‘A no go area’: exploring the constructed reputation of a primary school

Louise Anne Golamhossen

Doctorate in Education 2020

‘A no go area’: exploring the constructed reputation of a primary school

Louise Anne Golamhossen

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Manchester Metropolitan University for the degree of Doctor of Education

Department of Education
Manchester Metropolitan University

2020

Abstract

This thesis presents insights and understandings about the constructed reputation of Daisybank Primary School by critically exploring current perceptions of Daisybank and the influences that have played a role in such a construction. Insights from four participants' perspectives challenge my thoughts and encourage self-reflection.

Using a constructivist grounded theory approach, as well as a transformational learning lens, I engage with the concept of a constructed reputation at a deeper level. I look beyond the context of Daisybank and raise my head above the parapet and rhetoric of neoliberalism. In doing so, I engage with some of the deeper and more substantial issues surrounding the complex concept of reputation and its construction. Such a journey has put me in a position where I now not only understand the key influences behind the constructed reputation but I am also able to highlight the negotiating space within them.

Seeing that my own emancipation lies with my own conceptions both of responsibility in leading and towards how I view Daisybank, has brought about changes in my views of what school and education mean to me and to others.

By considering the work of Lacan (1977), I recognise how easy it is to become entangled into a fantastical image of what a school should be in order to attain a good reputation. However, this thesis shows how headteachers can learn how to swim within a neoliberal market and swim with a focus on the horizon and beyond. It concludes that it is possible to co-construct a reputation from attuned dialogue with a school community. It highlights that it is paramount that school and education remain more than the restricted definitions placed on them within a neoliberal context.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all members of the governing body who have supported my doctoral studies and who have given me permission to carry out this inquiry. I would also like to offer thanks to the interviewees for taking the time to share their perspectives on how a school's reputation is constructed.

I would like to thank Dr Rosemary Mulholland who has not only provided moral support, preventing me from giving up, but has also questioned and provoked my thinking. Additionally, I would like to say thank you to Professor Deborah James who supported me at such a late stage in developing a new direction towards completing this doctoral journey. By listening and challenging my thoughts, she enabled me to articulate my learning more succinctly.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, and in particular my husband, who have provided moral support and who have taken the time to read it!

Contents

List of Diagrams

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
LA	Local Authority
LEA	Local Education Authorities
NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headship
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PAN	Pupil Admission Number
PR	Public Relations
SAT	Statutory Assessment Tests
SEN	Special Educational Needs
UN	United Nations

List of Appendices

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Area of Research

1.0 Introduction

This research seeks to explore and understand how the reputation of Daisybank Primary School[1] has been constructed. As a serving headteacher, this reputation is a live and pressing issue for me. This thesis critically explores current perceptions of Daisybank and the influences that have played a role in the constructed reputation. It is hoped that this critical exploration will enable me to uncover whether such a social phenomenon can actually be reformulated as well as exploring if there is negotiating space in a context where reputation appears to be built predominantly on performativity.

1.1 Rationale of the research

Whilst it is perhaps unusual to refer to the actual doctoral journey upfront, the doctoral process did, inadvertently, shape this thesis significantly. After 'living and breathing' this doctorate for a significant period of time, it came as a surprise that, after the viva, I was given substantial changes. This onerous and daunting task made me question the worth of it all as I deemed this to be a 'failure' and what I refer to as my own 'disorientating dilemma'. The viva, my perceived sense of failure and the question (aided by dialogue with others) about the value of my doctoral work launched me into what I now describe as a transformational educative experience. This post-viva process has resulted in me shaking off the shackles of the neoliberal influences that had insidiously influenced my understanding of the purpose of education, including the subject matter of the thesis (namely the construction of a school's reputation). Mezirow's (1991a) transformational learning theory proved a useful, though not sufficient, framework through the latter stages of my doctoral journey and provided another analytical lens to further explore the original empirical data. Therefore, whilst this doctorate uncovers the complexities behind the

[1] This is the pseudonym of the school on which my doctoral research is concentrated.

constructed reputation of Daisybank by using a constructivist grounded theory approach, the additional use of a transformational lens enabled further critical reflection on the purpose of education and my own identity as a school leader.

At the start of my headship, I had developed my own initial understanding of why the school had developed what I came to describe as a poor constructed reputation. However, becoming more familiar with the inner workings of the school and endeavouring to make Daisybank 'work' within the globalised society that I found myself in, the reputation became an antagonism for me. The reputation appeared to conflict with what I believed Daisybank offered from an internal perspective.

Indeed, during the past ten years of my headship at Daisybank, there have been many incidents and concerning anecdotes which presented a different reality to what I had experienced. Based on my understanding of reputation, the day-to-day running of Daisybank, how the school was managed, the teaching, how well the children behaved and the academic progress that they made, I believed Daisybank to be a school which should have a good reputation. However, I became increasingly aware that the way in which I viewed things, from my own professional stance, was not necessarily shared by others. Recognising this difference has highlighted the possibility that I have perhaps simplified the concept of a reputation to be something that can be polarised into two groups – good or poor. However, when we understand a reputation to be an intangible and complex asset which any organisation is subject and vulnerable to (de Marcellis-Warin and Teodoresco, 2012), this highlights that a reputation is far more complex than just simply being defined as good or poor, and also that there are implications associated with having a reputation as it influences choice. Consequently, within this thesis I confront the problematic nature of Daisybank's reputation alongside the assumptions which underpin how a reputation is constructed and any implications this may bring.

The 'dilemma' of leading a school that has a poor constructed reputation, from where I was positioned ontologically at the time, was the impetus for this thesis. I wanted to develop my understanding of the nuances of Daisybank's reputation with a view to bringing about change to the way in which it is currently viewed. On reflection, I recognised that my understanding of the educational context that I was working within had influenced the way in which I was functioning professionally within Daisybank. It became a dilemma because I recognised that a school's reputation had become increasingly important (Bond and King, 2003; Friedman et al., 2006). From my own professional experience, a school's reputation influences whether or not parents want to send their child to that particular establishment. Reputation also decides whether communities are proud to have such a school at the heart of their community and how a school is perceived. Therefore, school establishments are vulnerable to the notion of a reputation. Schools are labelled; they are spoken about; they are written about; they are subject to numerous perspectives which all, potentially in different ways, work to give the school a reputation.

