Investigating the Coaching of Teachers to Support Change in Challenging Circumstances

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Abstract

This research was undertaken in the light of the issue of Ofsted inspections and failing schools and the resulting emotional turmoil for staff working in these schools. It also reflects a developing research interest in coaching in schools as a means of professional development and school improvement though there is little evidence of practice in education despite much writing on the topic. Specifically there is scant research on coaching as a means of facilitating organisational change in schools despite evidence suggesting that organisational change is one particular area in which coaching can make a valuable contribution from the individual, to the team, to the organisation as a whole.

The study aims to explore coaching as an intervention to support the professional development of staff in schools and links to the school improvement agenda in a failing school. It seeks to explore whether coaching can be used to support staff to implement change in their practice at a time when staff morale would be potentially low and to gain some picture of the participant's experience.

A case study was carried out in a 'failing' primary school. It involved two teachers, two teaching assistants and one learning support assistant who together represented the Key Stage 1 team. Weekly coaching sessions were given to each participant on an individual basis over a period of sixteen weeks. Coaching focused on individual goals initially and extended to team goals. Feedback was given to the head teacher midway through the intervention and at the end of the intervention. Data transcripts from coaching sessions and interviews were analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis. From this analysis master themes emerged from the data, those of theatrical, war and the coaching journey.

It seemed that the coaching sessions motivated the participants to improve their practice and to achieve their goals. Participants appeared to alter their thinking about how they viewed change. The coaching seemed to build effective teams with improved communication and a sense of purpose and direction.

The findings indicate that a model of coaching that begins at the individual level with an individual focus and extends to support the development of team goals is effective for coaching in schools. It seems to be a model that supports change in challenging circumstances and the development of effective teams.

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1   Introduction

This research investigates whether the coaching of teachers can support the development of professional practice and the implementation of change in a failing school.   The conceptual area of development looks at what a model of coaching might look like for staff working in a failing school. Linked to this is the notion of how coaching might fit into a way forward for the school.   The research adds to understandings about coaching, professional development and school improvement, individual and school change.

I was interested to find out whether coaching would be effective in a failing school where staff morale would be potentially low and where the change agenda would be of the highest priority.   I hypothesised that staff would require a high level of motivation for change at a time when they would perhaps have low self-esteem and confidence in themselves as practitioners and I considered that coaching might provide the level of motivation necessary to affect change at such times.   It seemed to me that coaching could provide a solution to the potential professional discontent that might exist within the culture of a failing school.

This thesis explores the possibility of supporting staff to engage in a change agenda at an individual level with the suggestion that the change process can develop from this starting point. This raises many questions however, not least that the problems inherent within a failing school are essentially systemic. It is the national inspection system and performance indicators that ultimately place pressures on schools and it could be argued that the special measures judgement requires a whole school response as opposed to an individual response.   Although the practitioners are working within this system, it is nevertheless not a problem that necessarily rests with individuals for a solution.   However as we shall see within the literature review, failing schools have great difficulty implementing systemic change as individuals within the system distance themselves from responsibility and fail to engage with the change agenda.

This research is a response to these research findings and looks at the issue of change from an alternative perspective, seeking initially to engage individuals in the change agenda and harnessing support from the motivation that comes with successful change. What I will argue is that schools cannot respond systemically if staff are not responsive to change at an individual level. If staff do not commit to change as proposed at a systemic level then any change agenda will be ineffective.

Chapter 1 opens with a consideration of the historical and political context that brought about the notion of the failing school. I then look at the social context and how this impacts on performance criteria and inspection outcomes. I reflect on the emotional context and the impact on staff of the decision to issue a special measures judgement and thereby label the school a failing school. I explore the implications surrounding this judgement and the difficulties faced by staff in coming to terms with the outcome of inspection. This leads to a discussion on self efficacy and a consideration that teacher efficacy may be depleted following the outcome of inspection. I argue for the need to improve teacher efficacy in order to begin to engage staff in a change agenda. Chapter 2 explores the culture of failing schools with the suggestion that this has to be well understood as a pretext to any intervention that hopes to support change. I then address organisational change and the difficulties inherent in its implementation and argue for change which engages the individuals within the organisation as a precursor to school change. This leads me to a consideration of what works for failing schools and a subsequent review of interventions that seem to make a difference in creating successful change. I then consider coaching as a possible intervention to support professional development and individual and school change. I discuss different models of coaching and give support to the solution focused model as one which can support staff to focus on purposeful outcomes for themselves, as individuals within the system.

Coaching has been a long-standing personal and professional interest as a model for supporting teachers to develop their practice. This interest has developed over my career as an Educational Psychologist, providing professional development for staff in areas that they have identified. I have found solution focussed coaching, an evidence based approach, to be a model that particularly suits the work I do in

schools. Its roots are in solution focused therapy, often referred to as brief therapy because of its potential to be succinct. Solution focused thinking concentrates on the future with solution focused questions exploring solutions, strengths and actions.

The results of the work I have done in schools have encouraged me to use coaching to work on quite complex issues within schools. The evaluations from this work have always been extremely positive with staff motivated to achieve their goals and in so doing to effect change. Work has focused on individual goals, many of which appeared to be classroom based but as the coaching progressed were often school based. As such, coaching often resulted in staff working with other individuals within school to resolve issues. Relationships were often at the core of difficulties experienced by the individual and coaching appeared to provide a means of exploring these underlying issues. Evaluations suggested that staff felt empowered to make changes. Self esteem and confidence increased as staff began to see the positive impact of changes that they made within their practice and this spurred them on to take on greater challenges. Coaching appeared to make a sustained impact and seemed to be an effective way of supporting schools. This notion of using coaching to support staff to improve their practice and by so doing raise self-confidence and self-esteem made me think about the possible potential of using coaching with staff working in schools labelled as 'failing'.

Much research on teachers working in failing schools refers to low self-esteem and confidence and low self efficacy. Bandura (1997) defined perceived self-efficacy as 'beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments' (Bandura, 1997 p.3). Self efficacy beliefs are thought to influence motivation to persist in the face of obstacles. They are also thought to influence the goals people set for themselves and the strategies they choose to attain their goals. It seems that self-efficacy makes a significant contribution to enabling individuals to meet the challenges that are inevitable as schools work towards their action plan for improvement.

There is also evidence to suggest that teacher-efficacy has an impact on student achievement and self esteem and so at a time when learning outcomes are under

particular scrutiny with an inspection and monitoring regime, teachers with low self-efficacy may be less able to enable pupils to make improvements. Ross (1998) demonstrated that teacher efficacy predicts school effectiveness, adoption of innovations, success of programme implementation, classroom management strategies and stress levels. The notion of teacher efficacy seems particularly relevant to staff in failing schools, working in challenging contexts with a highly pressurised and intensive change agenda.

Coaching appeals to my professional interest in that it is a systematic application of psychology that can be used with individuals, groups and organisations. There are many definitions of coaching psychology although I particularly favour the definition provided by S. Palmer and Whybrow (2008) because of its reference to psychological approaches, learning theories and models of coaching.

> 'Coaching psychology is about enhancing well-being and performance in personal life and work domains, through techniques underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established learning theories and psychological approaches' (S. Palmer & Whybrow, 2008 p.8).

Coaching has its critics not least because of the degree of coaching that is undertaken which is unregulated by any professional bodies. As such it could be argued that coaching lacks rigour with much coaching lacking theoretical underpinnings. This has resulted from an upsurge of interest in coaching which originally stemmed from the private business sector and its focus on executive coaching. Coaching has therefore evolved to fulfil a niche and this has resulted in practitioners offering coaching with a variety of different backgrounds, experience and competence and offering a range of models, some psychologically based and some not.

It could be argued that coaching as a model originally stems from sports psychology and the desire to improve performance. This gives credence to coaching as a model to improve the performance of those functioning at the top of their profession, hence its application to high functioning executives. Coaching has thus become something

that executives aspire to have as it signals they are worthy of the opportunity to improve their performance and to progress through the ranks.

Another branch of coaching psychology which is gaining in popularity is life coaching. This is a structured approach to coaching which supports people to make personal changes in their lives to enhance their well-being. The practice of life coaching is also unregulated, leaving it open to criticism, with coaches operating within this sector with varying degrees of experience and levels of qualifications.

More recently, coaching has been used in schools as a form of professional development in support of the school improvement agenda. The National College of School Leadership has championed the role of coaching in schools and its potential in education. Similarly however there are concerns regarding the suitability of coaches within this arena to deliver a professional service to staff in schools.

I will argue for the relevant training and understanding of the philosophical and psychological underpinnings that need to accompany any work in the field of coaching if it is to be effective in its delivery. I will also argue for the quality of the coaching relationship which would seem to be an important prerequisite to useful work in this area.

Bluckert (2005) provides a useful working definition of coaching whereby he emphasises the potential of coaching to support learning and development, to improve performance and personal satisfaction and ultimately to support change. As evidenced in this definition, the setting and striving for achievable goals is an essential aspect of all coaching.

> 'Coaching is the facilitation of learning and development with the purpose of improving performance and enhancing effective action, goal achievement and personal satisfaction. It invariably involves growth and change, whether that is in perspective, attitude or behaviour' (Bluckert, 2005 p.173).

It could be argued that staff working in failing schools are caught up in a change agenda, having to address the action plan that the special measures judgement imposed on the school, at a time when staff are least able to cope. However D. E. Gray (2006) advocates coaching as an intervention to support such levels of change. He argues that complex change makes it difficult for people to retain their motivation and commitment to projects and to employers. He sees one of the roles of the coach as that of change agent whereby the coach helps to support someone through a changing culture, helping people to become more confident and sustain their commitment. Peltier (2001) agrees with the potential for coaching when an organisation faces change.

Failing schools are organisations that must change if they are to come out of special measures. A school is placed in special measures following an inspection if it is judged as failing to provide an acceptable standard of education and it will have two years to improve against the action plan. Special measures are removed when the school is deemed to be improving and to provide an acceptable standard of education otherwise the school will close.

I considered that coaching would provide the opportunity for staff in failing schools to engage with the change agenda, to reflect upon their practice and to identify improvement goals through confidential conversations within an emotionally safe environment. I hypothesised that staff would make changes to their practice because they had identified the area for development and therefore accepted the need to change. They would have ownership of the problem and the solutions and therefore they would have control of the scale and pace of change. All of these factors would support them to engage with the change process. I hypothesised that success brought by these changes would increase momentum for further change and that a cycle for improvement would be set in motion. D. E. Gray (2006) suggests that individuals are more likely to engage in change through coaching because it is the individuals who agree their strategies and commit to them.

As Educational Psychologist for a primary school that was placed in special measures following an Ofsted Inspection, I was interested to explore whether or not

coaching would be a suitable intervention option to support staff through the inevitable process of self evaluation and change. I had been the Educational Psychologist for the school for three years and knew many of the staff well. I wanted to provide support to the school and I believed that I was well placed in my role to offer coaching to staff at this time when they would potentially feel at their lowest ebb.

I approached the head teacher when the Ofsted findings were made public to offer coaching to staff but at the time it was thought that staff had too many other issues to contend with and that this was perhaps not the best time to run the intervention. The head teacher went on long-term sick leave shortly after the announcement and an acting head teacher was brought in to manage the school and eventually took up the headship.

I had formed a good working relationship with the acting head teacher during her leadership. She had implemented a number of changes since taking over the leadership of the school and had a clear vision of future direction. The school was undergoing a process of change. She was very receptive to new ideas and to new ways of working with the Educational Psychologist in school. It seemed timely to once again offer the opportunity of coaching to staff as a means of supporting their professional development and as a means of supporting staff to meet the challenges inherent within organisational change.

Coaching was seen as a useful way forward and the head teacher was keen to engage staff in the process. She wanted an existing team within school that was not reliant on supply staff to have the benefit of the coaching intervention and the Key Stage 1 team was identified. Other teams within school had staff on long-term sick leave with several supply staff covering sickness absence. The Key Stage 1 team consisted of two teachers, two teaching assistants and one learning support assistant. This school and the key Stage 1 team subsequently became a case study for my research.

All participants were offered confidential coaching sessions of 45 minutes duration on a weekly basis for 16 weeks. I accepted that a school by its very nature would have changing conditions that would necessarily impact on the research and that not all staff would be able to attend all of these sessions. Staff were invited to keep a diary of the coaching sessions, documenting their reflections on the process. Feedback was provided to the head teacher midway through the intervention to alert her to the work undertaken and to allow her to provide feedback as appropriate. Agreement was sought from the participants in terms of what information I could give as updates on the process. I included within the design semi-structured interviews with participants and the head teacher to provide an overview of the perceived value of the coaching intervention from different perspectives.

The literature review found little research around failing schools which may be attributed to the difficulties researchers face in gaining access to such emotive environments. There is an increasing interest in coaching in schools and this is a developing area of research. Fillery-Travis (2007) writes that despite information on potential best practice of coaching in schools there is little evidence of practice in education. Although the literature suggests that coaching in schools can contribute to organisational change there is little research that explores this issue, in particular coaching in failing schools and this therefore represents a gap in the research literature that this study seeks to address.

I approach this research from a realist ontology that recognises that the world consists of objects and structures that have cause and effect relationships with each other. I support a critical realist epistemological position that recognises that natural and social things exist in the world with human beings and social structures regarded as the primary objects of study. The importance for critical realism is in how these natural and social structures are perceived, noting that our perceptions are influenced by our culture, our history, our beliefs, our expectations and our experience of the world. It allows reality to be considered through understanding different constructions of knowledge. 'What is real is not dependent on us, but the exact meaning and nature of reality is' (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006 p.107).

I was interested in investigating the experience of participants working in a failing school and their experiences of coaching as a means of supporting change. Data collection methods needed to allow participants the opportunity to talk openly about the work they undertook to reach their targets and achieve their goals. Willig (2008) asserts that qualitative data collection techniques 'need to be open-ended and flexible enough to facilitate the emergence of new, and unanticipated, categories of meaning and experience' (Willig, 2008 p.15). I collected data of transcripts from the coaching sessions held with the participants that were analysed through interpretive phenomenological analysis. I chose this method of analysis because of its focus on psychology. It enabled me to analyse the experience of participants working in a failing school and their experiences of coaching as a model to support change by identifying themes within the data.

I was aware of the need to be reflexive in my thinking and to acknowledge how my 'own reactions to the research context and the data actually make possible certain insights and understandings' (Willig, 2008 p.18). As both coach and researcher I was aware that I would influence the data. I have brought my own personal style to the coaching sessions and although based on the solution-focused model, the coaching experience will nevertheless have been influenced by myself as an individual. Participants have brought their own interpretation of events and I will have brought an interpretation of the experience of participants as I sought to make sense of the findings.

The study provides evidence based practice of a coaching intervention within a failing school. It provides knowledge about a model of coaching for teachers that can support change in challenging circumstances.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Overview

Within the literature review I explored the historical and political context which brought about the notion of the failing school. This led to an overview of research into failing schools with a particular emphasis on how working in failing schools affects staff confidence, self-esteem and self-efficacy and how this impacts on the potential for change and self improvement. I was also interested in schools as institutions, their school culture and how staff operate within these systems when working to a change agenda. This led me to an investigation of the literature on organisational change and the capacity of school staff to implement and sustain change. I reviewed the coaching literature and its proposed benefits in terms of supporting and motivating staff towards self-improvement and change. I considered psychological models of coaching and investigated the use of coaching as a means of supporting staff to engage in the change agenda within failing schools. I concluded the literature review by stating my research questions.

2.2 Contextualising the Failing School

2.2.1 Historical and Political Context

The new Labour government came to power in 1997 and highlighted education as a key priority. The school inspection system became more rigorous under the Labour government with a remit to address low standards in schools and a focus on accountability and improvement. A zero tolerance policy was introduced in regard to perceived failure. Barber's key lecture (1995) entitled, 'The Dark Side of the Moon: imagining an end to failure in urban education' was influential in determining educational policy. This opened up the debate about failure and the need to challenge low expectations and to raise the quality of education, with specific emphasis on schools in disadvantaged areas.

It was acknowledged that good leadership was essential if quality issues were to be addressed which resulted in the establishment of the National College for School Leadership. Research into school improvement was commissioned with a focus on the school leadership team and the introduction of performance management. The responsibility was given to head teachers to deliver national reforms and to engage in national testing which placed increasing pressure on head teachers to improve school performance.   National assessment levels of attainment and public examination results were used as benchmarks with expected levels of attainment set at Level 4 in English, maths and science at Key Stage 2, age 11 and five GCSE A-C passes at Key Stage 4, age 16.

Contextual value added indicators which included social disadvantage as measured by free school meals, neighbourhood deprivation and prior attainment were developed with the aim of accounting for differences in pupil intake.

The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), the inspection unit for schools, looked at educational standards, the quality of teaching and learning, leadership and school improvement.   Following inspection those schools judged as failing were placed in special measures and were given a two year period to make improvements against their action plan. Inspection visits would follow the inspection judgement on a termly basis with the aim of monitoring progress. If schools were unable to make the required level of progress within this time frame then fresh start would apply.   Under this strategy, schools would close and re-open as a different school with potentially different staffing and leadership.

Under this arrangement schools that were identified as failing were publicly named and shamed. This created much public debate and the policy was heavily criticised (Power, Rees, & Taylor, 2005; Thrupp, 1999; Whitty, 2002). The main thrust of the argument was that it failed to recognise intake disadvantage and all that this entailed, poverty, poor parenting and family breakdown which research had shown to affect the life chances of children from disadvantaged homes. There was also grave concern expressed at the way that the naming and shaming of schools also indirectly labelled teachers working within those schools as failing teachers who were often

working in challenging circumstances. Special measures judgements were seen to be more prevalent in those schools taking disadvantaged pupils.

Despite the intense criticism, the Labour government pushed ahead with policy with an emphasis on raised expectations, school improvement measures and schools accountability with a view to eliminating failing schools. In defence of government policy, Barber (2007) argued that there was now an acceptance of low expectations and educational failure for large numbers of vulnerable pupils and a history of blaming poverty. The Standards and Effectiveness Unit was set up to help identify and support failing schools. This high challenge, high support model was set up to address inequality. It also attempted to engage middle class parents who had higher expectations in the debate in an attempt to reduce the move to private education.

The strategy appeared ill conceived from the start however in its aim to develop parental confidence in the state system of education for middle class families. Rather the strategy opened up the opportunity for public criticism of the state system and provided inspection evidence of the failure of schools within the state system to reach expected standards. From this perspective it could be argued that the policy of naming and shaming had the potential to lower parental confidence in the state education system, publicly failing to meet parents higher expectations and increasing middle class opt out to private education.

Rosenholz (1989) picks up the debate of placing blame on the school as the only explanation of failure.   The context of the school is acknowledged as a main contender for blame, arguing that deadwood doesn't kill itself. Within this argument schools are recognised as having external sources of influence which are entrenched and over which the school has little control. This addresses the need to take account of external factors to the school such as school catchment and pupil intake, attendance, punctuality, social deprivation, family dysfunction, lack of parental involvement and lack of external support as sources of influence on school outcomes. I will argue that the Labour government failed to sufficiently take account of these external factors in addressing the need to improve standards, despite the emphasis on improving standards in those schools with disadvantaged pupil intakes.

2.2.2 Social Context

The social context of the failing school seemed to lack consideration in the Labour government's aim to improve school standards. Research suggests that children from disadvantaged backgrounds enter schools with low attainments and rarely increase their attainments (Piontek, Dwyer, Seager, & Orsburn, 1998). This argument is supported by J. Gray (2001) who suggests that social disadvantage affects children in their preschool years and becomes a growing influence as they move through school. He argued that the issue of social class was not adequately addressed in the Labour government's improvement strategy and that schools in disadvantaged areas would struggle to meet imposed benchmarks. 'The odds are still stacked against schools in poorer areas and the social class differential remains a powerful indicator of subsequent educational achievement' (J. Gray, 2001 p.23). Stoll and Fink (1998) support the argument of failing schools often residing in socially disadvantaged areas. They highlight the issues of poor parenting and unprepared children.

> 'A sinking school is a failing school. It is a school in which isolation, self reliance, blame and loss of faith are dominating norms, and powerfully inhibit improvement. It will often, although not always, be in socially disadvantaged areas where parents are undemanding and teachers explain away failure by blaming inadequate parenting or unprepared children' (Stoll & Fink, 1998 p.192).

This of course was the very essence of what the Labour government was trying to address through its stark measures for improvement. However, it could be argued that it went too far in addressing the blame seen to be attributed by teachers to parents and children and not far enough in addressing the social inequalities that continued to exist.

The Independent National Audit Office (2006) published common problems in poorly performing schools, many of which were external to the school. These were weak leadership, unfilled staff vacancies, unfilled places, poor environment, poor

standards of teaching, high rates of pupil absence, poor behaviour, low attainment, lack of external support and low parental engagement.

Reynolds, Harris, and Clarke (2004) reported similar findings and identified high staff turnover, poor facilities, lack of resources, falling pupil numbers and regular supply teachers. They argued that schools in more desirable areas would not have to contend with these issues. Social inequality and its impact on educational equality was not thought to have been addressed sufficiently through the contextual value added indicators (Dyson & Raffo, 2007). As Gray (2001) points out, 'It is clear that improving against the odds is now the name of the game irrespective of socio-economic context or degrees of disadvantage' (J. Gray, 2001 p.24).

Given the effects of social class on educational achievement, it could be argued that schools placed in special measures in socially deprived areas would seem to be at a particular disadvantage when addressing improvements in educational attainments. Ofsted (2008) investigated the ways in which schools placed in special measures recovered and sustained improvements. Findings suggested that they benefited from strong leadership, set high expectations for pupil behaviour and developed effective systems for self-evaluation. The suggestion was that these measures created a strong school identity that helped change the climate of failure.

In considering this report the risk of bias has to be addressed in favour of promoting the usefulness of inspection and the high challenge, high support interventions advocated in the Labour government's education policy. Within this research they heavily promote the benefits of strong leadership and this had received a high level of government investment with which they would be eager to attribute some success.

A. Harris, Chapman, Muijs, Russ, and Stoll (2006) undertook research in improving schools in challenging contexts. I was particularly interested in this study as it makes strong links with my own research. The study focused on a group of 8 schools, 6 secondary and 2 primary in disadvantaged areas that had successfully improved their academic performance over a five year period. Improvement was judged by increased external examination scores and a general upward trend of

improvement within school. Contextual, performance and inspection data were collated. Semi-structured interviews were held with head teachers and a cross section of subject leaders, classroom teachers, support staff and groups of pupils at each school.

Schools within the study identified the strategies they had used to raise attainment and these included improving literacy and numeracy, focusing on teaching and learning, using data tracking and target setting and extending professional development. The single most important factor in these improving schools was identified as the quality of teaching and learning. This was seen to create the momentum for classroom related change and development.

Within the study, professional development was recognised as necessary for schools to improve. Schools were noted to be proactive in their professional development rather than reactive to government initiatives and were using alternative approaches to professional development such as mentoring, coaching and peer review. Each school elected to use strategies to meet its own particular context, pupil intake and development need and it was the combination of interventions that was reported to be necessary for improvement to be sustained.

Findings from the study suggest that schools in challenging contexts have to exert additional effort to those schools in more affluent areas to maintain improvements and to enable sustainable school outcomes. Whitty (2001) makes the observation that 'success can be short lived and fragile in difficult or challenging circumstances' (Whitty, 2001 p.9).

This is a Department of Education and Skills (DfES) funded study. As such the findings have to be considered in the context of supporting the Labour government's drive for school improvement measures. The study is limited in its scale and scope, involving 2 primary schools and 6 secondary schools in rural areas. It is therefore limited in its claims. Increased examination scores are objective measures whereas the measurement of an upward trend of improvement is subjective. Although the study makes claims of strategies showing positive influences upon pupil learning,

there could be other confounding factors upon pupil learning not considered here such as improved parental involvement, improved attendance and behaviour. The findings are tentative and as the authors suggest, a direct correlation between raised attainment and factors affecting this cannot be claimed. Rather they suggest the study offers insights into strategies for raising attainment.

Much of the data is derived from semi- structured interviews with staff. It might be argued that staff would want the strategies they are using to be hailed as the reason for school improvement and therefore would want to promote them in a positive light. Members of the school leadership team were also asked for their views and again it is highly probable that they would want to portray strategies that they had potentially introduced to the school as effective. Bias may therefore influence the findings.

2.2.3 Emotional Context

Research suggests that staff have great difficulty dealing with the emotions that accompany working in a failing school. Earley (1997) compared the process of going into special measures to a bereavement period, following the stages of shock, anger, rejection, acceptance and help. This comparison illustrates a sense of loss that accompanies such a judgement, the loss of self confidence, self esteem, self efficacy, teacher efficacy and a sense of grief that accompanies the loss.

Nicolaidou and Ainscow (2005) in their study of failing schools described the period of special measures as 'a traumatic experience with negative effects on morale and self esteem' (Nicolaidou & Ainscow, 2005 p.232). It was described as one full of tension and conflict. Feelings of discontent, lack of confidence and de-motivation amongst staff were reported with some staff expressing feelings of being useless and a failure. Jeffrey and Woods (1996) investigated the responses of primary school teachers to inspection and found professional uncertainty, confusion, inadequacy, anxiety, frustration, anger, shame and doubt.

This research highlights the difficulties staff experience working in challenging circumstances. At the very core of these emotions seems to be the doubt that is

introduced through the inspection judgement over the ability of a teacher to teach. Although the government provided support to failing schools in the drive for improvement it is debatable as to what level of support was provided for teachers who perceived themselves as failures within their profession. It was assumed that teachers would either leave the profession or improve but the issues were much deeper than this, requiring greater levels of support to deal with the feelings of inadequacy that ensued before improvement efforts could be tackled.

Nicolaidou and Ainscow (2005) found a culture of denial whereby staff refused to acknowledge the reality of their situation. They were reluctant to accept change and continued to use past practice. Findings suggested that past history kept people together but also restricted change and development. The findings from this study reinforce the need to engage individuals in the change agenda and that without participation at the individual level, change at the school level is fraught with difficulties. It would appear that staff need to recognise their responsibility for change within the system. It seems that staff working in failing schools experience emotional difficulties that have the potential to threaten change and development and that these emotional difficulties need to be addressed in a sensitive manner if change is to be effective at a systemic level.

Research highlights strained relationships in failing schools. Nicolaidou and Ainscow (2005) found a particular tension around the transfer of power to the head teacher and new people coming into school, resulting in the development of a them and us culture. Willmott (1999) found similar difficulties with relationships in a failing school and found staff rooms and meeting rooms potential areas of conflict. This research emphasises the social difficulties inherent in the emotionally charged environment of a failing school with conflict and communication problems at the heart of difficulties. It highlights key contentious issues arising out of the Labour government's support agenda such as the transfer of power to professionals external to the school in a bid to raise standards. Research suggests that the emotional difficulties experienced by staff working in failing schools need to be understood, acknowledged and addressed in order to support improved relationships and communication and that this is necessary before the school improvement agenda can be implemented successfully.

Many of the emotional difficulties staff experience in failing schools can be understood in terms of low perceived self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) defined perceived self-efficacy as 'beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments' (Bandura, 1997 p.3). Efficacy belief is recognised as a major basis for action and of self regulation. People's beliefs influence the level of their:

- action
- effort
- perseverance
- resilience
- stress
- depression
- accomplishments

In Bandura's (1997) theory self-efficacy beliefs are constructed from 4 principal sources of information (see Figure 1). Efficacy beliefs result from the cognitive processing of these sources of information and affect actions. People high in self efficacy are able to have some control over life circumstances. They are able to set personal goals and commit to them to secure favourable outcomes. People low in self efficacy have less control over their lives and are less able to set and commit to personal goals. Levels of self efficacy are cyclical such that those people with high self efficacy strive for more while those with low self efficacy make less effort.

Theory of Self-efficacy (Bandura 1997)

• Enactive mastery experiences	Enactive mastery experiences provide the most realistic evidence of whether the individual can master what it takes to succeed. Successes build a robust belief in one's personal efficacy whereas failure undermines it. Experience in overcoming obstacles through perseverance builds a resilient sense of efficacy.
• Vicarious experiences	Vicarious experiences are mediated through modelling whereby individuals appraise their capabilities in relation to the attainments of others. In everyday life people compare themselves to others in similar situations such as colleagues in the work situation. Raised efficacy beliefs follow high achievement in comparison to colleagues whereas lowered efficacy beliefs follow low comparative performance.
• Verbal persuasion	Verbal persuasion can improve a sense of self-efficacy if the appraisal is thought to be realistic. People who are persuaded verbally that they possess the capabilities to master given tasks are likely to apply greater effort and sustain it.
• Physiological and affective states.	Physiological and affective states have an impact on efficacy beliefs. Physiological reactions to stressful situations can be viewed by individuals as signs of vulnerability to dysfunction. Stress reactions can result in further stress through anticipatory self-arousal. As a general rule, moderate levels of arousal are thought to heighten awareness and to facilitate action whereas high arousal disrupts the quality of functioning. It is how these reactions are perceived by the individual that is important. Arousal will have different meanings of efficacy for those who have found arousal facilitating and those who have found arousal debilitating.

Figure 1: Theory of Self-Efficacy (Bandura 1997)

People high in self-efficacy are able to take advantage of opportunities and overcome institutional constraints whereas people low in self-efficacy are easily discouraged. Bandura (1997) suggests that 'it can be the settings themselves that activate a sense of incompetence within individuals and that this can impair future performance in those particular contexts' (Bandura, 1997 p.18). He argued that when people are placed in subordinate roles or are assigned inferior labels, implying limited competence, they perform activities at which they are highly skilled less well than when they are not labelled negatively or placed in a subordinate role.

It could be argued that schools in challenging contexts present the ideal conditions for the development of a sense of incompetence amongst teachers and low self efficacy, particularly when viewed against the backdrop of negative labels that come with a failing school and the subsequent shifting agendas and responsibilities. It is highly probable that teacher efficacy will also be threatened within the context of a failing school. Teacher efficacy has been defined as 'the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance' (Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1977 p.137). The definition provided by T. R. Guskey and Passaro (1994) is more extensive in its coverage in that it accounts for those pupils who are considered difficult to teach, therefore requiring a higher level of teacher efficacy. 'A teacher's beliefs or conviction that they can influence how well students learn, even those who may be difficult or unmotivated' (T. R. Guskey & Passaro, 1994 p.4).

Teacher efficacy has been found to have far reaching effects on pupil and school outcome measures. Ross (1998) found that teacher efficacy predicts:

- pupil achievement
- pupil motivation
- pupil self-esteem
- pupil pro-social attitudes
- school effectiveness
- the adoption of innovations
- the success of programme implementation

- classroom management strategies
- teacher stress

The implications from these findings are significant in that teacher efficacy not only impacts at a personal level but also impacts at a pupil level and a school level. The suggestion is that innovations and interventions rely on high levels of teacher efficacy if they are to be effective in their implementation and without high levels of teacher efficacy they have little chance of success. This once again highlights the need for teachers to be engaged at the individual level if change is to be successful at the school level.

