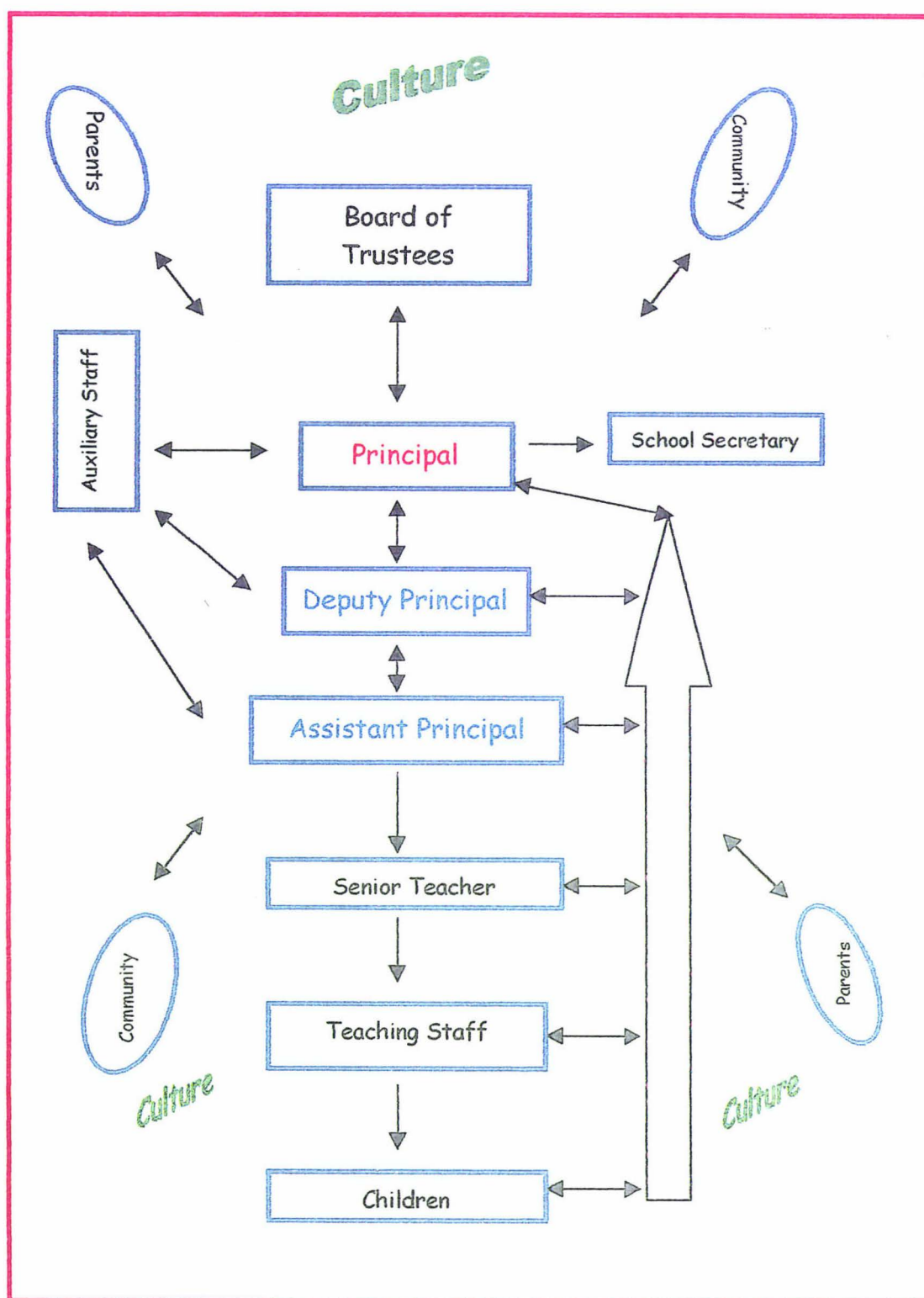
4.3   :   Data Presentation – Past to Present

4.3.1   Culture

Visuals

Retrospectively, parents, teachers and children acknowledged - during their conversations with the researcher - that the school's physical condition was run down. One interviewee said, "Maintenance was swept aside, awaiting the Ministry of Education's deferred maintenance programme to step in."   Another interviewee said, "The school was in need of a 'make-over', both internally and externally; it could have been done earlier, but we (the parents) didn't know the school had money in the bank to do it.   We didn't have to wait for deferred maintenance!"

With the arrival of the new Principal, a new direction emerged.   The new Principal noted that,

> There was an immediate need for a long-term strategic plan to update and upgrade the school.   We (meaning the Board of Trustees and the Principal) developed a plan that included the purchase and/or upgrading of classroom furniture, internally and externally painting classrooms, putting front runner on classroom walls and removing hazardous display wires strung across classrooms. The plan included also redeveloping the administration block to meet today's administration needs, including an interview room, a modernized Principal's office and an administration area that allowed for technological advancements, namely computers.

An interviewee described this plan as, "Moving the school, giving it a 'corporate image' to let it be seen as a school that was progressive, innovative and capable of moving into, and meeting the educational needs of, the twenty-first century."

The Principal explained that the strategic plan was reviewed, over time, and that the library was identified as an area desperately in need of an upgrade.

> This year (1999) we have painted the shelves, turned the books around and reorganised the books to make the library more user – children - friendly. We have added to the strategic plan that the library is to be computerised for issues and returns in the year 2000, as well as developing the library to incorporate an information technology unit for internet and e-mail access, indicated the Principal.

Apart from the school's buildings, a major visible feature of the school is the playground. The Principal explained,

> We had to have a parents' working bee to get the playground up to standard. It was of concern that the playground did not meet New Zealand Safety Standards for playgrounds, and nothing had been done about it for so long. The playground had never been 'signed off' by the local Council's Building Inspectors. However, what was terrific was the number of parents who came along to a working bee weekend and helped put the playground right.

During the researcher's observations, the playground was frequently used by children of all ages for all sorts of imaginative activities. "It's a cool playground, the chain bridge is fun so long as you don't bounce on it!" exclaimed the children.

'Sun-safe' shelter was another major visual feature of the school. In addressing the issue of a lack of natural shading, the school purchased sun umbrellas and sun-shade tents. These are erected daily by the children and, during the researcher's observations, children frequently used the sun-shades during break times as places to play games, read, listen to music or lounge on bean bags and rugs. The children described the sun-shades as 'instant trees' - "They are great to play under and they are a shady place to eat your lunch," said the children. During observations, the researcher noted the shades being used as extensions to some classrooms, with children reading, completing mathematical activities or writing under them. One teacher suggested, "The sun-umbrellas and sun-tents are visually attractive and provide sun sense when we don't have trees. Visually, they say we are offering the children shade and quiet places to be - they create an image for our school."

This observation concerning the visually - aesthetic - aspects and safety needs of the school reveals a significant trend of thought: that the school had became a more appealing place in which to work, and to visit. Indications from the interview groups were:

School is a cool looking place now. The school looks good, especially for first impressions. The colours have given the school a great tone, feel. The library is a very enthusiastic environment for readers now. The school has vibrant, exciting and motivating colours.

There was also consensus that, in the school's becoming more visually vibrant and exciting, its community had shown an increase in pride and respect towards the physical environment. There was the belief that, in general, the vandalism - graffiti, broken windows, broken equipment - had reduced since the school had been revamped. One interviewee confirmed this by saying, "The children are genuinely upset if anything is done to the school - graffiti." Another interviewee suggested, "Appearances can help bestow a set of values and instil a sense of pride."

"There are no male teachers, we had them in the past," said the children. "There are no male role models on the teaching staff, however, males should not be employed at the expense of putting a top quality teacher in front of the children first," affirmed one interviewee. 'Teacher gender' was a major visible item noted by all interview groups. In the past there had always been a 'male' presence, whether it be the principal or teaching staff. Currently, the teaching staff is totally female. There is a significant belief across the interview groups that a male teacher would provide a balance that some children do not have. As one interviewee said, "A male role model is needed for all children, but especially those who do not have a male influence in their homes."

The school's personnel policy on employing staff is, first and foremost, to employ the 'best person' for any available position. "If two people are even, then gender and cultural considerations come into the picture," explained the Principal. To date, the school's management, namely the Principal and Board of Trustee members who were interviewed, believe that, "We have followed this policy in an endeavour to meet the educational needs of the school's children."

Educational resources, recreational and sports equipment and certificates and rewards were also predominantly noted as visuals across the interview groups. Educational resources, like the rest of the school, had a major overhaul. As one teacher noted,

> Anything that was over 15 to 20 years old, that was tatty, or 'well loved', was either thrown out or replaced. This included library and reading books, science, social studies, mathematics resources, dictionaries, sports and physical education equipment, nothing was sacred!

"Hard," was the opinion voiced by one teacher. "It took a lot of effort, especially for some teachers - throwing out resources - whoever heard of it!" exclaimed another teacher. Nevertheless, it was agreed amongst the teachers that, "A lot of money has been spent revitalising, modernizing and restoring resources to meet targeted educational needs." "This practice," explained one teacher, "has developed into an annual 'tidy up ritual', where, at the end of each year resources are audited, checked and - if found to be old or tatty - throw, replace, up-date is the procedure."

A significant trend, especially from the children's perspective, was the increase in sports and leisure equipment available during break times. In the past, according to the children, there were only rugby, soccer and net balls, and one cricket set issued per class. "Once things were lost, that was it: they weren't replaced," noted the children.

The school's Charter (1998), under 'Local Goals', states:

> We are committed to providing a wide range of leisure activities to enable our students to be actively involved during intervals.

The researcher's observations support this statement - during the research data gathering time frame - there was a significant visible presence of playground and sporting equipment. Equipment was centrally located in two classrooms: this enabled teachers to keep track of it. The equipment - which was put out daily by the children - included volley-ball, skipping ropes, pogo-sticks, moon balls, tennis racquets, croquet, mini-golf, swing ball, as well as traditional basket, rugby, net, and soccer balls, and kiwi and hardball cricket sets. This is considered a high consumable commodity area, due to losses and general wear and tear. However, as it is part of the school's charter, there is a strong endeavour to maintain a wide variety of equipment and provide opportunities for children to develop recreational activities. As one of the teachers observed,

Balls go missing, equipment gets broken. However, we can't lose sight of the fact that there are 50/60 or so children using this one set, piece, of equipment - and it's better than seeing children roaming in groups making trouble.

In addition to the active games equipment, it was acknowledged that there was also a need to provide 'quiet' games. As the Principal explained,

> We noticed that some children liked to sit and read. They weren't always wanting to be running around. Therefore, as a staff, we agreed that there needed to be quiet spaces, and games such as cards, marbles, connect four, snakes and ladders, books to read and paper to draw on, to meet all children's recreational needs.

These quiet spaces and games were visible during the researcher's observations, and were well utilized by the children. Some children noted that, "It's good to have places to go where you can play games that aren't busy." One child said, "If you like reading, why can't you have a place to be that is not in the busy lane?"

> My child got more certificates in the past than today! The certificates varied in content from good behaviour, great work, to having terrific manners - I know my child's behaviour hasn't changed, but it's not acknowledged as much - I believe it must affect their (the children's) self-esteem.

Was the opinion expressed by one parent which was strongly held by most of the parents who were interviewed. Although they mentioned certificates, these were not a major concern for the children. In mentioning certificates, the children noted that the 'school's crest' was no longer found on them. When asked to clarify the importance of having the school's crest displayed on certificates, the children explained that, "It was a 'sign' that told us this is our school - and it doesn't belong to another school".

However, what was of more concern to the children than being awarded certificates were the 'sporting trophies'. "We used to have a cross-country shield that had all the names of the kids who had won put on. There used to be trophies for 'player of the day' for sports teams - all these have gone." the children added. Teachers agreed trophies used to be awarded, and that they used to be in the old administration area, however, no one knows what happened to them. "It's a real shame, the kids like getting trophies - they are something tangible and it sort of creates a bit of history, a hall of fame." as one parent explained. As a result of these comments, the management team purchased 'new player of the day trophies', and found the cross-country shield on which the names of past winners have now been engraved. These trophies have now been put on display on the trophies shelf in the library for all to see. As for certificates, today these are centred on the New Zealand Curriculum Guidelines set of stated values and work attainments, and are presented weekly at the respective Junior and Senior assemblies. However, they do not display

the school's crest (symbol). When asked why, the new Principal indicated that,

> Certificates can be overdone and they can lose their significance. We have moved on from rewarding everything, which was part of a behaviour management technique in the past, to acknowledging those special events, behaviours, achievements. Certificates, therefore, relate to behaviours, or events, and are made on the computer at school.

The last major trend identified under 'visuals' was the lack of people around the school: significantly, pupils and teachers - due to the fall in roll - but also the visible 'lack' of parents. "In the past, there was a perception that more parents were involved and, therefore, they were physically at school either helping or visiting," noted a couple of parents. "This is a sign of the times. Both parents work, and they don't have as much time. Parents are there for specific outings, trips, but they need to know in advance, everyone appears to be so busy these days!" exclaimed another interviewee.

During the researcher's observations, it was noted that parents were around school specifically in the morning and at the end of the school day, either bringing or collecting children. Some parents came only as far as the gate, others came into the grounds and sat waiting on seats - while others went into the classrooms and talked with the teachers. What was noted by teachers - specifically junior school teachers - was the decline in the number of parents available to help in the classrooms during class time, compared to the past. Parents

used to come and listen to children read, assist at writing time and help put books away. However, as some of the teachers noted,

> Parents just don't have the time, and you, as a teacher, can't expect parents to be there all the time. Nevertheless, parents will be there if you need them. What you have to do is ask, phone them or personally approach them, and, if they can, they'll be there.

Obviously, visual trends make a great impact on how an environment is perceived, and this setting is no different. The strongest visual trend that has made an impact across the interview groups has to be the physical development of the school. In general, the interview groups agree that the new image has given a new sense of pride in, and respect for, the setting. However, it was also noted - specifically by parents and teachers - that "Paint and paper are only skin deep; it takes more than these to make the school truly different."

Verbals

Looking back, it occurred to the researcher that none of the interview groups could specifically identify any verbal (phrases or sayings) which stood out as being intuitively part of the school. However, some major trends identified as having verbal significance were the general admission that, in the past, 'swearing/bad language', 'slang' and talking 'disrespectfully' to teachers, and - occasionally, visiting parents - by children, had been more readily 'put up with'. "In the past we got away with swearing more easily," the children admitted. One teacher commented,

> Swearing has been dramatically reduced in the playground. We would be fooling ourselves if we said that it was completely gone, however, the children know that swearing is not acceptable, and they know the consequences if caught. They also know that the consequences will be followed through - this is the big difference today.

The Principal was more forthright,

> Zero tolerance is my expectation towards swearing. Children have three languages: home, class and playground - they need to know what is, and is not, acceptable and where. For this school, swearing and being disrespectful have come under control because the children know that there is 'consistency' in implementing the consequences: they know that the consequences will be, and are, consistently adhered to.

In the past, there had been the conception amongst some parents that, "Some parents 'ranted and raved' about issues happening around the school." Others suggested that, "We could 'work our way around' management to ensure we got what we wanted. Past management listened, it was easier to communicate with the then Principal." However, still other parents complained that, "You would walk away believing that you had been heard, yet, nothing ever changed; issues 'didn't appear' to be dealt with, so were we really able to 'work around' the past management?" "On reflection, not as much as we might have thought we had," said one parent. "Today, management doesn't 'muck about'," added another. "Issues and concerns are dealt with and management is far more 'strong willed'." Some parents suggested

that, "In some aspects, today's management is harder to 'communicate with', or not as easy to 'talk around', however, things, issues, concerns appear to be dealt with - and that's what is important."