Gardberg and Fombrun (2002) link the possession of a good reputation to having a competitive advantage with the likelihood of attracting more customers. In the corporate world, for example, I suggest that the reputation of Apple Inc. as being at the cutting edge of technology with quality products (e.g. computers and mobile phones) enables the company to remain a market leader. Similarly, Safon (2009) and Vidaver-Cohen (2007) have adapted the concept of a corporate reputation to the field of educational management so if a school has a good reputation, it will have similar positive effects. It can be inferred from this that if a school has a good reputation then it is likely that more parents will want to send their children to the school. Hence it is of interest that my dual role of headteacher and researcher has highlighted that one of the antagonisms relevant to my area of research means that from the annual reception intake of pupils, I am aware of how many parents have selected Daisybank as their preferred choice. As the initial intake has been consistently low for a significant number of years, and as I concur with what

Safon (2009) and Vidaver-Cohen (2007) suggest, then I can assume that Daisybank does not have a good reputation. However, by recognising that the relationship between reputation and choice is not straightforward, I am able to explore why some schools may be selected over others and the possible influences behind the selection. Therefore, the inclusion of parental view will be significant within this research as I seek to problematise the notion of reputation.

This research study stemmed from my growing awareness of the multiplicity of meanings that Daisybank's reputation seemed to hold for different people. I had assumed that the Office for Standards in Education's (OFSTED) grading and performance data of a school would be the key influences to achieving a good reputation. At the same time, I had a niggling doubt that other factors were at work and was unsure how I might be able to research the less visible and less obvious. To that end, anecdotal evidence and professional intuitions (around e.g. word of mouth) led me to pay attention to the complexities of a reputation, how it is constructed and whether it is possible for the reputation of Daisybank to be reconstructed.

1.2 The 'water in which we swim'

As a serving headteacher, I believe that I am not only influenced by the political landscape and the globalised society that I am functioning within, but that actually this backdrop has now become the 'water in which I (we) swim' (Ball, 2013a:132). I recognise that my own sense of professionalism as a headteacher has been set against and regulated by the audit culture. My sense of responsibility, as a leader, is dominated by the educational outcomes that Daisybank achieves. Therefore, I recognise that it is important to reflect on the backdrop against which my learning took place whilst also exploring the 'world view' that I had developed about education.

Although most of the literature on reputation that I encountered was intended for the corporate world, more recent school literature has adopted a corporate

approach and applied it to school settings (Hepburn, 2014). Allen et al. (2014:5) suggest that:

> …market-based accountability is central to raising standards and that more reliance will be placed on this to… ensure schools are kept up to the mark.

I know that market mechanisms have influenced the way in which I operate professionally within Daisybank. One of the fundamental issues that the marketisation of education raises for me is whether schools are:

> …first and foremost, purveyors of education, or businesses that need to operate with an eye on the marketplace in order to survive. (Tait, 2016: online)

Over the last ten years as a headteacher, I have experienced a strengthening relationship between education and economic productivity whereby school quality or effectiveness has become narrowed down to the measurement of pupil and overall school performance. There has been a shift in school priorities due to the ascendance of neoliberal ideologies (Barrs and Rustin, 2018). This has led to a shift in the way in which I have come to define both what a school and what education is. Against such a backdrop, I have become restricted in viewing education as solely linked to the academic outcomes that a child achieves. Whilst I accept that education is synonymous with a child's academic outcomes, I also recognise that education is and should be more. Therefore, I understand how my own pedagogical and philosophical beliefs have been compromised. School is an implementer of governmental policy. Such policies, enshrined with particular ideologies and specific to the political party at any given time, pave the way for education to be viewed in a specific manner. However, I have become increasingly unsettled professionally with some of the changes and recognise that decisions I am making do not always sit comfortably with my own educational and pedagogical beliefs. Thus, in order to grapple with my frustrations, I reflected on aspects of Ball's work

from 1997 to 2013 to explore the significance of a neoliberal structure, not only to exemplify the backdrop of my learning, but also to consider the role that such a structure may have with how I and others construct Daisybank's reputation.

1.3 The backdrop of my starting ontological position

In Britain, the conservative governments of 1979–1997 introduced all of the features of quasi-markets in a series of reforms, most notably the Education Reform Act in 1988 (Croxford and Raffe, 2007), consequently applying market principles to the provision of public services. Since 1988, when the Education Reform Act (1988) saw the introduction of parental choice, there have been significant implications for educational institutions. Within this age of 'parentocracy', (Brown 1990:65) the power which parents have has become a requisite for gaining educational success. I recognise that there has been a shift for schools as I see that they are now in a position where they compete with each other within the market place to attract prospective pupils and their parents, to guarantee financial viability. Ball (2012a:1) would argue that 'the unstated and usually unexamined subtext of neoliberalism is not doctrine but money'. Therefore, from a school's perspective, pupils can become a form of wealth to a school as they increase their viability. From a parental perspective, the right school can lead to better educational success, leading to better job prospects. As such, results are seen as a 'currency that can be converted to a labour market value' (Kromydas, 2017:1). As stated by Ball (2012a:1), 'the subtext of neoliberalism is money'.

The 'right to choose' has become enshrined in government policy. This right is reflected in Article 26 of the United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that 'parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children' (United Nations, 2011: online). In addition, the coalition government (2010–2015) consulted on a new Schools Admissions Code which would allow popular schools to expand – facilitating greater choice for parents, but also potentially resulting in less

popular schools losing out in terms of pupil numbers and funding (Department for Education, 2010). Rather than going to a school within the immediate catchment area, parents are now able to select a preferred school if there is an available place. This fulfils what Margaret Thatcher (UK Prime Minister from 1979–1990) had expressed in terms of individual liberty – the freedom to choose, but in doing so, and with regard to educational establishments, it has resulted in schools becoming more competitive. As parents are able to select what they deem to be the most appropriate school for their child, there has been a shift in power relations. I believe that parental choice creates a number of complex issues for schools and in particular for Daisybank. It seems to create competition between schools and I recognise that it has the potential to create polarisation and encourage inequality.