We have established that self efficacy is cyclical whether in a positive or negative direction. Teacher efficacy is similarly cyclical and Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998) demonstrated this through their integrated model. They assert that teacher efficacy judgements are made through an interaction between a personal appraisal of what makes teaching difficult for an individual and a personal appraisal of their teaching capability. The model suggests that the goals teachers set, the effort they apply and their resilience when problems are encountered influence their level of performance and this provides further evidence of efficacy. The implication is that lower levels of teacher efficacy lead to lower levels of effort and persistence which lead to deterioration in performance which in turn lead to lower efficacy. The opposite can be said of individuals with high teacher efficacy. Teachers working in failing schools are likely to have low teacher efficacy. Improved teacher efficacy would seem to be required to support improvement efforts in failing schools.

2.3   Addressing Change and Improvement

2.3.1   Understanding School Culture

The emotional turmoil engendered by special measures would seem to be reflected in the culture of failing schools. D. Hargreaves (1995) defined culture as 'the way we do things around here'. This seems to me to be a concise but fairly simplistic definition of culture. Fullan (2005a) offers a more detailed definition. 'Cultures consist of the shared values and beliefs in the organisation' (Fullan, 2005 p.57).

Schein (1992) offers a more comprehensive definition of culture:

> 'A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to these problems.' (Schein, 1992 p.12).

I particularly favour this definition in its identification of the existence of a common history and shared experiences amongst members of the group and its acknowledgement of new staff accepting these basic assumptions as fundamental to working effectively within the school. It makes reference to the need to adapt from one culture (external) to a new and different culture (internal) and highlights the need to solve problems of adaptation in the process, acknowledging that the task is not an easy one. This definition serves to highlight the importance of understanding local practices and the ways in which people think and interact. It emphasises the need to consider these factors when seeking to facilitate participation in change in order to better understand the barriers and challenges that need to be addressed in working towards change.

Schiffer (1980) stresses that change and innovation will be restricted if we fail to address the issue of organisational culture in schools. D. Hargreaves (1995) supports this view suggesting that a failure to understand the importance of culture may limit school improvement. It seems that school cultures need to go through a transformation period where staff can begin to work collaboratively towards improvement measures. Nias, Southworth et al. (1989) suggest that staff should ideally become the co-founders of a new culture. A. Hargreaves (1994) talks of a collaborative culture where staff can be encouraged to share practices and engage in teamwork and co-planning. Fullan (2007) talks of reculturing, a term which refers to the process through which teachers come to question and change their beliefs and habits.

This raises important issues. Firstly, the need to develop collaborative relationships which as has already been discussed, is distinctly problematic amongst staff in failing schools. Secondly, the issue of staff feeling suitably equipped to be able to question and change existing beliefs and habits.   This would seem especially problematic for well-established staff within failing schools who have a longer history and have potentially been the co-founders of the existing culture.   From this perspective I support the idea proposed by D. Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991) who refer to the maintenance/ development dilemma in creating new cultures. This offers support to the need to maintain some continuity between the past and present of the school and thereby enable all staff to retain some of their existing beliefs and values while being open to change in others. This would allow individuals to choose what to take with them across the period of change.

Nicolaidou and Ainscow (2005) in their study of four inner city schools with high social and economic deprivation placed in special measures found that the problems arising at each school were linked with their internal conditions, their unique culture. 'In failing schools the prevailing culture is one of recrimination, denial and negative emotions' (Nicolaidou & Ainscow, 2005 p.236). The findings underline the importance of organisational culture in fostering improvement and development. Of particular interest to my study was the finding that professional development was an area of significant difficulty such that tension arising from special measures created a barrier to staff collaboration. The findings suggested that staff needed to be brought together in ways that would foster more positive working relationships amongst colleagues.

I was particularly encouraged by their observation that once staff realise that the improvement process is non threatening and that they have something to gain from the task then staff are more likely to become more involved and work cooperatively on shared aims. Nicolaidou and Ainscow (2005) note:

> 'The need to achieve unity and harmony between staff was recognised as
> significant for each school in the study. There was an identified need for
> staff to be encouraged to work in collaboration, share practices and engage

in team work and co-planning. By analysing cultural assumptions in schools in special measures, many insights can be derived on the way they function that can facilitate improvement efforts' (Nicolaidou & Ainscow, 2005 p.245).

This reflection on the importance of school cultures and the notion of changing school cultures led me to a consideration of the difficulties inherent within organisational change.

2.3.2 Organisational Change in Schools

Organisational change involves groups and individuals within organisations working towards making significant changes. Sturdy and Grey (2003) suggest that the field of organisational change offers little tolerance towards resistance to change. The research suggests however that staff in failing schools are resistant to change despite the fact that there is no option but to change if the school is to avoid closure. It seems that resistance needs to be recognised and expected, particularly as change takes people out of their comfort zone. Marris (1975) makes the case that all real change involves loss, anxiety and struggle. This implies that there will naturally be resistance to change as people find loss difficult to accept. This again links to the notion of bereavement and grief noted in my previous consideration of staff emotions and emphasises the magnitude of the process of change for staff working in failing schools.

Research suggests that change is difficult to achieve in failing schools. Fullan (2007) suggests that confusion, overload and low sense of efficacy deplete energy, recognised as essential for effective change. Stark (1998) notes that the school can lose the capacity to function once it is stigmatised as failing. This is illustrative of a failing school in which staff have emotionally closed down or switched off and have nothing further to give. In such environments any attempts at change would seem doomed to fail. (Stober, 2008) supports the view that change is difficult to achieve:

'Organisational change is hard….overcoming coping with the known (for better and worse) in order to move toward the unknown is an uncomfortable

process, one in which maintaining the status quo is often the unconscious or even conscious choice' (Stober, 2008 p.73).

The literature suggests that staff working in failing schools often prefer the status quo.

Research has identified several factors strongly related to the implementation of change, a teacher's psychological state, emotions and working relationships. Huberman (1988) found that a teacher's psychological state can make him/her more or less predisposed to change. The suggestion is that personality and previous experience can result in some teachers being more self-actualised with a higher level of efficacy, leading them to take action and to be persistent in achieving successful change. Fullan, (2007) argued that the culture of the school was able to shape an individual's psychological state. Fox and Amichai-Hamburger (2001) found that the emotional side of change is also a key determinant as to whether or not people willingly participate in the change process. The quality of working relationships among teachers was also identified as a critical variable, strongly related to the implementation of change (Fullan, 2007). These research findings add further weight for the need to gain an understanding of the individual within the change process and to support initially at the individual level before supporting at the group and organisational level.

Fullan (2007) argued that top down change is ineffective in bringing ownership, commitment or clarity and bottom up change doesn't work either. He suggested a combination of top-down and bottom-up forces for change, a strategy referred to as capacity building with a focus on results (Fullan, 2005a). The research highlights the fact that top down change does not deal with resistance to change and that support for change needs to be harnessed amongst practitioners.

Motivation is recognised as key to implementing change. D. Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991) argue that teachers need to be able to recognise a personal and professional gain from change in order to be motivated and committed to that change. Deci (1975) argues that motivation for managing change is increased when

people are able to attribute positive change to their own resources. Early rewards and some tangible success are considered to be critical incentives during the implementation of change (Huberman & Miles, 1984).

Fullan (2007) identifies the need to acknowledge people's dignity and sense of respect through empathy as key to motivation in difficult circumstances. He suggests that for most teachers, daily motivation and social support is essential. He notes that motivated people improve at tasks and that all successful change initiatives develop collaboration where there was none before. According to Fullan (2007) the goal has to be to find out what motivates teachers to work on the problem. He suggests that teachers can be motivated to change through working with other colleagues on improving their practice and stresses the need to develop an environment where this is encouraged.

Fullan (2007) described the characteristics of change as the need for clarity, complexity, quality and practicality. Clearly defined goals bring clarity together with a specified means of implementation. Complexity refers to the extent of change required of the individuals, with greater change possible if more is attempted. He argues that ambitious change and quality is possible and it is the way people think about change that is important. The practicalities surrounding the implementation of change offer important considerations with increasing numbers of people affected by the process helping to progress the change itself (Fullan, 1982). He makes the point that individuals do not achieve complex change by being told or shown what to do. This is supported by Rosenholz, (1989) who notes that change results from a 'doing with' teachers as opposed to a 'doing to' teachers.

2.4   Coaching as a Model for Organisational Change

The characteristics of change identified by Fullan (2007) would seem to fit neatly into a coaching model. Within such a model, the coachee would identify a personal development need. Clarity would be achieved through firming up goals with clearly defined stages of implementation. Complexity would be negotiated with the coachee with a consideration of what the individual felt realistically able to take on. Quality would relate to preferred outcomes and standards that the individual is seeking to

achieve. Practicality would look at setting achievable goals within a realistic timeframe. Viewed in this way, coaching could be used as a means of supporting organisational change.

All coaching is aimed at facilitating some sort of positive change whether it is in performance, development of particular skills or personal development. Coaching involves getting buy in to change through positive emotions (Guaspari, 1996).

D. E. Gray (2006) regards the coach not as an expert but as a collaborative partner. In the coaching model it is the coachee who takes responsibility and ownership for the strategies to reach the goals. He sees one of the roles of the coach as a change agent. "The coach helps to guide someone through a transient culture….helping people to become more confident, committed and able to sustain their drive and commitment." (D. E. Gray, 2006 p.478).

Coaching has been found to be extremely useful when an organisation realises the need to change (Peltier, 2001). Reference is made to the work of I. Palmer and Dunford (2008) who identified coaching as a means of managing organisational change. Their model of coaching uses participative management philosophies and involves a wide range of people in the process of developing a vision. Team based communication styles encourage people to be involved in the change process and there is a focus on developing an appreciation of people's personal capacity to cope with the post-change environment.

This model harnesses the support of individuals and groups as a means of implementing change. It encourages people to become involved with the change process and to realise a shared vision. It encourages the involvement of large numbers of people within the process and this stimulates further change. It is person focused.

Stober (2008) also identifies coaching as an area that can contribute towards organisational change. She argues that organisational change requires a number of interlocking phases of change, from the individual, to the team, to the organisation as

a whole, opening up a number of opportunities for coaching. She argues that individuals need to understand how the organisational change is meaningful to them and how their individual actions contribute to affecting change if they are to value the process.

Prochaska and DiClemente's (1984) Transtheoretical Model of Change (TTM) sets out the stages individuals move through in making significant change in their lives: pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance and relapse. This model is useful in that it enables coaches to work towards stage specific coaching strategies.

- At the pre-contemplative stage, the aim is to raise awareness, often through asking questions that encourage the individual to think about this particular stage.
- In the contemplative stage, the key issue is the ambivalence of making change. Coaches can assist individuals by enabling the individual to talk about this ambivalence and thereby enable the individual to explore the pros and cons of change.
- In preparation stage the coach can help clarify the vision of change and support the individual to identify specific action steps. This can increase commitment and purpose for the individual.
- In the action stage, the coach supports the individual to develop their vision and plan for change.
- During maintenance, the coach can assist the individual to maintain his/her change plan by working on stretch goals and by planning for possible difficulties ahead.
- Relapse is a stage that is recognised as natural with any change beyond small steps. During relapse the coach can enable the individual to see it as a normal part of change.

Within this model the coach is able to meet the individual at their particular stage in the change process and facilitate their development. It allows the individual to move through the stages of change towards attaining their goals.

2.4.1 Theories Relevant to the Practice of Coaching

"Coaching psychology is about enhancing well-being and performance in personal life and work domains, through techniques underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established learning theories and psychological approaches" (Palmer and Whybrow 2008 p.137). The theoretical framework of coaching draws on the principles and processes of psychotherapy in its commitment to confidentiality and adopting an ethical stance.

D. E. Gray (2006) contrasts the work of Schon (1991) and Hallett (1997). He notes that Schon (1991) has had significant influence on addressing the nature of professional knowledge. Schon (1991) believed that 'theories in use', theories developed through professional practice and relating to the individual, should be considered of greater worth than theories that are simply taught. This supports much evidence based practice undertaken in schools where practitioners develop their own styles and techniques and adapt these in the light of experience. In contrast, Hallett (1997) contends that academic theories can play an important role in later stages when the practitioner is able to link practice in action with theory. He argues, that within the coaching model, the coachee changes some aspect of his/her practice in response to an identified need and then self monitors its effectiveness in resolving the issue. The suggestion is that through the evaluation process the coachee's initial understanding of the problem is modified and changed.

It is believed that the decision to adopt a change strategy therefore precedes the development of understanding and that action initiates reflection. Reflection is recognised as important within coaching in order to facilitate and strengthen the learning experience. Without reflection learning will not occur (Thompson, 2001; West Burnham & O'Sullivan, 1998).

A range of models and theoretical perspectives underpin the coaching process, some of the most prevalent being solution-focused, cognitive-behavioural, purely cognitive and purely behavioural. I have chosen to outline two of these approaches, cognitive coaching and solution focused coaching.

Costa & Garmston (1994) have developed a model of cognitive coaching which assumes that the behaviours of teachers cannot be altered until their internal thought processes have changed. Within this model teaching is conceptualised as an intellectual, decision-making process. Reflection is considered necessary to link the intended and actual outcomes of teaching. The model advocates a sequential approach to coaching, a planning conference prior to observation in the classroom, class observation of teaching behaviours and pupil learning and a reflection conference. According to Costa and Garmston (1994), cognitive coaching can positively influence self-confidence, classroom management skills, teaching styles and self awareness.

T. T. Guskey (1986) claims that 'evidence of improvement (positive change) in the learning outcomes of pupils generally precedes and may be a prerequisite to significant change in the beliefs and attitudes of teachers' (T. T. Guskey, 1986 p.7). The suggestion is that coaching programmes should be aimed at enhancing the classroom practices, of successful teachers, that directly enhance desired learning outcomes in pupils.

Solution focused coaching offers an alternative model. Hicks and McCracken (2010) identify three basic principles of solution focused coaching.

1. There is no need to have a detailed understanding of the problem to find a solution.
2. Focusing on the future creates more useful outcomes than focusing on the past.
3. Effective change is more likely to occur through small steps rather than large ones.

Solution focused coaching is a structured approach which has clearly identified stages, including:

- Problem free talk (on subjects not linked to the issue)
- Goal setting
- Exception-seeking (when the issue is not present)

- Competence seeking (finding and acknowledging the individual's own resources and strengths)

The role of the coach is to help the coachee to find his/her own solutions. The coach helps the individual identify and set achievable goals linked to his/her preferred outcomes. The coachee is helped to discover strengths and capabilities within him/herself to help achieve goals and to identify and commit to small steps that will support the attainment of those goals. The approach seeks to build confidence in the individual that the outcome can be achieved. The small steps approach enables the individual to see each stage as achievable and within their control. In this way forward momentum is established and change becomes possible. Hicks and McCracken (2010) suggest that it allows the coach to successfully facilitate change and places ultimate responsibility for a desirable outcome with the practitioner.

Fillery-Travis (2007) suggests that people love being coached, value the one-to-one development and believe that it helps them to become more effective.

2.4.2 Coaching in Schools

Coaching is increasingly recognised as a form of continuing professional development in schools in the United Kingdom. The National College of School Leadership has championed the role of coaching in schools. The work of Joyce and Showers (1995) has been influential in promoting coaching in schools to support the training of staff. Research has found that with trainee teachers, training was enhanced when in-class coaching was added to the initial training experience.

The Training and Development Agency for School's (TDA) commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to conduct a review into coaching (Lord, Atkinson, & Mitchell, 2008). Findings suggest that coaching encouraged staff to be reflective in their practice, to improve the sharing of knowledge and skills with colleagues and to promote change in professional cultures towards learning, reflection and collaboration. However challenges to the use of

coaching as a model to develop professional practice included pressures around time, workload and workplace cultures.

Despite these findings, A. Harris (2001) points out that collaboration between individuals so they can work and learn together is not prevalent in many schools. A. Hargreaves and Dawe (1990) note that encouraging teachers to collaborate can be viewed as contrived in order to avoid individual criticism of change.

This is an important challenge to those who seek to engage individuals in change and raises the issue of whether collaboration is to be viewed as something that empowers teachers through personal ownership or something that is imposed from above. If the latter, it could be argued that any collaborative efforts may be short lived as the commitment for involvement will be severely lacking.

2.4.3   A Coaching Culture

In an environment where change is a constant there is the need to develop the confidence of teachers to manage change. It seems that coaching has the potential to offer professional development for teachers, enabling them to meet the challenges of their changing agenda but only if it is supported and managed effectively. Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005) have proposed that a coaching culture is one where coaching is the predominant style of managing and working together and where a commitment to develop the organisation is linked to a commitment to develop the people in the organisation.

Veenman and Denessen (2001) summarised the findings of five training studies evaluating the effects of a coaching programme for teachers in Dutch primary and secondary schools. The coaching programme was based on the assumption that coaching can help teachers become more reflective and analytic, more self-directed and more adept at identifying areas for improvement and implementing those improvements in their teaching. In this coaching programme, coaching was defined as a form of in-class support to enhance teacher competence through systematic reflection on professional practice. The model of cognitive coaching developed by

Costa and Garmston (1994) was used within this programme, a coaching cycle involving pre-conference, observation and post conference.

Findings suggested that the training programme positively affected the coaching skills of prospective coaches. It was found to particularly improve 'developing autonomy' within teachers, referring to their ability to reflect upon their teaching and formulate action plans for improvement.

This research did not identify whether these coaching skills brought about change in the cognitive processes and instructional behaviours of teachers but this could be a useful development for the future in determining the usefulness of the coaching programme. The training uses the model of coaching developed by Costa and Garmston (1994). Alternative models may need to be considered in determining which model best suits the process of teacher change and therefore which coaching model best suits the coaching of teachers. It may be that one training programme for coaching does not fit all and that adaptations may be necessary to accommodate teachers who have different experiences and who are at different stages of their careers.

The NFER study (Lord, Atkinson et al. 2008) found that effective coaching hinged on the quality of the coaching relationship. The range of qualities and skills of the coach were seen to be important and these included the knowledge and experience of the coach and their success as a practitioner as well as qualities of trust, respect, approachability, empathy, flexibility and self awareness, together with listening, communication and interpersonal skills.

West Burnham and O'Sullivan (1998) highlight the need for high quality personal and interpersonal skills, mutual trust, confidence and respect within successful coaching relationships.

A key finding from the NFER report (Lord, Atkinson et al 2008) into coaching was that understanding of coaching in schools was found to be limited. The report found that primary school staff tend to be supported by external coaching sources.

There is also evidence to suggest that in order to consolidate gains in shifting cultures, individuals within organisations have been trained to take over the coaching role through accessing training in coaching skills (Stober, 2008).   Rhodes and Beneicke (2002) propose management teams train their own staff in order to build coaching capacity within teams.

Fillery-Travis (2007) argues that although much has been written concerning the potential best practice of coaching in schools, there is little evidence of practice. However the belief is that once people have experienced the benefits of coaching, many will want to introduce it throughout their school, thereby developing a coaching culture, as proposed by Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005).

2.5   Research Questions

Having reviewed the literature around failing schools research suggests that the social and emotional difficulties experienced within these schools are highly complex. The research has highlighted key difficulties with teacher engagement within the change agenda and seems to place the individual at the heart of change if it is to be successful. If individuals can see a personal gain from the change they are more likely to engage.   Collaboration has been seen to be important to move schools forward but again this is recognised as very difficult to achieve, particularly in failing schools where the culture is one of isolation rather than collaboration.

However within the review of organisational change the research suggests that coaching is a model that can support change because of its ability to engage the individual at a personal level. This offers hope for failing schools that are unable to move forward with the improvement agenda, so necessary for a failing school.

Within the review of the literature I have been able to find little research around failing schools, principally because researchers have difficulty accessing such environments (Nicolaidou & Ainscow, 2005). Although much has been written about potential best practice for coaching in schools, there is little evidence of practice in education.

Coaching is a developing research interest and there is growing support for coaching as professional development in schools. Much of this work looks at supporting teachers in the classroom to develop their practice. Although the literature refers to the appropriateness of coaching to support organisational change there is a need for further research in this area, particularly when the evidence suggests that organisational change is one particular area in which coaching can make a valuable contribution from the individual, to the team, to the organisation as a whole (Stober, 2008). It is this gap within the research that I hope to explore within this study. It opens up interesting research questions that I will explore further, namely:

- How do people make sense of their experience of working in a failing school?
- How do people experience a coaching intervention?
- Is coaching a useful intervention to support professional practice and development in a failing school?
- Can coaching facilitate change in failing schools?

3 Methodology

3.1 Overview

This thesis investigates the coaching of teachers to support change in challenging circumstances and explores the aforementioned research questions. In setting out this chapter I will begin by outlining my ontology and epistemology. I will then discuss the rationale for the design of the study, providing a description of the case study and detailing the coaching intervention. I will then discuss the data collection sources and data analysis.

I approach this research from a realist ontology that recognises that the world consists of objects and structures that have cause and effect relationships with each other. The emphasis is on things rather than events with a search to understand their characteristics and their interactions with one another. Human beings represent a complex thing within this reality with specific characteristics. Things exist in the world independent of our knowledge, beliefs or perceptions. As Lopez and Potter (2005) describe reality: 'It simply is, however it is. Things are however they are. They possess just what characteristics and powers that they possess' (Lopez & Potter, 2005 p.12).

Knowledge, beliefs and perceptions are recognised as fallible just as human beings are fallible. Realist ontology focuses on underlying structures of truth rather than surface truth. Observation and inference are used to understand the underlying features of reality although it is recognised that they may also be limited and fallible. Things are viewed from a particular perspective and this reflects the limitations of our time and culture. The concern rests with meanings which are recognised as understandable and communicable. There is a recognition of novel events and knowledge is seen to evolve.

I take a critical realist epistemological position. Human beings and social structures are recognised as the prime objects of social study and are very different. Natural

and social 'things' are known to exist in the world but how we perceive them is determined by our history, our culture, our beliefs and expectations and our experience of the world. This means that we cannot know everything there is to know but rather we are selective in our knowledge through our perception. Social structures and natural objects are seen to exist outside of human perception. Objects are recognised to have emergent properties and these are seen to interact with other objects which then form other properties. The transitive world of knowing is recognised as distinct from the intransitive world of being. Critical realism allows reality to be considered through understanding different constructions of knowledge.

Critical realism acknowledges the perspectives of others and is interested in the ways individuals make meaning of their experience within the social context. Social interactions determine the meanings individuals ascribe to events and their views are seen to be important in representing reality through their experience. Knowledge is viewed as something created with others.

Scott (2007) identifies critical realism as realist and critical for two reasons. Firstly, objects are understood to exist in the world whether the individual is able to see them or not and secondly knowledge is recognised as fallible because attempts to describe objects needs to account for the transitive nature of knowledge. Scott (2007) suggests however that by attending to both the real world and the transient nature of knowledge it is possible to make qualified statements about the nature of reality.

From a critical realist approach, data collection methods need to provide information about an individual's experience and reality and would need to allow participants the ability to express themselves fully. The development of knowledge is recognised as a social process with language at its core. Although the aim is to gain a better understanding of the world there is the acknowledgement that the data may not provide direct access to this reality. Critical realism combines the realist ambition to gain a better understanding of what is going on in the world with the acknowledgement that the data the researcher gathers may not provide direct access to this reality.

I decided to conduct empirical research through the lens of a case study which involved the design and implementation of a coaching intervention in a primary school judged by Ofsted as failing.

Punch (2005) identifies case study as an approach to qualitative research design, more of a strategy than a method. He provides the following definition:

'….we can define a case as a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context' (Punch, 2005 p.144).

R. Stake (1995) offers an alternative definition:

'…case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances (R. Stake, 1995 p.10).

Tight (2010) takes issue with a small sample being categorised as a case study. He states that the essence of a case study is the detailed examination of a small sample '…. at its extreme a single example…of an item of interest, and typically also from a particular perspective' (Tight, 2010 p.337). He makes the point that there is a proliferation of research which refers to case study within their title and argues for a different terminology for single case studies, with the suggestion of referring to a small sample or an in-depth study rather than a case study. This suggestion seems to unjustly diminish the value of the case study however and fails to address the significance of the case. A small sample or an in-depth study does not reflect the essence of the sample which is a case study within a bounded context with a complexity and particularity.

Yin (2003) suggests that the case study is a useful strategy when the investigator has little control over events and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real life context.

R. Stake (1995) identifies three main types of case study

1. Intrinsic, when the study is undertaken to gain a better understanding of the particular case

2. Instrumental, when the case is to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalisation and

3. Multiple or collective, when a number of cases may be studied jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon, population or general condition.

This research is a study of a single case and is intrinsic in its search to gain a better understanding of coaching in a failing school. It explores a coaching intervention which took place over a 16 week period with a focus on change and development.

Case study has many criticisms that need to be addressed. Yin (2003) who is a key proponent of case study research illustrates the low regard in which case study is reviewed in scientific research.

"The case study has long been (and continues to be) stereotyped as a weak sibling among social science research methods. Investigators who do case studies are regarded as having downgraded their academic disciplines. Case studies have similarly been denigraded as having insufficient precision (ie. quantification), objectivity or rigour" (Yin, 2003 p.13).

There are criticisms regarding the reliability of the case study. They inevitably involve the researcher in close relationships with individuals and institutions. Thus they are in a sense part of the study and not detached from it and it is acknowledged that they will therefore have an effect on the research process and findings. In addressing issues of reliability case study researchers anticipate that readers will be able to investigate their own situations in so far as they are in similar situations and using the same techniques come up with similar results. Reliability is sought by careful and explicit documentation and the construction of a separate evidence base.

Flyvbjerg (2004) gives a useful analysis of the criticisms often levelled against case work research. He identifies 5 misunderstandings or oversimplifications about the nature of case work research:

1. General, theoretical (context independent) knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical (context dependent) knowledge.

2. One cannot generalise on the basis of an individual case; therefore the case study cannot contribute to scientific development.

3. The case study is most useful for generating hypotheses, that is, in the first stage of a total research process, while other methods are more suitable for hypothesis testing and theory building.

4. The case study contains a bias towards verification, that is, a tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions.

5. It is often difficult to summarise and develop general propositions and theories on the basis of specific case studies.

The implication from these misunderstandings is that it is theory, reliability and validity that present as the critical concerns of case study. The assertion is made that these failings can be attributed to qualitative research in general. Flyvbjerg (2004) challenges these misunderstandings. In relation to the 5 misunderstandings listed above he makes the following assertions:

• Within social research there are only specific cases and context dependent knowledge.

• It depends upon the case and how it is chosen.

• Again it depends upon the case and how it is chosen. Reference is made to the selection of extreme, critical or even paradigmatic cases for study.

• This criticism is true for all methods of social research.

• The problems in summarising are often due to the properties of the reality studied than to the case study. Often it is not desirable to summarise and generalise case studies.

Generalisation is regarded as a key issue within case study research. Even though we cannot generalise from small scale qualitative research it could be argued that 'if

a given experience is possible, it is also subject to universalisation' (Haug, 1987 p.44). This asserts that although it is not known who or how many people share a particular experience, once we have identified it through qualitative research it can be argued that we do know that it is available within a culture or society.

Thomas (2011) suggests that what can usefully be generalised about in social science can only be uninteresting or mundane concerning everyday generalisation. He refers to special retrospective generalisation as that concerned with explanation rather than prediction and argues that if this is to be worth something it must involve more than our everyday generalisations of what human beings do all the time. He makes the point that case study offers understanding presented from another's view but understood from one's own. He argues that the case study should be judged by its offer to an individual's personal understanding.

In defence of the criticism of generalisability of case studies R. Stake (1995) writes:

> 'The real business of case study is particularisation, not generalisation. We take a particular case and come to know it well, not primarily as to how it is different from others but what it is, what it does. There is emphasis on uniqueness, and that implies knowledge of others that the case is different from, but the first emphasis is on understanding the case itself' (R. Stake, 1995 p.8).

Silverman (2000) defines generalisability as that characteristic of research which permits generalising from particular cases to populations. Hammersley (1992), Giddens (1984), have suggested that it is possible to establish the representativeness of a single case on the basis of comparisons with a larger sample of similar cases. The argument is based on an inductive logic where the frequency of occurrences or cases serves to strengthen our confidence in the typicality of the phenomenon. Here generalisability is achieved through accumulation of similar cases.

Others such as Bromley (1986) and Yin (1994) argue that such a view of generalisability is not appropriate within the context of case study research. These researchers propose that case studies can give rise to theoretical insights that may be generalisable, however they cannot be used to generalise their findings to populations of similar cases.

R. E. Stake (1994) supports this view:

> '[Whereas] the single or a few cases are poor representation of a population of cases and poor grounds for advancing grand generalisation…case studies are of value in refining theory and suggesting complexities for further investigation, as well as helping to establish the limits of generalisability (R. E. Stake, 1994 p.245).

Yin (1994) argues that the case study can be likened to an experiment. While a case study can constitute a test of a theory it can never be representative of other cases in a statistical sense. Case study can generate generalisable theoretical positions but it cannot tell us anything about the characteristics of populations. Case studies help us to test the limits of our existing understanding and allow us to develop or modify theories to explain occurrences. He makes the point that a case study is intended to demonstrate existence not incidence.

An alternative approach to generalisation has been proposed by Alasuutari (1995) who recommends that we replace the term generalisation with extrapolation to refer to the ways in which 'the researcher demonstrates that the analysis relates to things beyond the material at hand' (Alasuutari, 1995 p.156-7). In this way it is argued that we can talk about the wider applicability of case study research without importing claims associated with statistical or experimental research into our arguments.

I considered several ways in which I could have approached this case study and coaching intervention. One possibility would have been to conduct semi-structured interviews with the participants at different stages of the coaching intervention. This would have provided information on their experience of coaching as the intervention

progressed. Another would have been to conduct semi-structured interviews with the head teacher and other senior management staff within school at different stages of the intervention. This would have provided information on whether or not the coaching intervention had made a difference in school and if so in what ways? I considered that I could have interviewed the children to ascertain their views on how strategies introduced through coaching had affected their experience of the classroom and learning. This would have provided a different perspective regarding possible change as an outcome of the intervention. I also considered the possibility of conducting classroom observations to establish the effectiveness of coaching on classroom practice. All these options considered however, I was very conscious of what would be possible within a realistic time frame not only for data gathering but also in terms of data analysis.

In view of this I decided to concentrate specifically on the coaching intervention with semi-structured interviews planned for participants and the head teacher at the end of the intervention. Opportunities were provided for feedback to the head teacher midway through the intervention and at the end of the intervention.