Communication with the school's community was recognised as a trend that, in the past, had been 'reasonable'. "There were school newsletters, teacher interviews, school reports and limited impromptu teacher/home communication," said one parent. Today, there is still the belief that school/community communication is reasonable, with communications, as noted above, continuing. However, there was an acknowledgment that teacher/home communication has become more open, especially in the junior area, with the introduction of the school/home partnership book, which encourages two-way communication. "Home partnership books keep me informed. At least I know where to look for notices instead of finding them crumpled up in the bottom of the school bag," grinned another parent. Both parents and teachers acknowledge that communication barriers constantly need to be addressed. One parent remarked,

> I want to know when things are not working, or if my child needs help, or if things are going fine. I'm strong and I'll just come and ask, but not all parents are like me, and it's then that teachers need to be more forward in contacting the home, you know, before things get really bad. I think the communication is getting better, but it's always going to need work and commitment from both teachers and parents.

Communication between teachers and children would appear to be improving. The children identified that teachers are more willing to

listen than in the past. "Teachers give us options, they don't trap or close us in, they give us time to cool off before talking and working through problems." the children reported. The teachers agreed that there has been a change in the way children are now being encouraged to take ownership of, and responsibility for, their actions - and that 'listening' and 'talking positively and calmly' are important 'happenings' of life around this school today. "Positive talk to children and allowing children a fair chance to be listened to, are paramount in turning behaviour around," explained the Principal. "To this end, I encourage teachers not to trap, chase or confront children but to give them a chance to cool down first."

Finally, under 'verbals', there were some sayings identified by the interview groups, but primarily by the children and teachers, as being indicative of this school, namely: 'C2B4M – see two before me', a sign in most senior classrooms which means, "See two other students for help before seeing the teacher", 'simmer down', 'use your manners', or simply 'manners', 'speak clearly', 'tell me …', 'hey … well done', 'please use my name', and 'cool'. A 'visual verbal' often used by the Principal is the shaking of both hands when stressing a point, which is often accompanied with the saying: "Let's be proactive rather than reactive." Meaning, "We want to avoid issues developing rather than putting the bandages on after the event," explained the Principal.

Verbals are an integral part of developing the picture of what happens around a place. For this setting, the most significant verbal concept

mentioned by all the research parties, is the perception that, in the past, the organisation appeared to 'put up with' swearing, bad language and slang: whereas today, 'zero tolerance in this area' is taken as the norm.

Rituals

Past and present rituals, the things that happen on, and in, a regular way around the organisation, appear to have remained similar. There was, and is, the school's educational programme, where every subject and class has a timetable showing what they are doing - and when. For example:

- Mathematics, reading, curriculum study.
- Reading Recovery.
- Individual class routines.
- Timetables for the library, the greenhouse and the tennis court.
- Weekly Bible in Schools sessions for the senior classes;
- Weekly, yet separate, junior and senior assemblies, with whole school assemblies occurring on an irregular basis, or as the need arises (such as visitors to the school).
- School newsletters.
- School reports on children's progress, both oral and written.
- Out-of-school activities (such as sports teams, the choir group, the gym team).
- Wearing school uniforms when representing the school.
- Teachers carrying out duty.
- School road patrol.
- Time out spaces for children.
- School photos.
- School trips.
- Interval and lunch times.
- The management structure of Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal, Senior Teacher.

- Staff, syndicate and tutor teacher meetings.
- Teachers' Friday morning teas, raffles and betting syndicate.
- Impromptu meetings/discussions/talks that occur around the school between teaching staff, parents and teaching staff, principal and teachers and principal and parents.

This set of common rituals, as identified across the research groups and supported through observations, has a 'feel' that this school could be any school, anywhere. However, in breaking these rituals down group by group, and through the researcher's observations, a more intricate pattern emerges of how the school's rituals have changed.

In highlighting changed rituals, the children mentioned such things as: "We are now allowed to drink water throughout the day. We have a drink bottle on our desks and the school has put in water filters." "We still have school trips, but they are part of what's happening in the school programme. We no longer have ski trips - but we do have outdoor education where the seniors go to Milford Sound." "There are no longer PE shed monitors. The playtime sports equipment is outside rooms one or four and you help yourself to the gear." "During assemblies, teachers read stories which contain a story, like honesty or being friends. In the past, assemblies were for certificates and songs, and sport reports, which still happen." "You used to be able to buy lunches at school every day. This has changed, and you can buy them only on Mondays and the lunch hour has changed from 12.00 to 1.00pm to 12.30 to 1.30pm." "The Principal's office is open, anyone can go and see the Principal at any time, you are never turned away." "If

you are good, you get a 'Green Card': in the past, if you were good, you never got anything."

Parents, in considering changes from past to present rituals, stressed that, "The 'systems', the way things are done, appear to be fairer and meet the needs of the children, and parents, more readily than in the past." For example, in reporting to parents on children's progress,

> There have always been one-to-one formal interviews twice a year, but today they are more focused. Data gathered for the written report are shared from the computer screen, with portfolios of work ready to be shown. I believe that, in the past, interviews appeared to be more ad hoc in nature, one parent observed.

> As for the written report, previously there were two, one mid year and one at the end of the year. Now there is only one written report at the end of the year. It is curriculum-focused, it has specific information on our children's needs and direction, and it includes teacher assessments and self-assessments by children, all of which is great information, however, a concern would be the lack of a personal statement on our child's social interactions, some parents admitted.

> This social statement happened previously and for me it is extremely important, in some ways it was more important, at this age, than curriculum statements because I want to know if my child is happy, working with others, making friends. It's a shame it doesn't happen now, added another parent.

There was also a strong trend of disappointment that the ritual of having 'yearly' school photos had been changed to 'two-yearly'. "What a shame we don't get a photo every year, especially for the year six's - I don't agree with this step at all," one parent complained.

For parents, the most significant change in ritual was the disbanding of the parent support group. They believed that this was one way in which parents were openly encouraged to be part of the school. "As the parent support group we organised fundraising ventures for sports equipment and educational resources, assisted with school barbecues, working bees, anything to help benefit the children and the school in general," one parent explained. "It (the parent group) encouraged a link between the local kindergarten and school, as often parents flowed from one committee to the other," noted another parent. Today, however, the parents suggest, "This is not happening. There is no avenue to encourage new parents to become actively involved in the school's life, apart from being on the Board of Trustees - which not all parents want to be involved in." When attempting to reach an understanding of why the parent support group was no longer, the researcher was told,

> I don't believe that it does any good to be specific, but let's put it one way: two parties did not see eye-to-eye on how things were to be run, - in essence, there was a communication breakdown with the new management, was one parent's explanation.

"However, maybe it was timely, maybe it was time for new blood and maybe new parents coming in will start it up again - let's hope." said another parent. The Principal indicated that there had been a call to form a 'friends of the school' committee just recently, however, there was very limited response from parents. "It's just not the right time to get it going again," said the Principal.

The final ritual, which parents noted as being a positive innovation, was the newsletter from the Board of Trustees. "In the past, the Board of Trustees were 'just there' - whereas now we are more fully informed and can see what the Board are doing and trying to achieve," one parent explained. Another parent suggested, "In a way, the Board have put a 'face on': they have become 'real' for parents."

For the teaching staff, including the Principal, rituals very much centred on the day-by-day, week-by-week, term-by-term happenings - and they found the notion hard to express in words. Most teachers started this section of the interview with, "I have to think hard about this concept." "Let me think, what does 'ritual' mean?" Nevertheless, some significant changes from past to present were highlighted, the first being the ritual of *planning*. The researcher observed that both syndicates planned as groups, with members supporting each other and sharing ideas. However, one syndicate took a broader approach to planning to ensure that educational levels (2 and 3) were met, as well as ensuring that there

was a 'building block' process across the levels. Those staff members who had longer records of service noted that, in the past,

> Planning was not as co-ordinated as it is now. You very much did your own thing. I like this way of planning - as it broadens your own understanding and encourages a sharing of ideas and knowledge but yet you can still put your own personality in to how it works in your own classroom.

"I hadn't thought of developing a building block approach before, building on prior knowledge, it makes sense," one teacher conceded.

"Syndicate meetings traditionally fell on a Tuesday. Today, especially for the senior syndicate, the day varies, depending on what is happening, sport wise, after school events. It's more flexible," said one teacher, approvingly.

"Staff meetings have changed," noted another teacher.   "To start with, there is now an 8.00am, Monday morning information meeting. This meeting is held in the staff-room, where coming events, the mail and any issues are discussed or shared." "There is also a 3.15pm, Monday staff meeting," added yet another teacher.

> This meeting is held in the seminar room, which is situated away from the administration block, with the direct purpose of eliminating unnecessary interruptions, thereby, enabling participants to focus on the meeting.

The afternoon staff meeting's primary objective is to meet curriculum and professional needs of the teachers and the school, the Principal explained.

It is the venue for teachers sharing and discussing educational ideas, meeting school-wide professional development commitments as well as implementing school-wide curriculum planning. Professional development was a big issue to start with, admitted the Principal.

Curriculum knowledge and its implementation was not a strength in the past. You were very much left to your own interpretation. Under the circumstances we didn't do too badly. However, today we are far better off, we have someone who is very knowledgeable about curriculum understanding and implementation – this has made a significant difference to this school's educational outcomes, added a longer standing member of staff.

Both staff meetings have specific time spans, half an hour and one hour respectively, which are closely adhered to. As one teacher said,

In the past, there was only one meeting, Monday's 3.15pm, held in the staff-room, and it would vary in content and duration. Sometimes it would not end until well after 5.00pm – too long, the brain was usually tired by then!

Another common thread was that, traditionally, teachers never changed classrooms. As one teacher put it, "Once you were in a room or area of the school, you stayed there." Today, there is more movement. "Teachers need to be encouraged to change levels, (take a risk) move rooms, and not become bound or stuck by conformity," the

Principal explained. "Nevertheless, the ritual of Room One being the Deputy Principal's room continues today, probably due to its close proximity to the administration block," added the Principal.

Teachers highlighted also the ritual of being responsible, or taking responsibility for, a curriculum area in the school. Again, these have remained stable. "If you were issued art supplies as your area of responsibility when you arrived, the chance of your still being responsible for art supplies five years on was high," said a teacher. Today, there is a specific time span for being in charge of a particular curriculum area. The Principal's philosophy is that, "After two years, all curriculum areas are re-allocated." This philosophy was seen, by some teachers, "As a means to encourage people out of their 'comfort zones'; a means to nourish 'risk taking'." When questioned by the researcher in her endeavour to obtain/gauge a 'feel' for this philosophy, most teachers replied, "Is it that bad to move out of your comfort zone? Some of us need that push – for some it's hard - but others, it's not."

A further ritual highlighted by teaching staff was the school's flexibility in 'adapting' to meet behaviour management issues. In the past, the ritual was to send all the children who misbehaved to the Principal's office. This applied to classroom as well as playground behaviours. Some staff members reveled that, if you – as a teacher – took this course, then "Guess what *your* child has done," would be

thrown at you. There was the belief that, as the child's teacher, you had to take responsibility and do something.

Today, staff note that the trend in behaviour management is to move towards a model that encourages a school-wide approach - whereby behaviour management becomes the responsibility of the 'whole school' and requires a collective approach by all staff.

The saying, "Let's be proactive rather than reactive," was heard by the researcher, most often in relation to behaviour management issues. This verbal often occurred in the context of the Principal's encouraging staff to ensure that sufficient playground equipment was available, that the duty teacher had ready support from 'all' teachers - with the Principal or Deputy Principal being that 'additional presence' in the playground - that there was a sense of adaptability in handling students' behaviour, yet maintaining the consistency of the school's three rules, namely: "No swearing, no bullying and no disrespect to people and property."

As for individual classroom behaviour management, and in line with developing a collective approach, the sample school subject to this research - during the research time frame - implemented a school-wide system that rewarded positive behaviour. The researcher was able to observe the whole process from the formal introduction, to the initial flurry of "What's it all about?", to its adoption by some teachers, through to the implementation of the system school-wide.

Not all teachers believed that the system would work for all ages; however, all 'gave it a go'. Over the ensuing weeks, the researcher observed many 'informal conversations' which were centred on clarifying how the system should work and how could it be made fair? All this informal conversation led to a deeper understanding, and to adaptability of the system to meet the needs of the school. The end result was that not all teachers necessarily agreed that the system worked for all students, and all ages: "The new entrants don't understand it," said the new entrant teacher. "What happens when someone keeps getting a blue card – what's the next step?" asked some senior classroom teachers. Nevertheless, all the teachers agreed that the system worked for 90% of the children, with the bonus being that the system centred on the 'positive', rather than the 'negative', behaviour of the children. Near the end of the researcher's observation time, talk was, "We should carry the system on, however, let's adapt it to meet the needs of our school's children."

The final ritual identified by the teaching staff related to the interactions of staff. They suggested that, in the past, staff interactions appear to have focused on the social side of school life. One teacher noted that, "Staff were always supportive, friendly and helpful in professional terms. However, the emphasis of interactions appeared to be, more often than not, of a social nature." Another teacher added, "There was a personal, outside school life, bond in the interactions." Today, teachers suggest that, "Many of the staff interactions continue, such as raffles, Friday morning teas, and social

functions, but the bond is different." Staff attribute this change to the different staff compositions that exist today. "Staff have left and new staff have arrived, each taking and bringing different personalities, different perspectives and different visions," said one teacher. A direct result suggested by staff is that,

> Staff interactions have become more professional than social. There is far more co-operative planning, more school-wide educational focuses; you can, and will, get support if you need or want assistance in developing and implementing an educational idea. There is a more 'open' and directed approach in extending teachers' professional needs rather than social needs.

There was an agreement between all teaching staff that a direct result has been that the balance between professional and social rituals has been changed.

In examining the school's rituals for a major or significant trend, or trends, the researcher discovered that there are many notable trends unique to each group, yet, when the sample school subject to this research was viewed as a complete entity, all the rituals became significant in identifying changed 'ways of life'. No one ritual was more or less pertinent than the other. What was noticeable was that, for all interview groups, the 'rituals' had changed in some way.

Climate

In comparing the school's climate, past to present, the interview groups identified similar trends. It was noted by the children that,

"School in the past was, overall, an 'o.k.' place to be. If you were part of the 'right' group of children in the playground it was a fun place. If you 'didn't fit in', it was tough." Children, parents and teachers all agree that it was a lonely place if children were outsiders. "As an outsider, a child would be 'picked on', bullied," said one parent. "There appeared to be no 'fair' consistent discipline system in place to deal with bullying," added another parent. One parent described the school's climate as, "Like having a sticking plaster on a wound - some wounds heal but others fester; some issues would be dealt with, some wouldn't."

Today, there is a strong belief that the school is a much calmer, friendlier, safer and, consequently, happier place for children, teachers and parents. One parent summed it all up,

> Bullying, where possible, is dealt with. There are boundaries set for children and they know them, this all makes for a happier place.

"We know what's expected from us with behaviour and showing respect," agreed the children.

> The discipline system in place treats all children fairly and encourages discussion rather than confrontation. It encourages children to take responsibility for their actions, noted one teacher - then added, All this makes the climate better, happier for all.

During the researcher's data collection time frame, observations were recorded where children were given 'time out' to cool off before any discussion occurred. 'Time out' was either outside Room One or sitting in the Principal's office - and consisted of about 10 minutes on the child's own. During discussions, cause, action and consequence were often the main foci, with the child's being asked to concentrate on their responsibility in the misdemeanor.