Whilst good quality education could be a powerful engine for 'greater equality and a way of bringing society together' (Walker et al., 2019:5), when social conditions are created by globalisation, market rules of engagement provide the middle class with 'a more reliable way to preserve their positional advantage' (Croxford and Raffe, 2007:40). This was previously highlighted by Ball (2003b:26) who stated: 'The particular policies of choice and competition give particular advantages to the middle-class, while not appearing to do so, in the way that selection policies did in a previous policy era.'

The most recent Centre for Economic Performance (CEP) research for England shows that a primary school that is one standard deviation above the average in terms of the performance of its pupils in key stage 2 tests (at age 11) attracts a house price premium of around 3% (Gibbons, 2012: online). Thus, a link between 'better schools' and house prices emerges and consequently 'house prices highlight the quality and value placed by society on a wide range of public and environmental amenities, including schools' (Gibbons, 2012: online). Middle-class parents are more able to send their children to exclusive private and high-performing state schools (Vincent, 2001; Ball, 2003b), relegating others to what may be deemed to be less popular. Their choice is made possible by financial resources and they use the resource to mobilise

into areas in order to gain outcomes for them and to secure the same potential for choice for their own children. As a result, the mix of children within a school, in terms of social class, when some parents have such a choice over others, suddenly diminishes. This makes way for inequality within the education system as parental choice becomes part of a social process influenced by salient properties of social class and networks of social relationships (Reay and Lucey, 2003; Ball, 2003b). Therefore, whilst some parents may benefit from the freedom of choice about a school, not all do, if social mix plays an integral part. Parental choice, which was instigated to give parents the opportunity to select the best schools, may actually only benefit a minority of parents if this polarisation exists between middle-class and working-class parents because the choice they have is suddenly determined by their social class.

In England, league tables have been published annually since 1992 (Department for Education, 2016) and performances in these tables inform OFSTED. Noting competition as the defining characteristic of human relations (Monbiot, 2016), neoliberalism sees democratic choices best exercised by selling and buying, a process which rewards performance but punishes inefficiency. As such, within a globalised market, the 'inefficiency' of schools is published on an annual basis. Parents, by exerting their right to choose, potentially and inadvertently highlight inefficiencies. As league tables play a facilitating role in the quasi-market of education by informing parental choice, it could be argued that schools become winners and losers as some are positioned as more valuable than others in terms of what they offer. My current perspective is that, in such a market place, Daisybank is a loser due to its lower positioning in the league tables, making it a less desirable choice.

1.4 What is a school?

I therefore recognise that what I understand as 'the school' is thus an effect of the interweaving of certain historic and more immediate (and sometimes

future, possible) discourses. These discourses are typically entangled and confused as they are obscured by micropolitical struggles.

Ball (1997:318) highlights that:

> …schools, like other organisations, are produced and articulated by disparate discourses (knowledges and practices) that sometimes grate and collide, or at least sit uneasily together. These disparate discourses provide resources of order and effect, and vocabularies of motives for organisational practices and fables and are particularly visible in critical events and moments as well as in various odd and 'unpromising places'.

The globalisation of a neoliberal utopia within education has become hegemonic (Robertson, 2007). This shift (the introduction of parental choice in 1988, the introduction of league tables and OFSTED in 1992), where neoliberal principles have become embedded within education, has been a pervading influence in the way in which I have talked about Daisybank and how I understood it to be. I see that the education that I am now trying to deliver is more in line with national economies and has entered into the world of marketisation and consumerism (Hatcher, 2006). As a headteacher, I have reacted to the pressures of different political agendas that police Daisybank's boundaries and adhered to them because I perceived them as being necessary to implement. Consequently, this constructs a new identity of what a school should be from a neoliberal perspective. I recognise that Daisybank is 'obscured by micropolitical struggles' (Ball, 1997:318) and that it is entangled with the political outlook of any given time and, unfortunately, has become embroiled in the changing initiatives brought by each new government. Due to political pressures, I have come to believe that Daisybank needs to be presented in a particular way within a globalised arena. As neoliberalism favours a particular (education policy) discourse (Van der Walt, 2017), the principles of a neoliberal outlook influence what is being is imposed within the educational world at the time and therefore what I am implementing within the school.

1.5 Education and business

Neoliberalism is an ideology where the political economic practices propose liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework (Harvey, 2005), however, it is also a regime that commodifies knowledge and ensures close alignment with the capitalised market (Brackmann, 2015). Commodification originates from Marx's notion of commodity fetishism (Marx, 1952) and is generally used to describe how consumer culture has become embedded in our daily lives through an array of subtle processes (Gottdiener, 2000). The logical end of neoliberalism is the commodification of everything (Leys and Harriss-white, 2012), everything including education.

In a neoliberal structure, new roles are created and new terminology pervades the educational arena. A parent is no longer just a parent but also a customer (Hughes et al., 1994; Hooge et al., 2012) as they are acting as consumers on behalf of their children (Hughes et al., 1994) as they select a school. The positioning of parents impacts on the role of a headteacher. I recognise that my own sense of responsibility as a headteacher is at times conflicted. How I act when prospective parents come and visit Daisybank is not my 'ideal', but I have come to the understanding that it is important to 'sell' the school to these prospective new 'clients'. I see that I have fallen into a position where I am no longer primarily overseeing the education within a school, but I am also a manager of a business. I recognise that I am concerned with what parents are looking for and thus the education on offer within my school starts to become treated as a product and the parent as a customer. When education:

> … 'steps forth' as a commodity it becomes packaged for exchange; and its 'product' becomes not only concreted (in that it holds 'real' exchange value) it becomes transcendent (it holds immaterial value, is 'desired', 'fetishized'). (O'Brien, 2017:157)

So, when education (knowledge) is seen as a product, it becomes a 'fetishized' commodity. This results in '…our understanding of the world shifting from social values created by people, to one which is pre-given' (Shumar, 1997:28). As a market-infused approach to education treats knowledge as a commodity and therefore restricts education's task to be measurable, 'everything starts to be viewed in terms of quantities; everything becomes simply a sum of value realised or hoped for' (Slater and Tonkiss, 2001:162). Within this scenario, I recognise a school will be selected over whether it provides education where the knowledge (product) gained meets the needs and interests of the parent (consumer).