The research was structured as follows:

- Initial meeting with the head teacher to discuss the research proposal.
- Further meeting with the head teacher to firm up the research proposal. Signed consent given to conduct the research in school. The head teacher to inform the participants of the research proposal in brief terms.
- Individual introductory meetings with participants to explain the research proposal and to discuss ethical issues. Signed consent given to conduct the research.
- Individual 45 minute weekly coaching sessions arranged for participants over a 16 week period.
- Meeting with the head teacher midway through the intervention to share information on the coaching intervention. All information shared agreed with the participants.

- Meeting with the head teacher at the end of the intervention to share information on the coaching intervention. All information shared agreed with participants.

- Semi-structured interviews held with participants and the head teacher at the end of the intervention.

3.2 Case Study of a Failing School

This research arose out of a support need for a school which was placed in special measures and represented a unique case of interest to me, that of a failing school. Such schools have been of interest to me over my career as an Educational Psychologist as they represent for me schools in crisis. Much of my work in schools has supported critical incidents and although I do not wish to compare the two, nevertheless it does reflect an interest in supporting schools when they are in most need. I have always been interested in supporting the social and emotional concerns of children, families and teachers in schools and this interest stems from a background in counselling psychology.

As an experienced teacher who has also worked in socially disadvantaged schools I am able to empathise with staff who work in challenging environments. Although I have never personally experienced an Ofsted inspection and never been part of a failing school I can only imagine the emotional turmoil that must accompany such a judgement. Coaching is an area of work I have developed since training as an Educational Psychologist. I have often worked in schools following Ofsted inspections where the inspection report has identified a need for support for teachers in schools. Coaching has provided a way forward for these teachers and these schools and I believed that coaching could be equally effective in supporting staff in a failing school.

I was the Educational Psychologist for the school and had worked with the school for three years. I had involvement across the school with various year groups and had worked with many of the staff. The school was in a socially deprived area with above average numbers of children with Special Educational Needs and Statements

of Special Educational Needs. There had been long term staff absence and many classes were covered by supply staff.

I offered the head teacher the possibility of staff coaching when the school was first placed in special measures. It was my belief that this would have been the optimal time to have run the coaching intervention as it would have been at a time when staff were potentially feeling overwhelmed by recent events and in need of the opportunity for reflection, personal development and support. However the offer was declined as the head teacher was of the opinion that staff had too many other factors to contend with.

Following this offer, during the following term, the head teacher went on long term sick leave and an acting head teacher was brought into the school to support the formulation of the action plan towards improvement. The deputy head teacher went on long term sick leave within the same term and an acting deputy head teacher was brought in to support the management of the school. Several other members of staff went on long term sick following the outcome of inspection. An advisory teacher was brought in to support the school in the Foundation Stage and long term supply staff covered staff absence in other areas of the school. The head teacher resigned within the academic year and the acting head teacher was appointed head teacher.

I had worked closely with the new head teacher when she had been acting head teacher and I was aware that she was open to new ways of working with the Educational Psychologist. I once again broached the idea of offering staff coaching within school and an interest was expressed to take this work forward. I asked about the possibility of using this work as a research project and she was in agreement for this to take place. This then gave me the opportunity to work in a school which had previously been inaccessible.

This is a case study of an average sized primary school in a rural area with high social and economic deprivation. D. Gray (2000) suggests that schools in areas with high deprivation factors are most likely to be judged in need of special measures. A. Harris (2001) argues that this is due to the fact that they tend to face a myriad of

complex and socially related problems. At the time of the research the school had 207 pupils on roll, aged 3-11 years with a nursery attached to the school. The school had 9 teaching staff, including the head teacher and deputy head teacher and 7 support staff. Many of the staff had long service at the school. The proportion of children claiming free school meals was at more than twice the national average. The proportion of children who had learning difficulties and disabilities was also well above the national average. The school served a white population in the main.

A meeting was set up with the head teacher to discuss the coaching intervention. At this meeting I outlined my early thoughts about my research design and the head teacher discussed potential research participants. She wanted to target a team of people for the intervention who were not reliant on supply staff for long term cover as many of the teams in school were. She identified the Key Stage 1 (KS1) team for the coaching intervention. This team consisted of a Year 1 (Y1) teacher, a Year 2 (Y2) teacher, two teaching assistants (TA's) and one learning support assistant (LSA). All staff were female and within the 25-35 year age range. The Year 1 class teacher had been on maternity leave at the time of the inspection and the Year 2 class teacher was appointed to the school after the special measures judgement was announced. All other participants were in school at the time of the inspection. Even though I had worked in the school over the previous 3 years I had no previous involvement with the teachers in the study and only fleeting contact with the non-teaching staff through brief classroom observations or brief discussions regarding individual children. Signed consent was given by the head teacher to conduct the research in the school.

The participants were informed of the coaching intervention by the head teacher and I arranged a meeting with all potential participants on an individual basis to explain the research and to seek their permission for involvement in the project. Issues of confidentiality were addressed and all participants were informed that they would remain anonymous, as would the school. They were informed that if at any time they wished to withdraw from the research they were at liberty to do so. An ethics statement was drawn up for the head teacher and for the participants that outlined my approach to the research and all parties signed up to this agreement.

The coaching process was explained to participants and they were given information on the coaching model. They were informed that information from the coaching conversations and the semi-structured interviews would be used for research purposes to gain an understanding of their experience of coaching with the proviso that if anything was said that the participants later wished to remove from the research material they could do so. All participants were in agreement for information to be used in the research with this proviso. There was an agreement that they would have access to the findings of my research.

Following the initial meeting with participants it was arranged with the head teacher and staff that I would visit the school over the spring and summer term on a weekly basis for 16 weeks to deliver individual coaching sessions. Participants were asked to think about an aspect of their practice that they would like to improve. They were informed that this would form the basis of the first coaching session.

Participants were timetabled to work with me on each of my visits. The time of my visits coincided with professional preparation activity (PPA) for teaching staff who were therefore available to attend sessions. I accepted that the school by its very nature would have changing conditions that would necessarily impact on the research and that there would be times when other events within school would have to take precedence and that plans could change at a moments notice.

I arranged to have access to a room in school during my visits to meet with participants for the coaching conversations. A notice was placed on the door to prevent disturbances. Tea, coffee and water were provided on each of these occasions in an attempt to enable participants to feel relaxed within the coaching session. Within this room I aimed to create an emotionally safe environment that would enable staff to engage with the coaching process.

3.3 Ethical Issues

It was imperative for the head teacher to have a clear understanding of the nature of the intervention from the outset. From a school management perspective she could

see how coaching could be used as part of the school improvement agenda, to develop leadership skills in management and good classroom practice in teachers, to improve relationships between staff and between teachers and management, to build highly functioning teams. There was some steer to move on good practice. The head teacher ultimately wanted Key Stage 1 to stand out as a beacon phase in the school for other teams to emulate.

Several ethical issues arose out of the research design. The head teacher's agenda was clearly linked to school improvement and the need to raise standards. There was also the perceived need to improve staff relationships that had thwarted attempts to implement change. It transpired that the head teacher had relationship difficulties with some staff. Many still had a strong allegiance to the previous head and blamed her for his eventual resignation. By her own admission she had a directive management style and this had not gone down well with many staff.

I made the head teacher aware that I would not be able to approach the coaching with her agenda but that the focus of the coaching would be determined by the participants and that I would have no influence over the focus of the coaching conversations. I was engaged in the study as a neutral participant, one that had no desire to affect the course of the coaching conversations but rather one that would be placing the onus for the direction of change on to the participants.

I was aware that the research could be compromised if the participants believed that I was following the agenda of the head teacher in terms of school improvement. I therefore felt the need to distance myself from that assertion by making it clear in my initial meeting with participants that this research was independent of the school. I recognised that I would have some difficulty gaining the trust of the participants if they felt that I was aligned to the head teacher and I therefore put measures in place in an attempt to secure that trust.

Confidentiality was assured for all participants within coaching conversations. I was careful to avoid harm and to preserve the psychological wellbeing of participants when carrying out this research. I remained sensitive to emotional responses in

participants during the coaching conversations, checking with them that they were happy to proceed or changing the direction of the conversation if not. I always checked with participants who may have felt that they had revealed more than they intended in the coaching conversation that they were happy to include the information in the research, otherwise I assured them that it would be withdrawn. There was an agreement that I would check with participants to ascertain if there were any aspects of the conversation that could be shared with others, either colleagues that were part of the intervention or the head teacher.

Meetings were arranged prior to the start of the intervention with the head teacher to inform her of progress at the midway point and at the end of the intervention. Participants were informed of this schedule. Summary papers were prepared for each of these meetings and these were shared with participants prior to the meeting with the head teacher. This enabled all participants the opportunity to alter any part of the presentation should they feel it compromised them in any way. By working in this open manner I hoped to secure their trust throughout the duration of the intervention.

This approach also required a high level of trust from the head teacher. Similarly I agreed confidentiality with the head teacher regarding our conversations in these meetings. I asked permission to share any comments made in those meetings that I thought would be beneficial for the participants to hear. I believed much of the information would be motivating for the participants and therefore was keen to have permission to share. I also believed that this would pave the way for any conversations that the head teacher may subsequently have with the participants.

Throughout the intervention there were events that occurred in school that caused tension between the head teacher and the participants. One of these was the news of redundancy for 3 teaching assistants. This event affected all participants as teachers supported their own TA's. One of the backlashes from this was that those TA's that did not keep their posts felt that those that did had an unfair advantage because the successful candidates had accessed the intervention. Indeed feedback from the head teacher after the interviews suggested that the TA's who had

accessed the intervention had delivered strong interviews, particularly in regard to confidence and teamwork.

There was also an ethical and moral issue around those staff who were not included in the intervention. The participants had discussed the work they were doing through coaching with colleagues and many had expressed an interest in engaging with this work. As a consequence it seemed important that staff were given an opportunity to access coaching in the future. This encouraged the head teacher to plan for internal development of staff as coaches and to work towards the development of a coaching culture.

3.4 Coaching Intervention - Solution Focused Coaching Model

A solution focused model of coaching was used for this intervention. The model arose from work developed initially in the field of family therapy in the form of solution focused brief therapy. It has evolved into an approach that can be used just as well for coaching and it uses the same principles and beliefs. I considered that it had many advantages over other coaching models for the purpose of this research. One of the prime considerations was its potential to be brief and in a time limited study this seemed to be a realistic option. I also chose the model because of my familiarity with this form of coaching. I had used solution focused coaching often within my practice and was very familiar with the form of questioning used to elicit solution focused thinking, including exception finding questions and preferred future questions.

Whilst I only used the model to interact with individuals I designed the process to create an environment where individuals would communicate effectively and support each other through the process. Implementation of the design required iterations of the process to initially build a trust relationship and further, to create self initiating teams that could implement new goals.

OVERVIEW OF COACHING INTERVENTION PROGRAMME
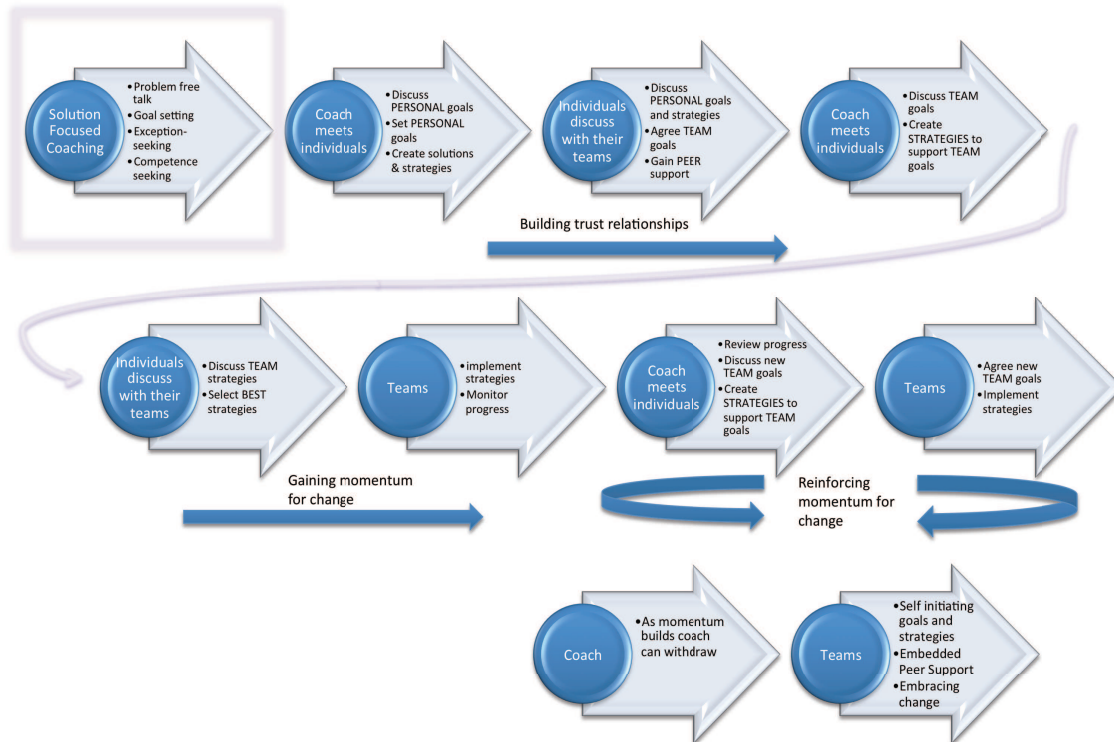
Figure 2: Diagrammatic representation of coaching intervention design

The coaching intervention was conducted over a 16 week period. Details of the coaching intervention programme are included in Appendix 1 which outlines the different stages of the intervention. Stage 1 documents the individual focus of each participant, stage 2 outlines the team focus as experienced by the Year 1 class team and the Year 2 class team and stage 3 sets out the Key Stage 1 team focus.

A diary of events in Appendix 2 outlines significant occurrences within the school over the period of the intervention that sets the context for the coaching conversations. A table summarising participant's sessions and topics provides an outline of the specific focus for each participant over the course of the coaching intervention and is in Appendix 3. An exemplar showing detail of the content of Lucy's sessions is in Appendix 4 which includes information on subsequent changes in beliefs and/ or behaviours resulting from the coaching conversations.

The coaching model is based on the following solution focused principles and beliefs:

- Each person has the skills, knowledge and resources to change or manage a concern or situation in a way that feels better to them.
- It is not necessary to focus on past details of problem situations to solve them and the problem is the problem not those involved.
- There are always times when the problem is less or absent and these can be learnt from.
- Small changes can lead to widespread change.
- Identified goals or changes should come from the practitioner. They must be positive and focused and reflect what is achievable.
- No sign up, no change.

The model uses problem free talk which is a natural two way conversation that can be about anything of interest.   It is often used to begin the conversation to develop rapport.

The first session is about agreeing the focus of the coaching. The participant is asked to bring to the session some aspect of their practice that they consider they would like to explore and develop. The coach then works with the participant to firm up the focus of the work.

The work may involve observation of the participant in the classroom to further the coach's understanding of the issue and to enable a more informed discussion of the concern. It provides a context reference for the coach and allows feedback on strengths and resources to be illustrated. It helps create a sense of collaboration and creates a second perspective of the classroom situation. Observation is not always a useful way to address the concern however.   Few observations were undertaken within the context of this research and those that were have not been analysed.

Within the coaching session discussion focuses on what is going well and the things that the practitioner is doing to facilitate this. The practitioner is encouraged to think about what he/she would be doing differently if a preferred situation were to be established, how those changes would impact on practice and who would notice them. The opportunity is given to think about things happening outside of the classroom and any impact this might be having on the work. The coach's role is to work collaboratively alongside the practitioner in order to support self reflection. The coach brings specialist knowledge and skills but the practitioner is considered the only expert in relation to what is going on in the classroom and the context within which they work. The coaching process allows the practitioner the opportunity for self evaluation and change and allows further areas of interest to be explored. Goals are identified which are broken down into achievable steps within an identified time frame.

Aims:

- To raise awareness of what is working and to build on this.
- To allow the practitioner an opportunity to communicate concerns and stressors but without it taking over the process.
- To reflect back strengths and resources.
- To identify goals within areas of concern or areas where change is desired.
- To identify what might be helpful in achieving goals.

Future sessions follow a similar structure to the first coaching conversation but build on work covered between sessions. They would include a review of the issues under consideration, a review of the strategies underway, exploring successes and movement towards a preferred future. There would also be exploration of aspects of the work that perhaps had not gone to plan, using these instances to reflect on why that might be and to explore alternative strategies. Conversations build on success, find exceptions within areas of concern, detail a preferred future and utilise subjective rating scales to track progress and identify goals.

A cycle of coaching is then in place where previous goals are reviewed and adapted as necessary, or new goals established. Both practitioner and coach take responsibility for keeping a record of agreed goals and strategies.

Aims:

- To provide an incentive to go away and implement some changes.
- To create a sense of momentum and belief that there is more control over the situation than is often assumed.
- To provide support to facilitate reflection and learning.
- To provide a structure for ongoing development and change.

I wanted to gain a perspective of life on the inside for these participants and discover whether a coaching intervention could support them to develop their practice and implement change, whether it could strengthen their cohesiveness as a team and whether it could support them in working towards a change agenda in school. I was interested to know whether the coaching process encouraged motivation to strive towards reaching identified goals and whether that motivation could be continued over the course of the intervention.

The task seemed to require a specific approach to fieldwork requiring openness and the opportunity for people to talk. The intention of the research was to provide practitioners with the opportunity to reflect on their practice and explore areas for change and development. I viewed the process as emergent as I had no prior knowledge of what each of the participants would bring to the coaching sessions or how the work would develop. Willig (2008) asserts that qualitative data collection techniques "need to be open-ended and flexible enough to facilitate the emergence of new, and unanticipated, categories of meaning and experience." (Willig, 2008 p.15).

3.5 Data Gathering

3.5.1 Coaching Transcripts

Transcripts were collected from the coaching sessions, samples of which have been included in Appendix 5. Participants were reluctant to be audiotaped and I was therefore influenced in my research design by the work of Nias, (1993) who interviewed teachers who had undertaken a PGCE course that she had taught at the School of Education, University of Liverpool. She hoped to capture as nearly as possible in the words of teachers themselves, a detailed comprehensive picture of the subjective reality of primary teaching. In this paper she talks about the insatiable hunger they showed to reflect upon their professional lives in the presence of a neutral but friendly outsider. Within this study she states her uncertainty about the effect that a tape recorder would have upon the willingness of teachers to be frank and she therefore opted for taking rapid notes in a personal shorthand, recording verbatim wherever she could. She explores the difficulties inherent within this approach as she seeks to attempt to create a relaxed conversational atmosphere and therefore maintain as much eye contact as possible.

Following this example I took copious shorthand notes during the coaching sessions. I wanted the coaching sessions to reflect as closely as possible those that I would ordinarily undertake in this work. This would allow me to feedback to the participants, through the course of the coaching session, their thoughts and agreed actions and these would provide a record for future conversations. There is an obvious limitation within this in that not everything that was said was captured. To aid my note taking, I concentrated on capturing the participants responses rather than my own within the dialogue.

Within the research I wanted to explore participants views of the coaching process. Although I presumed that I would establish some notion of this through my interpretations of the coaching transcripts, I believed that direct questions on these issues would aid my understanding of these issues further and confirm or deny some of my interpretations from other sources.

I was also interested within the research to establish the head teacher's views of the coaching intervention. This would provide a management perspective and a view external to the coaching conversations. I considered the head teacher's view would be dependent on feedback sessions provided by myself midway through the intervention and at the end of the intervention, her observations of outcomes from the coaching intervention and her interactions with the participants and the children in their classes. I was also interested to know whether she would be interested in taking the work forward and if so how she envisaged this work to progress.

3.5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews because I believed this approach would allow a flexible approach, providing the opportunity for the participant to talk freely and for the interviewer to take more of a listening role. I worked to an interview schedule for both the coaching participants and the head teacher. The schedule was flexible in that items could be missed to allow the conversation to flow and be addressed at a later point in the schedule as appropriate.

Potter and Hepburn (2005) remind us of the importance of contextual features of the interview such as interactional features, the status of the interview as a conversation between two people and the stake that both interviewer and interviewee necessarily have in the interview.

Willig (2008) reminds us that semi-structured interviews require sensitive and ethical negotiation of rapport and that interviewers should not abuse the informal ambience of the interview to encourage the interviewees to reveal more than they may feel comfortable with after the event.

3.5.3 Research Journal

Participants were invited to keep a journal documenting their experiences over the weeks. As a participant within the research I was aware of the need to consider the trustworthiness of the research. Although I realised that I could not entirely lose my subjectivity and that there would be times when my personal beliefs might influence

the research I was interested to achieve learner validation for the research and therefore asked the participants to keep a research journal, recording their experience of the process. In this way I hoped to bring the participant into the analysis as a positive contributor, almost as a research assistant. I kept a research journal for the duration of the study as a personal reflection of the research process.

3.6 Data Analysis

The resulting transcripts from the coaching conversations, semi-structured interviews and research journals could have been analysed using a range of methods. In particular I believed the methods of thematic analysis, grounded theory and interpretative phenomenological analysis to be worthy of consideration.

3.6.1 Thematic Analysis

Boyatzis (1998) defines thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes the data set in detail. However frequently it goes further than this and interprets various aspects of the research topic.

Braun and Clarke (2006) make the point that thematic analysis is widely used but there seems to be a lack of agreement with regard to what it is and how to go about doing it. They refer to it as a poorly branded method in that it does not seem to exist as a named analysis in the way other methods do such as grounded theory and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. As such it lacks kudos as an analytic method in scientific research.

Thematic analysis can be used to analyse experiences, meanings and the reality of participants and would therefore have been appropriate for this study. It is a process for encoding qualitative information and involves searching across a data set to find repeated patterns of meaning. Analysis involves a constant moving back and forth between the entire data set. Codes are used to identify features of the data that appear interesting to the analyst which are then categorised into potential themes that capture something important in relation to the research question. This produces

a collection of candidate themes and sub themes. These themes are then refined to produce a thematic map to illustrate how the themes fit together. A detailed analysis is written on each theme, identifying what is of interest about them and why. The analysis provides an account of the data within and across themes with data extracts that demonstrate the prevalence of the theme. Data is interpreted such that analytic claims are grounded in but go beyond the surface of the data.

One of the disadvantages of this method is that it is not attached to any pre-existing theoretical model although it can be used with other theoretical frameworks. Allied to this is the criticism that thematic analysis can be overly descriptive rather than interpretative if not used within an existing theoretical framework that supports the claims that are made.

The flexibility of the method allows for a wide range of analysis. Although this can be viewed as an advantage however, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that it can also be seen as a disadvantage in that it makes developing specific guidelines for higher phase analysis difficult and can be overwhelming for the researcher trying to decide what aspects of the data to focus on.

Boyatzis (1998) identifies projection as a major obstacle to using thematic analysis effectively. Projection is linked to reflexivity and is defined as reading into or attributing to another person something that is the researcher's own characteristic, emotion, or attitude. The argument is that the stronger a researcher's theory, the more he/she will be tempted to project his/her values or conceptualisation of events onto the people from whom the raw information has been collected. He argues that familiarity with the phenomenon being studied and the source material such as the setting encourages projection.

In summary, although thematic analysis seemed a possible option for the analysis of data within my research I was particularly concerned that the method would lack the level of interpretation required by the study.

3.6.2 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is associated with Glaser and Strauss (1967) who introduced the approach in their publication the Discovery of Grounded Theory. It developed as a reaction to the sociological stance prevalent in the 1960's that studies should have a pre-existing theoretical orientation. It was originally conceived to enable researchers to study basic social processes.

Grounded theory was considered because of its facility to identify and integrate categories of meaning from the data. These categories refer to the grouping together of instances that share central features with each other and they can be descriptive or conceptual. Coding is the process used to identify the categories and participants words or phrases are attached to category labels. It involves constant comparative analysis, moving back and forth between categories to capture the full complexity of the data. As analysis progresses categories can be identified at a higher level of abstraction that are analytic and interpretative. Within this method, categories emerge from the data and evolve through the research process. Grounded theory merges the process of data collection and analysis in an attempt to ground the data in the analysis. It is designed to be flexible and encourages the researcher to continuously review earlier stages of the research and change direction as necessary. It moves towards formulating a theory and providing an explanatory framework for understanding the phenomenon under investigation.

The most widely raised criticism of the grounded theory approach concerns its epistemological roots. It has been argued that grounded theory subscribes to a positivist epistemology and that it sidesteps issues of reflexivity. Although grounded theory has been used to produce representations of participant's experiences it could be argued that it is better suited to address sociological research questions in that it aims to identify and explicate contextualised social processes that account for phenomena.

3.6.3   Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is the method I have chosen to analyse my data, essentially because I was interested in exploring the experience of participants involved in the coaching intervention but also because it is consistent with my epistemological position. Jonathan Smith founded IPA as a response to the need for an approach to psychology which was able to capture the experiential and qualitative aspects of research. It is a relatively new approach heralded by Smith's (1996) paper in Psychology and Health. IPA is used in applied psychology and is interested in people engaging with the world. It is a specifically psychological method. J. A. Smith (1997) characterises IPA as:

'…an attempt to unravel the meanings contained in…accounts through a process of interpretative engagement with the texts and transcripts' (J. A. Smith, 1997 p.189).

Phenomenology is interested in the experience of human beings within particular contexts and times and is concerned with the phenomena that appear in the consciousness of the individual. Perception is recognised as intentional and therefore representative of experience itself. People are understood to experience the same objective conditions such as a social event in very different ways depending on the beliefs they bring to that experience.

IPA is concerned with idiography, the study of the particular in detail. It is concerned with understanding how experiential phenomena such as events have been understood from the perspective of the individual in context. As a consequence IPA utilises small samples and may often be a single case which can be used to make more general claims of particular phenomena.

IPA is informed by hermeneutics, the theory of interpretation and analysis always involves interpretation. IPA involves the researcher in gaining an insider perspective of the phenomenon while interpreting the phenomena from an external perspective.

It attempts to understand the experience of the participant through an empathic approach and a questioning style.

IPA allows people to begin to reflect on the significance of their experience. It takes the view that human beings are sense making individuals and reasons that the accounts they provide will reflect their attempts to make sense of their experience. The researcher then interprets the account of the participant in order to understand their experience.

This involves the researcher in a double hermeneutic because the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what is happening to him/her. The researcher only has access to the experience of the participants through their own account.

Two of the participants were unable to attend many of the coaching sessions and when they did they could only attend for a short time as they were covering PPA time for the teachers. I have therefore decided not to use these participants within the data analysis.

The coaching transcripts were analysed in accordance with the principles of IPA and as recommended by J. A Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009). I began by analysing each participant's text individually, beginning with the transcripts of the participant that I found to be the most complex. Initially I analysed this first case in detail by reading and re-reading the text to immerse myself in the data, acknowledging that the participant was the focus of the analysis.

I then set out to produce a detailed and comprehensive set of notes regarding the data, accepting that some parts of the transcript would be richer than others and facilitate more commentary. I was searching for descriptive comments that had a clear phenomenological focus that were seen to be important to the participant. Alongside this I used more interpretative noting exploring language use, associations, context and identifying more abstract concepts in an attempt to make

sense of the patterns of meaning in their account. These initial notes were recorded in the left margin of the text.

The next stage was to identify emergent themes from the exploratory comments and notes and involved a focus on discrete chunks of transcript. I was searching for a statement which summed up what was important in the notes attached to a piece of transcript. I was looking for something that would reflect the original words and thoughts of the participant as well as my interpretation, something that would capture and reflect an understanding. These were recorded in the right margin of the text.

I then took the list of emergent themes in the chronological order they appeared in the transcript and moved them around, putting similar themes together to form clusters. A new title was developed for the cluster which became a super-ordinate theme and emerged at a higher level of categorisation. Patterns were then established between emergent themes to produce a super-ordinate theme. Within this process I adhered to what Smith et al (2009) refer to as polarisation in my analysis where transcripts were examined for the oppositional relationships between emerging themes by focusing on difference rather than similarity.

The list of themes that had been identified were now analysed in relation to one another. Themes were integrated across transcripts in order to identify shared themes that captured the participant's experience. I moved back and forth between the list of themes and the text that generated those themes to ensure that the themes were reflected in the detail of the accounts of the participants. Clusters of themes were given labels that captured their essential quality in relation to the text.

To help with the analysis I created Word files of emergent themes and pasted all the relevant transcript extracts into this file. This enabled me to check on the consistency, broadness or specificity of each emergent theme.

I then produced a summary table outlining the super-ordinate themes that emerged from the analysis with the themes under each one. Each theme was annotated with

a few key words from the participant together with the page/line reference in order to be able to locate it in the text.

I then moved to the next participant's transcripts and repeated the process. I was aware of the need to treat this next case as an individual case and of the need to bracket the ideas emerging from the analysis of the first case although I acknowledge that this was difficult. This allowed new themes to emerge with each case. This process was continued for each subsequent case.

The next stage in the process was to look for patterns across cases. This involved laying the tables out and looking across the cases to find connections. This involved a reconfiguring and relabeling of themes. Some of the themes were excluded either because they were not representative of the text or because they were marginal to the phenomena. A table of themes was then produced for the group showing how themes sit within super-ordinate themes and how the themes are illustrated for each participant.

3.7   Reflexivity

Reflexivity requires an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the research process and an acknowledgement of the impossibility of remaining external to the research (Yardley, 2000).

I had been the Educational Psychologist for the school for three years and had developed good relationships with staff over this period. It could be argued that given my closeness to the school I could not obtain the necessary distance and therefore objectivity within the research. This is something I needed to be aware of in designing the study but I believed the fact that I knew the school and the staff gave me an advantage in gaining entry to conduct research at such a sensitive time.

The study involved me as a participant within the research. I was very aware at all times of the sensitivities involved in working in a school in special measures. I hoped to gain acceptance in the school and to achieve an understanding of the

difficulties staff were dealing with in adapting to working life in a failing school. Woods (1986) explains the difficulties inherent in gaining acceptance as a researcher:

> 'Acceptance into their culture can lead to all manner of confidences about their innermost feelings on subjects like school, teachers, other pupils, themselves, home life, their out-of-school activities, but once in it does not mean permanent membership. Respect has to be continually earned, and….too much pressure may cause offence' (Woods, 1986 p.25).

Yardley (2000) notes the importance of the relationship between the investigator and the participants in research, acknowledging that the researcher can influence the balance of power within the research process and this can pose an ethical dimension. She suggests that this is difficult to overcome when the researcher is engaged in initiating and controlling the process of research.

Throughout the coaching conversations I was aware of the possible effects of my own personal identity as a coach, such as social identity, gender, age, ethnicity, nationality and social class on the participants. I was older than all of the participants. I was in a professional role as Educational Psychologist for the school and also researcher. I considered that it would be difficult, if not impossible for them to separate one role from another. I was aware that given my training and expertise they would view me in an authoritative role and as an expert figure within the coaching conversations and that this would have an effect on the research data and would impact on my findings.