Another aspect of the school's climate, which was identified by two of the interview groups, was the perception that it had - in the past - been 'autocratic'. Substantiating this perception, the latest Education Review Office report (1996) notes - under Governance, Management and Organisation - that "Delegations were not clearly defined and effective leadership was not provided to board members or staff." Today, the perception is that, as the Principal put it,

> The climate has changed to one which is strong in conviction, strong in direction and strong in ensuring that all the organisation's members, The Board, senior management and teaching staff, take responsibility for their part in meeting the educational needs and outcomes of this organisation.

'A clean sweep' is the final major trend under climate. Parents, teachers - and even the children, to a certain extent - noted that,

> For the school to move forward, some members of the school's community had/have to leave. That some form of natural attrition or casualties of change had/have still to

take place, and that the new management needs people who would support the new trends, or ways of doing things around this place, summarised one interviewee.

It was pointed out by one interviewee, that,

> Some parents resisted, some teachers reacted, and some children couldn't cope with the tighter boundaries, nevertheless, with time the new directions taken by management have seen some of these cohorts of people move away. However, there remain some school community members who are sceptical of change and, yet, they remain in the organisation,

There is a strong belief, held by both parents and teachers, that the climate of the school is in a re-growth period, with an emphasis on encouraging the next generation of families, children and teachers to develop this educational organisation as a safe, happy and exciting place for children to learn. As one parent expressed it,

> Up and coming families need to be encouraged to be part of this school's life to create a climate that meets their needs. I'm an oldie – changes don't really affect me - but it's the younger ones you, as staff, management and Board of Trustees, need to capture to move forward.

4.3.2   :   Educational Effectiveness and Improvement

In examining parents' and children's thoughts on changes that have resulted in educational improvements and effectiveness, comparing from past to present,   there is a general feeling, summed up by one

parent, that - on the surface - "Not a lot of things have changed." The fundamental programmes of reading, writing and mathematics still happen; children still take reading books home, there is a mathematics basic fact programme, and children still play sports. On a closer examination, however, there are some general observations that indicate that changes have occurred, and still are occurring, which - parents constitute improvements to educational outcomes. In general, parents note that: "There appear to be more resources available at school - for example, computers in every classroom, sports equipment and up-dated reading and library books." Parents also suggested that the school's educational programmes appear more 'focused' today than in the past. "The school's programmes show goals and expectations which children are working towards of which my children and I are made more aware of." Two parents did suggest that,

> In the past, goals and expectations 'were' part of the school's programmes, however, unless you were a 'forward' parent, goals and expectations were not discussed. This resulted in parents' having little understanding of what educational growth to expect as their child progressed through the school system.

Today parents, in identifying trends that have impacted on educational improvements and effectiveness, highlight:

- Educational programmes that show progression in steps over time. Examples quoted by parents were the school's outdoor education programme, which starts in the junior area and culminate in year six with a school camp, and the mathematics basic facts programme where children work through progressive levels starting in the juniors and working through to the seniors.

- Behaviour. The turnaround in the general behaviour of the children and the respect that the children show towards each other and the school community. As one parent said, "Fewer behaviour problems to deal with must mean more time focused on educational needs."

- Teaching staff. "Staff appear to have more up-to-date knowledge and skills," suggested one parent. "The 'deadwood' has drifted away," added another.

As one parent expressed it,

> Educational improvement – I suppose there is a lot more happening for kids today than before. Maybe things were happening before but they weren't pushed, maybe there was a lower expectation for what children could achieve, but today there is a feeling that things, educationally, are better – as a parent I don't know, or can't specifically say what they are, but, for me, there's a difference. My kids come home and talk about school, and what they are doing, much more today than a couple of years ago – that's a sign for me.

From a professional perspective, the Principal refers to the last Educational Review Office report (1996) which noted that,

> There were concerns with the effectiveness of teaching methods and programmes which varied across the school; there was a need for greater accountability of systems to ensure school requirements in curriculum were being met; and student expectations from teaching staff were low.

"School programmes had definite boundaries," one teacher recalled. "There were distinctive junior, middle and senior school areas, and never would their paths cross - communication on what each syndicate was doing was limited." "And programmes", indicated the Principal, "were traditionally 'topic' rather than 'curriculum aim' driven." "These factors often resulted in topics being syndicate owned," as both the teachers and the Principal acknowledged. For example, "If the seniors studied electricity, then no other syndicate in the school was 'encouraged' to study electricity." The current Principal reassured the researcher that, "These practices have now changed."

Today there is a strong belief held by both the teaching staff and the Principal, that the school's educational effectiveness has vastly improved since the time of the Education Review Office's 1996 report. However, in expressing this, the Principal added her belief that, "There is still a long way to go - you can always be, and should always be, looking at how to improve. Sitting on your laurels doesn't keep you on the cutting edge!" Nevertheless, both the Principal and

the teachers believe that the school has developed effective 'systems' for curriculum delivery. And that these systems, which are contained in the school's Curriculum Folder, outline expectations for curriculum delivery and levels of educational growth for students of the sample school which is the subject of this research. A further strong belief shared by the Principal and teaching staff, is that three major factors -

1) The development of continuity in expectations across the school.

2) The provision of systems with a 'building block' approach wherein educational outcomes have a definite layering sequence.

3) Educators have up-to-date knowledge and skills to implement the systems effectively.

- have improved educational effectiveness for learners.

> As professionals, we as teachers, are held more accountable for what's happening to learners in our classroom; we have to be able to explain what we are doing to assist learners, and how we are implementing programmes to meet learning needs, noted a teacher.

"We expect children to do more than they did in the past - for me reading has been the biggest gain. I wasn't pushing the children enough in the past - I have raised my expectations," one teacher acknowledged.

As evidence in support of these beliefs and assumptions, the Principal produced the class records from which data on reading, writing and basic fact levels are being collected and collated. Although the reforms are still at the early stages, it is obvious that educational outcomes, as measured by levels of attainment, have improved in these curriculum areas.

Although she is excited and delighted with these results, the Principal suggests that, "It can be difficult to measure improvements, especially over short-term time frames. It takes time to up-skill teachers through professional development programmes, and it takes time to transfer these skills into classroom practices." In supporting these sentiments, the Principal highlighted a discussion she had had, at a recent professional development workshop, where Judith Atiken (Education Review Office) indicated that,

> A new principal going into a school needs time to implement improvements and collect and analyse data. Six months to a year is too short a time span - in real terms it can take up to five years for improvements to be clearly identified.

Nevertheless, both parents and teachers acknowledge that trends, through the implementation of systems and 'gut feelings', would indicate that innovations in educational practice and effectiveness have changed, improved, this educational organisation: both groups attribute this improvement to one major key factor, namely 'leadership'.

4.3.3 Leadership

As noted earlier in this document, this organisation's latest Education Review Office report (1996) stated that "There ...(was) a need for strong effective leadership." Parents and teachers associated with the past strongly agreed with this sentiment. "The previous leader was kind, friendly and approachable, 'a people person', yet, autocratic and dictatorial in nature," admitted an interviewee. The Education Review Office report endorses this assessment by highlighting deficiencies, "In the inability of the leader to delegate roles, install expectations – and in a failure to provide a cohesiveness for the Board of Trustees to work to meet the needs and expectations of the organisation." Teachers indicated that these deficiencies had also rolled over into the running of the school. "There was no cohesive direction for the school to follow, no overall vision, and a lack of curriculum knowledge to help guide the implementation of the new curriculum documents," one teacher indicated. However, as an interviewee noted, "At the time there was a strong belief amongst the teaching staff that 'things' were going fine and that the children were getting the best deal – we didn't know any different." As one interviewee quoted, "Hind-sight is a wonderful thing."

With the benefit of reflection, along with the knowledge and leadership which are available to the school today, it is easy to see that – with all the changes of Tomorrow's Schools, the new curriculum documents and the expectations that these factors brought together – the vision, knowledge and way of doing things which were

characteristics of the former leadership did not meet the changing directions of education and, ultimately, the needs of this organisation.

The researcher had a conversation with the new leader (the Principal) who explained,

> On entering the organisation, there were many areas of legislation, administration, professionalism and educational knowledge and focusing that needed development - all of which took 'more than five minutes' to change.

According to the new leader,

> In real terms, it has taken three years to get the school to where it is today. This has included changes in staff (surrounding myself with similarly focused management and teachers), a genuine commitment by self, staff and Board of Trustees to develop the organisation, and lots of energy and perseverance to transform the organisation into a 'contemporary educationally-focused organisation'.

The new Principal added that,

> This focusing has been achieved, on the whole, through 'leadership', guidance, professional development, and the establishment of systems, rather than by 'dictatorship'. All of which can be evidenced in Board of Trustee, staff and syndicate meeting minutes, professional development plans - both personal and school-wide - and through the school's Curriculum Folder.

In looking at the past, the present and the future, the new leader maintains that this organisation, or any organisation for that matter, "Should never stop changing. An organisation needs to respond to, and develop to meet, its ever changing needs - and, for this organisation, those needs arise from children - and legislation."

The characteristics of good/effective leadership, therefore, appear to be vision, knowledge and motivation. As one interviewee suggested, 'Today's leadership has provided us with the what, how, and why we are doing the things we do around here today."

4.4   :   Emerging Themes:

In combining the data to provide the description, the 'snap-shot' of this organisation, the researcher identified the functional and/or common words and ideas which emerged from all interview groups. These words and ideas were then grouped according to similarity of meaning and placed under the appropriate major headings that permeate this research, namely: *culture, educational effectiveness,* and *improvement and leadership.* From here, the words themselves suggested an underlying theme that best described their existence. The *Taxonomy of Functional Words/Ideas to Emerging Themes,* (refer p.113) shows this process.

Taxonomy of Functional Words/Ideas to Emerging Themes		
Functional Words/Ideas	Research Heading	Emerging Theme
A. Fair, Listens, Strong, Decisive, Direct, Shares, Disseminates, Pulls Together, Motivates, Knowledge, Expectations, Supportive, Flexible, Autocratic, Weak, Directive, Fragmented.	Leadership	Leadership
B. Expectations - indicators, Building Blocks, School -wide Focus, Knowledge - educational/legislation, Package of Reporting, Future-focused, Open, Ideas, Practices up-to-date, Provides purpose and meaning in doing what we do, Systems, Professional Accountability. Time.	Educational Effectiveness and Improvements	Vision and Focus
C. Discussions, Higher Expectations, Timetables Lunch Hours, Communication, Behaviour Changes, Sports Equipment, Painted Building, Accountability, Team Focus, Teachers Listen, Show they Care, Professional Talk, Knowledge, Re-growth, New Teachers.	Culture	Change

4.5 : Summary:

In developing the researcher's quest for meaning, the important and recurring variables have been collated and presented using the major headings of *culture, educational effectiveness, improvement* and *leadership.* These data were then synthesised, during which process reoccurring functional words and ideas were categorised. From this information three major themes - *change, vision and focus,* and *leadership* - emerged. These will be discussed in the ensuing Chapter.

Chapter Five

Discussion

5.1 : Introduction

At the outset of this research, one of the aims for the researcher was to answer the questions that arose when formalising the maze of thought about change, namely:

- When working towards improving a school's organisation, what elements were involved in developing change - culture, effectiveness, improvement and leadership?

- What changes in the school's organisational culture do teachers, students and parents consider have occurred?

- Have changes to the organisation impacted on educational effectiveness and resulted in improvement for teachers, students and parents?

A second aim was to apply the concept of organisational culture in exploring and interpreting how effectively, or ineffectively, a primary school adapted to change. This Chapter focuses on first, the analysis of gathered data by discussing the major emerging themes, as

> "(Discussion)... is a way of walking - not of talking!"
> (W.R. Inge, Dean of St. Paul's, 1975, A Dictionary of Modern Quotations, p.109:33)

identified in Chapter Four - *Change, Vision and Focusing* and *Leadership* - and second, literature. This is followed by a review of the analysis through the entanglement of the themes noted above and their relationship to the concept of organisational culture. Finally, the chapter looks at answering the researcher's questions and addressing the aims and objectives of the thesis.

5.2 : Emerging Themes

In analysing the data collected for this research the *Taxonomy of Functional Words/Ideas to Emerging Themes* - Chapter Four (refer p.113) - was further broken down to ascertain what elements had motivated the sample school to change. Owens (1995) and Stoll and Fink (1997) suggest that elements have depths which interplay and create the social norms and expectations and values and beliefs - the personality - that make up an organisation. Each emerging theme has had the layers of its personality peeled back.

5.2.1 Change

The elements used in analysing change were the *visual, verbal, ritual* and *climatic* cultural features (Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994; Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1989; Marsh & Beardsmore, 1985; Deal, 1985) as defined in Chapter Two. Chart One (refer p.116) *'Taxonomy of Cultural Features - Past to Present'* - shows this process. The taxonomy was constructed by either transcribing or cutting up recorded data and organising it under the headings of past or present cultural elements, as noted above.

Cultural Feature	Past	Present
Visuals	Male teachers present. More certificates given out. More sporting trophies presented. More parents visible. Buildings - old tatty, old furniture, cramped admin. area. Library never changed - not user friendly. Dangerous playground. Resources old, out of date. Limited sports equipment.	Painted - upgraded, colourful, new furniture, admin. area to to meet 21st century, progressive, innovative. User friendly library. Working bee to fix playground. New teachers. Updated resources. Wider variety of leisure activities - busy and quiet areas. Sun shades. Certificates focused on values and directed. No male teachers. Not as many parents visually around school - busy lives.
Verbals	Swearing, bad language, slang and talking disrespectfully were readily tolerated. Parents ranted and raved about school. Could work Principal around. Principal listened but nothing changed. Communication could have been better - had meetings, phone calls, interviews, but needed to be a forthright strong parent to get notice taken. Communication with children not always the best, sometimes confrontational between teachers.	Zero tolerance to bad language. Consistency with implementing zero tolerance. Management doesn't muck around, issues/ concerns dealt with. Harder to communicate with Principal but things dealt with which is more important. Communication like past, had newsletters, written/oral reports, impromptu meetings, phone calls, but better are the partnership books, BOT news-letters, can always be worked on. Communication with children much better, teachers listen, not confrontational. Teachers proactive rather than reactive.
Rituals	No eating/drinking during school. Ski trips, Camp. PE shed monitors who gave out equipment. Assemblies for certificates, singing, sport reports. Buy lunches everyday. Lunch hour 12 to 1:00pm. Yearly photos. PTA did good things for school, fundraised. Syndicate meetings. Staff meetings long, mixture of house keeping, coming events. Teachers never changed levels, classrooms, curriculum responsibilities. Staff interactions more social, shared morning teas, raffles, social functions outside of school. Bad behaviour recognised. Reporting: formal interviews included social comments - appeared to be ad hoc in nature - teacher centred. Very little professional development focused for staff. Behaviour issues always sent to Principal's office, teacher held responsible. Limited professional discussion happened amongst staff.	Encouraged to drink water during the day. Some rooms allow popcorn to be eaten. Outdoor Education programme formalised. leisure equipment outside room one - help yourself. Assemblies include stories on values. Only buy lunches on a Monday. Lunch hour now 12:30 to 1:30pm. Principal's office open. Get green cards for good behaviour. Reports curriculum focused, on computer, use port-folios, child/teacher assessments included. More co-operative planning. Syndicate meetings focused on planning. Two staff meetings, one housekeeping, other PD, both focused with time limits. Teachers actively encouraged to change levels and responsibilities. Behaviour management focus is school-wide responsibility, including children encouraged to take responsibility. Staff interactions, more professional discussions occur in staff room, still have morning teas, raffles and some social functions (not as many). Social comments missed from reports. Photo biannually. No PTA - sadly missed. Bought lunches only available on Mondays.
Climate	Strong past parent group. Felt, believed, things were going fine. Had to be part of the right group in playground. If you didn't fit, it was tough. Lonely place if you were an outsider, you got picked on, bullied. No fair, consistent discipline system. Past management was autocratic, delegations not clearly defined, leadership not provided.	School much calmer, friendlier, safer, happier for children in playground. Overall o.k. place. Bullying dealt with. Consistency in dealing with it. Boundaries set for children. Encourage children to take responsibility for their actions. Time out to cool down before entering discussions, reduces confrontations. Management climate strong in conviction, direction ensuring all take responsibility in meeting educational needs and outcomes. Clean sweep of dead wood and others who didn't want to change or become part of new focus/direction. Need to encourage up and coming young families to become part of the school again - look forward not back. Time of regrowth.