1.6 The influence of performativity on education

Within the performative regime that I work within, I know that Daisybank, as all schools, is scrutinised by the outputs it produces. Such outputs reflect the school as a whole, where experience becomes nothing, and productivity becomes everything (Ball, 2012b).

Performativity encourages the valuing of organisations solely for their performance. When it is applied to schools, competition is encouraged between establishments through league tables and OFSTED reports. These provide a numerical comparative measure where some schools will have an advantage over others based on their results. The free market and choice on one hand may make schools seek to improve their performance, which arguably could lead to children achieving better results. Allen et al. (2014:5) suggest that '…market-based accountability is central to raising standards'. Therefore, it could be argued that more reliance would be placed on this to '…ensure schools are kept up to the mark' (Allen et al., 2014:5) and learning outcomes start to exemplify educational commodification (Brancaleone and O'Brien, 2011). Therefore, within a neoliberal framework, I recognise that the central role of education has become about the outcomes that children achieve and thus the performativity of schools.

The Department for Education (2010:11–12) highlights that:

> We want every school to be able to shape its own character, frame its own ethos and develop its own specialisms, free from either central or local bureaucratic constraint… But our direction of travel is towards schools as autonomous institutions collaborating with each other on terms set by teachers not bureaucrats.

On the surface, being free from either central or local bureaucratic constraint seems an exciting and liberating transformational change in educational thinking – a way in which Daisybank is potentially free to develop its own individualistic identity. However, the paradox of neoliberalism is that it portrays a hands-off approach to governing and yet I see how it has seeped into the educational arena, inciting schools to take on certain forms of self-government (Ball, 2013b). An example of this is that schools are directly accountable for their performance but that individually they are able to decide how to improve their performance. Whilst superficially neoliberalism perhaps presents a picture of freedom, I recognise it to be a neoliberal version of freedom where deregulation and autonomy are at the forefront of the policies imposed. As what is perhaps less obvious is that there is an underlying expectation – in the shape of a 'norm' – which influences the way in which we make our choices. As neoliberalism underpins educational policy (Patrick, 2013), specific discourses and conceptualisations of educational outcomes and aims have arisen. I believe that Daisybank is now not only under pressure to implement new government initiatives but also to meet the requirements of stakeholders and in particular parents who have a choice about educational establishments.

When you consider the hierarchical gaze that overlooks Daisybank, I recognise that I am caught in a micropolitical struggle that influences the way in which I view Daisybank and how I make comparisons with the local and national performative data. I am constantly reviewing the image that Daisybank portrays based on the political initiatives at any one time as I try to

understand how Daisybank is seen within the neoliberal educational framework (Lacan, 1977).

1.7 The 'mirror image'

Brown and Heggs (2009:295) reflecting on Lacan (1977) in relation to identity state that:

> Lacan sees the subject as caught in a never-ending attempt to capture an understanding of his or herself in relation to the world in which he or she lives. The human subject is always incomplete and remains so, where identifications of oneself are captured in a supposed image, an image of which, Lacan insists, we should always be wary.

The capturing that is referenced above is the idea of the mirror stage corresponding to the 'imaginary order' which is an important early component in Lacan's critical reinterpretation of the work of Freud. A child looking at him/herself for the first time within a mirror develops an understanding, a first impression of him/herself. For Lacan (1977), when we look in the mirror, we assume an image, a way of picturing ourselves.

I understand that this wariness referred to by Lacan (1977) provides caution to the way in which the seer is influenced by the background. For me, I recognise that I should be wary of the neoliberal ideology that is influencing not only the way in which I view my professional self, but additionally the way in which I see Daisybank.

The neoliberal purpose of education is to provide the workforce needed to sustain the capitalist economy (Rustin, 2016), and the ascendency of neoliberal market ideologies has shifted the priorities of schools and their systems of management (Keddie, 2018). If I reflect on my own understanding of this, I see that schools are now in a position where they are attempting to understand their own identity compared to other schools around them and to

find where they sit within the created market place. Other schools, which we are in competition with, I often consider to be 'ideal' schools and I can see how this is politically influenced. When schools look at themselves in the mirror, I believe that they assume an image of what they believe they are like. Whilst I have highlighted that Lacan (1977) recognises that we should demonstrate a cautionary approach with such an image, the imposed expectations, set out by political agendas relating to education, make it difficult to achieve this. However, the highlighted wariness by Lacan (1977), for me, also provides an opportunity to be critical of what is happening. It provides hope that there is more to the image than is initially seen, as at times you perhaps only see what you are looking for. If you are able to change how you approach the mirror in the first place, start to look for different things, then the image portrayed might take on a whole new meaning.

What we are experiencing when we look in the mirror is what Lacan (1977) believes Freud would call the 'Ideal-I' (or 'Ideal-Ich' or 'Ideal-Ego') But because this 'I' is formed in a mirror, it is a fantasy, an unreal image that only seems real. So as a child grows up it begins the process of developing an identity distinct from others and yet, at the same time, dependent on the images of others to determine itself.

Schools also have an identity. I believe that most schools endeavour to serve the community where the school is located. Due to the diverse make-up of each individual school, an identity is created. However, the more a school potentially looks at itself, reflecting on what has become the 'norm' within a neoliberal framework, there is the potential for anxiety. When the image is looked at with a particular mind-set it could appear that the school is falling short of the expectations of that time.