As both coach and researcher I was aware that I would influence the data. I would bring my own particular style to the coaching sessions which would be a reflection of my personality, training and experience. Although based on the solution-focused model I understood that the coaching experience would nevertheless be influenced by myself as an individual.

Participants would bring their own interpretation of events to the coaching sessions and I would also form an interpretation of their experiences as I attempted to make sense of the findings. My own reactions to the research context and the data would make possible certain insights and understandings. I was aware that the language used would play a part in the construction of meanings.

The study brought with it the concept of commitment and prolonged engagement with the research and with the participants. I accept that personal relationships inevitably develop over the course of the research which brings with it the inherent risk of subject bias where participants may be motivated to please the researcher within the process.

4 Findings

4.1 Overview

In presenting my findings, I have followed the format suggested in J. A Smith et al. (2009). Super-ordinate themes and themes are presented in the following tables for each participant. I have then presented a master table of themes for the group. I have referenced by using the initial letter of the participant followed by the coaching session, followed by the line number. For example (L11:34) refers to Lucy, coaching session 11, line 34. Samples of the transcripts are included in Appendix 5.

Table of super-ordinate themes and themes from Lucy		
Living with self doubt		
Putting on a mask	I feel the need to put on a show	(L2:12)
Not wanting to be found out	I didn't want her to know	(L12:35-36)
Feeling unprepared	I had no experience	(L1:12)
Threat to Leadership	I think Andrea would want that role	(L8:41)
Facing hostility		
Conflict	The culture is tough at the moment	(L8:37)
War	She is definitely in battle zone	(L11:23)
Resistance from others	I'm dealing with negative staff	(L2:27-28)
The development of cliques	There are divisive groups	(L8:20-21)
Mounting stress	It has been very difficult	(L8:19)
Movement towards team cohesiveness		
Emerging confidence	They have become more confident	(L12:68-69)
Strengthening relationships	Our relationship has changed	(L12:72-73)
Change		
Speed of change	We are able to move on quickly	(L12:13-14)
Motivation	I was amazed at my own motivation	(L13:10-11)
Reflection	Giving myself time to reflect	(L13:58)
Moving towards independence		
Self coaching	I have been setting my own goals	(L13:79-80)
Peer coaching	I have started to think of some of the things within me to try and build her up	(L11:143)

Figure 3: Table of super-ordinate themes and themes from Lucy

Table of super-ordinate themes and themes from Andrea

Internal Struggle		
Difficulties with relationships	I was stuck in the middle	(A9:10-11)
Lack of confidence	I was not comfortable with it	(A1:22)
Signs of stress	Sometimes I feel so overwhelmed	(A2:8)
Towards Harmony		
Seeking Help	I've felt more able to ask Kathryn for help	(A11:43)
Opening up	It's helped me to talk to Kathryn more easily	(A11:31)
Optimism for the future		
A change of outlook	I have changed the way that I think	(A11:31)
Shared concerns	I need to deal with issues that are worrying me	(A11:51)

Figure 4: Table of super-ordinate themes and themes from Andrea

Table of super-ordinate themes and themes from Kathryn

Loss of control		
Taking on a different persona	It was…changing me as a person	(K5:5)
Loss of personal efficacy	It undermines what you are	(K2:11)
Communication		
Support	I know from this I need support as well	(K11:45)
Addressing concerns	I'll definitely try and talk a problem through	(K11:41)
Looking ahead		
Planning for the future	I'm now thinking ahead to September	(K10:57-58)
Harnessing the enthusiasm	The girls are so enthusiastic	(K8:69)
Going with the flow	We are trying to keep the momentum going	(K10:51)

Figure 5: Table of super-ordinate themes and themes from Kathryn

Master table of themes for the group

Theatrical		
Living with self doubt		
Lucy	I feel the need to put on a show	(L2:12)
Andrea	Sometimes I feel so overwhelmed	(A2:8)
Kathryn	It was getting me down	(K5:5)
Threat to self efficacy		
Lucy	All staff were failing teachers	(L1:19)
Andrea	Teaching Y1 was an initial shock	(A1:23)
Kathryn	It undermines what you are	(K2:11)
Fighting for control		
Lucy	I think Andrea would want that role	(L8:41)
Andrea	I do the same job as Lucy	(A7:5)
Kathryn	It would make me under her	(K1:51)
War		
Conflict		
Lucy	She's definitely in battle zone mode	(L10:23)
Andrea	It was explosive	(A9:15)
Kathryn	It has taken her down	(K:71)
Cliques		
Lucy	There are divisive groups in school	(L8:20-21)
Andrea	I was stuck in the middle	(A9:10-11)
Kathryn	Different teams have been created	(K8:2-3)
Mounting Stress		
Lucy	It has been difficult…the pressure	(L8:19)
Andrea	Sometimes I feel so overwhelmed	(A2:8)
Kathryn	There's been a tension in school	(K9:7-8)
The Journey		
Movement		
Lucy	We are all able to move on quickly	(L12:14)
Andrea	I could see the effects really quickly	(A11:30)
Kathryn	…it brought it about much quicker	(K10:60)
Impact on Teams		
Lucy	They have become more confident	(L12:68-69)
Andrea	More able to ask Kathryn for help	(A11:43)
Kathryn	Girls are so enthusiastic now	(K8:69)
Peer Coaching		
Lucy	I am starting to use some of the ideas in coaching	(L11:145)
Andrea	Like to have skills to coach others	(A11:48)
Kathryn	Others have wanted to do it	(K10:54)

Figure 6: Master table of themes for the group

The group themes will be discussed in the order that they are presented in the master table of themes for the group.

4.2 Theatrical Theme

Many of the participants made reference to theatrical descriptions when talking about their experiences of working in the school. I have chosen to use a selection here which perhaps best reflect the issues for each of the participants.

"I came in here when they were doing badly. They saw me as the next person that could do something, say something and then having the confidence to follow that up. I feel the need to put on a show here. Staff seem to be expecting so much of me. I feel I need to show them what I can do but I lack the confidence to carry it out...." (L2:10-15).

Lucy talks of "the need to put on a show", suggesting that she has to act a part that is perhaps outside of her capability. This seems to stem from her lack of confidence in coming from a small school to a large school with limited experience in the role of Key Stage 1 leader and literacy coordinator. Her past experience impacts on her confidence levels. Lucy sees herself as an actor playing a demanding part for which she has not seen the script. She feels she has to adlib in order to get by but this creates increased pressure and anxiety and only serves to decrease her confidence levels. Lucy is not a person who is comfortable with the unknown. She needs to see the script and she needs to rehearse but this has not been possible in the time frame she has had to understand her role. She is seen to be learning her lines as she becomes more confident in the role.

Lucy indicates here that she is always acting a role in school and that this is how she has learnt to cope with her general lack of confidence. It is as if she sees the need to take on another character, another personality that does have the confidence required to fulfil the role. Behind the mask she can aim to deliver a performance that befits the role. She sees the role of Key Stage 1 leader and literacy coordinator as

parts in a play, which she enacts on the school stage. Her audience are the teaching staff who are rarely kind.

"I always thought of teaching as performing and now I feel I am performing in meetings. In fact I think I am performing most of the time. I don't think I'm alone. I don't think anyone in school is really being themselves. I think we are all pretending to be someone different, just to get through. It's tough. I'm dealing with negative staff and I find it so frustrating. There are huge feelings of negativity. It's all very negative. I know I'm going into a negative situation"(L2:21-26).

This talk links very strongly to the idea of an actor performing in a play. She sees others as also acting out a part. This may be the way she has learned to deal with the negativity and therefore distanced herself from the personal nature of the interactions. She sees herself as part of a theatre production in school, with all staff having their individual parts to play. The suggestion is that everyone is pretending to be someone different. She therefore normalises her experience with others in the school such that within this school it is expected that staff take on dramatic roles and perform and this is recognised as a coping mechanism.

"Laura gave feedback and took the lead. I want to have the confidence to do that. I feel better when I am working with Laura (the head teacher) for delivery. She makes it look easy. The staff don't question and when they do she has an answer. I like working with her. I am learning a lot from her. The staff feel that they are more qualified with years of experience but it's different for them, they are not on stage, they don't have to perform in front of an audience and a critical audience at that". (L2:27-32).

Within the school, Lucy can be understood to attribute roles to staff within the unfolding drama of school life. The head teacher is seen to have a key part in supporting her performance and is seen as a backstage prompt. She models herself off the head teacher and seeks to emulate the performances she is able to deliver to the staff. "Laura gave feedback and took the lead". She sees her as an ally just as Lucy has allied herself to the head teacher. The head teacher is seen to be in a

supporting role and Lucy takes comfort in the support she is offered. It is as if Lucy sees herself as an understudy to the head teacher, learning the lines and practicing the role in rehearsals, in preparation for the time when she will have to take the leading role.

"The staff are expecting great things of me. They expect me to deliver a star performance and I wish I could. I need to work on that, on the confidence. Perhaps it will get easier and I will not be phased by the expectations on me…but at the moment…it's not easy. I need to be more upfront. I need to take centre stage at the meeting"(L2:33-37).

In interpreting this talk, Lucy acknowledges the enormity of the task confronting her. She believes that she lacks the experience and knowledge required of the role and she feels under tremendous pressure to deliver a performance which meets staff expectations. She explains how she will have to take "centre stage at the meeting", suggesting that she sees herself as taking the lead role but is uncomfortable in this position. Lucy states that she "would like to be more upfront." again acknowledging that she would like to be the headline act with the confidence to follow this through.

 "I feel better when I am working with Laura for delivery. When I am asking them to do something different hostility is expressed. This happened in one particular meeting when I didn't have the confidence to back that up. I felt I had let myself down but I just have to brush myself down and get on with it. The thing is I'm expecting to go into a negative situation. It is all so negative. There is nothing positive. I am aware that I will be facing my strongest critics." (L2:38-42).

She has to deal with a critical audience who feel they have more experience and knowledge than she has and who are resistant to change. "When I am asking them to do something different hostility is expressed". Similarly she deals with hostility through acting a part, never allowing herself to become publicly upset by the confrontation she meets and never opening up to her difficulties with the head teacher or colleagues. Part of her performance seems to be to mask feelings of

anger, frustration, anxiety and distress that result from her interactions with staff at such events.

She sees herself as "going into negative situations" and she views her prospective audience as negative. Lucy anticipates negative responses in meetings and this creates a barrier for her. It is difficult for her to perform well when she is anticipating a hostile audience. She seems concerned that she will not handle the situation, that she may need to leave the stage or at worst be asked to leave the stage.

Andrea's talk is around a training event that she helped to deliver for Lucy alongside the local authority advisory teacher for literacy. There had been a series of training events run by the advisory teacher for literacy and supported by Lucy. These were not well received by staff who perhaps saw the local authority advisor as another external person coming in to school to tell them what to do. Following this particular training event Lucy commented, "I felt I had to apologise to Mary (advisory teacher) for the staff's behaviour" (L5:21-22). This topic is introduced by Lucy who sets the scene of Andrea delivering training to staff.

"She did her bit and she did really well but the staff heckled her. I couldn't believe it. I know the staff can be negative but this seemed a bit extreme. I felt for Andrea, particularly because I wouldn't have liked to have been in that position" (L5:5-7).

This is suggestive of a strong reaction to Andrea's delivery. The fact that Lucy comments that she did really well suggests that the problem is not in the content of the delivery and is perhaps at a more personal level.

Teachers heckled one of their own who was delivering training and therefore aligned with leadership, suggestive of the fact that they didn't see that as her role. Rather it suggests that they were of the opinion that she should be refusing to take on new initiatives as the majority of staff had chosen to do.

This talk is picked up by Andrea in her coaching conversation.

"I couldn't believe the reaction of the staff at the meeting. It flustered me, I lost my way, I couldn't think straight. I couldn't make sense of what I was trying to do. I felt I was on stage and just wanted to get off as soon as possible. Anyway, I probably won't be doing it again for a while. I just don't think they wanted to be at the training and probably didn't expect me to be presenting. I think they were ready for home" (A:8:15-20).

"I felt torn down the middle. I think they were surprised to see me get up to deliver. I don't normally do that but I think it will be good for me in the long term, to give myself some experience. They weren't supportive but just seemed to want me to finish" (A8:28-32).

Andrea has worked at the school considerably longer than Lucy and has strong friendships in school, particularly with those staff that are seen to be most resistant to change and yet she is given a tough time in her delivery. The heckling seems to be a means of addressing their unhappiness at Andrea, a teacher, supporting management in the delivery of new initiatives, which they, as a group seem so keen to resist. This gives a clear message to Andrea that she has defected to the opposing side and should remain firm in the decision not to support management in the implementation of change. Andrea's response is one of surprise. She talks of being on stage and just wanting to leave the stage as soon as possible, as an actor would leave a stage following heckling from a critical audience. She talks of being torn down the middle, like a character in a play that has two parts and struggles to know where her loyalties should lie. This provides a graphic image of Andrea trying to reflect two images, one where she is supportive of the staff and another where she is supportive of management. She is looking for promotion and feels that she could do Lucy's role of Key Stage 1 leader. This type of training event supports the notion that she is capable of fulfilling this role. So here we have a situation where Andrea is wearing two hats and thereby playing two parts, one that is supportive of the teachers stance and another that is supportive of management. The conflict arises for Andrea when she has an audience comprising of both teachers and management and she has to make a commitment to wearing one hat or the other, to play one specific part. This causes considerable anxiety and upset for Andrea.

Friendships are seen to be very important to her and she is keen to remain loyal to certain staff but this conflicts with her desire to seek promotion and to be seen to take on more responsibility in school.

Kathryn also plays a part within the performance that is the daily life of the school. Her talk is around relationship difficulties.

Kathryn's difficulties surface as problems with working relationships threaten to manifest themselves in conflict. Her issues stem from her difficulties accepting another member of staff, Alison, who is training to be a higher level teaching assistant and therefore senior to Kathryn, coming in to her class to cover PPA time.

"I feel undervalued in the class. I am a different person. I'm not being myself, I'm different, I can't be myself. The children are noticing I'm different. I don't know why I can't just be left alone to get on with it. I can manage fine, I don't need her help. I don't know what I am supposed to be doing. I have no role, I don't feel part of the class" (K2: 16-20).

Kathryn believes that she can manage the class without the need for Alison's intervention and regularly takes the class on her own. She believes that when Alison comes into the class she can no longer be herself and has to be someone else. In this instance it seems that Kathryn is given a part to play by Alison, a one she does not choose to have of her own accord but one which she has no option to play when Alison is in the class. This is an inferior part but one which serves to assert Alison's authority on the class. Kathryn is unhappy with the part she has been asked to play and believes that this does not allow her to be herself and that it changes her as a person into someone she doesn't want to be. She has taken on a different persona. The emphasis is on the fact that she can't be herself, as if the situation is stopping her from being who she really is. "I feel undervalued in the class. I am a different person. I'm not being myself, I'm different, I can't be myself. The children are noticing I'm different." Alison has no knowledge of the role Kathryn generally plays in the classroom. She expects less of Kathryn in her role and this results in Kathryn feeling de-skilled and de-valued. Her self-efficacy is subsequently

threatened. Kathryn talks about the fact that she will be under her, like an understudy, less important to the main actor in the performance, whereas she wants to be the main character and ideally the only character in the classroom.

4.3 War Theme

Many metaphors of war were used to describe the difficulties that staff were experiencing in regard to relationships within school. Interestingly, one of the definitions of theatre in the Collins dictionary is a major area of military activity and so we can see the link between the two super-ordinate themes, theatre and war.

There were several significant events that occurred in school that created conflict for staff. One particularly significant event was an accusation of physical harm made by a child's parent against Lucy.

"This has been the worst two weeks. There is a powerful force out there with the parents. Building relationships with parents has gone. It all escalated, I was defending bullets. She is definitely in battle zone mode. They're all huddling in groups on the playground. It is hard when I am on a professional basis" (L10:1-4).

"I've been in and out this week. I've not been in much with them. I haven't got stuck in to the teaching" (L10:34-35).

Power seems to be an important issue for Lucy and she sees the child's mother and the child as having the power and conversely herself as having no power. She attributes this lack of power to being in a professional role where she cannot say what she thinks or feels but has to guard her conversations with caution. Power is seen to be important because those with the power have control. Lucy sees herself as having no control in this situation. She therefore feels powerless in her attempts to deal with the situation and in consequence feels vulnerable. This brings feelings of a lack of control within her professional role and the need to take a step back hence her inability to be in the classroom at this time.

She talks of a "powerful force out there with the parents" seeing it as a them and us situation, with them at a distance, external to the school but at the same time having the power to enter the school on their terms and this leaving Lucy vulnerable to attack. She talks about bullets being fired at her from all sides and that she was avoiding the bullets. "It all escalated, I was defending bullets", suggesting that these attacks were coming from different groups, from all sides. There were a growing number of parents turning against Lucy, hence the powerful force, mustering the troops ready for attack. She says that "building relationships with parents has gone", suggestive of a sense of loss, something that she had been striving to build which has now been lost and will never return. Escalation of distress is evident when the parent is known to have had conversations with other parents. Parents are noted to be huddling in groups suggesting that the battle was in the playground as well as in school. There is a sense of isolation and things closing in on her.

Lucy regarded the school, as a major area of military activity, a war zone with enemies all around her. She found distant people who had isolated themselves and retreated to the safety of their classrooms or bunkers wanting to be left alone. They did not want to take on any new initiatives and were resistant to any form of change.

> "There were closed doors. Staff kept themselves to themselves. There was no spirit, no teamwork. Staff were unreceptive to change. They just wanted to be left alone after Ofsted. (L1:22-24).

Lucy viewed the staff as the resistance, perpetually finding reasons why they could not take on new initiatives. They seemed to be plotting against any attempts towards change.

From the outset Lucy realised that she needed to align herself with the head teacher and from then on the lines were drawn. "There was a new head teacher in post pushing for change. The head teacher needed an ally in me to support new initiatives" (L1:25-26). The language suggests the need to take sides, to provide support against the opposition.

Another significant event in school was the announcement of classes that staff would be teaching in September. Lucy was given a Y3 class which took her out of KS1 and in to KS2. This caused conflict in school as members of staff attempted to assert themselves in leadership positions.

Julie as Foundation Stage leader set out to establish her authority over Lucy. This led to confrontation as each tried to assert themselves in decision making.

"Julie has a leadership role and that has caused confrontation. We were discussing the outdoor area and where we should go next. She said "you mean us. I am the foundation leader." On Tuesday we discussed books. Julie has reception/Y1 next year. The children need to be mark making. She said, "they are not having books" and clamped down saying "I know the foundation stage". Once in Y1, the children are following the national curriculum and there is an expectation for the lower stage of KS1. There is an entitlement there (L8:23-29).

There is a sense in Lucy's talk of increasing levels of anxiety as staff continue to resist direction and advice. Once again she aligns with the head teacher who conducts the monitoring alongside Lucy.

"Next week we are doing monitoring and we will be more unpopular with more stress and pressure" (L8:30-31)

Change of classes brought new conflict and pressures for Lucy in regard to her own leadership role. Andrea began to question why Lucy would remain KS1 leader when she would be teaching Y3 and therefore be part of the KS2 team. Andrea saw this as an opportunity to take on the KS1 leadership role and working relationships became difficult during this transition period. Within Lucy's talk there is a growing sense of despair at the conflict that surrounds her.

"There is a tetchiness with Andrea although said in a jokey manner but how far is it a joke?....She has started to come to the leadership meetings . She maybe sees me

as competition, one for snide comments. The culture is tough at the moment"
(L8:31-36).

Additional conflict arose in school once possible redundancies of TA's were
announced. There were 9 teaching assistants in school but due to budget costs, all
had to be re-interviewed for their posts and 3 posts had to go.

 The following quote sets up the context.

> "All teachers have their TA's for interviews. All are fighting their corner.
> This week there have been quite a few confrontations. It has been very
> difficult….the pressure. There are divisive groups in school. Everybody is
> trying to hold their own and have gone into individual groups. Some TA's
> are out to cause trouble. Andrea is involved with the intimidation of TA's"
> (L8: 17-22).

Andrea talks about the atmosphere in school being explosive and of her being
caught in the middle of the conflict.

> "I've had early finishes this week. I haven't wanted to be in school….I
> haven't been sleeping well. When I'm in the classroom I'm ok. Monday was
> horrendous. I was stuck in the middle. I was ok in class but it was like a
> minefield out of class. I just didn't want to be there. I'm friend's with Judith
> and Maureen (the TA's who didn't get the jobs). I'm happy for the others but
> the atmosphere has been explosive. I have been battling with myself. It is
> difficult to be in the middle. I've felt as though I was in the line of fire. I've
> had to take sides. They are blanking people in school who they think have
> been plotting against them. I have to show that I wasn't one of them…."
> (A9: 10-12).

Andrea describes being in the firing line, stuck in the middle, not knowing which way
to turn. Staff from one camp isolated themselves in their bunkers, staying within the
relative safety of their classrooms and avoiding public meeting places such as the

staff room. Staff from the other camp allowed them the seclusion. Trouble seemed to erupt when staff had to leave the seclusion of the classroom for any reason and at such times confrontation seemed to be inevitable.   Staff dealt with this in different ways. Andrea had particular difficulty and was on sick leave for a period of time. She talked of feeling overwhelmed by the experience, of not wanting to be at work, of wanting to come in late and leave early. She talks of everything being bearable in the classroom but unbearable when out of the classroom.   She was unable to cope with being in the middle, a position she frequently found herself in when dealing with events in school.

Andrea describes her time outside of the classroom as like a battlefield where she has to avoid fire. This suggests that she may have been firing shots as well and therefore the atmosphere may be part of what she has created.   She has been forced to take sides but in doing so she has created difficulties with other staff. The difficulties she experienced affected her everyday functioning in school. "I haven't wanted to be in school. I operated day to day. I had no inclination"(A9:14). In many ways it can be seen that she was also isolating herself from school and school life and was seen to be going underground.

Lucy found herself in the opposing camp to Andrea. Colleagues who were in the same team and therefore needed to meet together to plan together found themselves divided and neither one felt able to cross the firing line. Both retreated to their respective classrooms and meetings didn't happen that should have happened. Lucy didn't follow anything up. She let things go and was unaware of what Andrea was doing in her classroom. "I don't know what's going on in her class. I've just left her to get on with it" (L10: 56-57). The safe position seemed to be to let her carry on alone. There is a sense of exhaustion and a recognition of the need to retreat and regroup for further offensives. It would appear that both Lucy and Andrea were battle weary. Lucy said of Andrea "I think she's just had enough" (L10: 46-48).

There is the recognition that the team have had it tough. Lucy suggests that they are just trying to get to the end, meaning the end of term, or possibly the end of the traumatic episode, just trying to survive. Survival is the imperative with the hope that

a new term will bring a new start, when war perhaps will be over and there will be a resurgence of energy and purpose around rebuilding what was destroyed, damaged or lost.

"I had a rough couple of weeks previously but this is now a month. Debra's had a tough time. Elizabeth's had a tough time. We are just trying to get to the end, just trying to survive" (L10: 56-58).

Kathryn however seemed more able to put the conflict and tension to one side. Although she also experienced the intimidation she seemed to be able to rise above it and expected others to do the same. She acknowledged that Andrea had been badly affected by the confrontation and described how it had "taken her down". This suggests her being wiped out, shot down and taken out by the conflict. She was described as "flat", conjuring up an image of someone who has no more to give, no energy, no more fight. This manifested itself physically in Andrea and she was off work on sick leave.

"Andrea is finding it very difficult. I stress they'll be fine, you've got to see it as good for them but she is flat. It has taken her down. There's a tension in school. People are not talking. People are isolating themselves. People close to them are not gelling with the people who have been given the jobs, they thought they wouldn't get the jobs" (K8:70-74).

Kathryn however was able to set this aside and look towards how life would be when these staff eventually found other jobs or served notice and eventually left the school. "I am just the same with people. They have isolated themselves. Different teams have been created now" (K5:1-3).

Kathryn was one of the teaching assistants who had been successful in retaining her post with increased increments for additional responsibility. Energised by her promotion she was able to function effectively in school at a time when others had difficulty, seeking out meetings with staff to negotiate her work for the coming year.

There is an attempt by Kathryn to resolve the tension of staff not getting jobs by determining that they were not happy in post and therefore by implication they did not deserve the posts. "The two who haven't got jobs were unhappy in the job" (K9:7-11). This allows Kathryn to move on in her own mind and concentrate on those who were happy here and who wanted to stay in the job and she immediately sets about the task of building teams. "I am very aware of how people are feeling but we still need to plan. I'm sensitive to other people but I need to speak to teachers" (K8:3-5).

4.4 The Coaching Journey

This theme illustrates the journey participants were making with the coaching intervention. The journey begins when participants were first introduced to the coaching model and experienced their first coaching conversations. This brought about a focus for development with identified goals and solutions and strategies to reach those goals. Participants were seen to be in control of the process from the beginning and this was seen to be important to them.

> "It very much has been centred around me. I have always felt in control" (L11:130-137). "The emphasis was on what I could do to improve a situation. I never felt that you were making me do anything. I wanted to keep ownership of it" (L10:1-2).

Some goals were easier to achieve than others. Some were more complex and were a focus for the duration of the intervention. All participants began with individual goals and all were encouraged to share their goals in the hope of encouraging each other along their journey. This proved to be effective in opening channels of communication between participants and in the support they were able to give each other in meeting their targets. This help and support seemed to be invaluable in assisting participants to stick with their goals even when setbacks occurred.

"The coaching has helped me to be able to talk to Kathryn more easily. Kathryn has really helped. I wouldn't have done this so willingly outside of coaching. I have a better relationship with Kathryn as a result of this. She has been a good source of motivation. Coaching has helped me to achieve my goals. I wouldn't have made the changes without the motivation. It has acted as a spur for me" (A:10:56-61).

Distal goals were not seen as urgent and were therefore less likely to be reached whereas proximal goals were more likely to be prioritised for action. This is demonstrated by Andrea in her reflection on the introduction of Lexia in her class.

"This is something I could have done but I needed a push. If something is not urgent then it doesn't get done" (A5:68-69).

All staff identified what they considered to be challenging targets and set personal standards against these targets. There was evidence of some staff expressing disappointment at not reaching their personal aspirations between sessions and putting in greater effort the following week to put them back on track. With regard to her focus on time management, Andrea remarked:

"I haven't done as much as I'd planned. I had a busy weekend and played catch up all week. I'm disappointed but I know why I didn't do it. I will be back to normal next week" (A9:1-5).

There was also the sense that staff were driven by rewards having achieved their goals, such as finishing work early or not taking work home.

"I did no work at home. I had early finishes. I haven't felt pressured this week" (A8:24-26).

One of the key findings to come out of the research was the sense of momentum and pace that was generated through the coaching model. Lucy used the metaphor of a train to capture the sense of motion and speed.

"The momentum has kept up. We have been able to move on quickly, sometimes achieving goals within a week or two weeks and then moving onto something new. Once the momentum started I enjoyed the quickness of the process. It was like being on an express train that was increasing in speed. As soon I came out of the conversation I started to work on the goals" (L10: 5-10).

The process began slowly with the first coaching conversations and geared up as participants became more familiar with the model. It seems that the process became quicker over time, with participants being able to achieve their goals with speed. This was a motivating factor and as goals were achieved new goals were set. Participants took on a number of goals over the intervention.

"I still had that focus but it was good to have more than one focus. It has given us something else to think about and we have looked at what we've worked well at" (L11:126-127).

As team goals were introduced the pace of change quickened. This seemed to be related to a shared vision and joint commitment to seeing the task through. Teams continually looked towards ways of improving what they were doing in their respective classes and took on several goals, sometimes working on three or four at a time. Success brought increased motivation. It seemed as though midway through the journey the process became more embedded. Participants were actively looking for things to develop and improve. There was an awareness from participants that they were achieving more.

"By the time the team were half way through the process the team were working really well and we had all established individual targets and were working towards class targets. I was amazed at my own motivation to

complete the tasks in hand and the benefits of the process. I found myself spending more time reflecting on myself and the classroom and I was constantly trying to find things to improve. Targets became quicker to achieve and we began several over the weeks. We were really motoring" (L10: 33-40). "I wasn't doing anything at the speed that I should have been. The children can cope with change and they quite like it. The class want to please and want to do it…..Debra and Elizabeth have also enjoyed working at pace" (L10:16-17).

Referring to the new term Lucy remarked:

"I will try to have the confidence to tackle things and keep the pace of improvement going" (L9: 3-4).

There was a sense of dynamism and excitement with the pace and rapidity of change together with a sense of shared enjoyment.

"The whole process has motivated me to want to do more" (L11;138).

When things were progressing Kathryn used language suggestive of travel:

"It's all on track"; "it's sailing along"; "the children are driving the move"; "the TA's are pulling together" (K:8:26-28).

This talk suggests a sense of control and calmness about the process and a sense of everyone working together towards the desired outcome, including the children.

Participants talked of "moving things on", "moving things forward", "doing the next thing" (K8:13-16). There was an increase in motivation and momentum over the course of the intervention that helped the participants move forward with their goals. This seemed to be linked to mutual help, support and encouragement.

There was a sense of urgency with staff to move things forward, to plan and prepare for the future. New roles were now in place for all participants and every one was preparing for September. They were all positive about the future and what it would bring. They seemed to have developed the confidence to be able to deal with change in a way that perhaps would not have happened before.

"Debra and Elizabeth are very focused on their new role. It wouldn't have been like that. They are looking forward to the change and the challenge" (L10: 21-27).

Participants were also more able to set their own goals and strategies and to challenge themselves to complete tasks. They were keen to keep the momentum going.

"There is a drive to improve. I've been working more effectively and getting more done. I've been setting my own goals. I'm more motivated to do things during the week…I'm trying to motivate myself to keep going. I'm not working any later. I'm trying to get everything done by 6.00pm so I don't have anything else to do" (L9: 31-36).

"I feel I am able to continue to improve the targets I set myself and I am confident to establish a new leadership team in September. This is particularly important as it was the first target I set myself and perhaps the most difficult to achieve. I have developed in so many ways because of the process" (L10: 44-48)

Communication was also considered to be important within the coaching model. Improved communication seemed to be linked to awareness of a joint purpose in which everyone had a significant part to play. This seemed to allow the teams to change and develop into more effective communicators.

"Everyone is motivated to achieve. There is enthusiasm to talk to everyone. We are all much more open as a team and if we need to resolve issues we

will actively seek out people who can support us. At one time we would have been very accepting. This has made us more proactive rather than reactive to situations that arise" (L11: 148-152).

There is the sense that the teams feel empowered to make a difference and that nothing presents as a problem but rather teams seem to recognise that they have the solutions within them to make a difference.

Confidence was noted to improve over the course of the intervention. This emerging confidence seems to be linked to the coaching model which provides directions for the participants on their journey, signposting the route to their goal.

"Somewhere along the line they have become more confident" (L10: 51-55).