On the surface of this analysis the obvious visual, verbal, ritual and climatic changes are noted. For example:

- Buildings upgraded.

- Resources, both teaching and leisure equipment up to date, relevant and available.

- Behaviour management is a school-wide responsibility. Zero tolerance of bullies and bad language, and showing respect are the expected norms today.

- The organisation is calmer than in the past.

These elements, in Chart One, indicate how the beliefs and values - *the norms* - (Owens, 1995) of the organisation have changed. What was appropriate in the past is not what is appropriate in the present.

Lying under this surface are the actions - *feelings, relationships,* and *interactions* - of 'people'. Bolman and Deal (1991) imply that these actions formulate the deeper understandings of the notion of change. They are what is accepted as being the environment's reality, truth, nature, and activity (Schein, 1985). They are true or false, possible or impossible, implied or clear. They are *the assumptions* upon which all other aspects of culture are constructed. Chart Two (refer p.118), *'Taxonomy of Actions - Past to Present'* further analyses the data

from Chart One - *'Taxonomy of Cultural Features'* - using the action headings of *feelings, relationships* and *interactions.*

Chart Two

Taxonomy of Actions - Past to Present		
Action	Past	Present
Feelings	Old, never changed, out of date, put up with things, frustration, unhappy, lonely for some, standing still, socially great, fun, had good times, believed things were o.k., independence, isolation, lack of co-ordination, didn't know any different.	New, progressive, innovative, zero tolerance, consistency, don't muck around, exciting, formalised, positive, know what is happening, secure, encouragement, insecure - boundaries being pushed, professional focus, questioning, challenged, exciting, calmer, friendlier, safer, happier. regrowth.
Relationships	Frustation, manipulative, dominated, autocratic, lack of leadership, confrontational at times with children. Socially fun, supportive, caring, good people, meant well, at time isolated to syndicates, hard workers, strong parent group encouraged, supported home/school/parents.	Leadership, professionally focused, supportive, caring, hard workers, non-confrontation encouraged, co-operative, challenging, communication across syndicates encouraged, shared responsibility for school wide behaviour, no parent group to encourage school/home/parent relations. Management strong in conviction and direction, hard to communicate with. Break-down of relationships, challenges, movement of parents/teachers away, new staff, time of regrowth.
Interactions	Sports important, parents needed to be strong, forthright to be heard, old equipment, confrontational, listened but no actions taken, limited professional development, social interactions important, teacher driven, more parents visible, defensive, up-skilling not a dominant factor, children not readily listened to, boundaries not always clear/consistent.	Professionally driven, co-operative with teachers, children, parents, listened to, actions followed up, co-operative, things more user friendly, fewer parents visible at school, but there when needed, non-confrontation encouraged, listening important for all - especially children, consistency in implementing behaviour management routines, set boundaries that all - teachers, parents, children - know. New staff, regrowth happening.

An analysis of this research suggests that, from the initiation of the process of change which occurred when the new Principal took over the reins of the sample school which is the subject of this research, there have been significant undercurrents of feeling and relationship moves. As new ways of doing things have been introduced the school's stability, predictability, departmentalisation and bureaucracy (Stoll & Fink, 1997) - its rules of conduct, familiarity, comfort and security - have all been challenged. The analysis suggests that not all parties to the school's community were happy with the changes that occurred. There were:

- Insecurities,
- Boundaries pushed,
- Challenges,
- Breakdown in relationships, and
- Some staff and families moved on, new staff arrived.

Gustavson (1955) suggests that people like familiarity, they like the passivity that keeps the machinery running. With change, however, misunderstandings, unease, distrust, and - in some cases - conflict can arise. Schein (1985) and Bolman and Deal (1991), through their writings, suggest that some members of this school, who could not adapt, moved on, while others stayed, and adapted to the challenges of change. New members, who supported the school's new direction, joined the community.

The analysis also highlights a significant change in teaching staff interactions and relationships. In the past, the interactions were perceived as being:

- Predominantly social in nature,
- Limited in professional development and discussion,
- Segmented in approaching educational focuses, and
- Limited in team (school wide) approaches to educational initiatives.

Today, staff interactions are associated more in terms of professional discussions, co-operation, team (both syndicate and school wide) approaches to work objectives and unity. This change could be defined as a shift in balance from congeniality to collegiality. The balance shifted from being predominantly the "... friendly human relationships that exist in a school ... (to being) a faculty of like-minded people bonded in common commitment of shared work goals and ... identity" (Sergiovanni, 1992, p.91). The *Taxonomy of Actions* (refer p.118) analysis suggests that, with the change in balance from congeniality to collegiality, staff members have become more aware of the need to change, resulting in a willingness to implement change. As one teacher said,

> There will always be change, nothing ever stays the same, (however), there have been more changes in the past few years than ever in this school's life, but life goes on.

The *Taxonomy of Actions* analysis endorses this statement. The interview groups acknowledge that, with hindsight and reflection, changes had to happen, and, as one interviewee indicated, "Change is synonymous with re-growth for this school."

For the sample school in this research, change did not just happen. It happened because one Principal retired and a new Principal was appointed. The new Principal became the vehicle through which the pressures of the school (both inside [micro, day-to-day needs] and outside [macro, governmental, social, environmental, community]) were addressed and/or delivered. Donahoe's (1993) and Schein's (1985) writings suggest that the new Principal became the organisation's *change maker*, the central motivator. Figures 1 and 2 (p.76 and p.77 respectively) show the school's administration and organisational structure which suggest that the new Principal is at the 'heart' of the existence of the sample school which is the subject of this research.

In being at the sample school's heart, the Principal becomes the school's central motivator. The *Taxonomy of Cultural Features* and the *Taxonomy of Actions* suggest that the new Principal motivated changes by putting systems, such as professional development programmes and school-wide expectations, in place. In doing this, the Principal further motivated change by offering guidance, leadership, and encouraged professional discussion, adaptation and flexibility to ensure that the organisation's community had ownership of the

changes. "I prefer discussion, reasoning and deliberation to bring about change," explained the new principal.

This research's *Taxonomy of Actions* analysis supports research (such as that of Littledyke, 1997; Donahoe, 1993; Neville, 1992) and writings (Owens, 1995; Kemp & Nathan, 1989) which suggest that participatory approaches to change empower people to adapt to new ways of doing things by having ownership over the change. However, this research's *Taxonomy of Actions* analysis indicates also that the sample school's change maker was faced with challenges from some of the then existing organisation's community. In dealing with these challenges, the change-maker indicated that,

> An authoritative approach from the Board and myself did occur. Sometimes deliberate steps of action have to be taken to get things moving; however, it was not the most productive approach and was used only when absolutely necessary. However, time was ticking on and action was needed.

Although not specifically mentioned in any data analysis regarding change, the *Taxonomy of Cultural Features* and the *Taxonomy of Actions* imply that initial changes happened over a short time span. On the arrival of the new Principal, buildings were painted, the way school's organisation was changed, and systems were put in place to ensure continuity across the school. The questions that arise here are: Did the members of the school's community have time to digest

the changes? Were some of the changes just too fast for some people to cope with? The *Taxonomy of Cultural Features* and the *Taxonomy of Actions* would imply, "No" and "Yes" respectively to these questions.

Ediger (1997) suggests that culture can change rapidly, or slowly and surely; it all depends on what is happening in an organisation. For the sample school in this research, in the new Principal's words,

> Things had to change. Sometimes you just can't stand back and wait! No, some things needed immediate action and that's what I did. Sure, along the way some community members were 'lost' but I needed to look to the future. I did my best to lead, guide, but at the end of the day, it was their choice to stay, adapt, or move on.

For the sample school in this research, the outset of change was rapid, but, as time has moved on, change has moved into Ediger's (1997) description of 'slowly and surely'. As one interviewee suggested, "changes are still happening but not as slow or as fragmented, or as dramatic as in the past." This statement implies that members of the school's community believe they have time to digest, discuss and evaluate new trends.

The actions of the change-maker, the new Principal, have challenged the norms and assumptions - principles and practices, behaviours, interactions, values and beliefs - that influenced how the sample

school's community in this research study thought, felt and acted. The new Principal, according to Schein (1985), challenged the status quo and is now in the process of developing the school's new cultural patterns. As the *Taxonomy of Cultural Features* and the *Taxonomy of Actions* indicate, the school is working through a *re-growth* cycle.

This analysis would suggest that the sample school, which is the subject of this research, had its culture changed both as a product (that which is fixed) and a process (that which is active) (Stoll & Fink, 1997). As a product, the sample school manifested a set of wisdom – for example: behaviour management, curriculum knowledge, educational expectations, professional development (the norms and assumptions, values and beliefs) - which needed direction to meet the challenges of a contemporary educational system. As a process, the sample school received direction – guidance and leadership to up-date and implement more contemporary and focused educational programmes and systems - when new staff, in particular the new Principal, took over the running of the sample school. This supports Ott's (1989) argument that culture is a concept created by people. As people changed in this sample school, so did the culture.

5.2.2 Vision and Focusing

Chart Three - *Educational Effectiveness and Improvement - Taxonomy of Attributes* (refer p.125), uses educational attributes, identified by research (Stoll & Fink, 1997; *Good New Zealand Schools*, 1994; Downer, 1991; *Effective Schools*, 1981), that embrace and

enhance educational effectiveness, and improvement. In doing so, the taxonomy highlights the changes that were described by its community members as having taken place in the sample school of this research.

Chart Three

Educational Effectiveness and Improvement Taxonomy of Attributes		
Attributes	Past Vision/Focus	Present Vision/Focus
Student Achievement/ Goals/Objectives/ Expectations	Expectations low. Educational programmes in place but had topic and school area boundaries. Resources old, tatty. Lack of continuity between school areas - limited coordinated, co-operative approaches to planning/meeting needs. Progress of children not always easily identified/shown. Some dead wood around.	Expectations high, use building block approach to setting learning outcomes Resources up-to-date including coordinated computer use. Educational Programmes that have focus, show progress, and are known by all. More skilled staff, greater accountability. Syndicate boundaries broken down. Coordinated systems to follow.
Relationships: Home/ School/Community Members	Not always clear communications. Confrontational at times with children. Parents felt they had to be strong and forthright to be heard. Reporting general.	Clear communications encouraged. Non-confrontational fostered. Open. Friendly. Accountable. Reporting specific to curriculum areas.
Culture Fostered	Low educational expectations. Control autocratic.	High educational expectations. Control - and responsibility for what happens - shared.
Core Leadership	Curriculum Knowledge not strong. Expectations not clearly defined. Maintaining standards.	Curriculum knowledge strong. Clear coordinated expectations. Raising.

Historically, the vision and focusing of this organisation, as the *Taxonomy of Attributes* indicates, did not embrace educational effectiveness and improvement. In many aspects, the school's vision

and focusing were limited and segmented; as one teacher expressed it, "School programmes and expectations had definitive boundaries."

This taxonomy would imply that, in the past, the school had been divided into segregated areas - each area having definite lines within curriculum delivery and context. Teachers were not openly, or actively, encouraged to work together or provide a building block approach within curriculum contexts. Educational expectations, and the reporting of such to parents and the Board of Trustees, were general in context and contained subjective statements.

As Hopkins, Ainscow and West, (1994), Sackney, (1991) and Finn, (1984) suggest, once these attributes were encompassed and entwined in the sample school's everyday activities they became internalised as the mandatory values, standards, procedures and behaviours. Essentially, they became part of the sample school's norms and assumptions – its culture.

The *Taxonomy of Attributes* analysis would suggest that, historically, the sample school went against research (*Good New Zealand Schools*, 1994; Downer, 1991; *Effective Schools*, 1981) findings of being effective in instigating educational improvements. Primarily, the school lacked contemporary educational direction, leadership lacked contemporary educational knowledge and focusing, the school lacked agreed contexts for direction and expectations, and the goals and objectives of the organisation were unclear to its community

members. "On entering the school, I found that there were many areas of legislation, administration, professionalism, educational knowledge and focusing that required development," the new Principal recalled.

The *Taxonomy of Attributes* suggests that the sample school in this research has moved to develop school-wide educational focuses, which start at year zero and provide building blocks and layering of skills and knowledge up to year six. Teaching staff are coming together 'professionally' with an holistic vision and focus for the educational needs of the community. Professional development has been implemented to instigate and enhance contemporary educational directions. There has been development of school wide student expectations and levels, based on objective statements, as well as the refocusing of monitoring, assessing and reporting on children's progress to parents and the Board of Trustees.

The new Principal, in refocusing and providing the school with a contemporary educational vision, has laid the foundation for developing a more educationally effective environment and improved educational outcomes for its students. As the new Principal indicated, "Raising standards and expectations takes mind-shifts in teachers - and other community members - it takes time, reflection, good decisions and a vision to pull it together." These ingredients - attributes (Parlett & Hamilton, 1972) - help to develop educational effectiveness and improvement.

Writers on educational effectiveness and improvement (Worthen & Sanders, 1991; Finn, 1984; Parlett & Hamilton, 1972;) suggest that the shifts which the *Taxonomy of Attributes* indicate, as happening for the sample school in this research need to be internalised as values, standards and behaviours. They need to become entwined and encompassed as the sample school's norms and assumptions – its new culture – to be effective in improving the routines and results of education. If they are not then there is the possibility that the new ways will collapse and the old ways will return (Donahoe, 1993). However, the *Taxonomy of Attributes* would suggest that the sample school is moving along a path of internalising the 'new way of doing things'. It suggests that new norms and assumptions are being developed with the help and guidance of its new core leader. Having a strong core leader is viewed (Stoll & Fink, 1997; Downer, 1991) as another essential ingredient in increasing educational effectiveness and improvement.

5.2.3 Leadership

In peeling away the layers of personality in the previous two emerging themes – *Change* and *Vision and Focusing* - Leadership has been a word that stands out as being the most significant in bringing about change to the culture of the sample school of this research. Chart Four (refer p.129) – *Taxonomy of Leadership Premises* - uses Stoll and Fink's (1997) invitational leadership premises of *optimism, respect, trust and intentionality* (defined in Chapter Two, pp.32-33) to analyse past and present leadership actions.

Chart Four

Taxonomy of Leadership Premises		
Premise	Past	Present
Optimism (Expectations)	Low expectations. Not strong. Lack of direction.	High expectations, strong, decisive in direction. Wants best. Motivates. Looks forward.
Respect (Behaviours)	Nice, kind, friendly Person. Lacked high level of professional knowledge. Listened but no obvious actions taken.	High level of professional knowledge. Encourages, discusses, fair, listens, acts.
Trust (Inter-dependence)	Fragmented.	Pulls together. Encourages. Discusses. Supportive. Visionary.
Intentionality (Functions)	Autocratic. Directive. Lack of delegation.	Shares. Open. Supportive. Flexible. Disseminates knowledge. Commitment. Motivates.

Stoll and Fink (1997) suggest that leadership is about communicating messages in order to build, and act on, visions that enhance educational experiences for an educational organisation's community. The *Taxonomy of Leadership Premises* implies that the past leadership of the sample school in this research had only a limited knowledge with which to develop and enhance educational improvements and effectiveness. As the Education Review Office report (1996) noted, "... there is a need for strong effective leadership in this school."