Lacan (1977) recognises that the fantasy image of oneself can be filled in by others who we may want to emulate in our adult lives – anyone that we set up as a mirror for ourselves in what is, ultimately, a narcissistic relationship. I now recognise that I had become too interested in how Daisybank 'looked'

against a neoliberal backdrop. I was excessively preoccupied in achieving or exceeding the 'norm'. An ideal which, I now recognise, may itself be a fantasy, but one which appeared necessary to me at the time when concerned with constructing a good reputation.

In the pursuit of a good reputation, I saw Daisybank being faced with the abyss of desire for this 'norm' which could be aligned with the Lacanian idea of 'the big other'. I saw 'the big other' as political initiatives and policies. In order for Daisybank to be competitive, which I saw as an established feature of a neoliberal education system (Williams, 2016), I tried to respond to what I believed the market wanted. However, my lens has shifted through this doctoral journey. The image that I now see presents me with 'negotiating space' where I can work and respond differently within a neoliberal regime. Recognising that education is more than the educational outcomes of a child, enables me to see the image with a different mind-set as I explore the constructed reputation of Daisybank.

This 'shift' may present me with an opportunity to create a school with its own character, framing its own ethos and developing its own specialisms. However, as there is a hierarchical gaze and an established 'norm', at times I see a different story. I see a fantastical mirror image which has been created through what has been imposed as being part of the 'norm'. A dominant discourse associated with this 'norm' is linked with performative data. Schools have to achieve certain percentages to fall within the 'norm'. Performative data incites the competitive component of neoliberalism. This has been encouraged through league tables. I now recognise that I had become more concerned about Daisybank's ranking in the table. When performativity indicates the worth or value of a school (Cowen, 1997; Ball, 2003a), and when knowledge becomes a commodity, schools are led to produce more and to evidence that production (Shore and Wright, 1999) in order to be desired.

The insidious operation of neoliberalism impacts on the way in which individuals understand who they are and how they operate (Ball, 2003a). As a

serving headteacher, I recognise that I am professionally drawn into the micropolitical struggles of how to lead Daisybank, and I am aware that over the ten years of leading this school, the implementation of new initiatives has given rise to new norms and expectations of Daisybank as well as of other schools. For example, changes such as the implementation of a new primary curriculum (Department for Education, 2014) has had an impact on the subject knowledge that children are required to have. The way in which children are tested also changed causing greater pressures for schools in relation to the results they are expected to achieve. Such changes led to schools being compared based on curriculum enactment and attainment. School 'attainment' is then presented in a numerical fashion with limited reflection on the context of the school, thus presenting a particular version of the truth. The formation of discourses, based on, for example, performative data, results in narratives being created around educational settings. These narratives, I believe become influential and impact on the construction of a school's reputation. The 'ever changing' goalposts that schools navigate are continually interpreted and re-interpreted. Reputation is perhaps therefore not a single, definable entity but a creation that may be deeply contested.

When I started this doctoral journey, the construction of a reputation, which I saw as being predominantly influenced by performativity, was a driving force to this doctorate. However, as I have progressed on this journey, I started to understand that the reputation I was seeking to reconceptualise, understand and change, was itself entrenched in neoliberal principles and influenced by the quasi-markets in action. Engaging with Marmot (2010) became an antidote to neoliberalism as it provided me with a way to consider the stakeholder's perceptions in a new light. I started to reconceptualise what a school and education is, which in turn influenced the way in which I actually saw the construction of a reputation.

1.8 How I explore the construction of reputation

The research within this thesis offers an exploration of Daisybank's constructed reputation. While acknowledging that a reputation is a socially constructed entity (Rao, 1994), I explore and reflect on the problematics of a reputation. Drawing on the Lacanian (Lacan, 1977) metaphor – the 'mirror image' – this doctorate utilises a constructivist grounded theory approach as a way of 'seeing' Daisybank and the ideological contexts in which I and the school operate. Rather than drawing wholly on my own experiences, I conduct in-depth interviews with three stakeholders and one external headteacher. This enables me to reflect on the school's 'reputation' and to explore some of the deeper and more substantial issues surrounding this complex concept.

Chapter 2: Adding Context to the Area of Research

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter I position the research in terms of the context, which includes my personal position.

I explore the make-up of Daisybank Primary School but also consider what I already understood, prior to this doctoral journey, about this school in relation to factual perspectives and anecdotal evidence. From an 'internal' perspective, some of this evidence was in conflict to how I personally perceived the constructed reputation of Daisybank. This led me to question why my perspective appeared to be so different from an 'outsider' perspective. I will also document my professional journey prior to embarking on this thesis and prior to becoming a headteacher. I believe that this has relevance in order that I am able to show, not only how Daisybank's reputation has become more important to me professionally, but also to emphasise how my role as a headteacher is significant to this doctoral journey.

Kegan (2000:28) highlights that 'informational learning' refers to extending already established cognitive capacities into new terrain and that this type of learning 'changes… what we know'. The factual perspectives and anecdotal evidence pertaining to Daisybank provided me with some new information. However, the learning that I experienced at this point in relation to Daisybank's reputation was limited. Whilst this provided some insight, it did not enable me to understand a range of stakeholder perspectives, what had influenced such perspectives or how I could professionally work in a different way to influence such perspectives to bring about change.

2.1 The professional context of this doctoral journey

Working in a globalised system, and trying to meet the demands that I perceived, the initial problem I set about addressing as a headteacher was the need to 'brand' or 'sell' my school to local parents. A quote that has influenced my thoughts and highlights how Daisybank's reputation became an antagonism for me is highlighted by Davies and Ellison (1991:6) who said that:

> To be effective in the 1990's, it is not enough simply to be a good school. What is important is that the school is perceived as being a good school… whatever the positive attributes of a school, they will not, of themselves, ensure continued success and survival unless the wider community knows about, understands and, above all, values them.