This talk that Lucy uses "somewhere along the line", again is useful in understanding the process of coaching and that it is linear. Change occurs over time and this talk suggests that it seemed to occur naturally, with no real awareness of when the shift had happened but an acknowledgement that it had.

Relationships were also noted to have changed during the intervention.

"Debra, Elizabeth and my relationship has changed over the course of the coaching. We work really well as a team now" (L10:61-63).

Kathryn reflected in her final session about the much improved relationship she now had with her colleague following the coaching sessions.

"How the tables flip! I need Alison's help now" (K10:12). "We are now working effectively as a team in supporting one another" (K10:5).

All participants were committed to making the journey and there was a sense that they were all in it together. The landscape of the journey was forever changing.

Significant events occurred which managed to derail the impetus for some projects. At these times momentum was lost as was confidence and self-efficacy and it became difficult to continue with the journey.

This was evidenced when Lucy was unable to go into class following the allegations that were made against her. It was as if she was no longer able to cope in that setting and needed to take time out to adjust to the change that had occurred.

Other changes that occurred had significance for Lucy, which were disarming at first but later proved to be the turning point for her in moving forward and giving her direction within her personal journey. This extract from session 8 illustrates the power of the coaching conversation and highlights the light bulb moment for Lucy as she realises the direction she needs to take and the actions she needs to follow.

"Classes are going to change next year. Julie will be foundation/KS1, R/Y1. I'm wondering if Andrea is moving away from me? I'm going now. It will be tricky next year. I will still be KS1 leader and I will need an overview of KS1. I will need to lead even if not working in KS1. I think Andrea would want that role. She is saying "how will you know what we are doing"? I'll attend meetings but they will be tricky. I still love what I am doing. I want people to see that there is a clear difference between what I am doing. I have a TLR. That's what she is talking about" (L8:37-43).

"Andrea has been to the head teacher and said she thinks she could do what I am doing" (L8:45-46).

"She has gone from a satisfactory to a good teacher but if she thinks she has done a better job than me! I am employed as a leader not a teacher. She had the option of applying for the job" (L8:48-51).

"She obviously thinks she could do this job but she's not at that place. It's not her role. We have worked completely as a team. I haven't enforced anything on her but rather I have said "what do you think of"? We are both

KS2 teachers and we are not coming in with KS1 experience to offer. I would have had the knowledge that she did. That's where it is! Leadership skills. The problem is in the job description of KS1 leader. I have done more leadership in terms of literacy. I have implemented things but for literacy. In terms of leading KS1, I haven't done as much. I show better leadership in literacy than in KS1. I should have been leading Andrea and improved her teaching" (L8: 52-60). "I need to put as much focus into leading Key Stage 1 as in literacy" (L8:75-76).

Reflection was also considered to be important within the coaching model and a key driver for change.

"I sort of want to get everything better than it is. I have been given the opportunity to think about what is wrong and to move on with this and then to move on to the next thing" (L9:43-45).

"We have become a lot more reflective of our practice and we are becoming more aware of what is happening" (L9:21-22).

Participants were able to reflect on how the conversations had supported them to think through their issues. Kathryn reflects on how the coaching conversation allowed her to address working relationship difficulties with a colleague.

"It was the talking…talking about things. I would never be where I am now had I not had this opportunity to think. It was in my head but I had not spoken to anyone else about it…but having the opportunity for you to ask that question, it's that question, planting that seed, it moved in such a short time. The relationship is much better. I'm now thinking ahead to September. I have to move on with the school. We are all looking forward to it. It would have resolved but not in the same way. Since talking about it and putting things in place, it brought it about much quicker" (k10:54-60).

Participants were of the opinion that they had changed in significant ways over the course of the intervention. They believed that they had changed in the way that they "look at things" and "do things", in the way that they "think about things", in their beliefs and their understandings about change.

"Coaching has made me realise that simple changes can have a big effect. I could see the effects really quickly. I wouldn't have set targets. It has changed the way I think and the way I do things. I'm trying to challenge myself. If there's something I'm not happy about I want to do something about it and to ask for help more if I need it" (A10:10-13).

"The coaching has made me think about the way I spend my time and that even a little change can have a positive effect. I've felt more able to discuss issues with my class TA and she has been extremely supportive. We've definitely achieved more as a team and the benefits to the children have been fantastic" (A11:28-31).

"I will try to talk things through instead of keeping it to myself. I won't let things fester. I know I need support aswell. Previously I have been the one to listen and support others" (K10:1-4).

As the time came for the intervention to finish and for me to leave the train as coach, it was obvious that the participants were able to set and manage their own goals and solutions. They had begun to do this independently before the end of the intervention, to take charge and to instigate things themselves as teams. Lucy had also begun to coach others.

"I had a conversation with Alison and she's not as confident as Elizabeth and Debra. Somewhere along the line they have become more confident and I'm thinking how can I do that for Alison. It's about building new teams and new relationships" (L9: 71-74).

This talk again makes reference to the fact that something has changed along the line. Confidence has grown over the course of the coaching intervention but again seemed to occur naturally. It was not obvious but it is noticeable.

> "I have started to think of some of the things within me, to try to build her (Alison) up. I am starting to use some of the ideas in coaching" (L11:143-146).

> "I would love to continue the process in the future and perhaps try to help others in a small way using some of the question techniques that have been used to help me improve" (L9:48-51).

There is a sense that participants on the journey are looking ahead to the future with optimism and enthusiasm. There is no sense of the participants wanting to get off the train but rather they all seem intent on carrying on with the journey.

> "I have to move on with the school" (K:9:36-39).

They were also keen to take others on board to share the journey with them.

Interestingly most of them were working on establishing effective teams as an outcome of the intervention. Each saw this as important in moving things forward. As the teams were reconfigured each participant realised what they would be losing in terms of effective team members and the emphasis was on strengthening new teams going forward.

> "The TA's must meet up more and think about how we can lift our presence as a team of TA's. It is important to keep things going that are currently happening. The girls are so enthusiastic at the moment and we need to harness that, to move things forward as a team. We are trying to keep the momentum going" (K10:7-12).

The coaching model gave participants a process to move towards change. It allowed them the opportunity to shape the changes they wished to make. It provided a model for teams to engage in coordinated joined up thinking and created a catalyst to motivate and drive the process forward. The process seemed to become easier once successful change was realised. It seemed to enable a greater degree of trust and commitment to evolve which allowed each member of the team to engage in constructive criticism. The process seemed to empower the participants and brought about a passion to achieve and improve. A sense of fun and enjoyment was also engendered within the process supported by a sense of success. It seemed that participants enjoyed taking the journey and became more effective communicators as a result.

5   Discussion

5.1   Overview

Within the study I asked two questions related to participant's experiences.

- How do people make sense of their experience of working in a failing school?
- How do people experience a coaching intervention?

Within the process of the research I was also interested to explore the following questions.

- Is coaching a useful intervention to support professional practice and development in a failing school?
- Can coaching facilitate change in failing schools?

In addressing these questions, three super-ordinate themes emerged from the findings: theatrical, war and the coaching journey. These will now be discussed with reference to the literature. I will then discuss the model of coaching that has emerged from the research and offer my personal reflections.

5.2   Theatrical

Theatrical represents a negative theme and highlights difficulties with communication and relationships that seriously hampered effective practice. The school was in a socially disadvantaged rural area and had many of the common problems identified in the review by the National Audit Office (2006) associated with poorly performing schools. These included unfilled staff vacancies, unfilled places, poor environment, high rates of pupil absence, poor behaviour, low attainment, lack of external support and poor parental engagement. The school also had a number of supply staff working in the school that created a lack of consistency for pupils with resultant behavioural difficulties and low achievement. There were a large number of well established staff, with some having been at the school for their entire teaching career.

The school's problems were linked with both its external and internal conditions. It had its own unique context and its own unique culture. The culture of the school appeared to affect teachers' psychological state and how they responded to change (Huberman,1988). As in the study by Nicolaidou and Ainscow (2005), past history and previous shared experiences encouraged staff to stick together but this grouping also inhibited change and improvement.

Teachers resisted change and improvement and this seemed to be linked to their previous experience and stage of career. Well established staff were less inclined to move towards change. Younger staff were more susceptible to change but were highly influenced by the group. Attempts to support leadership in introducing and supporting interventions were not well received by other staff, making it unlikely that staff would continue to support change in the face of such opposition. Although as Huberman (1988) notes, it is the actions of the individual which is significant in changing their psychological state, teachers in the school were hampered by the conditions that pervaded and seemed locked into the culture of the school. This finding concurs with Bandura (1997) who noted that settings can create a sense of incompetence within individuals and that this can impair future performance in those particular contexts.

The findings indicate that the school setting did create a sense of incompetence within individuals to such an extent that there was the feeling that they had to put on an act, or a show and take on the persona of another as a coping strategy. Self efficacy and professional efficacy were extremely low which seemed to be as a result of working in a failing school with all the negativity and hostility surrounding that label. Self efficacy was so low at some stages of the intervention due to events in school that some staff were unable to cope professionally, resulting in the inability to go into the classroom, shorter working hours or sickness absence.

There was evidence within the coaching intervention of a loss of momentum when goal striving faltered. This was related to unexpected events in school that found teachers in low mood and low efficacy and a downward spiral was set in motion. This finding concurs with Bandura (1997) who noted that efficacy beliefs can

undermine performance. The theory suggests that physiological and affective states of high arousal disrupt the quality of functioning as does personal mood and despondency. These factors all contribute to lower efficacy beliefs, weaken motivation and lead to poor performance and this is cyclical.

Difficulties were experienced by newly appointed staff that came into the school with leadership responsibilities. This concurs with the study by Nicolaidou and Ainscow (2005) who found that established staff were observed to be prejudiced against their new colleagues. Staff were reported to feel disempowered as new responsibilities were passed to new people coming into school and these attitudes were seen to increase the division between staff.

It was a struggle to implement initiatives as staff put up barriers to change. Staff were described as negative and hostile. Attempts were made to support staff to take on new initiatives by working to their strengths and interests but they lacked engagement in all efforts. Those individuals who were trying to implement new initiatives were frustrated by the general lack of commitment and enthusiasm from school staff.

Staff were also highly dismissive of initiatives that were supported by the Local Authority Advisory Service. The Advisory Teacher for Literacy was involved in supporting the implementation of Literacy initiatives in school. Staff sabotaged meetings and training events and were uncooperative in implementing new strategies. Work which was requested was not done. Staff offered excuses for not being able to implement initiatives, such as lack of time. There was a general lack of motivation to tackle anything new and any new ideas were dismissed.

This concurs with the study by Nicolaidou and Ainscow (2005) where staff refused to accept the reality their school was facing and their responsibility in helping to turn it round. Many of the staff seemed to be reluctant to adopt changes that were proposed and they tended to retain past practice.

There appeared to be low collective school efficacy. A failing school presents a number of stressors and conditions that can erode teachers' sense of efficacy (Bandura, 1997). However Berman & McLaughlin (1977) remind us that a teacher's sense of efficacy is one of the best predictors of their engagement in adopting new educational practices and in seeing them through.

It seemed as though staff wanted to retreat to the way things were rather than take on new ideas and staff seemed to rally together to prevent new initiatives taking hold. There was an acknowledgement of the stress that staff in leadership positions were under to implement change against this level of resistance. Leaders found it more and more difficult to approach staff with ever increasing new initiatives and demands as they knew they would be met with a negative response.

The attitudes of staff worked against the implementation of new initiatives and ideas. This shared history worked against change as staff grouped together to offer a show of resistance towards any new development. Rather they chose to operate the way they had always operated and shunned staff who were attempting to support the change agenda.

5.3 War

One of the major themes to come out of the study was that of war, graphically illustrating the intensity of the conflict experienced by participants in the school. The war theme arose out of significant events in school which suggest that tensions bubble beneath the surface and resurface at times when the organisation and the people within it are under significant stress. Beatty (2000) notes that cultures in failing school are characterised by recrimination, denial and negative emotions.

Those staff new to the school following the Ofsted judgement talked of closed doors, staff keeping themselves to themselves, lack of spirit and teamwork, with staff unreceptive to change. There was the feeling that staff wanted to be left alone after the inspection in the belief that things would eventually return to the way they used to be.

As in the study by Nicolaidou and Ainscow (2005) many of the staff had established a culture of denial whereby they refused to accept their situation and refused to accept responsibility. As Stark (1998) argued, by stigmatising a school as failing, its internal capacities to change may be disabled.

Staff were unreceptive to change and had difficulty accepting external support and advice and a change of leadership. Rifts developed amongst the staff, some supporting change and others against change. It appeared that those most in favour of change were those staff new to the school since the Ofsted judgement.

Rosenholz (1989) study of the relationships between social organisation and student outcomes refers to what she calls stuck schools, as having deepening detachment, resigned pessimism, a paralysis of spirit and a stagnation of vision. There were no common goals and little apparent desire for improvement. Within the schools in the study there was little substantive dialogue among colleagues and staff members were complacent and not prepared to do more than the minimum. Stringfield (1998) argues that ineffective schools are often characterised by a leisurely pace, lack of planning, creativity and poor dissemination of good practice.

Strong feelings amongst well established staff were identified that inhibited change. Feelings of negativity and hostility pervaded and new initiatives were dismissed. Staff retreated to past practices and were reluctant to take advice. Equally, feelings of frustration were evident in those members of staff attempting to push through a change agenda at a time when standards had to improve and the school were under intense scrutiny to achieve targets. Staff attitudes were entrenched and were strengthened by group solidarity to resist change. Barriers to change were erected and it seemed difficult to break them down.

Staff had strong allegiances to each other through their shared history and cliques formed which surfaced at key points of tension in the life of the school. The announcement of redundancies for teaching assistants brought these strong allegiances to the surface. Staff formed cliques and confrontation and intimidation occurred prior to and following the interviews. Those TA's who were unsuccessful

isolated themselves. Staff aligned themselves to certain TA's and ignored others. People avoided the staff room. Relationships were strained throughout the school and it was described as a tough culture. Many people were unable to function effectively and there were some who didn't want to be in school. Nicolaidou and Ainscow (2005) in their study of failing schools found staff working in isolation who were very wary of other people and the majority of teachers were seen to be part of a clique. This seemed to increase tensions and to possibly initiate conflict.

These allegiances surfaced once again when teachers were informed which classes they would have the following year. This new arrangement formed new teams and tensions developed as members of staff attempted to assert their positions of leadership. The Foundation Stage Leader who was given a mixed Reception and Year 1 class and the teacher assigned to a mixed Year 1 and 2 class formed the new Key Stage 1 Team. They had strong existing allegiances and a challenge was mounted for the Key Stage 1 Leadership role. This isolated the member of staff who had been fulfilling that role the previous year who had to contend with a degree of conflict from both members of staff as they each tried to assert their position within the team.

The case study reminds us of the ever-changing nature of schools and the unexpected events that happen which create difficulties in relationships and coping skills. The accusation made by a pupil against a member of staff left the Year 1 class dealing with heightened emotions and a negative situation for a prolonged period of time. Staff were dealing with confrontational parents which placed increased pressure on the team. They were unable to function effectively during this time as children were withdrawn from initiatives and staff found it increasingly difficult to be in class. There was the acknowledgement that it had been a really tough year for all staff within the team.

Ball (1987) characterises schools as arenas of struggle invested with both actual and/ or potential conflict between members.

5.4   The Coaching Journey

In contrast to the theatrical theme and the war theme the coaching journey represents a positive theme with good communication and strong relationships evident, features representative of effective teams.   The findings suggest that communication and relationships improved over the course of the coaching intervention, culminating in the development of effective teams.   A sense of enjoyment and fun was evident within this theme that is perhaps linked to being a member of an effective team.   These findings will be explored in more detail with reference to the literature.

5.4.1   Effective Teams

Rosenholz (1989) argued that if staff realise the improvement process is less 'ego-endangering' for their workplace then the more they will request and offer advice and assistance to accomplish agreed upon goals.

The coaching intervention seemed to move the participants towards this mode of thinking. Some individuals had found difficulty seeking help and support prior to the intervention but during the intervention they were all willing to accept help from colleagues. They were all of the opinion that an outcome of the intervention was that they would be willing to ask for help and support as necessary in the future.

A sense of self efficacy seemed to be engendered through 'enactive mastery' (Bandura, 1997) where success at tasks built a strong belief in personal efficacy. Individuals were able to reflect on how they were doing in comparison to others, 'vicarious experiences', and to reflect on feedback from others within the organisation, 'verbal persuasion', and this supported the development of self efficacy.   Fullan (2007) argued that increased competence had the potential to create fresh insights. The coaching intervention helped staff become more reflective in their practice, more self directed and competent at identifying areas for improvement and also implementing improvements.

Goal Setting was recognised as a key driver for motivation and change. The setting of meaningful and achievable goals seemed to be a motivating factor for participants. Multiple goals seemed to increase momentum. Participants had a commitment to using time and energy to work towards goals because those goals had personal importance to them. They had ownership of the goal and similarly had ownership of the strategies to achieve the goal.   As Fullan (2007) suggested, individuals need to feel that change is significant to them.

Participants were encouraged by success and were particularly motivated when they could see the impact that their efforts were having on the children's learning. This seemed to be a key driver for motivation. Once successful change was realised further change and improvement resulted. This supports Guskey and Passaro's (1994) finding that challenges in the thought processes and beliefs of teachers are likely to occur once there is evidence of successful change in practice and learning outcomes. The importance of goals within the coaching process led me to a consideration of goal theory as an explanation for its success in motivating participants.

Goal theory relates to cognitive motivation, the idea that people motivate themselves and act anticipatorily through the exercise of forethought (Bandura, 1997). Individuals acquire beliefs about what it is possible to achieve. Goals are set and actions are planned to support favourable outcomes and to avoid less favourable ones. Efficacy beliefs are assumed to be necessary to support motivation. Goal theory involves the ability to set personal challenge and to evaluate performance. According to the theory, behaviour is motivated by cognized goals and forethought. Perceived self-efficacy is recognised as influential in supporting motivation.

Personal standards are key to the theory of motivation bringing self satisfaction when they are met and by achieving goals. Self incentives are used by individuals to enable them to continue in their efforts until they reach their goals. Within the theory, achievable goals produce increased performance. Specific goals motivate the unmotivated and support the development of positive attitudes towards tasks (Bryan & Locke, 1967).

Goal challenge is seen to be important within the theory. The suggestion is that a high level of interest and involvement in activities is created by challenge. This relates back to self efficacy such that the higher the perceived self efficacy the more challenging the goals that are set and the greater the commitment to realising them.

Goal proximity is also important within the theory. The effectiveness of goals in supporting motivation and action depends on how soon they can be realised. Goals that are placed too far into the future fail to provide incentives for present action. The suggestion is that in such instances, people delay taking action and realising goals.

The theory also suggests that when people are involved in selecting the goals they take on the responsibility of reaching them and self motivate. In contrast goals that are imposed by others are not necessarily accepted and staff feel no compulsion to meet them.

Many of the ideas within goal theory were prevalent within the goal setting and goal striving observed in coaching. Individuals did set personal standards for themselves that they aspired to reach. There was evidence that if people had fallen below their personal standard there was the incentive to put more effort in the following week. Self incentives were built into the achievement of goals whereby for example, individuals were able to finish work earlier if certain goals were achieved.

Clear attainable goals are a major component of coaching and participants found these particularly useful and motivating. They provided a clear direction and kept individuals focused on their course of action.

Goal challenge was seen as important. All individuals set what were for them challenging goals. They all put effort in to goal striving and had a great deal of satisfaction in achieving their goals. Goals became more challenging as they developed multiple goals and team goals when the level of effort from team members increased and the level of satisfaction seemed greater.

Goal proximity was particularly useful within the coaching model. Individuals were able to break their goals down into smaller steps which made them achievable within a short time frame. This really appealed to the participants and they were encouraged by how much could be achieved and how quickly their actions could achieve desired results. Conversations with participants suggested that distal goals did not appear urgent and therefore were less likely to be prioritised for action. These conversations reflect past attempts by participants to implement initiatives which never materialised.

Coaching goals were set by the individual, giving them total ownership of the focus of change as well as the methods to achieve those goals. Nothing was imposed. Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991) assert that only when teachers recognise a personal and professional gain from the task will they be motivated and committed to it. Participants were engaged in a self evaluative practice which was seen to be a motivating influence. This idea of the individual being in control of the goals and strategies for achieving these goals seemed to be an important factor in goal striving and motivation within the coaching intervention. There was evidence within the coaching conversations of goals imposed by others that individuals did not feel obligated to meet. This is in particular reference to the Key Stage 1 Team goal of utilising the spare classroom to create a creative resource for the whole school (as detailed in the intervention in Appendix 1). The idea behind this was that one member of staff would lead the development of the project. On reflection, one of the reasons it faltered seemed to be because the team leader had not involved all team members sufficiently from the outset and so although there was agreement that it would be a useful project there was no commitment or obligation to have to contribute to the development of the initiative.

As discussed in goal theory, motivation was generated through goal challenge within the coaching intervention which pushed individuals to take on further challenges. Fullan (2005a) argues that it is possible to achieve ambitious change and quality because it is what people develop in their minds and actions that counts. Participants responded well to multiple goals which enabled them to achieve more within a specific time frame. They particularly liked the speed at which it was

possible to implement their ideas and strategies and this again increased motivation. The team goals were also significant in driving motivation. This seemed to be connected with the support that came from being a member of a team but also the involvement and commitment that comes from being part of a team.

A tremendous sense of momentum was generated whereby staff immediately set about doing what they had agreed in the coaching conversation. This momentum increased as the coaching intervention became more established and became particularly evident when team goals were introduced. Multiple goals were introduced as success followed success. Huberman and Miles (1984) argue that early rewards and some tangible success are critical incentives during the implementation of change. Fullan (2007) suggests that if the change works out it can result in a sense of mastery, accomplishment and personal growth.

Team members seemed to carry the momentum forward. The clarity of the goal and the roles of each member of the team seemed paramount to realising the goals. The speed of implementation of some of these initiatives and the success that they brought seemed to accelerate the momentum for further change. There seemed to be a drive for self-improvement with individuals working more effectively and reporting an increased work output. This demonstrated the integrated cyclical model of teacher efficacy as advocated by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998). Within this model teacher efficacy is a measure of the difficulty of the task and an individual's perception of their ability to achieve the task. The goals set by teachers, the effort they exert and their resilience to succeed against difficulties enable improved performance which creates increased efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

Coaching seemed to have the capacity to build effective teams. The Key Stage 1 Team appeared to have good relationships at the start of the project. There seemed to be several reasons for this. Both teachers in Key Stage 1 had similar backgrounds. Both lacked experience of teaching in Key Stage 1 and both were accepting of this. In this way they were in a supportive relationship with one another. The Key Stage 1 leader did not impose ideas on the others but rather it appeared to

be a more democratic form of decision-making where everyone was able to contribute and have a view.

In addition the three teaching assistant's enjoyed the status they were given in the team, whereby they were accepted as teachers by the pupils and they were included in planning, evaluations, visits to other schools, meetings and initiatives. However, although all members of the team felt that they enjoyed good relationships with one another they equally all felt that coaching had supported the further development of the teams. Much of this was attributed to goal setting. Individuals had been encouraged within the coaching conversations to share their individual goals with each other as a means of gaining peer encouragement and support between coaching sessions. Also much of the work entailed checking back with other staff to see whether individual strategies and solutions were acceptable or workable within the classroom situation.

The team goals seem to have been significant however in encouraging the teams to develop a shared and firm commitment to their implementation. They each had a role to play in firming up the goals, in providing solutions and in implementing strategies. It seems that as individual teams achieved success in reaching their goals, it motivated them to achieve more. According to Fullan (2007) the goal has to be to find out what motivates people to work on the problem. He argues that people are motivated to make more investments of time, energy and commitment when improving at something that has importance to them. Each member of the team was encouraged by the progress made with each small step and this created the momentum to achieve more. It seemed that this process brought teams together with a common purpose. Fullan (1982) argued that increasing numbers of people involved and affected by the change helps to progress the change. Teams viewed the intervention as a positive experience which according to Fullan (2005b) is a motivating factor.

There was acknowledgement from participants of the help and support they had received from other members of the team in realising their goals. Communication seemed to support momentum and motivation. Losada and Heaphy (2004) in

examining the functioning of high performing teams found that teams worked best when there was positive communication, support, encouragement and appreciation. High performing teams were characterised by a balance between a focus on self and others in their communication. Fullan (2007) argues that motivated people get better at their work and that all successful change initiatives develop collaboration where there was none before.

Coaching was also seen to support individuals in developing more open and honest relationships with each other. Staff felt more able to ask other members of the team for support as necessary in a way that hadn't been possible before. Fullan (2007) suggests that one of the keys to successful change is the improvement of relationships. He suggests that daily motivation and good social support is essential, especially when individuals are working with colleagues who support them and have good ideas. Teachers can be motivated to change through working with colleagues in exploring, refining and improving their practice. Communication places an emphasis on doing rather than extensive planning.

One of the findings of the research was the pace of change that was possible when teams were working well. All staff reported on the speed at which change was possible. This seemed to be related to all members of staff supporting each other and enabling goals to be achieved with consistency. It was clear to see through the process of coaching who were natural team leaders, who had a determination to get things done and who required the support of the team to ensure they reached their goals. The teams seemed to be going through a collaborative process of change.

> "Developing strong, high functioning work teams who move beyond needing the presence of the site leader to function well on their own should be the goal of any effective leader and this implies building capacity through delegation accompanied by ongoing coaching" (Wise & Jacobo, 2010 p.163).

Fullan (2007) suggests that new practice depends significantly on whether teachers are working as isolated individuals or are communicating with others. The quality of working relationships among teachers is strongly related to implementation.

Salas, Sims, and Shawn Burke (2005) argued that teams require the ability to coordinate and cooperate with each other to facilitate tasks. This is accomplished through a shared understanding of the knowledge, skills and experience available within the team as well as an understanding of the goals, objectives and the constraints under which the team works. They argue that teams also require teamwork, a set of interrelated thoughts, actions and feelings of each team member that are needed to function as a team. These combine to facilitate coordinated effort in the achievement of task objectives. Shared understanding was felt to be important to facilitate the team's progression towards goal attainment. Communication was seen as invaluable and mutual trust essential.

The coaching intervention seemed to encourage individuals to take a positive view of the future. People who have a high sense of efficacy take a future time perspective in structuring their lives (Bandura, 1997). Participants saw future events as challenges to be welcomed. There also seemed to be a sense of urgency with participants to make plans and to be prepared for the new academic year. All staff were focused on their new roles in September and were forging ahead with arrangements. There was an enthusiasm about the new academic year, seeing it as a fresh start. The suggestion was that the coaching had supported them in this journey to be confident in this change of direction.

Individuals seemed to gain an increased self awareness of how they were operating in the past which prevented them from functioning effectively. There were indications that the coaching process had changed the way the participants functioned and that they now had the skills to be able to manage their own goals and to self coach. Fullan (2007) reminds us that in order to secure new beliefs and higher expectations critical to improvement, people need new experiences that lead them to different beliefs. There was also the realisation that they could perhaps offer

other staff the skills they had acquired and thereby support others through the process of making changes to their practice.

The general feeling was that individual class teams were now working effectively and that something had happened through the coaching intervention that had encouraged the development of strong teams. Good working relationships were attributed to the coaching intervention.   This was heightened when staff realised they would be working with different staff in new teams in the following academic year who would not have the skills seen to have developed within existing teams. There was a desire to skill up those people who would be joining them to enable them to function effectively within teams.

5.4.2   Can Coaching Facilitate Change?

The coaching intervention enabled change for individuals and teams. It had the potential for involving more staff within the organisation had the Key Stage 1 Team initiative developed through to its conclusion.   This would have celebrated achievements and success across the school and would have been an opportunity to bring staff together with one common goal.

All participants who were involved with the intervention were of the opinion that coaching had enabled them to make significant changes within their practice. Other staff in school had also noticed the effects of these changes as initiatives impacted on the children and other areas of school and this was evidenced through the coaching conversations. Relationships were recognised to have improved between some of the participants and other members of staff in school as a result of the intervention and this had enabled change to progress. Teams who had accessed coaching were functioning much more effectively as a result of the intervention and helped members stay positive in the face of negativity.

Coaching seemed to create a sense of calm and self confidence amongst participants. They were seen to be self evaluating and following a self improvement agenda, driven by themselves. There was the recognition that they had internalised

the coaching model and were now self coaching. It seemed to me that the coaching model provided a framework for self reflection and self directed action which is missing in many other forms of intervention. Change seems to be possible if it is self generated and therefore meaningful for the other person.

Much of the work that was achieved within the intervention could have been attempted using different models. A senior member of staff or an external adviser could have supported on behaviour management and organisational classroom strategies but the implementation of these may not have been as purposeful or effective. The main thrust for change seemed to come from the individual, with a clear remit that change was possible because the individual was committed to making it happen. Fullan (2005a) makes the point that people do not achieve complex changes by being told or shown what to do.

5.4.3 Towards a Coaching Culture

Conversations with the head teacher during feedback sessions suggested that she could see the potential for coaching in school following the outcomes of the intervention and she wanted to develop a coaching culture. Fillery-Travis (2007) suggests that once people have experienced the benefits of coaching many will seek to introduce it throughout their school, thereby developing a coaching culture. Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005) have proposed that a coaching culture is one where coaching is the predominant style of managing and working together and where a commitment to grow the organisation is embedded in a parallel commitment to invest in the people.

There are various models for developing a coaching culture in schools. Wise and Jacobo (2010) propose a school based outline framework in which the head teacher is the primary agent of change aided by an external coach. The head teacher receives coaching and guides the change process at the school through a variety of coaching practices involving teachers, staff and students. They suggest that the main purpose of coaching is to move from a reactive environment to a proactive one where the head teacher and staff spend more of their time reflecting and planning for future improvements.

Rhodes and Beneicke (2002) propose management teams train their own staff in order to build coaching capacity within teams. Stober (2008) supports the notion of individuals within organisations being trained in coaching skills in order to build capacity.

The head teacher envisaged training in coaching skills for herself and for other members of the management team. She believed that a management model with a coaching component could work well to support staff to share agreed goals and common objectives and in this way support the change agenda. Handy (1981) argued that the head teacher needs to be a facilitator of a new and more democratic culture that will foster improvement and bring staff and pupils together.

Although there are advantages to this model it is dependent on those in leadership positions having the appropriate skill set to be a coach and also of having the experience of being coached. The possibility of training participants who had received the coaching intervention in peer coaching skills was another idea that the head teacher was keen to pursue. This would enable capacity building within school and enable the momentum to continue. One of the participants had already begun to think about how she could support another member of staff to develop her practice through coaching.

There are difficulties inherent in developing a coaching culture. Rhodes and Beneicke (2002) suggest that management teams need to devise strategies to facilitate closer working relationships between colleagues so that trust and mutual support can develop. Also they need to engage staff commitment to a management style that incorporates coaching and allow sufficient time to enable the coach to undertake the role. Management teams would also need to carefully select individuals as coaches. West Burnham and O'Sullivan (1998) highlight the need for high quality personnel with good interpersonal skills, including the ability to engender trust, respect and confidence in the relationship. The environment is also seen to be important in creating trust, safety and support.