The Education Review Office report (1996) suggested further that the then leader was unable to delegate roles or instil expectations and that there was a lack of cohesion in working to meet the needs and

expectations of the organisation. The *Taxonomy of Leadership Premises* implies that the past leader was a nice 'people person'. However, the leader had been bureaucratic and worked from the top down. According to Angus, (1994) this leadership approach displayed characteristics and notions of being conventional in nature and unlikely to succeed in instigating real changes that would enhance educational improvement and effectiveness.

The *Taxonomy of Leadership Premises* supports the *Taxonomy of Attributes* (refer p.125) in implying that the new leader has become the 'heart' of the organisation. It is the heart - as Sergiovanni (1992) implies - that proclaims the organisation's beliefs that are turned into visions and, ultimately, actions. This approach displays characteristics of a more contemporary form of leadership: an approach that takes on collective problem-solving, the sharing of ideas, depicts expectations, has children's achievement and welfare at heart, and concentrates on improving the organisation's educational programmes.

Leadership writers (Leithwood, Begley and Cousins, 1994; Foster, 1994; Smyth, 1994; Sergiovanni, 1992) suggest that the new Principal displays characteristics of being a 'transformative' leader. A leader who is strong transforms the beliefs and convictions of the organisation's community into its needs, wants, visions and goals; and assists members to make changes, conquer behaviours and use their talents and energies. Stoll and Fink (1997) extend this analysis to suggest that the new core leader, in being a transformational leader,

is also a proficient invitational leader. The new leader - in the sample school subject to this research - is more astute than the past leader in her ability to communicate, make decisions, and develop plans that encourage collegiality and collaboration in the pursuit of developing changes to enhance educational effectiveness and improvement for the research's sample school. As one interviewee commented,

> Today's leadership has provided us with the how and why we are doing the things we do. We are in the throes of developing an educationally focused school equipping itself to meet modern challenges. Things are moving, nothing is perfect, nevertheless, the school is in good heart!

5.3 : The Entanglement of Change

In defining the thick description, the snapshot, of this organisation's culture, the three themes, of *change, vision and focusing* and *leadership*, have become the 'cultural glue' of the sample school which is the subject of this research (Marsh and Beardsmore, 1985). They are the bindings which have connected the people, their behaviours, interactions, activities, beliefs, visions, values, goals and expectations; essentially their *norms* and *assumptions*. In analysing the themes, an organisation has emerged in which major changes in direction and focusing have occurred, and through which historical norms and assumptions have been challenged.

In determining 'how things are done around here', the *Taxonomy of Cultural Features* (refer p.116) indicates that, while many ritual, verbal and visual influences have changed - some have disappeared, while some have altered only slightly - some remain unchanged. However, all have been influenced by a more contemporary educational *focus and vision.* This focus and vision have been delivered through a contemporary form of *leadership* that has, at its heart, the educational improvement and effectiveness of the organisation.

The correlation between the school's cultural changes, leadership and ultimate goal of improving educational outcomes for learners is reinforced through educational leadership, cultural, and effectiveness as various writers suggest. (For example, Stoll and Fink, 1997; Ediger, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1987; Schein, 1985; Deal, 1985; and Finn, 1984.) These writers suggest that cultural behaviours are impacted by leadership which, ultimately, affects the quality of the organisation's educational effectiveness and improvements. Viewed separately, the concepts are less effective, put together, they become a strong foundation for instigating real change.

Real change can be effected only through altering or influencing the dynamics, power and politics of people (Brown, 1995; Ott, 1989). This research, through the Taxonomy analysis of *Cultural Features, Actions, Attributes* and *Leadership*, supports this notion. Kotter and Heskett (1992) and Beardsmore (1985) suggest that a good 'fit' between what happens around a place and the strategic direction in

which - and purpose for which - the organisation wants to travel, lies in the people and their interactions. Therefore, it is the people and their interactions that create the 'uniqueness' that defines the culture of an organisation.

Research (Ott, 1989) suggests that organisational culture does not provide a set of cultural rules on how to make a successful organisation. Rather, organisational culture provides a 'snapshot' of the behaviours and concepts at work. This research demonstrates two uniquely different 'snapshots' of culture at work. Each snapshot was set in the same organisation, each was unique, with different meanings and behaviours being portrayed - one in the past and one in the present. As for the effectiveness of each cultural snapshot, research (Owens, 1995; Edwards, 1988; Deal, 1985) suggests that a culture which displays:

- Progressive shapes of thought,
- Coherent goals,
- Strong commitments to teaching and learning,
- Collegiality, open communication and collaboration, and
- Strong visionary leadership,

is more likely to be innovative and receptive to change. This research suggests that the current organisational culture of the sample school of this research is more likely to succeed in implementing real change than the organisational culture of the historical snapshot would have been.

5.4   :   Research Questions Answered

In the quest to understand what happened, and is happening, around the school which is the subject of this research, the researcher used, as a foundation, the notions of culture, educational effectiveness, improvement and leadership. Information on organisational culture was derived from current literature and entwined with data which had been collected from the sample school and analysed.   As a result, the following opinions have been formulated by the researcher in response to the research questions.

> - When working towards improving a school's organisation, what elements were involved in developing change - culture, effectiveness, improvement and leadership?

When working to improve the organisation of the sample school subject to this research, the elements that brought about change were culture, educational effectiveness, improvement and leadership. For the sample school, 'the way things were done' (the rituals, verbals, climate and visuals - the norms; the feelings, relationships and interactions - the assumptions) was altered to enhance educational effectiveness and improvement (student achievement, expectations, goals, objectives and relationship). The data analysis indicates that the correlation is strong between the adopted cultural elements of

the sample school and how they impact on the educational effectiveness, and improvement elements. However, in achieving changes, the <u>key element</u> was *leadership*, and specifically core leadership - which, in this sample school, was provided by the Principal. When the core leadership of the sample school changed, new norms and assumptions were developed and established to provide a more contemporary educationally focused and driven environment. It is, therefore, the opinion of this researcher that, without the *strong core leader* in this sample school, any changes designed to enhance educational effectiveness and improvement derived through cultural ways of doing things *may not* have been as successful. For this sample school, *core leadership* has been a central issue in determining the path along which it is now travelling.

- What changes in the school's organisational culture do teachers, students and parents consider have occurred?

There are a vast number of surface features that each of the interview groups identified as being made; for example, the buildings were painted, resources were updated, sunshades were purchased, new teachers were appointed, and programmes were formalised. School became a more friendlier place - behaviour was dealt with, and people became proactive rather than reactive. Nevertheless, further

analysis of the surface changes indicated that, for real changes to occur, there needed to be changes in the deeper layer of *actions*. The analysis suggested that these deeper actions were the assumptions of *feelings, relationships and interactions.* Some of these actions relate to:

- The environment being more contemporarily driven and focused - in a manner which is both educational and professional,

- Issues and actions are followed up, parents feel listened to,

- The belief that there are set expectations in behaviour,

- The belief that there are higher educational expectations and outcomes for students and teachers, and

- The belief that teachers and children are listened to.

Again, in answering this question, the identified driving force has been the new core leadership – because this is a leadership that is contemporarily focused in educational knowledge and expertise, as well as being contemporarily focused in dealing with the issues, concerns, needs and wants of the organisation's community.

- Have changes to the organisation impacted on educational effectiveness, and resulted in improvement for teachers, students and parents?

In the short term, the answer to this question is that it is difficult to measure improvements over a short period of time. In the long term, after careful data monitoring, collection and analysis, it is hoped that the answer will be *yes*. Notwithstanding the short and long term situations, the interview groups were strong in their beliefs that there have been educational improvements that have led to improved educational effectiveness in the sample school of this research. There was acknowledgement, by the participants in the research, that curriculum knowledge, understanding, implementation, programme delivery, planning, assessment and monitoring - all of which should lead to more effective educational outcomes for the students - have had significant improvements made to them. There are some initial indications that these improvements are leading to more effective outcomes for students; primarily in reading and the basic fact mathematics programme. There is also a strong belief that behaviour management has come under control, which means more emphasis can be placed on educational needs than on behaviour management issues. Again, a core element in answering this question has been *leadership*. It has taken a contemporarily focused, strong, knowledgeable leader

to provide direction, guidance and understanding to help bring about educational improvements and effectiveness for this sample school.

In developing a quest for meaning and answering the research questions about 'what happened around this place' (the sample school in this research), it is significant to acknowledge that change - new ways of doing things - occurred through the direction, guidance and openness of the new core leader - the new Principal. Strong, knowledgeable, open, receptive leadership, therefore, has to be at the centre of developing and implementing changes that are being taken on board, internalised and developed into new ways of doing things - a changed culture - which, in turn, leads to educational improvements and effectiveness. Without this strong, core leadership, it could be debated that changes might be only superficial. Notwithstanding, this research suggests that the sample school has started along the path of internalising new ways of doing things, with the new ways being constantly reviewed; as the new Principal has said,

> This organisation, or any organisation for that matter, should never stop changing. An organisation needs to respond and develop to meet its ever changing needs.

5.5 : Thesis Aims and Objectives Addressed

The following section addresses the aims and objectives of this research by considering their usefulness.

- To apply the concept of organisational culture to a primary school setting in order to explore and interpret how effectively, or ineffectively, the school adapted to change.

Organisational culture, as an umbrella of notions and concepts, provided the researcher with an abundance of information on current thinking about what determines whether *real changes* can be managed effectively, or not. The researcher, in using organisational culture as a foundation, identified frameworks and options that *any organisation,* including the sample school of this research, could pursue to help shape and direct the path along which it can travel to promote effective, or ineffective, changes.

Organisational culture suggests that it is the unconscious thoughts of an organisation that develop the meanings and behaviours (Ott, 1989) of the organisation which, in turn, form the nucleus of *how things are done* within it. These unconscious thoughts are compounded by the espoused leadership that impacts on the quality and effectiveness of what happens in an organisation.

In separating and peeling away the organisational components - *culture, effectiveness, improvement and leadership,* - researchers can begin to identify and explain how and why things happen. However, in developing a more complete picture, the separate components need to be re-entwined so that the impact of what is happening in one component can be seen on the other components. For the sample school in this research, the concept of organisational culture enabled the researcher to identify past and present ways of doing things. From this information, the researcher could ascertain a core element that made each era (past to present) travel along different paths. Each path, in turn, affected the educational effectiveness and improvements within the sample school.

This research, therefore, provides an endorsement of the claim that **organisational culture** is a valid and useful concept upon which to establish and develop the understanding of what creates the *real changes* that enhance *effectiveness and improvements* in *any organisation.*

- To contribute to current research and debate on what determines effective and improved educational environments.

Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1994) and Sackney (1991) suggest that schools can, and do, make a difference. What this research suggests

is that *'making a difference'* depends on what is happening in, and around, an educational environment. This research has highlighted one environment, the management of which has taken two very different paths. Historically, the path did not display clear goals, objectives, high expectations, or strong contemporary knowledgeable leadership. This research supports current writers (Stoll & Fink, 1997; Downer, 1991) by illustrating that the sample school's present path of travel incorporates clear goals, objectives, high expectations and strong, contemporary and knowledgeable leadership. These attributes are highlighted by Stoll and Fink (1997), and Downer (1991), as embracing educational effectiveness and improvements.

This research also acknowledges that it takes time for changes to be viewed as being effective, as the Principal of this sample school noted, "We are moving along, lots of things changed immediately, other changes are not totally evident yet." This acknowledgement supports current thinking that improvements and effectiveness lie in the accumulation and assimilation of factors that take time, foresight, practice, decision-making and strong, contemporary, knowledgeable leadership (Parlett & Hamilton, 1972).

During the analysis of the data obtained from this research leadership has been highlighted as being the strongest element in determining and directing the cultural changes that have impacted on the educational effectiveness and improvements of this sample school. This research supports the assertion of Stoll & Fink (1997) that

strong educational leaders need to not only hold transformational leadership qualities - as espoused by Sergiovanni (1992) and other transformational leadership writers - but they also need to be action (invitational) leaders. An action leader is one who invites messages from - and communicates messages to - the community in order to build and act on shared and evolving visions which deal with reality that leads to enhanced educational effectiveness and improvement.

In contributing to current research and debate on what determines effective and improved educational environments, this research highlights, and, endorses, the important parts that the elements of *culture, leadership and effectiveness and improvement* in determining which path an educational organisation may travel in being either effective or ineffective.

> - To heighten the awareness amongst teachers, students and parents of the importance and influence that organisational culture has on the effectiveness and improvement of educational environments and outcomes.

"Hindsight is a wonderful thing," as one interviewee observed. During interviews, children, parents and teachers identified with all sorts of *changes* that had been made around the sample school. The participants in the research acknowledged the significance of the

change of direction although some had reservations about 'how' some of the changes were effected and whether some of the changes were of real benefit. Nevertheless, upon reflection, all could see that some existing 'things' had to change, had to be adapted, and new things had to be adopted for the sample school to become a more up-to-date educational environment with more contemporary ways of doing things. This research provided *all* participants with an opportunity to openly reflect, to identify what had changed, and determine whether or not the changes have been of benefit to them either individually, or as a part of the school's community.

During the interviews, it became clear to the researcher that the participants in the research could identify the significance of the concept that 'how things were done affected what happened around the place'. Parents and teachers were astute in associating what happens around the place with culture and, upon reflection they could see that the culture of the sample school had an important part to play in determining the ways in which its ethos was changing. For the children, this was not so obvious. However, they could clearly identify different - changed - expectations, behaviours and looks, and they were astute in attributing changes directly to 'top' leadership – namely, the change in principal.

In achieving the aim and objective of heightening awareness, amongst the interview groups, of the importance and influence that organisational culture has on the effectiveness and improvement of

educational environments and outcomes, this research, if nothing else, provided an opportunity for those in the sample school who participated to make that association. If they did not make the association of culture and effectiveness and improvement directly then at least this research provided participants with an opportunity to reflect on the past and compare it to the present. This, in turn, enabled them to make their own judgements on the effects that changes had brought to the environment of the sample school.

5.6 : Summary

In applying the concept of organisational culture, this research has highlighted that, in creating real change, there is a correlation between concepts of culture, educational effectiveness, improvement and leadership. If viewed separately, these concepts are less effective. However, when put together, they become a strong foundation for instigating real change. Real change takes the study of the dynamics, power and politics of people and develops a unique 'fit' between what happens around a place and the strategic direction in which the organisation wants to travel. This research suggests that the current organisational culture of the sample school is more likely to bring real change than the historical culture had been. A prime factor in developing this understanding lies in the *strong leadership* qualities showed by the new principal, in order to assist the school in making real changes that promote educational effectiveness and improvement.

The research questions have been answered. In developing changes in the sample school, which is the subject of this research, all the elements of culture, effectiveness, improvement and leadership were entwined to produce new ways of doing things. However, the one element that was highlighted as being the most significant for this sample school was leadership - specifically, core leadership. When the core leadership changed, the way things were done around the sample school changed. In identifying specific changes, the interview groups highlighted many surface changes. However, what were of more significance were the underlying changes to relationships, feelings and interactions that instigated more permanent changes. These permanent changes, in the view of the interview groups, have compounded to provide the sample school with an educationally improved and more effective environment.