Daisybank had been given the label of a good school from a number of OFSTED inspections (November 2007: outstanding in care, guidance and support; February 2009, February 2011, June 2015: a rating of 'good' subject inspections mathematics)[2]. However, the day-to-day reality felt somewhat different due to the reputation of the school that existed. Being perceived as a good school (Davies and Ellison, 1991), highlights the complexity of reputation attached to a school and how it is more important that a school is regarded as being good by others. When I considered how I previously viewed the constructed reputation of Daisybank, I know that my antagonism lay with not having a comprehensive understanding about what the reputation meant to others within the school community. Therefore, my frustrations were born out of an incomplete understanding of what influences the wider school community in making such a judgement about a school. I needed to move beyond my own context and see what the local community understood, valued and saw as positive attributes.

Anecdotal evidence played a role in my own professional frustration. A prospective parent who was allocated Daisybank shared her frustration at not

[2] Not included in references for anonymity reasons.

being given her 'choice' with the local newspaper, and it was reported as follows:

> *…but this has not happened, and [Zara], who lives on [Banks] Drive, was only offered a place at [Daisybank] Primary or [Claybank], but she says they are too far away, and in the meantime Jamie remains at home unschooled and with no new friends. (Downes, 2010: online)*

A member of the community responded to the article, and in doing so, perhaps identified a more significant issue as to why this parent may have been frustrated:

> *By the way, [Daisybank] is only 1.2 miles away from [Banks] Drive. That's not far. Perhaps it is the social distance rather than the physical one she's worried about for her own little darlings. (Downes, 2010: online)*

The reference to social distance in the extract highlights that this was potentially an issue for Daisybank, which was perceived in a different way from the factual perspectives that were presenting. This opened up my understanding that there were many more things at work in a school's reputation, and particularly in relation to Daisybank.

A further example was a parent's letter sent to my governing body, which I have permission to use, and was typical of the kind of responses that we received at the time.

> *[Salma – a pseudonym] is five years old and has been on the waiting list for seven schools within or close to my home area for two and a half years. She was due to start school in September 2012... However, unfortunately [Salma] was never allocated a school of my choice. She was offered a place at Daisybank which is in my catchment area but not one that I selected. My reason being that I heard very negative and*

worrying comments about this school from close acquaintances in regards to behavioural problems and more concerning for me, racism. As a mother of a child that is dual heritage I am sure you can understand my concerns and wishes to protect my daughter from experiencing such negativity that could damage her for life at such a young age.

Whilst never visiting the school before making such assumptions, this prospective parent had listened to viewpoints being expressed within the local community.

The two aforementioned examples start to highlight the multiple sources and voices that give rise to a school's reputation, including, but not being limited to league tables.

Further questions in relation to Daisybank's reputation came via my own knowledge of pupil numbers. Despite it being in a highly esteemed authority, where many schools were oversubscribed, Daisybank still had pupil places across the school. The issue was noticeable in the annual reception intake where it became apparent we were not a 'choice' school (e.g., in 2020, 44 places out of 60 were filled).

By exploring stakeholder perspectives, this research aimed to explore how the cacophony of voices and meshing of micro-narratives that were circulating around Daisybank contributed to its reputation in the local community. My original aim was to use the findings from this process to work more effectively within the neoliberal educational context and I wanted to find out how I could improve the reputation of Daisybank.

2.2 The context of the school

I have been the headteacher for ten years. When accepting my first role as headteacher in September 2010, I recognised that Daisybank had a history: an

unfavourable one. A log book dating back to 1986 provided a historical picture of the school. It meticulously recorded daily events from May 1986 to September 1996. Violence and vandalism were common occurrences and were documented as being difficult for the headteacher at the time to manage. This, along with regular staff absences and exclusions, presented a school that experienced immense difficulties.

My predecessor experienced Daisybank going into special measures during her headship due predominantly to the poor academic performance of the children. However, during her headship, she brought about change which resulted in a good OFSTED grading before I took on the role. This was my first headship.

Daisybank is now in a position where there is limited evidence of violence and vandalism, and the school has achieved a succession of 'good' OFSTED gradings. It is a larger than average sized primary school when compared to national statistical data. The cohort of children are predominantly white. However, the trend over the last few years has seen a decline in White British children and the introduction of more ethnic groups within the school, creating a greater diversity of backgrounds, cultures and religions. Hence, the make-up of the school appears to be in a transitional phase with a growing diversity, which also appears to be a trend in the local area.

Although situated in an affluent authority, Daisybank is itself located in a council estate surrounded by more affluent housing. It serves a diverse community in comparison to most local schools, with 40% of the children qualifying for free school meals and lying in the highest percentile for deprivation. Many parents have limited qualifications and are out of work. Others are in minimum wage jobs or are claiming benefits, with only a small number of parents falling into the professional category (based on my own data monitoring over the last few years).

For a number of years, the authority in which the school is positioned has been a leading authority regarding national attainment. This, in turn, meant that many of the primary and secondary schools became oversubscribed due to parents wanting their children to attend schools where achievement is described as at least good. It is also one of the few authorities where there is a 'selective' system in process for secondary schools. This is due to the high number of grammar schools, resulting in children being entered for entrance exams to attend what are presumed to be the higher achieving secondary establishments, ones with national recognition. This has an impact on the expectations that parents have for the primary schools as many parents want their child to be supported to get into grammar school. This has resulted in many primary schools investing time preparing children for entrance exams. Some schools have done this more successfully than others have, which makes them a preferred choice when grammar school is a desirable success indicator.

Although there are children at Daisybank who have successfully passed entry criteria for grammar school, and who have been supported, the school has not necessarily been acknowledged for its ability to support higher ability children (OFSTED report, 2015)[3]. It has in fact, due to it once having a small specialist class for children with more specific needs, become better known for effectively supporting children with special educational needs (OFSTED report, 2015)[3]. However, as it is situated in a high achieving authority, where there is an overall emphasis on results, Daisybank has previously not been able to show in OFSTED reports (2015, 2011)[3] how the higher ability pupils are catered for.