If we take the definition of organisational change provided by Fullan (2007) that organisational change involves groups and individuals within organisations working towards making significant changes then we can argue that coaching has enabled organisational change to occur within this setting. All those participants involved in the research would argue that the change they undertook was significant for them and the head teacher believed the change was significant for the school.

Fullan (2001) argues that one of the keys to successful change would seem to be the improvement of relationships. The coaching intervention did see improvements in relationships, not only between participants within teams but also beyond the scope of the teams and with other relationships in school. This development had been of particular interest to the head teacher who had noted that change was possible because of a change in attitude. Huberman (1988) found that the quality of working relationships amongst teachers was a critical variable and strongly related to the implementation of change.

Wise and Jacobo (2010) suggest that in the past, school progress was based on the work of isolated classrooms whereas in the current climate it is necessary for the school to work as a collective entity. They acknowledge the difficulty for schools that are generally conservative and often quite resistant to change and argue that it requires a continuous push toward a future where all students can reach their fullest potential. This process could be seen as the necessary evolution of schools into a culture of continual change and improvement. They argue that a coach can serve as a catalyst to transform the school more quickly.

This intervention supports a combination of top-down and bottom-up forces for change as advocated by Fullan (2005a). It had support from the head teacher but it was developed and implemented by the staff who had complete ownership of the process.

5.5 Critique of the Study

This research was conceived following an opportunity that presented itself when a school that I was working in as Educational Psychologist went into special measures following an Ofsted Inspection. I regarded it as an opportunity rarely available to researchers and I was keen to explore the possibility. At the time special measures was announced the head teacher did not feel that it was appropriate to conduct the study. He was of the opinion that staff were overwhelmed with demands that were being placed upon them. It seemed as though the possibility of conducting research seemed very slim and no further discussions were held in this regard.

A change in head teacher once again presented the possibility of conducting research within the school. The head teacher went on long term sick and an acting head teacher was brought in to manage the school and to address the action plan for improvement. I had continued to support the school in my role as Educational Psychologist, with particular reference to areas of concern identified within special educational needs. I had formed a good working relationship with the acting head teacher since her arrival to the school and she seemed open to new ways of working with the Educational Psychologist. It seemed appropriate to once again raise the possibility of conducting research at a time when the school needed to move forward at pace if it was to achieve the objectives on the action plan for improvement. The head teacher was receptive to the idea of staff coaching and agreeable to research being conducted in the school. I was aware that I was in a position rarely afforded to researchers considering that one of the reasons attributed to the lack of research in failing schools is the difficulty of access. I was mindful of the need to be sensitive in my dealings with the school and the need to involve the head teacher in the research design. I was also aware of the need to keep the head teacher informed of the research once it was underway. I also needed to consider how to take the work forward once the research was complete. It seemed appropriate to conduct the research as a case study.

There was a need for clarity around the formulation of the research design. I was reliant on the head teacher's knowledge of the staff and much of the research design

was dependent on which staff she felt would benefit most from the coaching intervention and therefore which would have the greatest impact on the school. I built in several meetings to firm up the research proposal and secured agreement on which staff I would work with. At this level the head teacher was able to inform the research design. I was also aware of the head teacher's motives for wanting the research conducted in her school. She needed to drive through improvements that were unpopular with staff and she needed staff on her side rather than against her. I considered that she thought the coaching intervention could support the improvement agenda. There was a tension between what she might want to derive from the coaching and what I wanted to offer. I therefore needed to be clear in emphasising that it would be the participants who would determine the focus of the coaching sessions and that within my role as coach I would be unable to influence the direction of the conversations. Rather I would support participants to work on issues that were seen to be important to them.

I needed to keep the research manageable and therefore didn't want to involve too many staff but I considered it would be useful to have staff participating in the research that currently worked together. The idea of working with staff teams evolved through discussions. At the time of the research there were a high number of vacancies and long-term sickness absences. This left a number of teams within school who were heavily dependent on supply staff. The head teacher was keen that supply staff were not part of the research as she wanted staff that would be retained within the school structure to benefit from the coaching and to be able to build on the work undertaken. This left the KS1 team within school. She was also keen to develop the KS1 team to lead on good practice in the hope that others would follow. This again highlighted a tension around what the head teacher hoped would be an outcome of the intervention.

I was conscious that the people who had been selected to take part in the research might not want to participate and might be suspicious as to why they had been selected. I was also aware that they might feel under pressure to participate because of the head teacher's influence in selection. I was keen to alleviate any anxieties

and arranged a meeting with each potential participant individually outlining the research and what this would involve. They all agreed to participate.

I was aware of the tension around the two roles I had within school, those of Educational Psychologist and researcher and that all participants were aware of these two roles. This will have impacted on the relationship with participants within the research who will have viewed me in a professional role and therefore a hierarchical position within the relationship.

The head teacher agreed to release staff on a weekly basis to receive coaching sessions. This worked particularly well for the teaching staff as this was their planned PPA time. I was always impressed that they never missed a session unless they were absent or out of school although I was also aware that they had been directed by the head teacher to attend.

The members of the team consisted of two teaching assistants and one learning support assistant who had been working in the school at the time of the Ofsted Inspection. The two teachers within the team had not been in school at the time of the inspection. One member of staff had been on maternity leave and the other had been appointed to the school following the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection. It could be argued that findings could have been very different had they been present at the inspection in that their levels of motivation towards coaching may have been very different.

Although the head teacher had given all staff within the team permission to attend the coaching sessions, it proved easier for the teachers to attend due to their PPA time being at the same time. However this did mean that the teaching assistants and learning support assistant were often covering PPA time and they were therefore not as readily available. Each took it in turn to release the other but this was not always possible.

Within the research design I was keen for the head teacher to be kept informed of developments. I therefore built feedback into the design. All staff were provided with

copies of the information I planned to give to the head teacher midway through the intervention and at the end of the intervention and each had the opportunity to amend this information if they so wished. This kept the head teacher informed of developments but also kept the participants informed of what the head teacher had been told. This was done in a spirit of openness and honesty and in this way I hoped to secure their trust that I would not divulge any confidence.

I hoped to provide sufficient coaching sessions to allow the participants the motivation to implement strategies and move towards their goals. I built in weekly coaching sessions with the knowledge that they would not be able to attend all of these sessions and there would be occasions when I was also unable to be in school.

These weekly sessions were important at the early stages of the research as participants became familiar with the structure of the sessions. It could be argued that the research was however very time consuming both for researcher and participants. On reflection it may have been possible to have extended the time between coaching sessions as the research became more embedded and the participants became more able to manage the process themselves. Telecoaching may well have been an option at later stages of the research process when contact could have been maintained but in a more time efficient manner.

One of the difficulties of the design was not being able to predict what goals the participants would set for themselves and not being able to influence the direction of the conversations. Coaching conversations would change direction as soon as new situations arose that became more important to the participant than those goals previously chosen. One example of this was when possible redundancies were announced for teaching assistants and learning support assistants, followed by job interviews and new roles. Teachers also experienced a change of focus with the announcement of new classes and new teams. On each of these occasions the participant's new situation became the focus for the conversation and goals changed to address this new situation. To this extent the research was fluid and highly dependent on what the participant chose to bring to the coaching conversations.

As the coaching sessions progressed, individual goals extended to class goals and team goals. The individual and class goals worked well but there was a difficulty with team goals. This seemed to be due to the way they were conceived and organised. Lucy, as team leader was keen to work with the team on establishing the team focus. She talked through ideas within our coaching sessions and agreed to run these ideas past the team. However it appeared that although the team thought these ideas were good and worth working towards, they took no ownership. Lucy however was committed to the team goal, as were the colleagues within her class who were also working on class goals with her. It appeared however in conversations with members of the other class that they were not as committed to the goal. It appeared that they had agreed to the team focus but had no commitment to it and did not see themselves as working towards it. On reflection Lucy felt that she had not included them sufficiently in the formulation of the team focus, in the setting of targets or in the implementation. She perhaps would have benefited from the opportunity to reflect on her approach to engaging staff in establishing a team focus, in goal setting and in agreeing actions. This was a different skill set to the one required of her in establishing class goals. It involved more members who were more remote in school and this therefore required planned and focused meetings. Class goals took less organising because staff were based in the classroom and were more readily available for reviewing the strategies and amending as necessary. Unfortunately as a consequence of a lack of commitment to the team goal, Lucy and the colleagues from her class took responsibility for implementing all of the actions for the team goal and the staff from Y1 had no actual involvement.

One outcome of the research seemed to be that other members of staff wanted to take part in the coaching experience. Participants were keen to inform other staff what they were doing and other staff wanted to take part. This became a moral dilemma for myself as researcher and for the head teacher and discussions with the head teacher once the research had finished considered how coaching could be offered to other staff that wanted to engage with the process.

I had hoped to tape the coaching conversations but there were reservations expressed by participants in this regard. I considered this was due to the lack of

trust that seemed to pervade relationships within school. Staff were untrusting of the head teacher. They may have thought that I was brought in by the head teacher to implement change. There was also a hierarchy amongst staff within the team that I was coaching, a KS1 team leader, a teacher, a learning support assistant and two teaching assistants. They may have been concerned that their conversations may have been shared with others within the team without their knowledge. As they were averse to being taped I agreed with them that I would take notes of our conversations. Although I attempted to take copious notes I was not able to capture all that was said and much will therefore have been missed. Rather I elected to capture that which seemed relevant to me at the time within the conversation and therefore my own interests will have undoubtedly shaped the research findings.

Some participants were unable to attend coaching sessions because of other commitments in school. Some coaching conversations were longer than others, often to do with the time available. I had hoped to include conversations from all participants within the research but on analysis it became evident that one teaching assistant and the learning support assistant had attended on fewer occasions than the other participants and when they did attend they were only able to attend for a short period of time due to classroom commitments. They were therefore omitted from the analysis. This reduced the case size to three participants which may be considered to be a small number.

The data was analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis. This is a specifically psychological method of data analysis and seemed particularly appropriate for this study. In interpreting the data I attempted to address issues of validity. As a participant within the research I was aware that I would influence the findings. Participants would bring their own interpretation of events to the coaching sessions and I would bring an interpretation of the participants experience. In an attempt to validate my findings I reflected back what I understood the participants to have said within the course of the coaching conversations to ensure that I had captured their talk. I also provided transcripts for the participants to view following each conversation to ensure that I had recorded their conversations accurately. Participants were invited to keep a journal documenting their experience of the

coaching intervention. This provided another source of participant validation. All this considered I accept that my interpretation of events may be very different to those interpretations that others may have made of this data.

Finally, I accept that because the study involved commitment and prolonged engagement with participants, personal relationships inevitably developed and with that came the inherent risk of subject bias in that participants may have wished to please the researcher.

5.6   Personal Reflections

I consider that I have also been on a journey with the participants over the course of this research. I have lived their experience of working in a failing school and their experience of a coaching intervention through their talk. During this process I have been motivated by their enthusiasm and the positivity that came through their conversations. I have also lived their difficult experiences and the emotions that they brought to those conversations. It was an opportunity to take a glimpse into the life world of another and to experience the ever changing landscape of the school through significant events for these participants. I was an active participant in the research but also professionally distanced from it. One of the reasons for the success of the intervention seems to be the fact that I was an outsider, external to the school. All participants were of the view that they would not have been able to be so honest and open had the coach been someone internal to the school. This reflects a lack of trust amongst the school staff in general and the potential difficulty of gaining that trust within a coaching conversation.

I reflected that it was a sign of commitment that in a busy work schedule teaching staff were prepared to give up their PPA time to attend coaching sessions and I determined from this that they must have found the process useful for them as individuals. I counteracted this with the knowledge that they had been directed by the head teacher to attend and they had committed to the research as individuals. Nevertheless it seemed a big commitment from them as individuals, a commitment which they never faltered other than for sickness and unforeseen events in school.

I sensed this pace of change, energy and excitement that ensued when participants reached their goals. It was a very positive energy that motivated participants to reach their goals and strive for more. In many ways the experience for me could be likened to a roller coaster, with participants moving gently and calmly towards goals, increasing in pace as things were going well and then a significant event would occur which would plummet them into emotional difficulties and low self efficacy, only to have to pick themselves up again. There were highs and lows for all participants on the journey but of interest is the fact that they have all continued with the journey and this seems suggestive of a process that can support such experiences. Additionally they were keen to take other people within the organisation on board and to share the journey with them.

5.7 A Coaching Model

This research offers a model of coaching that could be useful in the context of a failing school. The model follows research that suggests organisational change requires a number of interlocking phases of change, from the individual, to the team, to the organisation as a whole Stober (2008). The intervention was designed to follow these phases of change.

The model (as described in diagram 2) focuses on the individual in the first instance, establishing personal goals. Within the individual coaching sessions personal goals are formed. The individual has complete ownership of the goal and the strategies to reach his/her goal. Nothing is imposed. This goal and strategies are then shared with team members to develop communication and peer support. This then becomes a cyclical process. Strategies may change over time and as they do team members are informed. This ensures the team is involved on a regular basis and keeps lines of communication and support open.

Once these goals are established and there is a sense of colleagues supporting one another in the process, team goals are developed. Teams meet outside of the coaching sessions to agree a joint focus, a joint goal. This gives a sense of ownership of the concern. Solutions and strategies are then discussed in the coaching sessions at an individual level and members take the ideas discussed back

to the team for further reflection and development. This provides the opportunity for all team members to feel involved with the process and to be contributing to the solutions and strategies to reach the goal. Weekly coaching sessions are built into the model to review progress and to support movement to desired outcomes. Participants peer coach each other on a weekly basis. Once the coaching process and peer support is embedded within the team, members can begin to operate without the coach.

Once small teams are communicating well and working effectively, the model supports small teams to work together as larger teams to manage and sustain organisational change. In this way the coaching model can begin to infiltrate the school at an organisational level, with change occurring from a bottom up perspective but with top down support.

5.8 Future Research

Goal attainment seems to be a significant factor in coaching. Personal goals and team goals were highly motivating as were multiple goals. It would be interesting to explore what it is about the nature of goal setting and striving that motivates the individual to take on increasing challenges and change.

Another significant development from the study was the development of effective teams. Future research could explore what is happening within the dynamics of the coaching process that enables teams to flourish.

This study has given rise to questions of sustainability. Participants were highly motivated at the end of the intervention and spoke of maintaining the momentum of coaching through self initiated goal setting and team initiated goal setting. However teams were due to change at the beginning of the following term and this would inevitably make sustainability more difficult. Future research could address sustainability through a longitudinal study. Reeves (2009) acknowledges the necessity of coaching for sustainability. "Only a coaching system that anticipates the

need for renewal and works through the psychological and organisational barriers to sustained change will provide enduring results (Reeves, 2009 p.18).

This study has led to questions regarding future work at the school to address issues of capacity building. This could be developed through staff training in peer coaching for those participants who have experienced coaching within this study. They would come to the training with their own experience of coaching and have an understanding of the process and the skills required.

Capacity building could also be achieved through training the leadership team in coaching skills. There are inherent difficulties in this however, not least the fact that the team may not want to be trained as coaches and may not have the particular skill set even if they received the training. There would be the additional problem of convincing staff within school that coaching would be a good idea, given the sense of distrust that pervaded the school.

Participants believed that the coaching intervention had been successful because I was external to the school. They doubted whether anyone in school would have been able to gain the confidence and trust that I was able to achieve as an outsider. The coaching relationship would also be different in the sense that a hierarchy would be established within the coaching relationship and there is the possibility that it would be seen as more of a supervisory role with more of a management agenda to secure school improvement.

A. Harris (2001) has highlighted the importance of a coaching role for Local Authority Advisers in their work with teachers. Rhodes and Beneicke (2002) support the notion of using consultants to deliver the coaching role and also see a role for Local Authority Officers. This would also seem to be a key area of involvement for Educational Psychologists in their systemic work with schools. Fink (1999) reminds us that the time for intervention and support occurs long before a school is labelled a failure and this also suggests a significant role for the Educational Psychologist.

Spence (2007) advocated for research that involves studies that test the efficacy of coaching programmes in order to determine which formulations are most effective for facilitating goal attainment and wellbeing. He believed psychologists have a unique role to play in securing the future of coaching and in helping to establish it as a respected and credible sub-discipline of psychology.

Cameron (2006) states that Educational Psychologists can make a distinctive contribution as practitioners who can apply psychology to problems that occur in complex environments. Reference is made to their use of an evidence based psychological perspective within a clear problem solving framework. Baxter and Frederickson (2005) make the point that teachers will be better placed to meet the needs of children in their care if the teachers own needs have been supported. They argue that Educational Psychologists can add maximum value by targeting their work at a staff level which will have an impact on a wider range of children and young people. Miller (2003) refers to the positive impact that working with staff groups can have on staff culture, shifting perspectives and enabling staff to approach problems more analytically and less emotionally.

5.9 Summary

This research set out to investigate a case study of a coaching intervention in a failing school. The coaching model used for the intervention (See Figure 2) supports a model of professional practice and change within the challenging context of a failing school. It allowed for improved relationships amongst colleagues and team members and facilitated the development of effective teams. The findings are particular to the context of this particular case. However the coaching intervention as a model is something that could be generalised to other schools and adapted to allow the model to be more cost effective. Although I was available to provide weekly sessions of support, not all staff were able to attend for weekly sessions or to attend for the full 45 minutes allocated. The model could be adapted to provide less time to schools with a longer period between visits once peer support is working effectively. Another approach would be to provide more regular contact between visits through tele-coaching.

Key Findings from the Research:

- The setting and striving for achievable goals seemed to motivate and challenge individuals and teams.

- Goals that were realised within a short time frame brought increased motivation.

- The setting of multiple goals enhanced motivation.

- The speed at which change was possible was a motivating factor and supported momentum for further change.

- The support and encouragement provided by participants strengthened teams and mobilised action around shared goals.

- Relationships improved through the coaching process, both within teams and with other staff in school.

- Communication was key to supporting the development of relationships and teams.

- Working from the individual to the team was particularly effective and supported the building of effective teams.

The research suggests that coaching is a useful intervention to support professional practice and development in a failing school. Staff were highly motivated to realise their goals. The pace of change was significant and increased as the process of coaching became more embedded. Relationships and communication improved amongst team members and a sense of openness and honesty developed. It appeared that the coaching provided staff with a sense of direction and purpose that was perhaps lacking before and this seemed to create the momentum to achieve more. There was recognition from participants that they had not been working at pace prior to the intervention. Participants were buoyed by success and the realisation of what was possible to achieve within a relatively short space of time. Participants were eager to take on more and more, suggestive of an embedded way of working which became a self initiated process. Participants were seen to be working effectively as individuals and as teams in developing and supporting their professional practice.

The coaching intervention was successful in facilitating change in this school. Goals were found to be essential towards stimulating motivation and momentum for change. The coaching facilitated an improvement agenda where rapid change was seen to be possible. Individuals were highly motivated to aspire towards change and improvement and the support of peers seemed to strengthen this aspiration. The numbers of people involved in the change seemed to inspire further change. Participants talked about how they had changed in the way they now thought about change, suggesting a conceptual leap in their understanding of how to create, implement and sustain change. Hargrove (2008) notes that coaching has the power to stimulate and inspire people to think differently and facilitate ongoing change.

The school was one that was faced with the challenging conditions which accompany being in special measures with a high level of negativity and hostility, resulting in poor relationships and communication as highlighted in the superordinate theme of war. The school conditions also resulted in low self efficacy as evident within the theatrical theme where teachers coped by being actors within the school, covering up their inadequacies and lack of confidence by putting on a show.

The coaching journey stimulated growth out of the negativity of the theatrical and war themes and entered into a positive stage of development and change. It allowed for improved relationships amongst colleagues and team members and facilitated the development of effective teams. The coaching intervention took the participants out of the darkness of the military zone that was the theatre of the school and into a journey of discovery where participants were allowed to flourish and grow.

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Appendix 1 - The Coaching Intervention

Overview

In presenting my findings, I would like to begin by placing the work in context by providing an overview of the coaching intervention programme. This provides a brief synopsis of the goals individual's set themselves and the strategies they undertook to achieve their goals. I begin with an overview of each participant's individual focus, followed by the focus for the Year 1 class team, the Year 2 class team and then the Key Stage 1 Team.
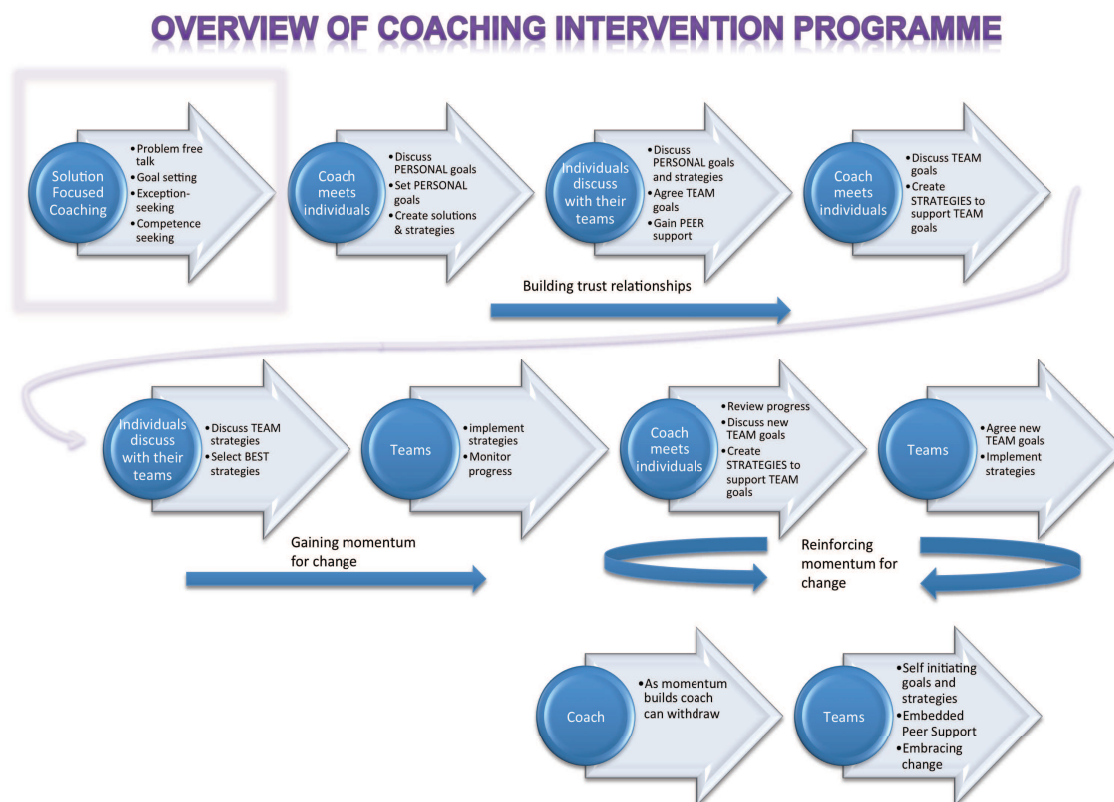

Figure 7: Diagrammatic representation of coaching intervention design

Stage 1 - Goal Setting – Individual Focus

Summary Table

Name	Role	Individual Focus
Lucy	Year 2 Class Teacher & Literacy Coordinator (Year 2)	To be more assertive with staff
Andrea	Year 1 Class Teacher	Time Management (Year 1)
Kathryn	Year 1 Teaching Assistant with additional responsibility for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)	Working Relationships (Year 1)

Figure 8: Individual Focus

The Discussions

Lucy

<u>Individual Focus: To be more assertive with staff in her role as Literacy Coordinator (Year 2)</u>

Within the coaching sessions Lucy raised many instances of challenges to her authority whereby staff refused to do as she asked and sabotaged meetings, training events and initiatives that she put in place. Lucy worked towards identifying strategies to manage these challenges, often pre-empting situations that might occur. Small steps were identified to guide her achievement towards these goals that Lucy followed up swiftly, often achieving her short-term goals before the next weekly session. She responded very well to goals and was keen to take on more and more every week as she saw what it was possible to achieve. Over the course of the coaching sessions, 11 sessions in all, she asserted herself in meetings and training events and in following through initiatives, including observations and feeding back to staff issues from those observations. By the end of the coaching programme Lucy felt she had achieved her goal and was keen to establish herself

with a new team in the new term, following many of the principles worked on during the course of the coaching.

Andrea

<u>Individual Focus: Time Management (Year 1)</u>

Andrea's individual focus was time management, something she had always struggled with and something that affected her functioning as a practitioner. Coaching conversations identified that time management regarding planning was a key issue, given that she would include unnecessary detail. Much of the focus was on trying to reduce the time given to planning. She put herself in situations which she considered risky, working from concise plans rather than lengthy plans. Despite her anxieties she found that she was no less effective as a practitioner in those lessons.

This work included her reflections on planning for the foundation subjects and made her think about a completely different way of managing the organisation and delivery of these. She felt she wanted to inspire the children to achieve more in these subjects. She reflected on the children's low expectations of themselves and their reliance on adult support. She wanted them to feel motivated to achieve and to do so independently of an adult. This led to the production of a range of activity packs and target cards and the children responded well to these.

Kathryn

<u>Individual Focus: Working Relationships (Year 1)</u>

Kathryn's key issue as a practitioner concerned her working relationship with a Teaching Assistant who was undergoing training as a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA). Alison supported the Y1 class when the teacher was timetabled for PPA time. Kathryn was the permanent Teaching Assistant in this class and had several issues with this arrangement.

Kathryn was of the opinion that the work the children were set was not pitched at the right level and was therefore not at the expected standard. The reasoning for this was that Alison did not know the children or what they were capable of achieving. Another issue for Kathryn was that Alison didn't seem to recognise the knowledge or skill that Kathryn brought to the class. Kathryn was not involved in either planning or evaluation as would normally have been the case if the teacher had taken the class. Kathryn arranged to speak to the class teacher regarding her concerns and a meeting was then arranged with Alison, Kathryn and the class teacher as a whole team. Alison was invited to observe Kathryn at work in the class with the teacher and the children. The teacher also clarified the role Kathryn played in her class around joint planning and evaluation. Kathryn managed to resolve the issue amicably and achieved her objectives. She became involved in the planning and evaluation of lessons, often leading the process.

Stage 2 – Goal Setting Team Focus

Summary Table

Team	Members	Roles	Team Focus
Year 2	Lucy Deborah Elizabeth	Year 2 Class Teacher Year 2 Learning Support Assistant Year 2 Teaching Assistant	Classroom organisation
Year 1	Andrea Kathryn	Year 1 Class Teacher Year 1 Teaching Assistant with additional responsibility for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)	The Introduction of the 'Lexia' phonics computer software programme to the whole class.

Figure 9: Team Focus

The Discussions

Year 2 Class

Team Focus: Classroom Organisation

Lucy and her Year 2 class team were keen to explore other ideas within the coaching sessions alongside their individual goals. This encouraged the development of a team focus, classroom organisation. Lucy, Elizabeth and Debra looked at issues, solutions and strategies in their individual coaching sessions and then afterwards they came together as a team to discuss and to agree solutions and strategies that they would all implement.

The team worked very effectively together in recognising areas for improvement and in trying out different ideas to effect change. The commitment and cohesiveness of the team was paramount to the success of their goals. It was a large task, made all the more difficult because of the teaching space which consisted of two separate rooms, one of which was used as an overspill room for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Lucy had inherited this arrangement when she was given the class in September 2008. She identified one of her challenges to be the integration of the children with special educational needs into the one classroom to enable them to feel part of the mainstream class. This would then leave the other room free for another use. The team came in to work on the rooms during the holiday and after school to begin the time consuming process of rearranging furniture, equipment and resources.

The classroom layout was changed several times before they felt as a team that it worked, trying it out in practice and rearranging groups as need be until they felt they had the optimum arrangement. This had various spin-off effects. The special needs children were seen to engage in a way that had not seemed possible before. One particular child who had extreme behavioural problems took well to the new arrangements and settled particularly well to the new regime. This excited the staff and engendered the desire to tackle more issues within the classroom.

Lucy described herself as disorganised and she felt that this impacted on the children and on the effectiveness of lessons. She acknowledged that the class was left untidy at the end of the school day, leaving her with the task of clearing away after the children had gone home or clearing up the following morning, before the start of the school day. There were no systems in place to encourage the children to tidy away or to collect things. It transpired that Lucy did everything for the children. The focus then became finding ways to make the children more independent. The team came up with a range of solutions and implemented them immediately. Trays were introduced for children to place and retrieve their work, stationary items were set up for tables and children were given jobs of responsibility. These small changes made big differences in the classroom and once again the team were inspired to move on with other issues.

Transition was raised as a problem in school. It is a large school with 3 quads and the children had some way to go before accessing the yard. On the way children were picking things up from displays, pushing, running ahead and were generally very boisterous and very noisy. Coaching sessions focused on solutions to these problems. They came up with giving those children who were continually picking things up objects to carry, those that were running ahead jobs of responsibility, those that were pushing were placed at the front of the queue with the job of holding the door to let the others through. There was also the idea of taking the class out in groups of three, each member of staff being responsible for a group. Additional to this, the groups were rewarded for good behaviour on transition to and from the yard.

Difficulties were also identified when the boys went to the toilet. They stayed there too long and had to be ushered along. Staff investigated arrangements used by other staff with their classes and also reduced the numbers going at any one time.

Transitions in the classroom were also a difficulty, from table to carpet and carpet to table. They came up with the idea of sending children to the carpet one group at a time, in orderly rows, starting at the front and working their way to the back. They also came up with the idea of using music to signal transition time and lowering the music to signal when children needed to listen. This idea came from one of the staff

that was used to working in the nursery and knew of the systems in place in this setting. Alongside this they put reward systems in place to encourage children to get to their place early and to sit quietly waiting for the music to stop and the lesson to begin. Again this worked well and staff were delighted to see the progress that the children were able to make in a relatively short space of time.

The work that was achieved is typical of work that might be done in an advisory capacity but the difference was that that the team had ownership of the problem and the solutions. The speed of response to put initiatives in place was impressive and each success brought a new impetus for more change. The team were motivated by success and keen to take on more. Change was achieved in a short period of time.

Year 1 Class

Team Focus: The Introduction of the 'Lexia' phonics computer software programme to the whole class.

This dual focus worked so well, the same arrangement was suggested to the team working in Year1. They came up with the idea of introducing a phonics software programme, 'Lexia' to the whole class. This was something that Andrea said should have been done a long time ago but she had never got round to doing it.

This initiative involved one member of staff assessing each pupil and then taking him/her through the sofware programme. The children were required to access the programme three times each week. This presented a timetabling difficulty but this was resolved through negotiation with other members of staff. There were 18 children in the class. Those that had been identified as most in need were introduced to the programme first and the others followed until all children had access to the programme.