Finally, aims and objectives of this thesis were addressed by acknowledging that this research found the concepts and notions that determine organisational culture useful in identifying elements involved in changing a primary school's 'way of doing things'. In so doing, this study has contributed to current research and debate, on what determines effective and improved educational environments, by highlighting and endorsing the *significance* that *culture, leadership and effectiveness and improvement* in determining the path an educational organisation travels in being either effective or ineffective. For the participants this research provided an opportunity to reflect on past and current ways of doing things -

heightening, for some, the importance and influence of organisational culture on the effectiveness and improvement of educational environments and outcomes. For others, it provided an opportunity to reflect on past and present ways of doing things which enabled them to make their own judgements on the effects which changes had produced in the environment of the sample school.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

6.1 : Introduction

This chapter completes the circle in the researcher's quest for meaning within the boundaries of this research. In doing so, the Chapter contains a review of the methodology adopted by the researcher and an overview of the answers to the research questions, aims and objectives. Finally, it suggests possible recommendations for future research.

6.2 : Methodology Reviewed

In using the ethnographic approach to undertake this research study, the researcher found ethnographic techniques ideally suitable for the planned task. The techniques provided the researcher with the means to penetrate the culture of the sample school by travelling beneath the surface rituals, values, visuals and verbals in that search, 'that quest for meaning'.

In addition to providing the means/method whereby the researcher was enabled to penetrate the culture of the sample school, use of the

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"Education must have an end in view,

for it is not an end in itself."

(Arthur Marshall, (1975) "A Dictionary of Modern Quotations" p.149:37)

ethnographic approach enabled the researcher, who was a member of the staff, to remain part of the organisation, thereby providing the research with a 'natural' in-built validity (Wiseman & Aron, 1970).

No matter how ideally suited an ethnographic approach is in studying organisational culture, it is extremely time-consuming. In following the formalities of an ethnographic approach and using a combination of data collection techniques, (namely: participant observations, interviews and document analysis) it took the researcher a lot longer to complete the data collection and analysis than was initially envisaged. Nevertheless, in pursuing this approach and taking the time, the researcher was able to crosscheck information for validity (Creswell, 1994) and to gain a much broader and deeper understanding of the culture of the organisation.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) and Delamont (1992) suggest that being 'too comfortable' in an environment gives rise to the possibility of the researcher's overlooking important aspects, features and habits of the research site. The researcher - being aware of the significance of this issue - was particular in trying not to overlook, or dismiss, the mundane, everyday events. A conscious effort was made to ensure that a true, accurate picture was developed. In assisting with this task, conversations with children, parents and teachers were invaluable. They provided the crosschecks to the researcher's observations and data collected from documents, such as the

Education Review Office's report and the school's curriculum document, strategic plans and Charter.

During the research, mutual respect and trust became integral and important aspects to both the researcher and the participants. The researcher, fortunately, had already been part of the sample school's community for approximately twelve months prior to undertaking the research. During this time, children, staff and parents had come to know the researcher as part of their community and, in turn, the researcher had begun to assimilate and become part of the sample school's community. As such, mutual respect between the researcher and the sample school's community had begun to develop over this time.

This respect, in the researcher's opinion, was part of the driving force for the sample school's community to volunteer to participate in this research. In participating, the volunteers placed their trust in the researcher to ensure that what they said was accurately recorded, transcribed and used in contexts that would portray their intended meaning. Being conscious of this, the researcher took every precaution possible to ensure that the participants' respect and trust were not breached. This respect and trust, the researcher had an intuitive belief, 'a feeling', that the participants took risks in revealing their true thoughts, beliefs and values; a fact for which the researcher is both appreciative of and grateful for. This acceptance of mutual trust supports research writers (Delamont, 1992; Lubeck,

1985) who suggest that ethnographic studies of organisational culture are inherently intimate undertakings.

The experience of undertaking this study highlighted the constraints the researcher faced in using ethnographic research methods. The researcher was constrained by the necessity to balance full-time work commitments and by her lack of experience of being a researcher, and in both analysing and interpreting data. Another area of inexperience which came to light was in the researcher's ability to balance ownership of the research. Lubeck (1985) suggests that, with ownership, participants are more likely to provide a deeper understanding of the organisation's culture through seeing the benefits of disclosing their beliefs, values, norms and assumptions. The inexperience of the researcher resulted in her believing that the research was owned by her - and not by the participants. What effect this had on the results is difficult to determine. Nevertheless, it must be noted, and acknowledged as a factor that may have an effect on the overall validity of the research.

Notwithstanding these constraints, the researcher is of the conviction that ethnographic research has a place in defining organisational culture. The 'snapshot', the 'thick descriptions', the 'quest for meaning', all provide researchers and participants with views, meanings and understandings on how and why things are done. They provide an umbrella of notions and concepts from which vital information and evidence can be used by both researchers and

participants to make up their own minds, build understandings and draw their own conclusions (Stake, 1980) on how an organisation operates.

6.3 : Full Circle – Research Questions, Aims and Objectives Summarised

In searching for answers and meanings for the research questions, aims and objectives, this research study endorses the views of contemporary writers on the topics of cultural, educational improvement and effectiveness and leadership by demonstrating that:

- Culture, effectiveness, improvement and leadership are the foundations in creating real change.

- The organisation's community (its people) had to believe change was necessary to meet contemporary educational challenges.

- The organisation's community acknowledged that change involved more than just surface features; that change encompassed deeper beliefs and assumptions, norms and expectations.

- Leadership was a key factor in determining real change.

- Beliefs and assumptions, norms and expectations and leadership all played significant roles in intensifying the educational effectiveness and improvement for the community, its teachers and students.

In further pursuing answers and meaning, the researcher, through literature and earlier research, identified *culture, effectiveness, improvement* and *leadership* as important entities in this study. Each entity was then interlocked (Figure 3, refer p.153) to produce a totality of beliefs and assumptions and norms and expectations which determined how things 'are done' around an organisation. This research suggested that, for the sample school which was its subject, the interlocking of these entities – both in the past and in the present – had produced quite different sets of beliefs and assumptions, norms and expectations. However, the core entity for the organisation, both past and present, was *leadership*. Sashkin and Walberg, (1993) suggest that it is, within educational environments, the leaders who build the school's culture that create and shape the visions, values and excellence. Ediger (1997) and Donahoe (1993) advocate that, within educational settings, it is the principal who is the key person, the core leader, that influences the direction the 'culture' is to take.

This research highlighted two quite diverse perspectives of leadership, and demonstrated how leadership had created two different cultures that produced contrasting educational effectiveness and improvement expectations. The research also

Figure 3
Diagram Showing the Interlocking of Identified Entities
within the Research's Sample School Setting
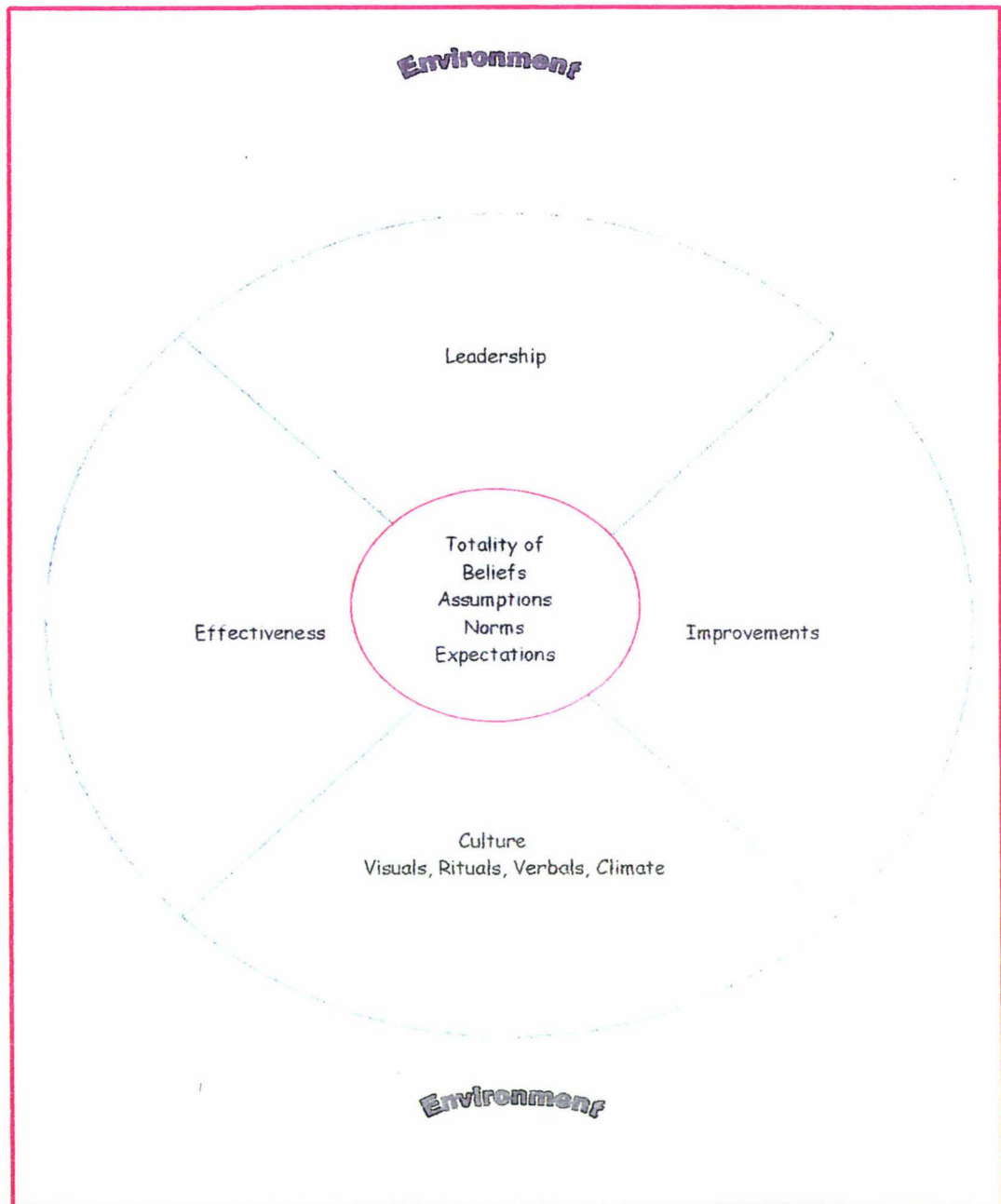
acknowledged both the positive and negative aspects that transpire when an organisation's culture is modified through the application of a more contemporary perspective to organisational culture.

In applying organisational culture, this research - although limited in size and scale - suggests that, no matter what the organisations is, it is shaped by the unconscious thoughts that develop meanings and behaviours. These meanings and behaviours - in turn - form a nucleus, a culture, of how things are done. This notion of organisational culture provided a foundation upon which the community members of this research could obtain a greater awareness of, and pay attention to, the practices and behaviours which have shaped their organisation and intensified educational improvements and effectiveness. This outcome was achieved by presenting both the past and the present behaviours and practices, and then applying the outcomes to current research and debate on effective and improved educational environments.

In adding to the contemporary assumptions concerning effectiveness and improvements, this research suggests that improvements take time, commitment, foresight, reflection and - above all - clear goals and high expectations from teachers, students and the school's wider community. This research also supports contemporary assertions that improvements and effectiveness are not always easily, or necessarily, tangible measurements. They are also the intangible beliefs, thoughts and perceptions of the community and its members.

In highlighting the importance and influence that organisational culture has for the effectiveness and improvement of educational environments and outcomes, this research provided an opportunity for those who participated to reflect on the past ways of doing things and compare these with the present. In doing so, participants were able to make judgements on the effects that identified changes had brought to the environment of the sample school, be they positive or negative.

This study provides a testimonial for current and future research and debate; that organisational culture is a useful concept upon which to contribute and develop the understanding of the factors which creates real changes and enhances effectiveness and improvements. It implies that, as a result of being able to compare historical to current behaviours, by identifying beliefs and assumptions, educators could ensure that an environment is made more amenable to adoption of changes and newly designed systems, rather than just identifying systems that are possibly inadequate to meet contemporary challenges.

At the outset of this research, it was suggested that change had become a constant feature of contemporary educational institutions and practices. It was also suggested that, if an educational organisation did not change, then it gave rise to the suspicion that a lack of quality education could be occurring (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). This research study, if nothing else, upholds these assumptions

through the comparison between past and present ways of doing things in an educational organisation. It supports the views of contemporary organisational cultural writers who assert that *culture, effectiveness, improvement* and *leadership* are the essential ingredients that impact on how an organisation comes together to create a culture which enables it to achieve its goals.

6.4 : Further Research Recommendations

Taking into account the constraints of this research study, its sample size and the inexperience of the researcher, recommendations for further research are restricted to developing a deeper understanding and application of the concept of organisational culture in educational settings. The following recommendations, therefore, suggest possible future research contexts:

- Comparative studies within other primary school settings. It could be useful to carry out similar research in other primary school settings that have undergone 'change' to identify what, if any, cultural element(s) are more significant in bringing about change. In undertaking such research, researchers could determine any link to a dominant cultural element(s) that creates real change within primary educational settings. Such research could help to guide those involved in developing real change.

- Leadership was a dominating element in initiating change within the sample school which was the subject of this research. Leadership and the part which the core leader plays in determining the culture of the educational setting, are key issues for further research which could well benefit educational leaders. Such research could assist those people who are involved with educating and training both present and future, educational leaders.

- Literature (for example Stoll & Fink, 1997; Donahoe, 1993) suggests that *time* is intrinsic to the way people structure how they behave and act. In developing change, participants believe they do not have enough time to take on board, digest, internalise and work through changes. The notion that 'time' is a factor in developing, adapting and/or adopting change in organisational cultures could well be a link between organisational culture and developing real change within educational settings that could be more fully researched. Such research could be of benefit to those involved in initiating change as a guide to factors which influence the successful implementation of real change.

6.5   :   Summary

This Chapter began with a review of the ethnographic approach undertaken in this study and concluded that, for this research, it had a useful place in defining the organisational culture of the sample school. It provided the 'snapshot' in the researcher's quest for meaning from which views, meaning and understanding of how and why

things were done, past to present, in the sample school were recorded. The ethnographic approach empowered not only the researcher but also the participants to reflect and draw their own conclusions on how and why things within the sample school had changed.

This Chapter also developed further recommendations for future research by identifying possible contexts:

- *Comparative studies* in identifying dominant cultural elements that influence change.

- *Leadership* and the part that core leaders play in determining the culture of an organisation.

- *Time* as a factor in developing, adapting and/or adopting change in organisational cultures.

Finally, in completing the full circle, the research study has been a journey of enlightenment. It transformed theory into practice. It added to the debate on the usefulness of organisational culture as a notion, a concept, that provides an understanding of what creates real change and enhances effectiveness and improvements. It has highlighted and drawn together all the relevant threads - the ideas, conceptions, beliefs and behaviours examined in the study - and it has shown the necessity of being able to respond to the challenges that

educational organisations face by implementing behaviours, meanings and practices through the development of an organisational culture which enhances and creates 'real change'.

The best that can be hoped for from the ending

is that, sooner or later, it will arrive!

N. F. Simpson, 1975, "A Dictionary of Modern Quotations," p.212:4

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Appendices:

Appendix A:

Copy of the sample school subject of this research staff meeting agenda informing staff of their right to withdraw from the research.

STAFF MEETING
8:00 Monday,   1999

- Drama Notice
  Festival

- NZPF Primary Product
  Photo and text to ... School.

- Cancer Society
  World Smoke-free Day.

- Health and PE Contract

- Discuss - Change of Friday am tea while swimming is on?

- Writing for Portfolios
  Bring any samples of the "10 min directed writing session idea," and be prepared to put your ideas forward.

- _____ Wednesday,   3:15 – 4:15 Staff Meeting
  Sorry about two 'functions' in the same week – no staff meeting next week.

- Andrea's Research Project
  I support this and so do the BOT – however all staff to be aware of the fact that they have the right to decline to take part.
  There will be an opportunity for staff to discuss any issues.