2.3 My developing understanding of a reputation

Within the introductory chapter, I highlighted that having a good reputation is essential to the success of any organisation in the business world as it is linked to having a competitive advantage (Gardberg and Fombrun, 2002). Similarly,

[3] Not included in references for anonymity reasons.

when applied to a school setting to '…ensure continued success' (Davies and Ellison, 1991:6) infers that how a school is perceived determines its success. Thus, from the perspective of the headteacher operating and seeking to improve the success of the school within a neoliberal narrative context, having a good reputation for the school, was, as I saw it, fundamental.

My understanding and awareness of reputation has changed throughout my career as my position within educational settings developed into more senior roles. As a more junior teacher I felt more detached from the reputation of a school, whereas in my current position, as a school leader, there has been a significant shift. In effect, I am striving to achieve a good reputation, where within the community the school is understood, valued and relevant. Although I have always been aware of reputations which surround organisations, they have not affected my professional practice in the same way that they now do. As a class teacher, I was concerned with parental perspectives about me as a practitioner at a more individual level, but less about the school as a whole. Now it is a live and a pertinent issue for me as headteacher because I recognise and understand the implications of a reputation. Moreover, my understanding about a reputation has transitioned as part of this doctoral process. Where I once saw reputation as something that has to be aligned with neoliberal principles to be deemed 'good', I am now seeking to understand how the reputation can be co-constructed with the local community by exploring the perspectives of stakeholders linked to Daisybank.

2.4 My professional journey so far

My career started within Fairbank, a school that was popular within the area and creative in style, situated within a fairly affluent area and without the added pressure of Key Stage Two Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs). A promotion led me to work in Thornbank within a different authority, but again within an affluent area. There was no history attached to Thornbank, no perceptions about the school, because it was not an amalgamation or a school just replacing an old building – it was a brand-new school that had been built

to cater for a newly established housing estate. This was a unique opportunity to establish a school and create an identity. Over the three years that I was there, it became a school high in the league tables, where there was almost too much parental involvement. Parents required constant reassurance and demanded more activities for the children to do at home. There was a continuous waiting list of children wanting to join Thornbank as it quickly developed what could be described as a good reputation. Due to the uniqueness of the actual building, the school was well publicised which seemed to enhance the reputation even more.

Up to this point, I had never been in a school where pupil numbers were in decline or where there was an added pressure to increase them. As a deputy headteacher, I moved to work within a different authority and an area of high deprivation. This experience was at the opposite end of the spectrum to what I had previously encountered. Heatherbank, high in deprivation, within a council estate, had low pupil numbers. Although numbers were not declining, any increase was not significant enough to impact positively on the budget, which led to the school going into financial deficit.

When I reflect back over my career, I recognise that there are many parallels between Heatherbank and Daisybank. The poor pupil numbers at Daisybank made the school vulnerable to negative or poor comments and the importance of its reputation became more apparent. The pressure to fill pupil places has increased due to the reduction in school budgets as a whole. As pupil numbers determine the budget allocation – good pupil numbers are imperative. The threat of closure, amalgamation, the change to academy status without choice or the loss of jobs, have all started to pose a threat to the school as pupil numbers and overall academic achievement becomes lower than the national standard. I understand that schools are different, that they are 'complex, contradictory, sometimes incoherent organisations, like many others' (Ball, 1997:317). However, the neoliberal version of a school does not take difference into consideration. The catchment area and the number of pupils are irrelevant as all schools are compared against the same criteria evidenced

in league tables. These tables lead to a situation where schools are governed by numbers (Grek and Ozga, 2008), are compared to each other and are subjected to surveillance, despite other complexities that individual schools may have.

My professional journey demonstrates how I had started to see differences between schools in terms of academic performance and parental involvement. I also saw how geographical location could possibly be linked with the reputation of a school and the detrimental impact of low pupil numbers. The difference (perceived or otherwise) between schools problematised the very idea of a reputation and began to demonstrate that there are entangled issues surrounding how a reputation might be constructed. Whilst all schools are different, they have to be 'perceived as being good' (Davies and Ellison 1991:6), but when there are so many differences, understanding how to build a good reputation (my main antagonism at the start of the doctoral journey) was problematic. As I am immersed in school life as a headteacher and therefore knowledgeable about the internal workings of a school, I understand the impact that government policies can have and how they work to frame and portray educational establishments. Despite this expertise, I recognised that I could not make sense of Daisybank's reputation. Influences I assumed would impact on such a construction, such as an OFSTED report, were being translated in various ways and appeared to be dependent on the interpreter, their relationship with the school and the concept of 'reality'.

2.5 My position and current understanding

What constitutes a good reputation is complex and problematic and, as Davies and Ellison (1991) suggest, not only does the wider community have to know about it (reputation), they also have to understand and value it. Thus, in order to explore the construction of a reputation within this thesis, I consider my own assumptions in relation to a reputation before I explore how members of the wider school community construct a reputation concerning my school.

Overtime, as a headteacher, I have become more aware of how seemingly impossible it is for me to stand outside the friction that exists between performance, practice and what I perceive to be the 'lived realities'. I have been subject to numerous political initiatives and I am aware that my leadership has been influenced by them, even though some of the initiatives have been opposed to what I pedagogically and philosophically believe. The force of external power structures sometimes feels too much to fight against because of the perceived consequences that exist.

Moreover, I am aware that I have been swept along with some of these initiatives that have almost determined what my leadership should look like (Gunter, 2001), in order to create a school that would be accepted and in line with the 'norm' that I believe is created by new political agendas. Central to this understanding of what leadership should look like, lies how the performing school has been and continues to be defined (Gunter and Gleeson, 2001). Furthermore, Gunter (2001:17) shows that the performing school 'directs a mandated model of leadership within schools'. The government expectation in relation to the performance of a school has impacted on how I am leading Daisybank as I feel that there is a constant pressure to perform to given criteria. Consequently, I have become increasingly concerned with the results that we annually achieve and I am implementing ways of working internally within the school to give the children the best opportunity to achieve this, in line with, or beyond, the stipulated expectations. Thus, performativity has become an influencing factor in how I am leading Daisybank, how I am understanding and trying to construct the school's reputation in a positive way.