This phased approach worked particularly well and seemed to bring further momentum to the work. All children eventually accessed the programme which was a significant achievement in a short space of time.

This approach highlighted Kathryn's preferred style of working, with a preference for clear direction on what the teacher would like her to do. She was extremely focused

and drove the project through with the class teacher giving her the go ahead to do so. This project was completed within weeks of the initial discussions and highlights the usefulness of the coaching conversation to effect change.

Stage 3 - Key Stage 1 (KS1) Team Focus

Summary Table

Team	Members	Roles	Team Focus
Key Stage 1	Lucy Deborah Elizabeth Andrea Kathryn	Year 2 Class Teacher Year 2 Learning Support Assistant Year 2 Teaching Assistant Year 1 Class Teacher Year 1 Teaching Assistant with additional responsibility for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)	The development of a spare classroom for project work across the whole school

Figure 10: Key Stage 1 Focus

The Discussions

Key Stage 1 Focus

The development of a spare classroom for project work across the whole school

The individual team initiatives had gone so well it seemed appropriate to work on a whole KS1 focus that all could agree on. Lucy took the initiative on this as Team Leader and agreed to discuss with the team what such an initiative might look like. The decision was made to develop the spare room that was originally part of Lucy's classroom into a themed room that had the potential to be a resource for the whole school. Each member of the KS1 team discussed ideas within the coaching sessions of what they could bring to the project. The team were keen to involve the whole school within the initiative and this had different degrees of success.

The KS1 curriculum is topic based and the team thought it would be a good idea to create an environment within the room based on their current topic, 'The Jungle'. It

was anticipated that this could become a room that could inspire the children creatively and that it could be a project that could involve the whole KS1 team and potentially the whole school. The team came up with a host of ideas and possibilities. Work began on the project. Elizabeth was released from her role to put up displays and she created a great environment within the room using low level netting across the room intertwined with leaves to resemble a jungle canopy. Other great ideas followed, putting desks together to resemble jeeps, tunnels, plants, a video-link to a live waterhole, a listening station, a creative writing area, a role play area, a music area, and a story area. Lucy took it upon herself to visit a school which had delivered a project on working with parents through a story chair project. Each took an area of interest to develop.

Although Lucy's team (Year 2 class) were well behind the project, Andrea and Kathryn (Year 1 class) were not as involved. Lucy herself acknowledged that they should have been included more in the early stages of planning. Although they were informed of the project and thought it was a good idea, they never took ownership of it.

Andrea had planned to take her children into the room to do creative work but the sessions were cancelled for one reason or another and as Andrea said, it was not seen as urgent and therefore didn't get done.

Kathryn was full of ideas as to how it could be progressed. She preferred to go down the route of starting parent groups or after school groups as a way of working with the children to produce artwork.

Elizabeth worked with a parent volunteer to help the children grow plants which could be used as displays.

Meetings were held with whole school staff to disseminate the idea and to encourage input from others. The art coordinator suggested that it could become a whole school project and extend into the corridors and cloakrooms, the dance teacher thought she would like to incorporate it into her work as an end of term performance,

as did the music teacher and the singing teacher. The interest was there. There were early signs that this would take off as a whole school project and have classes involved for an end of term performance. The head teacher supported the initiative. It was thought to be especially important in establishing relationships with parents and the community and was seen as a positive way to end the term and the year.

Unfortunately unexpected situations occurred that held up the project and this meant that its ambitions were never realised. Redundancies were announced for the Teaching Assistant's (TA's), after which neither the teachers or the TA's could concentrate on the task and all efforts went on planning for interviews and supporting TA's in respective teams. Relationships became strained.

In addition to this Lucy had a child make an accusation against her resulting in police and social services involvement and an investigation. Lucy and her team found this incredibly difficult to handle. Parents began to ostracise Lucy and Debra and they withdrew their children from class initiatives. Understandably the team lost focus. Lucy found herself unable to go into class on some days.

Consequently the themed room never realised its potential and the performance never came to fruition. Communication broke down with staff in school and in the big scheme of things it didn't seem important.

Appendix 2 - Diary of Events

Date	Event
13th February 2009:	Meeting with Head teacher to agree the focus of the research project.
20th February 2009:	Half Term
27th February 2009:	Lucy Coaching Session 1 Introductory session
	Andrea Coaching Session 1 Introductory session
6th March 2009	Debra Coaching Session 1 Introductory Session
	Kathryn Coaching Session 1 Introductory Session
	Elizabeth Coaching Session 1 Introductory Session
	Andrea Coaching Session 2 Individual Focus: Time Management
13th March:	Annual Leave
20th March 2009	Redundancies announced this week. Currently 9 Teaching Assistant's (TA's). 6 posts available 1 nursery assistant, 2 SEN posts, 1TA, 2TA's with PPA responsibility. All TA's to apply for posts. Interviews 3rd June 2009.
	Lucy Coaching Session 2: Individual Focus: To be More Assertive with Staff In her Role as Literacy Coordinator. Team Focus: Classroom Organisation
	Debra Coaching Session 2: Individual Focus: Knowledge of the Curriculum. Team Focus: Classroom organization
	Kathryn Coaching Session 2: Individual Focus: Clarification of

	Role
	Andrea Coaching Session 3: Individual Focus: Time Management.
27th March 2009	Lucy Coaching session 3: Individual Focus To be more assertive with staff in her role as Literacy Coordinator. Team Focus: Classroom organisation
	Debra Coaching Session 3: Individual Focus: Preparation for Interview. Team Focus: Classroom organization
	Kathryn Coaching Session 3: Individual Focus: Clarification of Role
3rd April 2009	Elizabeth Coaching session 2: Individual Focus: Interview Preparation. Team Focus: Classroom Organisation. KS1 Focus: Themed Room
	Lucy Coaching Session 4:Individual Focus: To be more assertive with staff in her role as Literacy Coordinator. Team Focus: Classroom organization. KS1 Focus: Themed Room identified as possible focus.
	Debra Coaching Session 4: Individual Focus Interview Preparation. Team Focus: Classroom Organisation
	Andrea Coaching Session 4:Individual Focus: Time Management. Team Focus: Introduction of Lexia phonics software programme to class.
	Kathryn Coaching Session 4:Individual Focus: Clarification of Role. Team Focus: Introduction of Lexia phonics software programme to class
Easter break	Schools break up for Easter. Back the week of the 24th March

	2009 but I am on a residential course that week.
1st May 2009:	Uncertainty expressed over which classes teachers will have and which classes TA's will be allocated to.
	Lucy Coaching Session 5 Focus To be more assertive with staff in my role as Literacy Coordinator. Team Focus: Organisation of the Classroom. KS1 Focus: Themed Room
	Kathryn Coaching Session 5: Individual Focus: Clarification of Role. Team Focus: Introduction of Lexia phonics software programme to class
8th May 2009:	Meeting with Head teacher re: Feedback
	Tension around interviews and the possibility of some staff losing their jobs.
	Elizabeth Coaching Session 3: Individual Focus: Preparation for Interview. Team Focus: Classroom Organisation. KS1 Focus: Themed Room
	Andrea Coaching Session 5: Individual Focus: Time Management. Team Focus: Introduction of Lexia phonics software programme to class
	Debra Coaching Session 5: Individual Focus: Preparation for Interview. Team Focus: Classroom Organsation. KS1 Focus: Themed Room
	Lucy Coaching Session 6: Individual Focus: To be more assertive with staff in her role as Literacy Coordinator. Team Focus: Classroom Organisation. KS1 Focus: Themed Room
15th May 2009 :	Some clarification of which classes teachers will have next year and implications for who they will be working with in

	teams. School Focus highlighted as Early Years Foundation Stage and developing the outdoor area. Foundation Stage Leader and KS1 Leader trying to work as a team.
	Andrea Coaching Session 6: Individual Focus: Time Management. Team Focus: Introduction of Lexia phonics software programme to class. KS1 Focus: Themed Room
	Kathryn Coaching Session 6: Individual Focus: Preparation for Interviews. Team Focus: Introduction of Lexia Phonics software programme to class. KS1 Focus: No involvement as yet:- Running a parent group. Running an after school club
	Lucy Coaching session 7 Individual Focus: To be more Assertive with Staff in her Role as Literacy Coordinator. Individual Focus: To move from a good lesson to an outstanding lesson. Team Focus: Classroom organisation/ outdoor space. KS1 Focus: Themed Room (picked up that she should have involved staff from Y1)
22nd May 2009	Difficulties in school regarding tensions around redundancies. Andrea applying for new job at a different school, KS1 Leader. Lucy not in school today
	Andrea Coaching Session 7: Individual Focus: Time Management. Individual Focus:Tailoring Foundation Subjects on an afternoon to the children. Team Focus: Introduction of Lexia phonics software programme to class
	Kathryn Coaching Session 7: Individual Focus: Interview preparation. Team Focus: Introduction of Lexia phonics software programme to class. KS1 Focus: Themed Room (Planning meeting did not take place. TA's directed by management to look at SEN). Running a parent group. Running an after school club

Half Term	School breaks up for Half Term
5th June 2009	Tensions in school around interviews. Divisive groups in school. Intimidation of staff up for interview. Interviews have been held. Some staff without jobs. They have isolated themselves . Tension in school. Tensions in school around redundancies for Learning Support Staff. People close to them are not gelling with those who have jobs. Teachers informed of which classes they will have in September 2010. Andrea in KS1, Lucy in KS2. New difficulties with role. KS1 Leader but teaching Y3. Andrea wanting the role of KS1 Leader. Andrea has gone from a satisfactory to a good teacher. Andrea has begun attending Senior Team meetings in her role as maths coordinator/ Teacher Governor. Light bulb moment for Lucy. That's where It is, leadership skills. The problem is in the job description of KS1 Leader. I have done more leadership in terms of literacy. I have implemented things but for literacy. In terms of leading KS1, I haven't done as much. I should have been leading Andrea and improved her teaching. With the role in school, possibly the idea would be to lead KS1 but there were so many problems in literacy it took over. In September the role is to lead KS1 when teaching in KS2. Conflict of roles with Foundation Stage Leader and KS1 Leader both working in the Foundation Stage. Cameron, child with SEN aggressive in school, throwing himself around. Unsettled all week. Allegation made by child that class teacher had pulled him. The child had been shouting allegations for the previous couple of weeks. Taken out of school.
	Debra Coaching Session 6: Individual Focus: Clariification of new role. Team Focus: Transitions

	Lucy Coaching Session 8:Individual Focus: To be more assertive with staff in her role as Literacy Coordinator. Team Focus: Classroom organisation. Team Focus: Transition. KS1 Focus: Themed Room
	Andrea Coaching Session 8: Individual Focus: Time Management. Individual Focus: Tailoring Foundation Subjects on an afternoon to the children. Individual Focus: To increase the independence of the children. Team Focus: Introduction of Lexia phonics software programme to class.
	Kathryn Coaching Session 8: Individual Focus: Clarification of new role. KS1 Focus Themed Room - Involving parents
12th June 2009	Cameron has settled down. Threat to Lucy from Andrea. Going through the threshold. After the KS1 Leadership role. Andrea had a difficult week. She didn't want to be in school. Felt stuck in the middle. A difficult atmosphere regarding the outcome of the interviews. Bad feeling in school due to outcome of the interviews. 2 staff who did not get jobs isolating themselves and keeping out of staffroom.
	Elizabeth Coaching Session 4: Individual Focus: Clarification of future role. KS1 Themed Room
	Debra Coaching Session 7: Individual Focus: Clarity of future role. Team Focus: Transitions. KS1 Focus: Themed Room
	Lucy Coaching session 9: Individual Focus: To be more assertive with staff in her role as Literacy Coordinator. Individual Focus: To be more assertive with staff in her role as Team Leader. Individual Focus: Clarity of role in September 2010. Team Focus: Classroom organisation. Team Focus: Transition. KS1 Focus: Themed Room

	Andrea Coaching Session 9 Individual Focus: Time Management. Individual Focus: Tailoring Foundation Subjects on an afternoon to the children. Individual Focus: To increase the independence of the children. Team Focus: Introduction of Lexia phonics software programme to class.
	Kathryn Coaching Session 9 Individual Focus: Clarity of future role KS1 Focus: Themed Room - Involving parents
19th June 2009	No staff available for coaching. High level of staff absence and staff football match
26th June 2009	Appointment to meet with head teacher to discuss feedback. Accusation from a child in Lucy's class that she had pulled him. Relationships with parents strained. Lack of team cohesiveness. No joint planning around topics. Relationships still strained since interviews. Andrea went home unwell in the afternoon. Thinking of September. Just need to get to the end of term. Risk to KS1 Leadership role. Lucy might be doing lower KS2 Leadership. Seeking clarity. Staff thinking of September, just trying to get to the end of term.
	Lucy Coaching Session 10 Individual Focus To be more assertive with staff in my role as Literacy Coordinator. Team Focus: Organisation of the Classroom. KS1 Focus: Themed Room No time to develop it. Staff not released.
3rd July 2009	Annual Leave
10th July 2009	Continuing concerns since the accusation. Bad feeling from parents and children. Child's parent blanking Lucy and Debra. All parents aware that Lucy will be teaching their children in September. Roles confirmed. Lucy to lead KS1 and Y3/4 until Deputy Head returns from long term sick.

	Elizabeth Coaching Session 5 Individual Focus: New Role/ planning for next year. Team Focus: Classroom organisation. Team Focus: Transitions.
	Debra Coaching Session 8 Individual Focus: New role/ planning for next year. Team Focus: Classroom organisation
	Lucy Coaching Session 11 Individual Focus To be more assertive with staff in my role as Literacy Coordinator. Team Focus: Organisation of the Classroom. KS1 Focus: Themed Room.
	Andrea Coaching Session 10 Individual Focus: Time Management. Individual Focus: Tailoring Foundation Subjects on an afternoon to the children. Individual Focus: To increase the independence of the children. Team Focus: Introduction of Lexia phonics software programme to class
	Kathryn Coaching Session 10 Individual Focus: New role/ planning for next year. Team Focus: Introduction of Lexia phonics software programme to class. KS1 Focus: Involving parents
17th July 2009	Fair on at school. Lucy not taking PPA. Able to free people up. Debrief with Head Teacher

Appendix 3 - Summary of participants, sessions and topics

Participant	Session	Topic
Lucy	1	Introductory session covering career history and current role in school. Hopes for the future.
Lucy	2	To be more assertive in the literacy coordinator role. Focus on the delivery of training to staff on the Professional Development Day. Working on increasing confidence. Dealing with negativity
Lucy	3	To be more assertive in the literacy coordinator role. Professional Development Day rescheduled. Focus on the planning and preparation for staff training on children's reading. Preparing for teacher observations of literacy lessons. Looking to extend Lucy's knowledge of literacy in the foundation stage. Review of classroom organization. Review of teacher and TA's organisational skills. Review of children's organisational skills
Lucy	4	To be more assertive in the literacy coordinator role. Focus on the planning and preparation for follow up staff training on children's reading. Involving other staff in the preparation and delivery of staff training. Focus on the delivery of feedback to staff on

		teacher observation of literacy lessons. Managing classroom displays of literacy across the school Classroom organization. Reorganisation of classroom furniture. Introduction of equipment and resources to enable children's independent access.
Lucy	5	To be more assertive in the literacy coordinator role. Reflection on the delivery of recent training on guided reading and reviewing learning points. Focus on raising standards for literacy. Planning and preparation for additional literacy training. Planning for classroom observations with the head teacher and informal interviews. Focus on classroom organisation and review of actions implemented. Focus on improving the children's independence skills in the classroom. Focus on the development of an unused classroom into a themed room for whole school use
Lucy	6	To be more assertive in the literacy coordinator role. Focus on the planning and preparation of guided reading training to staff. Extending topic work to Y3 and Y4
Lucy	7	To be more assertive in the literacy coordinator role. Focus to move from a good to an outstanding lesson. To develop the outdoor space in the foundation stage. To acquire knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. Focus on the development of the themed classroom
Lucy	8	To be more assertive in the literacy coordinator role.

		Reflections on literacy training delivered to staff and lessons learned. Dealing with negativity and confrontation with staff. Focus on the issues surrounding a change of class and a change of Key Stage and resulting difficulties leading KS1. Threat to leadership role. Confusion over the role and the need to seek clarity. Children's transitions from carpet to table and vice versa. Children's transitions to and from the playground. Development of a themed classroom using a jungle theme. Review of staff interest to stage an end of term performance based on the jungle theme
Lucy	9	To be more assertive in the literacy coordinator role. Planning and preparation for feedback to staff on literacy monitoring. Reflections on classroom observations and feedback to staff and lessons learned. To be more assertive in the role of team leader. Reflections on the role of KS1 team leader exploring understandings and expectations. Reflections on the implementation of initiatives as KS1 leader. Focus on the need for clarity surrounding the role of team leader for September 2010. Reflections on transitions within class and around school and review of initiatives implemented with further strategies agreed. Reflections on children as independent learners and review of initiatives implemented with further actions agreed. Focus on planning for the development of the jungle themed room. Focus on planning for the end of term performance based on the jungle theme
Lucy	10	Reflections on the accusation by a parent of a

		physical assault on her child. Reflections on the progress made towards the development of assertiveness with staff in the literacy coordinator role. Reflections on the progress made towards the development and use of the jungle themed room. Reflections on the progress made towards the development of the children's independence. Reflections on transitions within class and around school. Focus on gaining a better understanding of the leadership role for September 2010
Lucy	11	Reflections on the work undertaken over the course of the coaching intervention. Reflections on the feelings surrounding the accusation by a parent of a physical assault on her child. Reflections on the progress made towards asserting herself in her role as literacy coordinator. Reflections on the organisation of the classroom. Reflections on the independence of the children. Reflections on transitions within class and around school. Focus on the Early Years and the outdoor space. Focus on the leadership role for September 2010 and asserting herself as KS1 leader following confirmation by the head teacher that she will retain that role. Focus on the role of lower KS2 leader. Focus on planning and preparation for September 2010 - teaching in KS2
Andrea	1	Introductory session, career history and current role
Andrea	2	Focus on time management. Reflections on herself as a perfectionist. Reflections on planning and the

		need for detail
Andrea	3	Focus on time management and strategies implemented. Diary in place to document use of time. Focus on enabling all pupils in her class to access the LEXIA phonics software programme. Plan in place to secure the phased implementation
Andrea	4	Reflections on time management and strategies. New strategies identified. Review of diary. Discussion around potential sources of support. Focus on enabling all pupils in class to access the LEXIA phonics software programme. Phased implementation has begun. Timetabling issues to resolve
Andrea	5	Reflections on time management and strategies. Actions determined with additional strategies. Review of diary. Support in place. Planning for the implementation of the LEXIA phonics software programme to enable all children access. Phased implementation continues. Need to access more computers. Reflections on the use of a themed room for curriculum based work
Andrea	6	Reflections on time management and strategies. Review of diary. Reflections on additional workload when already stretched. Focus on managing stress. Establishing priorities. Seeking support. Reflections on the progress of the implementation of the LEXIA phonics software programme. Continued phased implementation. Additional time secured in IT suite.

		Reflections on the themed room and its potential for curriculum based activities.
Andrea	7	Reflections on an application for a KS1 leader post. Focus on planning for the foundation stage subjects with the initiation of new initiatives. Reflections on time management and new strategies. Focus on a new class for September 2010 with less support and implications for time management. Reflections on the progress of the implementation of the LEXIA phonics software programme and planning for further development. Reflections on ideas for curriculum based activities for the themed room
Andrea	8	Reflections on the decision not to apply for the KS1 post. Reflections on strategies to improve time management. Reflections on the progress made towards the implementation of the LEXIA phonics software programme to enable the whole class access. Further actions planned. Focus on planning and preparation for the foundation stage subjects and review of initiatives implemented. Focus on improving the independence of the children. Focus on planning for September 2010
Andrea	9	Reflections on time management strategies. Reflections on the children's independence and ability to complete tasks set to a time limit. Strategies discussed and actioned. Reflections on the introduction of the LEXIA phonics software programme to the whole class and planning of the same for next year

Andrea	10	Focus on planning for September 2010. Focus on support required for new support staff joining Andrea's class. Reflections on time management and completion of all outstanding tasks. Reflections on the implementation of the LEXIA phonics software programme and establishing planning for next year. Reflections on the progress made towards the children's independence. Focus on planning for the foundation subjects for next year and the implementation of new initiatives
Kathryn	1	Introductory session, career and current post. Reflections on the lack of clarity of her current role
Kathryn	2	Focus on the difficulties of a working relationship with a colleague. Reflections on issues impacting on these difficulties. Plan of action devised to tackle the issues
Kathryn	3	Reflections on actions undertaken last week. Focus on additional plans necessary to take the work forward. Concerns expressed regarding redundancies for TA's
Kathryn	4	Reflections on actions undertaken last week. Issues resolved through the implementation of strategies. Focus on implementing the LEXIA phonics software programme to enable all children in class access
Kathryn	5	Reflections on Kathryn's working relationship with her colleague. Now seen as positive. Meetings in

		place and seen to be useful. LEXIA phonics software programme introduced to 5 pupils. All have had assessment. Plans actioned to introduce more children to the programme
Kathryn	6	Review of the progress of the implementation of the LEXIA phonics software programme. 10 children have now had assessments and have access to the programme. Plans firmed up for other children to access the programme. Focus on supporting the children's independent work skills. Focus on running after school activities and involving parents with their children. Action plan to address ideas formulated. Focus on interview preparation for the TA post
Kathryn	7	Review of the progress of the implementation of the Lexia phonics software programme. 16 children have now been assessed and access the programme. Plans firmed up for the rest of the pupils to access the programme. Focus on interview preparation for the TA post. Reflections on progress against the action plan to develop an after school club for pupils and their parents. Additional actions agreed
Kathryn	8	Reflections on interview. Successful and appointed to promoted post. Reflection on the impact of redundancies on school staff and subsequent difficulties with relationships. Focus on preparation and planning for new post. Action plan firmed up regarding meetings with key staff and preparation

		for those meetings. Reflections on the implementation of the LEXIA phonics software programme and planning in regard to this for next year. Review of progress made against the action plan to develop an after school club for children and their parents. Reflections on the need to develop the team of TA's. Consideration of new roles for the TA's to lift their presence in school. An action plan established.
Kathryn	9	Review of the progress made towards the action plan to develop an after school club for children and their parents. Focus on planning for the new post. Further actions addressed to help to clarify the role. Review of the progress made towards the action plan to develop the Teaching Assistant's team
Kathryn	10	Review of the progress made towards the action plan to develop an after school club for children and their parents. Review of the implementation of the LEXIA phonics software programme. All in place. Focus on additional activities the TA's could do as a team. Action plan agreed. Planning for Kathryn's new post. Change of focus in regard to Year groups following Kathryn's new role in September. Focus on planning for September 2010.

Appendix 4 - Exemplar showing detail of the content of a session.

Session 1 - 27th February 2009

Session 1 was an introductory session used to formulate Lucy's goal for future coaching sessions.   Lucy was very clear on her goal which was to be more assertive with staff in her role as literacy coordinator. There was an exploration around why this was so important to her and this was picked up in future sessions.   She continued to work on this goal for the duration of the coaching intervention although other goals were introduced in subsequent sessions that she worked on simultaneously. The following sessions focus on this main goal and have been structured to provide an indication of the content of each session and to inform how subsequent sessions followed on from the previous session.

Session 2 - 20th March 2009

Goal: To be more assertive with staff in her role of literacy coordinator. The coaching conversation focused on her reasons for wanting to tackle this issue. Confidence was raised as an issue in terms of delivering training, addressing staff meetings, observing classroom practice and providing feedback. The increased size of the school compared to her last school was a significant factor contributing to her lack of confidence. Also her lack of knowledge and experience of teaching in Key Stage 1 and her lack of knowledge of the literacy curriculum across the primary phase. This was also Lucy's first leadership role and therefore a lack of experience in dealing with and managing staff. There was also the negativity of staff and the hostility expressed in taking on new initiatives that moved away from established practice that took its toll on Lucy's confidence.   It was difficult to enthuse staff with alternative ways of working. Teachers were not carrying out work that they had been asked to do, arguing that they didn't have time.   Lucy felt that she should have challenged staff when this happened but she didn't.

The coaching conversation explored what was going well. The delivery of joint training on the assessment of phonics with the head teacher had gone well with the head teacher taking the lead. Lucy was at her most confident when delivering

information jointly with the head teacher and this became the starting point for this work. Staff training delivered by Lucy on handwriting was thought to have perhaps gone better than she first thought. She was keen to point out that she had not imposed anything on staff but rather the training had provided staff with the opportunity to review the handwriting scheme and to identify parts of the scheme that they liked. Lucy had asked for feedback from staff on the progress they had made towards introducing Big Writing into their classrooms. Some staff had not started it but others had given positive feedback about how they thought it could work and one member of staff had approached Lucy after the meeting for further advice.

The coaching conversation explored areas for development:

- Whole school assessment of phonics.
- The monitoring of staff planning sheets to ensure that staff are delivering phonics in line with school policy.
- Children to be reassessed.

Guided Reading was recognised as the biggest development and the biggest challenge. A Professional Development Day had been set aside for this training to be delivered jointly by the local advisory teacher for literacy and Lucy. The development of guided reading would then be followed up by Lucy through looking at teachers planning and lesson observations. Lucy recognised that she needed to become more knowledgeable on literacy in the Foundation Stage and decided on several routes for this. These included:

- Meeting with the local authority advisor and inspector for the foundation stage.
- Attending training provided by the authority on literacy in the Foundation Stage.
- Visiting a school with a Foundation Stage Unit that offers good practice to provide a benchmark.

- Researching information on the internet.

Hoped for outcomes were explored.

- Training to be well received by staff .
- Teachers to begin delivering guided reading immediately following the training. Staff to be enthusiastic about guided reading and to see it as an enjoyable activity for the children.
- Teachers to be confident in their planning and delivery.
- Teachers to feel confident to approach Lucy if they have any queries or concerns.

Actions following the conversation.

- To follow up Big Writing in the Foundation Stage.
- To observe identified staff in the delivery of a Big Writing lesson.
- To provide advice to staff on how to extend this work.
- To take the lead in providing feedback to staff on observations throughout the school.
- To identify relevant training provided by the local authority.
- To arrange a meeting with the local authority advisor and inspector for the foundation stage

Session 3 - 27th March 2009

The session began by reflecting on the goal set last session and the actions taken towards reaching the goal. There had been a significant development since the previous session in that the Professional Development Day had now been cancelled.

Lucy was able to explore what had gone well. Since last session Lucy had looked at reading throughout the school with the head teacher and had taken the lead in feeding back at the staff meeting. Staff were asked to bring examples of work to the meeting for task based work and this had allowed discussion. Lucy received some

excellent feedback from the head teacher regarding her input at the staff meeting and development points were identified regarding taking the work forward. The meeting started off very positively. Lucy reported that she felt a lot better, a lot more relaxed. More staff had come to the meeting prepared with work, ready to do the task.

Areas for Development. Lucy was able to reflect on some learning points from this training session. She identified that she used to give too much information in staff meetings and staff were thought to find this too overwhelming. She also recognised that she needed to check what she had asked teachers to do and follow these actions up. Lucy identified that she needed to do literacy observations in every classroom. She was aware that she would need to challenge staff who hadn't followed what had been requested. She also felt that she would need to prepare staff for any feedback that was to be given in a staff meeting so that there would be no surprises. Since last session two courses had been highlighted which would be useful for Lucy to attend, 'What does Excellent Practice look like in the Foundation Stage' and 'The New Foundation Stage". Two staff meetings had been set aside for literacy training. Lucy had agreed to plan and deliver these sessions jointly with the local authority literacy advisor. We discussed what success would look like with reference to staff training. Lucy believed that success could be measured when things took less time to plan and when they became part of normal practice. She also felt this could be evidenced by seeing the results of what staff had been asked to do.

Actions following the conversation

- Seeking advice from the local authority advisory teacher for the foundation stage on key issues such as planning and structure. Lucy had missed the advisory teacher during her last visit to school and this was therefore to follow up.
- The link school had been identified as an example of good practice in the foundation stage and a visit was to be organised.

- Lucy to search the internet for information on literacy in the foundation stage to gain an understanding in the interim period.

- Lucy to meet with the literacy advisor to plan the two training courses.

Session 4 - 3rd April 2009

This session began by looking at the actions agreed last session and the progress made towards the implementation of strategies to meet the goal. Lucy had started preparing for the two staff meetings. She had met with the local advisory teacher for literacy for planning purposes. It was agreed that the advisory teacher would lead the first session and Lucy would support. Lucy had also asked a colleague to support the session by informing the group how guided reading was operating in her class. The planning for both sessions had been done. In preparation for the training staff had been asked to put up displays in their classrooms reflecting the work they were doing on guided reading. Reading displays were noted to be going up in classrooms. Lucy had organised her display as had the Y4 teacher. The display in Y1 was in progress. A visit to the link school had been scheduled in order to look at best practice in the foundation stage.

Aspects that were going well. Positive developments since last session were that displays were going up in school linked to Big Writing. Lucy had received positive feedback from a colleague who informed her that she was enjoying teaching this lesson and that it was going well in her class.

Areas for Development. Lucy identified that classroom observations would need to be done. Lucy planned to do these herself and spent some time thinking about how to structure the feedback to staff. She decided to keep it positive and to suggest only one development as a means of keeping it as achievable as possible. She also felt that it was important to attribute the development to children rather than teachers.

Actions agreed following the conversation.

- Big Talk was identified as the equivalent to Big Writing for the foundation stage and Lucy agreed to access information from the internet to ensure that she had a good knowledge base of this programme.
- Lucy had not yet managed to meet up with the local advisory teacher for the foundation stage. An appointment still needed to be arranged.
- Lucy had applied for courses on the foundation stage as identified last session but they were fully booked. Lucy agreed to approach the advisory teacher for the foundation stage to see if there were any other ways of receiving training, advice and support in the immediate term given the difficulties experienced in school.

Session 5 - 1st May 2009

This session began by looking at developments that had occurred in school since last session. The local authority advisor had delivered the first training session to staff but Lucy was of the opinion that it had not been successful. She felt that the staff had not engaged well. One of the issues seemed to be that the training had appeared too formal and staff had not responded well to this. The training had been delivered in a classroom setting and relied heavily on a powerpoint presentation. Lucy had taken the opportunity to explore the dynamics of the group and described a number of staff as behaving unprofessionally, arriving late, texting during the presentation, heckling a colleague who was supporting the delivery of the course and leaving early. The head teacher had not been present during the training and this was felt to have made a big difference. The Y6 teacher who was the only other member of the leadership team present at the training informed the group that his class didn't like reading. Lucy thought this was an unprofessional comment to make as other members of his team then agreed with him and this set a negative tone to the training. Following the meeting Lucy felt as though she had to apologise to the advisory teacher for the behaviour of the staff. The following morning the head teacher asked for feedback on the training and to Lucy's surprise the feedback was positive.