Appendix B:

Copy of the sample school subject to this research school's newsletter inviting parents to participate in the thesis.

Dear Parents

Our Swimming Programme is well under way and we have completed six swims, with another ten to go.

All teachers teaching Swimming at our school have undergone training in the 'Lotto Swim Safe' programme and the 'Bubbles To Buoyancy' programme which is part of our new health and Physical Education Curriculum.

We also employu
who is a trained Lotto Swim Safe tutor – this enables us to keep our group sizes manageable.

On the Health aspect of swimming – please make sure your child does not wear their togs to school under their clothes – but wears their underclothes and changes into togs at the pool. This is most important.

The Level 3 swimming expectations are that children can swim 3 strokes – 50m. When children have completed this requirement we are not putting them on to Level 4 which is covered in Year 7 and 8 (Form 1 and 2). We are extending them by teaching them diving. This is also being carried out by a trained coach.

It's great to see so many people parents and grandparents and auntie's and uncles taking such an interest in the aquatic programme. We do appreciate the assistance given in the changing rooms, it means we get back to school much more quickly.

School Lunches
Only 2 mums responded to the call for helpers to go on a lunch roster. Come on people – I know many of you want the children to have lunch options – but we are relying on you to help here!

If you ring the school and make that list of 2 a little longer – we may be able to go ahead with Fish and Chips on a Wednesday. Phone

Parent Interviews
These will be held toward the end of the Term.
The children are also invited to interviews and their job this time is to share their Writing Portfolios with their parents.

A written report is given at the end of the year.

Remember to contact the class teacher if you have any concerns about your child. It is best to make an appointment as the teachers have 2 meetings each week after school, and we would like to give you the time you deserve to discuss a concern.

Congratulations to
and   who have been awarded a certificate for Highly Commended work in the Festival of Easter Colouring Competition.

Music Festival
The school is taking part in the Massed Choir items at the Music Festival this year. Auditions will be held for interested children in Year 5 and 6 on .
from the College of Education will be assisting.

Principal

Thesis Research – 'School Culture'

I would like to invite parents who have had an association with this school for more than three or four years to be part of my Thesis Research Project on School Culture.

For more information please return the slip below and I will contact you as soon as possible.

Thank you
Andrea Joyce

....

To Andrea Joyce

I would like to know more about your research project.

Name: ....

Phone Number: ....

Appendix C:

> Copies of information and consent forms sent to pupils, parents and teachers who indicated an interest in participating in the thesis.

Massey University - Pupil Information Form
Thesis Research Project : "Change" - A case study - Effectiveness in changing the culture of a primary school

Name:_____

I am writing to invite _____ as a pupil of this school (and seek consent as the parent/caregiver of the child,) to be part of a thesis research project that I am undertaking to complete a Masters of Educational Administration degree. This information sheet has been explained to _____ by his/her own classroom teacher (not by me). Only those that have shown an interest have been given this information and consent form to take home.

The topic I have chosen to look at is 'culture". Culture is best described as the set of values, beliefs and traditions that determine "what happens around a place". In essence it determines "life at the school". The specific details of the project relate to the culture of our school and what happened to that culture when changes occurred.

In order to carry out this research project, I would like to take into account children's perspectives. To do this I am asking children who I have never taught before, and who are in either years, 4, 5, or 6 to be part of the project, as they have been involved in the school over a three or four year period.

If you and your child agree then the involvement will be three, forty minute sessions, held on Tuesday afternoons and will be part of the school's Social Studies programme under curriculum strands: Time, Continuity and Change and Culture and Heritage. There is no additional work and the children will not be missing out on any other school activities during these times.

It is important to mention that, although I am the Deputy Principal of this school, during these sessions I am also a researcher.

To help with accurate recording of data, the sessions will be audio-taped. These will be kept securely away from the research site and will be wiped when the thesis has been completed.

Given that the school is part of a small community, and that I am part of the teaching staff, absolute guarantee of anonymity cannot be made. However, names of children and the school will **not** be used in the published thesis. In addition, the Ethics Committee of Massey University will discuss issues of embargo at the end of the research to ensure all parties are protected.

It is important to stress that this is an <u>invitation</u> to participate and that the final decision rests with both the child and the caregiver/parent. Both must agree and feel comfortable. If both agree to the child participating then, can both child, and parent please sign and return the attached consent form in the envelope provided. It must also be noted that either <u>the child or the caregiver/parent have the right to withdraw the child from the research sessions at anytime.</u>

If you require further clarification or wish to discuss any part of the research please do not hesitate to contact either myself (Andrea Joyce - at school) or my thesis supervisor (Dr. Wayne Edwards - Massey University - 06 351 3368).

Massey University - Pupil Consent Form
Thesis Research Project : "Change" - A case study - Effectiveness in changing the culture of a primary school

We have read the information sheet and have had any questions regarding the research explained to our satisfaction. We understand that we may further questions at any time.

We understand we have the right to withdraw from the research project at any time.

We agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that names and the school's name will not be used in the thesis.

We understand that the information given will be used only for this research and the thesis publication.

We agree / do not agree to the discussion being taped.

We agree to participate in this thesis under the conditions set out in the information sheet.

Signed: ....   Signed: ....
     (Child)   (Parent/Caregiver)

Name: ....

Date: ....

Massey University - Parent Information Form
Thesis Research Project : "Change" - A case study - Effectiveness in changing the culture of a primary school

Name:_____

I am writing to invite you as a parent of this school to be part of a thesis research project that I am undertaking to complete a Masters of Educational Administration degree.

The topic I have chosen to look at is 'culture". Culture is best described as the set of values, beliefs and traditions that determine "what happens around this place". In essence it determines "life at the school". The specific details of the project relate to the culture of our school and what happened to that culture when changes occurred.

In order to carry out this research project I would like to take into account parent perspectives. To do this I am inviting parents, who have had an involvement with the school for more than three/four years, to take part in an informal conversation with me about what they see as this school's culture, identify how it has changed, and if the changes have made any difference to the educational outcomes for their child/children. It is envisaged that an initial discussion could take approximately 3/4 of an hour and would take place in a setting of the participant's choice. I will be taking notes, however, I would prefer to audio-tape the session with your consent. A second discussion may be needed to clarify and check accuracy of data gathered, and could be done by phone. Transcripts of taped discussions/notes will be returned to individual participants for verification prior to being used in data analysis. Any data recorded on paper or tape will be kept securely away from the research site and will be wiped/destroyed when the thesis has been completed.

It is important to mention that, although I am the Deputy Principal of this school, during thesis discussions I am also a researcher.

Given that the school is part of a small community, and that I am part of the teaching staff, absolute guarantee of anonymity cannot be made. However, names of parents and the school will not be used in the published thesis. In addition, the Ethics Committee of Massey University will discuss issues of embargo at the end of the research to ensure all parties are protected.

It is important to stress that this is an invitation to participate, that the final decision rests with you as a parent, and that you must freely agree and feel under no obligation to participate. If you agree to participate then please sign the attached consent form, and return to me in the envelope provided. Upon receipt of your consent I will contact you to arrange a time and place to meet. It must also be noted that you have the right to withdraw from the research project and the right to refuse to participate in any particular discussion/s.

If you require further clarification or wish to discuss any part of the research please do not hesitate to contact either myself (Andrea Joyce - at school) or my thesis supervisor (Dr. Wayne Edwards - Massey University - 06 351 3368).

Massey University - Parent Consent Form
Thesis Research Project : "Change" - A case study - Effectiveness in changing the culture of a primary school

I have read the information sheet and have had any questions regarding the research explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the research project at any time

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that names, and the school's name will not be used in the thesis.

I understand that the information given will be used only for this research, and the thesis publication.

I agree / do not agree to the discussion being taped.

I agree to participate in this thesis under the conditions set out in the information sheet.

Signed: ....

Name: ....

Date: ....

<u>Massey University</u> - Teacher Information Form
<u>Thesis Research Project : "Change" - A case study - Effectiveness in changing
the culture of a primary school</u>

Name:_____

I am writing to invite you as a teacher of this school to be part of a thesis research project that I am undertaking to complete a Masters of Educational Administration degree.

The topic I have chosen to look at is 'culture". Culture is best described as the set of values, beliefs and traditions that determine "what happens around this place". In essence it determines "life at the school". The specific details of the project relate to the culture of our school and what happened to that culture when changes occurred.

In order to carry out this research project, I would like to keep a running record, (in a diary form) of events that occur around the school over a five week period during term two. I would then like to take into account teacher perspectives on what they see as this school's culture, identify how it has changed, and if the changes have made any difference to the educational outcomes for the children at this school. To do this I am inviting teachers to take part in an informal conversation. It is envisaged that an initial discussion could take approximately 3/4 of an hour and would take place in a setting of the participant's choice. I will be taking notes, however, I would prefer to audio-tape the session with your consent. A second discussion may be needed to clarify and check accuracy of data gathered, and could be done by phone. Transcripts of taped discussions/notes will be returned to individual participants for verification prior to being used in data analysis. Any data recorded on paper or tape will be kept securely away from the research site and will be wiped/destroyed when the thesis has been completed.

It is important to mention that, although I am the Deputy Principal of this school, during discussions I am also a researcher.

Given that the school is part of a small community, and that I am part of the teaching staff, absolute guarantee of anonymity cannot be made. However, names of teachers and the school will not be used in the published thesis. In addition, the Ethics Committee of Massey University will discuss issues of embargo at the end of the research to ensure all parties are protected.

It is important to stress that this is an <u>invitation</u> to participate and that the final decision rests with you as a teacher and that you must freely agree and feel under no obligation to participate.   If you agree to participate then please sign the attached consent form, and return to me in the envelope provided. Upon receipt of your consent I will contact you to arrange a time and place to meet. It must also be noted that <u>you have the right to withdraw from the research project and the right to refuse to participate in any particular discussion/s</u>.

If you require further clarification or wish to discuss any part of the research please do not hesitate to contact either myself (Andrea Joyce -   at school) or my thesis supervisor (Dr. Wayne Edwards - Massey University - 06 351 3368).

<u>Massey University - Teacher Consent Form</u>
<u>Thesis Research Project : "Change" - A case study - Effectiveness in changing the culture of a primary school</u>

I have read the information sheet and have had any questions regarding the research explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the research project at any time

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that names, and the school's name will not be used in the thesis.

I understand that the information given will be used only for this research, and the thesis publication.

I agree / do not agree to the discussion being taped.

I agree to participate in this thesis under the conditions set out in the information sheet.

Signed: ....

Name: ....

Date: ....

Appendix D:

The following is a sample page of the "reflective diary." Reflective daily observations were written over a five-week period. The data was characterised under headings of *culture, educational effectiveness, improvement and leadership*. The characterised data was used to establish the synthesized taxonomies.

Fieldnotes — Observations → Headings

Wk: 2 days

Observations

8:00 Staff mtg – into general handout
- reminder about reporting time-line.
Discussion on c.c. release / who / how long
- Children were practicing very hard – need to get wider opportunities.
8:30 bell rang – then collect coffees and move to classrooms → children allowed who room's – Principal attends ethical / Parent inquiries. Parents becomes children off – especially juniors – Children tell time to hrs – flowing with swing bell – and other movement in school.
9:00 bell for class → 10:30 interval – talks to staff/room – general discussion however focus on new reading material. Takes over – what level – have a mtg.
In general talks watch out window at Playground – comments / look how good xxv is playing – isn't that great to see. A few breaks on office – sore knee – tell off officer as Staff room → Staff weather fixes with a Master!
10:30 – Bell → class resumes – lunch time 0.2 in with P. discussing staff why questions/focuses → note on whiteboard to bring back → Growth Plan for discussion and school circle.

Summary: 12/126 Ions (heading class)
Principal 1 D.P. most talking
others mainly answering –
→ notes on while because pointed out.

Why?

Meeting needs feeling around place

session/ww

(culture)

focusing + vision

→ professional discussions not sex ual.

Change for? Retaining visions

Caring?

(leadership)

Vision/transition x staff?
→ who leads?
levels?
who talks
who shares

→ professional

Notes
Busy Week – Reports due – c.c. finals
- Planning for next term to be done.
Staff meetings – D.P. on writing focus.

Appendix E:

Extracts from taped interviews transcribed but not analysed under research headings.

Total Association with school   years -

Environment Past: First association - new entrant room, happy classroom, welcoming, teacher encouraged participation from day one - invited after to be in room read to children, mix with groups as a parent helper.

After two years, one child arrived and I was asked to help out with toileting, babing sitting job initially not paid, then paid as a teachers aid.

Things happening around the school in the past: more children in past, fuller, classrooms had more furniture, no playground at that stage, a very muddy field. Greenhouse was there, same use as today. There were prefabs (larger roll) which took up tennis courts. All classrooms full, had the library.

Feel of school - inviting by the new entrant teacher, didn't approach other teachers as I was a shy person.

Changes: More for the children to do in outside and inside equipment. Could have been there but I didn't notice. School painted both inside and outside is terrific and more important because it makes the school more welcoming. When you walked in before the enviroment was old, even with pictures and people, however the environment encourages people to come in - first look.

Kids moved through school, educational work, there were jumps in the past, there less talking between syndicates, syndicates more isolated in past today there is more communication between syndicates to day. There is more building on what has happened in the past - e.g. past you can do that because the seniors have or will do it, not its more ok so the juniors have done, how can the seniors build on it.

Tone/Behaviour at school - Sometimes I think that the behaviour is still the same, however, how it is dealt with is different, before not swept but not dealt with thoroughly, now behaviour is noted (postive and negative) and dealt with promptly. Tone - the children love school now, children can wait to get here. In the past, the same would prevail in the juniors but seniors, not sure - sometimes children did want to go because of bullies, today better however bullies still happen.

Actions - regular occurances - assemblies (junior and senior) - not as many parents around the school today as in the past, however, it could be a wave, have years of lots of parents and then there is a wave of parents no available. Special assemblies parents did / do still turn up. Parent support has dropped off but could be a sign of the times.

Educational Improvements - as a parent you got an insight in the past of what your child can do through sample books and that was great. Today it is more specific, you can see specifically where they are and what they are doing. There is more

Rituals:

A lot of things from the past went out the door from the very first assembly - I went, and laid the ground rules so that we could all get along - that was: no swearing, bullying, disrespect.

Past - First assembly of year was when children found out which class they were to be in - the then DP would take this assembly and the Principal didn't attend.

Children would eat before school - it was the done thing, everyone ate before, that has been stopped.

Teachers didn't deal with behaviour in their classrooms, it was the ritual to send them to the office. This has been turned around, however, this doesn't mean that they are left alone. Teachers are supported, however, not as many children come to the office as in the past.

The staff-room, parents were not encouraged to go into the staff-room. There was a lot of talk about children (negatively) in the staff-room that wasn't backed up with data. This has now been pulled into check. The staff-room has become more open now for parents to be part of.

There was an expectation that children didn't learn to read in their first year at school because they come from low decile homes. This has moved.

Present - letting parents/children know what class/room they will be in for the next year is a change. The behaviour - being consistent with consequences throughout. Children have their say, in the past there was confrontation with children, now we will let them have their say which encourages a fair result.

Duty teachers take responsibility for the whole school, in the past they would walk into the staff-room and say, "your kids (referring to Room X's Teacher) have done this." It is now encourage and modeled through leadership that the children are not one persons at this school, the school belongs to all of us. Lets deal with it this way.

Reporting to parents / holding school records - this was changed in the old management - prior to my coming the school was triplicate the paper work. They had pink/blue cards as well as reports, as well as accumulated files. This was too much and indicated in the ERO report. They changed it to one written report at the end of the year, with two parent interviews throughout the year. What we have introduced is showing the parents the ½ year report from the computer screen. Parents that I have talked to are generally happy with this.

Appendix F:

Examples (four photos) of children's responses to research questions in chart form but not analysed.

Children's Perceptions of
Present Day School Culture
⟶

Children's Perceptions of
Past School Culture
⟵

Children's Perspectives on: Likes/Dislikes/
Parents/Teachers/Educational Results →

A V-Diagram Comparing School Culture
Past/Present – Children's Perspectives ←

Appendix G:

Example of spring board/focus questions used by the researcher during conversations with pupils, parents and teachers.

Focus questions - during discussions with participants.

- Define culture to participants as the shared things, sayings, actions, feelings of the school.

Focusing:

- Describe what it was like when you started working in this educational environment?

- What changes have you seen since you came here?

- What changes do you see as being changes that have improved educational outcomes for children/teachers?

- What changes do you see as being changes that have not improved educational outcomes for children/teachers?

- What do you believe as being the important things someone new starting here (a staff member) needs to know?

- What do you believe are the important educational outcomes for children?

- What is your personal view of the management structure? How do you see it working?

- What do you like/dislike about working here?

- What role do you believe parents play in this educational environment?

- What opportunities are there to have ideas represented?

- If you have to sum up what it is like working here, what would you want to say?

Appendix H:

Examples (six photos) of data categorised under headings of *culture, educational effectiveness, improvement and leadership* from which synthesized taxonomies were developed.
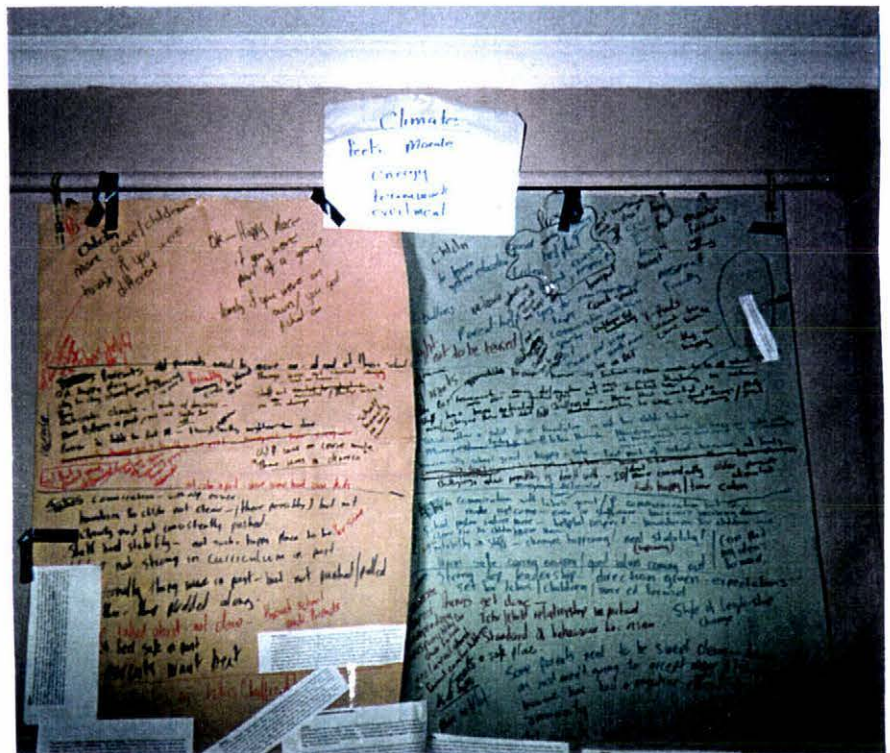
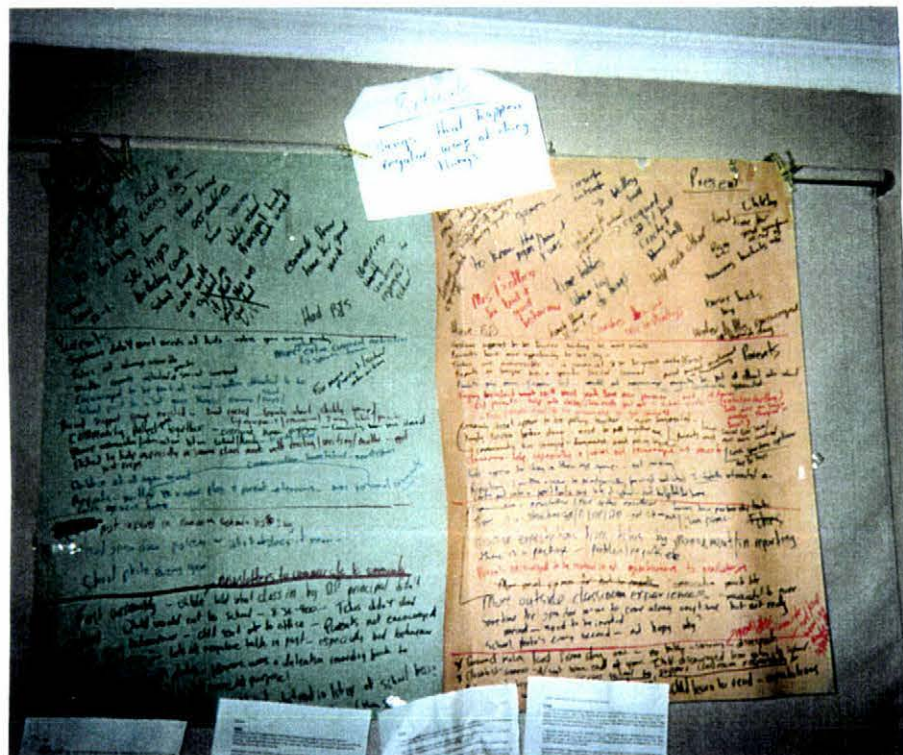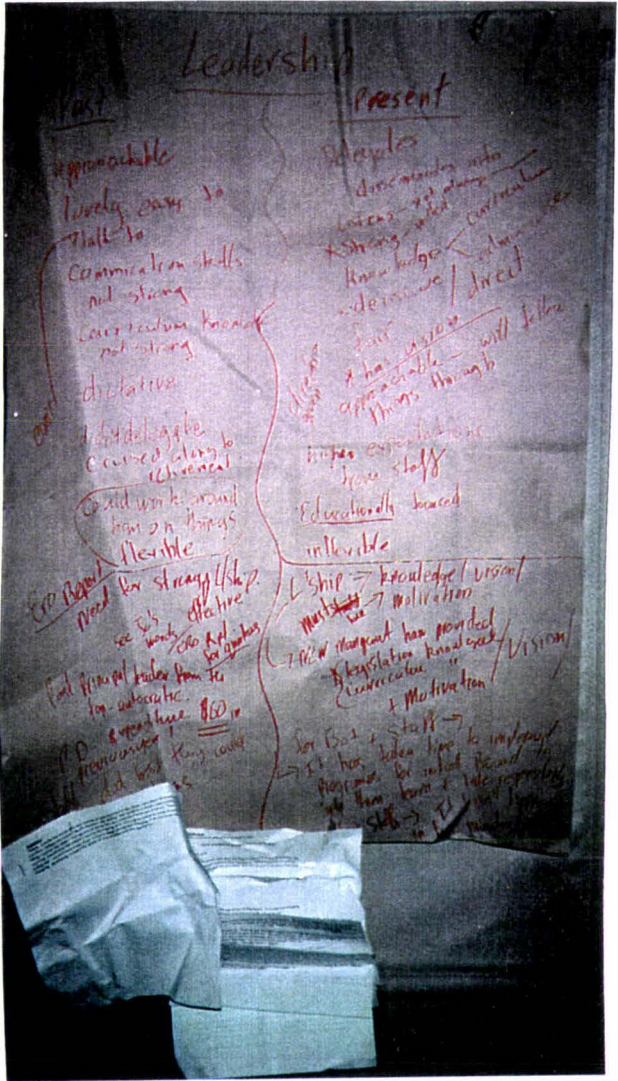Culture – Categorised Verbal Data
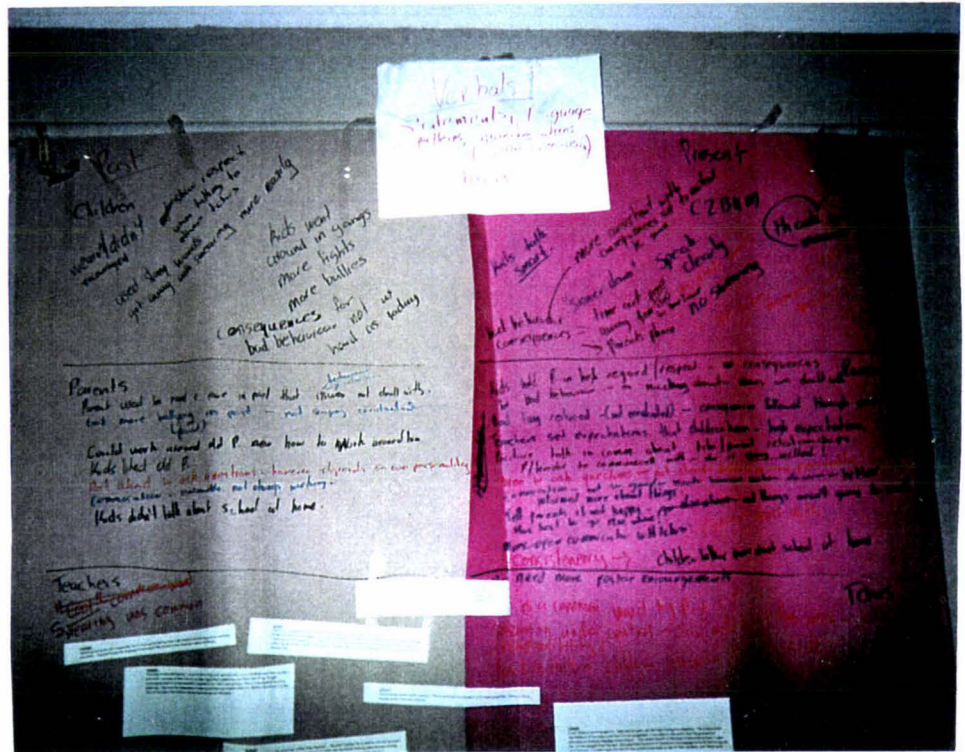
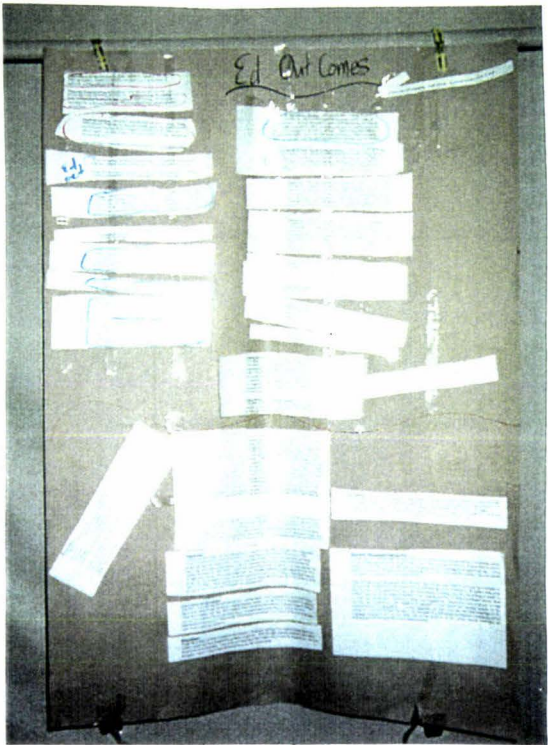Culture – Categorised Visual Data

Culture – Categorised Climate Data

Culture – Categorised Ritual Data

Categorised Leadership Data

Categorised Educational Outcome Data

Appendix I:

Examples of extracts from documented data categorised under research headings, culture, leadership, educational effectiveness and improvements.

Documents	Culture				L/ship	Ed. Eff. / Improv.
	Visuals	Rituals	Climate	Verbals		
ERO Report: L/ship		top down	Adaptable		There is a need for strong effective L/ship – inability to lead/delegate roles – instill expectations	Concern's with effectiveness of things/ methods/ Pgms carried across school – need for greater accountability of systems – expectations to learn etc.
Ed Eff/ Implace	no school wide systems exist	Bureaucratic				
Curriculum Booklet	Ed resource manual	Schr following rule	Direction Expectations set	written statements	Curriculum knowledge developed school wide aims/ standards est. Reference manual curriculum aim driven.	Focussing for school wide systems to be implemented → provides building blocks / linking to claims → higher expectations set.
School Charter	Community to a wide range of leisure activities being available	Developing in a ritual	Active involve- ment during intervals for students	written statement – provides accommodat to be achieved.	Principal (BOT) Community id an avenue to help school climate / through More focused Playground behaviours.	More professional recreational activities encouraged
local credits – no local goals prior to 1998 → Recreational week						

April, 1999

Chairperson
Turitea, Palmerston North Campus
Massey University Human Ethic Committee
Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North

Dear Sir

Re: Human Ethics Application –   – By Andrea Joyce – "Change: A
       Case Study – The effectiveness in changing a primary school's culture".

This letter is to confirm that Andrea Joyce has fully informed the .   School Board of Trustees the details of the above research study through oral discussion and a written information sheet.

The Board of Trustees give Andrea their support and approval to conduct this research.

I hope this letter of approval meets the Ethics Committee requirements.

Yours faithfully
          School Board of Trustees
Chairperson

May 1999

Chairperson
Turitea, Palmerston North Campus
Massey University Human Ethic Committee
Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North

Dear Sir

Re: Human Ethics Application –   – By Andrea Joyce – "Change: A Case
       Study – The effectiveness in changing a primary school's culture".

This letter is to confirm that Andrea Joyce has fully informed the   School Board of
Trustees and myself of details regarding the above research study.

Andrea has also asked that I inform the staff through an information sheet of my support for
the research study, however, staff also have the right to decline to take part.   I attach a
copy of the information sheet where this information to staff was written and time allocated for
discussion, at which time Andrea left the meeting.

I hope that this letter meets the Ethics Committee's requirements.

Yours faithfully
Principal

Attach:1   {For letter's attachment, please refer to Appendix A}

Appendix K:

Copy of formal written approval from the sample school subject to
this research Principal giving approval and support to the thesis.

- 20 -

Appendix L:

Copy of formal written approval from the Human Ethics Committee
of Massey University approving the ethics of this research.

Massey University Human Ethics Committee
c/- EXMSS House, Turitea

Telephone: 64 6 350 4268
Email: P.Dewe@massey.ac.nz
http://www.massey.ac.nz/~muhec

Massey University

Private Bag 11 222,
Palmerston North
New Zealand
Telephone: 64 6 356 9099

28 May 1999

Ms Andrea JOYCE

Dear Andrea

Re: Human Ethics Application – MUHEC 99/44
     "Change: A Case Study - The effectiveness in changing a primary school's culture"

Thank you for your letter of 7 May 1999 and the amended Information Sheets and Consent Forms for Teachers, Parents and Pupils.

We also have on file, letters from the School Principal and the Board of Trustees approving the research. The copy of the school's newsletter inviting participants to participate in the research is also on your file.

The amendments you have made and the documents you have provided now meet the requirements of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee and the ethics of your application are approved.

Yours sincerely

Professor Philip J Dewe
Chairperson
Turitea, Palmerston North Campus
Massey University Human Ethics Committee

cc   Associate Professor Wayne Edwards, Department of Educational Studies & Community
     Support - Hokowhitu, Massey University

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

Inception to Infinity: Massey University's commitment to learning as a life-long journey