Staff had just been informed of which classes they would be taking in the next academic year. There was a focus on preparation for September 2010 when Lucy would have a Y3 class and would therefore be a member of the KS2 team. She would be involved in joint planning with the Y4 teacher. Due to the long term sickness absence of the deputy head teacher Lucy had been given the role of KS2 leader. She was looking forward to the challenge of the new role although she recognised the inherent difficulties of working with a new team and with what she described as tricky characters.

Areas for Development. In order to address some of the negativity experienced at the last training session Lucy felt that the staff room should be used for the next training session as this would be much less formal. A significant development in the conversation was the issue of leadership which Lucy had recognised as key to moving staff forward. She had reviewed the ofsted report on leadership following this training to find that the Y6 teacher had been judged as good in his leadership as maths coordinator, a role he shared with a teacher from KS1. The conversation moved on to looking at the structure of the leadership team that consisted of the head teacher, Lucy as KS1 leader and literacy coordinator, the Y6 teacher and Y1 teacher as joint maths coordinators and the foundation stage leader. The focus of the leadership team was identified as raining standards in literacy. This was acknowledged to place pressure on Lucy as literacy coordinator to rally support from staff to implement strategies that would improve outcomes for children. Training on guided reading was planned for the next staff meeting. Lucy talked about feeling apprehensive and thought that the advisory teacher would also be apprehensive. Feelings around this level of apprehension were explored. Much of this stemmed from the negativity that was expressed by the KS2 team at the last training event. The advisory teacher had agreed to deliver the theoretical aspect of the training and Lucy had agreed to deliver the practical aspect with which she felt more comfortable.

Actions following the conversation.

- A visit to be made to the link school to look at best practice in the foundation stage.

- A meeting to be set up with the advisory teacher for the foundation stage.

- Observations with the head teacher on shared reading were outstanding as were informal interviews.

Session 6 - 8th May 2009

The session began with a review of strategies and actions identified last session. Planning had been done for the training to be held at the next staff meeting. This was organised to be less formal and more practically based with a change of room. A pack of information had been assembled for staff to take away with them. The head teacher would attend the training and Lucy thought this would make a difference to the level of staff participation. The staff would be divided in to teams. Lucy had spent some time thinking about how the staff would react on receiving the training in an effort to pre-empt issues that might arise. She felt that they would be negative in their response arguing that there was no time for guided reading but she had a suggestion of how this time could be freed up. Friday afternoons in school were currently used for assembly and golden time and Lucy felt that this time could be used for a guided reading session without the need to affect other curriculum subjects. Lucy talked about using this training opportunity to observe peoples reactions in their teams. The head teacher was planning to move around the teams and she felt that this would also provide useful feedback. Lucy had made arrangements to meet with the advisory teacher for the foundation stage with the head teacher. She had also visited the link primary school with the head teacher to look at the assessment of literacy in the foundation stage.

Actions following the conversation. Another visit was to be planned to meet with the teacher of the link primary school to discuss topic work and the possibility of extending this approach to Y3 and Y4. There was discussion around the need for an end product within the project work and an acknowledgement that they as a school had not managed to achieve an end product for the last few projects because they had lost momentum. Discussion focused around the reasons for this loss of momentum and how this could be managed better going forward.

Session 7 - 15th May 2009

The coaching conversation opened up with feedback on what had gone well since the previous session. The staff meeting was reported to have gone well. There was a lot of discussion about guided reading and the issue of time. Some staff were positive about the prospect of developing guided reading with their respective classes. There was still one member of staff who said she didn't have time but the meeting felt a lot better, partly due to the fact that Lucy had made sure that she had a good understanding of literacy in the Early Years. She was therefore able to address issues that arose with confidence. Lucy had managed to book herself on 3 courses to increase her knowledge and understanding of literacy in the Early years, 'Can't Write, But!" covering boys in reception and how to engage them in writing, 'Exploring the Early Years' and 'Assessment in the Early Years'. The link school had been contacted and the head teacher was going to return the call to Lucy regarding a visit to explore good practice in the early years. Lucy's head teacher was hoping to accompany her. The school's focus for development was the foundation stage and the development of the outdoor space and this was another area of interest during the forthcoming visit. One of the key issues to arise from the conversation was the internal struggle for leadership. Lucy was given the role of Key Stage 1 leader when she was first appointed to the school. The reorganisation of classes moved teaching staff in to different key stages. Lucy was asked to take her current class through in to the next year which took her out of KS1 and in to KS2. This left Lucy as KS1 leader but teaching in KS2, Julie as foundation stage leader and both trying to work as a team to develop the outdoor space for the nursery and reception children. Lucy was of the opinion that Julie seemed to be behind this initiative.

Session 8 - 5th June 2009

The coaching conversation began with what had gone well the previous week. Meetings were felt to be a lot better although there was still a level of negativity from individual staff which had resulted in confrontation and refusal to attend meetings. This happened at the KS2 booster training when teachers were asked to look at assessment results and identify children who needed specific interventions. It was felt that one particular member of staff may have felt threatened in this meeting as a

lot of her children were in the target group. Lucy considered that she might have felt that her teaching was going to be criticised. Within the training teachers were asked to move around the groups to look at the work produced across the school. This particular member of staff chose to work with another group during the session which meant that the work for her class wasn't done.   Information was given to her at the end of the session when she seemed keen to move the more able group on. Lucy was aware that this member of staff had been under pressure that day over other issues and attributed this to her not coping with the meeting. On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest level of coping, Lucy put herself on a 7/8, reasoning that she had not felt anxious during the confrontation that had resulted from the training.

Another issue that came out of the conversation was the interviews for Teaching Assistant's. Lucy talked about teachers fighting their TA's corner and this had resulted in confrontations in school with some TA's out to cause trouble. Divisive groups had developed creating a level of pressure in school that was described as very difficult to deal with. Confrontation had also developed over leadership roles. Julie had the role of foundation stage leader and was not accepting of Lucy being involved in discussions around the outdoor area for children in the foundation stage, seeing that as her role. There was also confrontation over the use of books for literacy in Y1 with Julie refusing to use them and Lucy seeing this as an entitlement for the children. There was an element of tension and pressure building in Lucy's portrayal of the week. She also reflected on the coming week and viewed this as a further accumulation of pressure and stress in her role of monitoring literacy with staff. Relationship difficulties were evident with her KS1 colleague Andrea. She was described by Lucy as tetchy, making snide comments directed at Lucy. The head teacher had overheard some of these comments and asked Lucy if she would like her to intervene but Lucy had declined. Lucy talked about Andrea now coming to the leadership meetings in her role as maths coordinator and teacher governor. It was felt that she perhaps saw Lucy as competition. Lucy described the culture in school as tough.

Conversation moved to the difficulties inherent in the change of classes for teachers next year and the knock on effect for leadership roles. The change of classes placed

Julie with Reception/ Y1 and Andrea with Y1/Y2. Lucy reflected on whether Andrea was moving away from her as team leader for KS1. She talked about herself as going now and that she saw next year as being tricky because of her teaching move in to class 3 and therefore KS2. However she reconciled the difficulty by rationalising that as KS1 leader she would need to have an overview of KS1, even though she wouldn't be teaching in KS1. Lucy talked about Andrea wanting the role of Key Stage 1 leader now that she was teaching in Y1/ Y2 and Lucy no longer had that level of involvement. She was aware that Andrea was questioning how Lucy could continue to fulfil that role when she was no longer involved at a teaching level. She felt that meetings would be difficult because of Andrea's perception of the difficulty of her leading the team from a distance. Lucy acknowledged that she still loved her role of KS1 leader and felt that she needed people to understand the difference between what she did and what Andrea did. Lucy made reference to her TLR and the level of responsibility that came with this.   The head teacher had informed Lucy that Andrea had been to her to inform her that she thought she could do the KS1 team leader role. The head teacher was aware of difficulties in the working relationship that had surfaced recently. She had overheard snide comments made in the public arena of the staff room and had asked Lucy if she wanted her to inform Andrea that this was unacceptable. However Lucy preferred this issue not to be addressed in this way. Lucy talked about Andrea having been invited to attend the senior leadership team meetings in her role as maths coordinator. However due to recent problems in relationships the head teacher had informed Lucy that she would not attend leadership meetings in September if these problems in working relationships continued. Lucy reflected on reasons why Andrea should think of herself as up to the KS1 leadership role. She felt that she would have had increased confidence in having moved from a satisfactory teacher to a good teacher in a recent Ofsted inspection. However Lucy felt that Andrea believed that she had done a better job than Lucy and that she was therefore capable of fulfilling the requirements of the KS1 leadership role but she countered this with the fact that it was not her role. Lucy reasoned that she had encouraged team work in her role as team leader and had not enforced anything on Andrea but rather democratic decisions had been taken. She acknowledged that they both lacked experience of teaching in KS1 when they took their classes at the beginning of the academic year having both had previous experience in KS2 and that both would have had the same knowledge

base. This led to Lucy reflecting on what she did in her role that Andrea didn't do and in this way justifying her role as KS1 leader. Lucy talked about her being employed as a leader not a teacher. She reflected that Andrea could have applied for her job when it was advertised had she been interested but chose not to, perhaps because at that time she did not feel as though she had the relevant skills.

Within the conversation there was a light bulb moment for Lucy where she realised the real nub of the problem and the issues that she needed to address, as evidenced by the following extract from our conversation. "That's where it is, leadership skills. The problem is in the job description of KS1 leader. I have done more leadership in terms of literacy. I have implemented things but for literacy. In terms of leading KS1, I haven't done as much. I show better leadership in literacy than in KS1. I should have been leading Andrea and improved her teaching" (L8:57-61). Lucy then went on to describe the confusion surrounding her role. She was interviewed for a KS2 teacher with TLR2 leadership role. There was also one post available for KS1 but there were no interviews held for that post and no appointment was made. When Lucy was offered the job she was employed for a KS2 position and she assumed it was for a KS2 job. She was given curriculum responsibility for literacy. At the time of appointment Lucy reflected that she did not know what the head teacher envisaged the leadership role to be but on the lower leadership scale she did not expect it to be to lead a Key Stage. On reflection she acknowledged that the idea may well have been to lead KS1 but that there were so many problems with literacy it took over. She acknowledged that going forward there was a need to put as much focus into leading KS1 as in leading on literacy. Lucy talked about her role in September. The head teacher had confirmed since last session that she wanted her to continue to lead the KS1 team. Lucy saw the challenge as being to lead the team from outside of her teaching area. By the end of the conversation she had come round to thinking that leading the KS1 team would be easier from a distance when she had no teaching commitment within the team.

Session 9 - 12th June 2009

The coaching conversation started with significant events that had arisen since the previous coaching session. Working relationship difficulties were still an issue for

Lucy. She expressed continued concerns that Andrea believed that she could do Lucy's job and was making communication difficult. Lucy was aware that Andrea was going through the pay threshold and with that would come levels of responsibility. An outcome of the conversation was that Lucy would have to speak with the head teacher to confirm what her role would be next September.

Following on from last session, Lucy's conversation turned to establishing herself as a viable member of the foundation stage/KS1 team working on plans for the outdoor space. The head teacher would also attend these team meetings. Lucy was keen for these meetings to be used as a forum to establish herself in the lower end of the school. Lucy reflected on her actions since last session. She had completed an observation of a literacy lesson but there were few positives to feedback. The head teacher was informed of the outcome of the observation and the follow up was for a child to be tracked in this class from a literacy stance. Lucy had arranged to attend teacher's planning meetings. Lucy talked about feeling more confident regarding assessment in the foundation stage following her attendance at courses. This had however made her very aware that there was a lot of work to do in regard to assessment within the early years and this was to be the head teacher's next focus. Issues had been raised in regard to literacy and phonics and Lucy recognised the need for her own professional development in terms of understanding what was required. Initiatives had been undertaken as joint ventures with the head teacher. Lucy again talked about her TLR with leadership responsibility and everything within the early years that needed to be done that term and was eager to take responsibility for this. It was agreed that an action plan would need to be drawn up with relevant staff. Lucy reflected on the use of joint PPA time and felt that this required more structure. Team meetings were also seen to require more structure and the head teacher had requested teams to follow a specific agenda and for the meetings to run to a particular time slot. Lucy planned to take more of a lead on assessment and planning, areas where she felt as a team they could really make some progress. Lucy talked about ways in which she could involve Andrea in preparation for the next team meeting. She decided to ask her to identify target children for assessment and to bring books to the meeting. It was thought that this could be in relation to literacy, numeracy or the foundation subjects and had yet to be decided. These children

would then be the focus for the half term. The following week they would look at planning for these children and group them across 2 classes. Lucy wanted to chair and minute the meeting to set the tone for meetings going forward. Lucy stressed that this assessment would be representative of the implementation of an initiative under her KS1 leadership. Lucy identified the need to look at literacy assessment, reading, writing, phonics, spelling and handwriting with a focus on basic skills. It was recognised that all the children should be working in books for literacy, phonics, spelling, handwriting and Big Write. It was also recognised that there should be an assessment folder for writing with a piece of work from target children. The head teacher had issued a list of items that needed to be addressed including guided reading, shared reading and children having an awareness of what they needed to do next. There were also the role play areas to consider for literacy, non fiction and story writing. Lucy had been involved with conducting lesson observations. She planned to provide feedback at the staff meeting regarding literacy monitoring although she was concerned that there was very little positive feedback to give regarding planning for guided reading or shared reading. The literacy advisor observed lessons with Lucy and was of the same opinion. They would need to review progress at the staff meeting.

Session 10 - 26th June 2009

The coaching session began with a review of developments since last session. A team meeting was held last week with a strict agenda. Lucy was to be involved with joint planning in the foundation stage in her role as literacy coordinator this term. There were continued difficulties expressed with regard to working relationships with Andrea. There had been less contact with Andrea and Lucy had no knowledge of what was going on in her class or what topic she was following. She had chosen to leave Andrea to her own planning. Andrea had been off ill and there had been no meeting this week. Lucy talked about being ready for September and had ideas for topic based work. There was discussion around the leadership role which had been raised with the head teacher. There still seemed to be some uncertainty around whether or not Lucy would be keeping the KS1 leadership role although there was an agreement that Lucy would keep an overview of what was happening. It was

agreed that this needed further discussion and clarification. There was also the possibility of Lucy leading the lower KS2 team.

In this session, Lucy talked about how she thought she had managed to become much more assertive in her dealings with staff in her literacy coordinator role. She considered classroom observations and staff meetings to have been much better. She still felt that her PPA time needed to be more structured with a clear focus. She considered that it was difficult to predict how things would develop with the formation of new teams for September and recognised that there was a lot still to be decided in terms of which staff were going to lead which teams. Lucy felt that attending courses had made a big difference to her being effective in her role because it enabled her to challenge with confidence.

Session 11 - 10th July 2009

Lucy had sought clarification from the head teacher regarding her leadership role for the next academic year and it was confirmed that she would lead the KS1 team and in the short term, the lower KS2 team, Y3 and Y4 with joint planning. Lucy talked of looking forward to continuing through to next year with the same class as this year. She also talked about looking forward to the leadership role of lower KS2, leading the supply member of staff. There was an acknowledgement that supply staff working with the current Y3 class had resulted in an unsettled class going in to Y4 and that because they were a very low group academically, differentiation would need to be a key consideration. They were also considered to be de-motivated and Lucy was reflecting on the need to prepare exciting activities with positive praise, reward and challenge. Lucy envisaged the classes to be set up as a mirror image of each other. Formalised meetings were recognised as necessary. There was also the recognition that it would be much more difficult to claw back if the momentum for change was lost within the first few weeks. Lucy talked about huge differences in her class from when she first took them in September 2008. The lower ability children in a Y2 class were then functioning at reception level. Lucy acknowledged that she would have support in class to work with those children with Statements of Special Educational Needs and this made the task seem manageable.

Lucy spoke about attending the Every Child a Talker launch and how this had caused some concern with Julie, the foundation stage leader as she thought a member of the foundation stage team would be attending. Lucy rationalised that she had attended as literacy coordinator to strengthen her understanding of literacy in the foundation stage. Lucy talked of staff not yet knowing that she would be Key Stage 1 Leader in September. She thought that Andrea would be fine about this acknowledging that relationships had settled down. Lucy was pleased that she had made a good start with resources for September. Lucy talked about the class team continuing to set individual targets and group targets. These targets were currently centred around the need to stretch individual children in her class who were trying to achieve the next sublevel. She believed that prior to the coaching the team would not have considered working to individual or group targets but she could see that the process of target setting had really made a difference. She believed she was more aware of things and not just accepting of the situation. She believed that it was not until she had taken time out of the classroom that she had had the opportunity to reflect on her practice. Lucy talked about an enthusiasm within the team to talk to each other and a motivation to achieve. She spoke of the team being very focused on their preparation for September for their new roles. Lucy talked about the need to maintain a focus with the foundation stage for the development of the outdoor space and with the early years and KS1 for literacy. Issues had been identified with the way the reception teacher was delivering the literacy curriculum. There was a lack of evidence of work in Y1 with the class teacher refusing to use books for the lower ability group. There was an acceptance from the class teacher that she had been wrong in her interpretation of the phonics curriculum and Lucy viewed this as a breakthrough. Perhaps she could also be convinced that the children needed to document their work in books. Lucy saw her role going forward as KS1 leader as providing support for Andrea who was keen to continue with topic based work. It was acknowledged that Julie would lead the meetings as Foundation Stage Leader. Lucy talked about the County having dropped the school to a level 4, indicating concern. As a consequence she spoke of the inevitability of consultants coming in to school to advise and of the Link Inspector coming in to observe teachers practice. However Lucy was able to reflect on the strides the school had made despite poor SATs results and recognised the effort that had been made over the year. She was reflective of the fact that the head teacher had put a positive slant on the regrading to

a level 4 in that it brought more money and support to the school. Every Child a Writer was a new initiative coming in to Y3/Y4 that Lucy would oversee as literacy coordinator.

In her final session Lucy reflected on her goal to improve her assertiveness as literacy coordinator. She believed this goal to have been particularly pertinent as it linked with the leadership target within her performance management. She felt that she had learnt more in a year than the previous 4 years. She knew she was not a natural leader and felt that she would not have applied for the job had she realised how much of a leadership role it entailed. She felt that the whole process of coaching had motivated her to want to do more and to aspire to the challenges that lay ahead of her in September.

Appendix 5 - Coaching Transcripts

Lucy

Coaching Session 2

20th March 2009

Focus:- To be more assertive and confident in my role as literacy coordinator

I still find observations and staff meetings difficult. I still find them a bit daunting.

Looking to the future I'm hoping my next move is going to be consultancy/deputy headship where I will need to be more assertive and confident.

I have thought about this for a while. I am confident in the classroom but not when I have to tell someone else what I want them to do.

My last school was completely different. The deputy headship is coming up there. We are all friends, it is very easy to talk to staff there. It's a lot more relaxed. Four teachers, one the deputy head and all worked together. Everything was split. There was no real hierarchy. TA's had the same roles. There was no need to put on a show.

I came in here when they were doing badly. They saw me as the next person that could do something, say something, then the ripple effect and having the confidence to follow that up. I feel the need to put on a show here. I would like to be more upfront. This is a much bigger staff than the last school. 8 teachers and lots of TA's. A large school. Staff seem to be expecting so much of me. I feel I need to show them what I can do but I lack the confidence to carry it out.

I haven't been here long enough to build my confidence. There's a lot going on. Always stuff happening. It gets in the way. I end up taking a lot of work home and other things don't get done. I need to build time in to work on the literacy role and the key stage 1 leadership role but where do you get the time and there are such expectations.

I always thought of teaching as performing and now I feel I am performing in meetings. In fact I think I am performing most of the time. I don't think I'm alone. I don't think anyone in school is really being themselves. I think we are all pretending to be someone different, just to get through. It's tough. I'm dealing with negative staff and I find it so frustrating. There are huge feelings of negativity. It's all very negative. I know I'm going into a negative situation.

Laura (h/t) gave feedback and took the lead. I want to have the confidence to do that. I feel better when I am working with Laura (the head teacher) for delivery. She makes it look easy. The staff don't question and when they do she has an answer. I like working with her. I am learning a lot from her. The staff feel that they are more qualified with years of experience but it's different for them, they are not on stage, they don't have to perform in front of an audience and a critical audience at that.

The staff are expecting great things of me. They expect me to deliver a star performance and I wish I could. I need to work on that, on the confidence. Perhaps it will get easier and I will not be phased by the expectations on me…but at the moment…it's not easy. I need to be more upfront. I need to take centre stage at the meeting.

When I am asking them to do something different hostility is expressed. This happened in one particular meeting when I didn't have the confidence to back that up. I felt I had let myself down but I just have to brush myself down and get on with it. The thing is I'm expecting to go into a negative situation. It is all so negative. There is nothing positive. I am aware that I will be facing my strongest critics.

The handwriting delivery wasn't too bad. It probably went better than I think. We looked at the scheme together and picked out the things they liked and tried to get them to see what we needed. It involved decision making rather than being imposed. Staff didn't seem to get enthusiastic about anything.

Phonics was thought to be something to get them motivated, but it didn't. I am dealing with negative staff and it's so frustrating. I want to do the next thing. I want to move them on. A lot thought Ofsted would be over, then they would be left alone but there are always new things that need to be done.

I did observations in nursery with Laura, 2x15 minutes. We were going to start these again. Claire, the nursery teacher came back and said that she can't fit it in. There are too many things to do. The teaching assistant fed back inaccurately what I had said that I don't know what I am doing either.

Andrea and me have a good working relationship. It was difficult to start with. Now it is a professional friendship. In Big Writing she is not doing what she should be. I should have challenged but I haven't. I asked staff how Big Write was going. The Year 4 teacher approached me to say that she could see how it could work. I invited her to see what was happening in my class. There are two new supply teachers. The teacher in Year 5 came to see me to say that she was thinking of doing it like this, is that ok? Some pointers were given to follow.

Action Plan. To look at Big Writing. The LA advisory teacher for literacy delivered the initial Big Write session. I followed it up with an informal session. Most people are doing it now. I still have to tackle the Foundation Stage. I have had a couple of staff meetings around Big Writing. I have some staff to observe in the classroom. I will observe the session and give pointers for where to take it next. Big Write is on the backburner. I need to assume that they are doing it. Phonics and guided reading are more important.   Reading is the biggest challenge, the biggest development.

I've gone back to phonics for whole school assessment. I held a staff meeting where work was done with individuals. Next I will be monitoring to see if they are filling in planning slips. I will reassess the same children.

Guided reading will be the PD day on the first day back after Easter. The advisory teacher will be helping. I will be using material from the course. The focus will be with individuals. I haven't approached them with this. I will monitor guided reading after Easter.

I hope it will go down well, the resources and the ideas or will it be another thing that they will have to sit through? Hopefully it should be ok. I'm coming at it from a consultant's point of view. I will look at practical resources that they can make. A guided reading basket and what would we need in it. By the end of the day they will all have one and will be ready to start. I will also print and laminate key question cards for the new assessment focus. I will look at the structure of what should be in a session and time will be set aside to plan the first guided reading session in teams.

I would like the teachers enthusiastic for guided reading so that they see it as enjoyable and so that the day is useful. I would like them to be confident in what they are doing. I will get a feel for how things are going and whether they put it into practice. I will mention in passing to see how people are doing. I am looking at planning and observing. I need to tell people, inform them that I will be coming in. I might sit with the children.

Agreed Actions

1. Planning and preparing for the PD Day. I need to follow up with monitoring and observation and to feedback to staff. I need to make sure that I am confident in the foundation stage.

2. Getting people to come to me rather than me go to them.

3. Google strategies for the foundation stage.

4. Arrange to meet with the Inspector for the foundation stage.

5. Visit a foundation stage unit that is using good practice to provide a benchmark. Good link already in place with the link school.

6. Establish whether there are any courses available for the foundation stage that would be useful to attend.

Knowledge of Foundation Stage 3 on a 10 point scale

Lucy

Coaching Session 8

5th June 2009

Focus:- To be more assertive and confident in my role as literacy coordinator

Meetings are a lot better. It was the full staff meeting yesterday. The use of the SureStart Room received a positive response. Y5 would like to use it. Y5, Melanie, has been the trickiest. At the KS2 booster training there was confrontation. She decided she wasn't coming. Melanie was in today. I asked her if there was a better time today but she came in in a mood. They (staff) were asked to look at the results and pick out children who needed specific interventions. In Y5 there are a group of children who have been targeted for next year based on the results and teacher assessments. There are a lot in her group who are above the levels for optional SATs. Maybe she felt threatened and thought we were going to criticise what she

had done. The teachers moved around so she took Y3 optional SATs and therefore hadn't done her year group. There is only Y5 to sort out for booster groups.

As a management team we looked at other results. The problem was with maths across the school. Information was given to her at the end of the session. She was keen to move the more able group on. The Y5 teacher had had pressures that day.

On a scale of 1:10 I managed on a score of 7/8 as I was not anxious about the confrontation.

All teacher's have their TA's in for interviews. All are fighting their corner. This week there have been a few confrontations. It has been very difficult…. the pressure. Julie has difficulties and for Andrea things are not great. There are divisive groups in school. Everybody is trying to hold their own and have gone into individual groups. Some TA's are out to cause trouble. Andrea is involved with the intimidation of TA's.

Julie has a leadership role and that has caused confrontation. We were discussing the outdoor area and where we should go next. She said "you mean us. I am the foundation stage leader". On Tuesday we discussed books. Julie has R/Y1 next year. The children need to be mark making. She said "they are not having books" and clamped down saying, "I know the foundation stage". Once in Y1, the children are following the national curriculum and there is an expectation for the lower stage of KS1. There is an entitlement there.

Next week we are doing monitoring and we will be more popular, with more stress and pressure. There is a tetchiness with Andrea although said in a jokey manner but how far is it a joke? There is a team meeting every week on a Wednesday. She was asking "are we meeting if there are no kids (polling day), are we having one?" She was also laughing at her running around and me having a cup of tea. She has started coming to the leadership meetings. She maybe sees me as competition, one for snide comments. The culture is tough at the moment.

Classes are going to change next year. Julie will be foundation/KS1, R/Y1. Is Andrea moving away from me? I'm going now. It will be tricky next year. I will still be KS1 leader and I will need an overview of KS1. I will need to lead even if not working (in KS1). I think Andrea would want that role. She is saying "how will you know what we are doing?" I'll attend meetings but they will be tricky. I still love what I am doing. I want people to see that there is a clear difference between what I'm doing. I have a TLR. That's what she is talking about. In terms of leadership and change she thinks that if you're not busy then you're not doing as good a job.

Laura (h/t) had been in the staff room when the snide remark was made. Andrea has been to the head teacher and said she thinks she could do what I am doing. Laura had put her on the leadership team because she was a maths coordinator. She has said that she would return in September off the team if she thinks that it is not working. She has gone from a satisfactory to a good teacher but if she thinks she has done a better job than me……..I am employed as a leader, not a teacher. She had the option for applying for the job. Laura asked "do you want me to say something" after a snipe about staple guns, "you lose things, pretty things". She obviously thinks she could do do this (job) but she's not at that place, it's not her role. We have worked completely as a team. I haven't enforced anything on her but rather I have said, "what do you think of?" We are both KS2 teachers and we are not coming in with KS1 experience to offer. I would have had the knowledge that she did. That's where it is, leadership skills. The problem is in the job description of KS1 leader. I have done more leadership in terms of literacy. I have implemented things but for literacy. In terms of leading KS1, I haven't done as much. I show better leadership in literacy than in KS1. I should have been leading Andrea and improved her teaching. I implemented phonics and we have always done this together.

I applied for KS2 teacher with TLR2, the lowest leadership role (TLR1 is higher). There was also one (post) for KS1 but there were no interviews for that. I don't know what Laura envisaged that to be but not to lead a Key Stage. When I got the job I was employed for a KS2 position and I assumed it was for a KS2 job. I really wanted KS1 but I would have had to move from KS2 to KS1. I was asked what group I would like to teach. I have taught Y2,3,4,5 and 6. They didn't employ anyone for the

KS1 job. I did some teaching, had an interview and was interviewed by the schools council where we were supposed to be sifted out. They interviewed all 3 (candidates).

Ofsted asked about leading KS1. A KS1 teacher with TLR2 leadership responsibility does not identify KS1. I was asked what subject would I take. I was given literacy as it had to be a core subject. My main subject was RE but it wasn't a big enough role. Possibly the idea would be to lead KS1 but there were so many problems with literacy it took over. For September the next step would be leading outside of my area. In September Laura wants me to lead KS1. I need to put as much focus on literacy in KS1. It will be easier when I'm outside. It will be easier to go into. In the meetings there will be Julie in R/Y1 which will fall under KS1 and foundation stage.

Key Stage 1 Team/ whole school focus:- The Themed Room

On Tuesday in the staff meeting I gave feedback on the (SureStart) room and timetables. Julie suggested a whole school art project. We are going to carry on the jungle theme. Other ideas for topics are seasides and under the sea. We could have a souvenir shop and set up a gazebo in the quad where we will be selling. We could set up a role play area. The art work could be done as a whole school thing. Julie is the art coordinator and she suggested that the whole school could be involved and extend out into the entrance with lots of photos of the children working.

Parent helpers have offered to come in who are interested in gardens, plants, cooking and art. Maybe we could link Elizabeth in with her art skills. A letter went out a few weeks ago asking if anyone had any skills. Two parents responded, one to work with me. I will coordinate the work with the parent and Elizabeth.

The Y4 teacher (supply) is really keen on it (the themed room). She is doing a singing group and wondered if they could do a jungle themed performance.

I had a chat to Laura on Monday and got the ok at the staff meeting to raise it. We could invite the new nursery/ reception parents, governors and parent helpers and parents of all the children. Children do the violin and there is a drama club. I still need to contact the Link Primary School to see how they have involved parents.

Class Team Focus:- Transitions

At transition times there are issues and also work times, when they go to their tables. Transition times are the greatest issue, from carpet to table, the movement of the children. This is a problem. There is noise at every point of transition. They get on the carpet and start crawling. It takes time to get them all settled and quiet. We lose time during transition. The children talk on the carpet. I might be able to use music. I need to create more structure, perhaps using groups at a time although I have tried groups. There are rewards in place but perhaps music. The transition from playground to classroom and classroom to playground is also a problem.

Agreed Actions

1. Monitoring of literacy in identified classes.
2. Clarification from the head teacher of the role of Key stage 1 leader.
3. To co-ordinate work with parent helpers.
4. To inform staff of the possibility of an end of school performance at the next staff meeting to ascertain interest.
5. To contact the link school re: parental involvement.
6. To use music at transition times to signal change of activity.
7. To divide children into groups to transition from the class to the playground, each group accompanied by a member of staff.
8. Rewards to be used to promote good transitions.