As pupil numbers have become more of a concern, understanding how parents select a school and how they are influenced with their choice, what they understand about a school and what is of value to them has become more significant. It is by investigating these issues that I will be able to expand and build on my own limited understanding of the key factors that affect their choice. Therefore, I understand that parents are influential in the construction of a reputation of a school and note that:

> All schools should already be involved in marketing because every school has a reputation and that reputation has to be managed. (Davies and Ellison, 1991:2)

In recent years, I have looked to market what I believe to be the positive attributes of Daisybank through the media, the school website, literature and open days in order to retain pupil numbers and appeal to parents. However, as Davies and Ellison (1991) highlight, unless the positive attributes that are being marketed are understood and valued, continued success and survival is not guaranteed. Parents are able to exert a power in the decision about a school and, more recently, I have become more aware of this shift in power. As a consequence, each academic year I wait to find out whether parents have selected Daisybank for their reception child, something as a headteacher I feel I have very little control over. Despite what I would describe as effective marketing, our reception intake is below what is financially viable. This thesis is not about focusing on parental choice in relation to educational establishments. However, as I seek to problematise Daisybank's reputation and explore how it has been constructed, I fully recognise that parents are fundamental to this construction. Therefore, this inquiry recognises parental choice as a significant entangled issue that requires consideration in any exploration of a reputation. To understand why schools are becoming more competitive and to understand the selection process by parents, this inquiry seeks to explore the construction of a reputation and philosophically consider the problematics and complexities associated with this concept and the discourses which underpin the construction of Daisybank's reputation.

2.6 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has provided a context to the research reported in this thesis. It has acknowledged the changes in my own professional role and has highlighted some of my current understanding about the constructed reputation of Daisybank.

This chapter has recognised how I believe that parents are influential in the construction of a reputation due to the choice that they have over the school. It has also recognised that there are other voices surrounding this construction, highlighting the problematic nature of a reputation. Whilst I acknowledge my own understanding of a reputation, and have made reference to the neoliberal context that I am functioning within, at this point I believe I have a limited understanding of how the wider community are influenced by political agendas. Therefore, this doctorate set out to explore the narratives of (parents and) stakeholders with a view to identifying the key influences at play as Daisybank's reputation was and is being constructed and where, for me as headteacher, negotiating space may lie.

In Chapter 1, I referred to Lacan (1977) and the 'mirror image'. I recognise that I have been seeing a particular reflection of Daisybank and that in order to explore the construction of my school's reputation, and find negotiating space, I need to challenge my own perspectives by drawing on the perspectives of others. Recognising myself as a source of data and the need to find a way to be self-critical, I explore transformational learning as a further lens in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: Exploration of Transformational Learning

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I critically appraise Mezirow's transformational learning theory. The aims of the chapter are to:

- Provide a conceptual critique of Mezirow's theory of transformational learning
- Appraise its application within other qualitative research
- Consider how I can use transformational learning as a lens to further explore the data generated within this thesis as I reflect on my own professional and doctoral journey.

Ulrich (1983:15) poses that anyone's understanding of any social situation is inherently incomplete and based on a selective application of knowledge. In order to develop a greater understanding of a social situation, Critical Systems Heuristics (CHS) encourages users to question different perspectives on a social situation to ultimately be able to devise a course of action to transform that situation (Ulrich and Reynolds, 2010). I recognise that I need to challenge and find ways of exploring my current perspectives and existing assumptions and explore ways that will enable me to do so.

Kegan (2009) notes, as adults we need transformation, not information. The original intention for the thesis was to find an effective way to explore the empirical data, in order to develop a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the constructed reputation of Daisybank. At the same time, I hoped that as my understanding developed, and the ways in which I acted changed, I would not just inform but transform how others may see my school.

I entered this doctoral journey with substantial experience as a headteacher, however, on reflection, I have not ever spent time challenging why I have come to

believe what I believe. Nor questioning how I navigate through the educational arena I currently work in. Thus, when considering developing my own practice, while exploring the complexity of the constructed reputation around the school that I lead, transformational learning, based on how I understood Mezirow's (1996a) definition of learning, opened up possibilities for me within this journey. He sees learning as '…the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action' (Mezirow, 1996a:162).

It was only after experiencing a perceived 'failure', and trying to make sense of this, that I started questioning my assumptions and my beliefs. The congruence between my own experience, and Mezirow's ten-step model of transformative learning, subsequently led me to a deeper inquiry and then to the application of his theory within my work.

3.1 Mezirow's original transformative learning theory

The theory of transformative learning was developed by Mezirow due to an interest in developing a research- based body of theory for adult education. (Mezirow, 1969). His first use of the concept of 'transformation' was in an early study with women from the United States who were returning to postsecondary study or their workplace after an extended period of absence (Mezirow 1978a).

The original influences on Mezirow's theory included Kuhn's (1962) paradigm, Freire's (1970) conscientization, and Habermas's (1971, 1984) domains of learning (Mezirow, 1978a, 1991b, 2000). Key ideas from such theorists influenced the theory and the significant concepts of a disorientating dilemma, meaning schemas, meaning perspectives, perspective transformation, frames of reference, levels of learning processes, habits of mind, and critical self-reflection. Mezirow's theory, however, has adapted and evolved overtime and whilst there was a recognition of influences from other theorists, it was primarily Habermas's (1971)

early work on domains of learning that most influenced Mezirow's transformative learning theory.

Habermas (1971) had proposed three domains of learning: (a) the technical, (b) the practical, and (c) the emancipatory. Using a grounded theory methodology, Mezirow developed his own interpretations of Habermas's ideas as a theoretical base (Mezirow, 1985) in his *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood* (Mezirow, 1990a), culminating in his book on transformative learning, where the theory had its first full explication (Mezirow, 1991a). Mezirow's examination of these three domains led to his description of perspective transformation as:

> 'the emancipatory process of becoming critically aware of how and why the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships, reconstituting this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings.' (Mezirow 1981: 6)

Mezirow's theory was first framed as perspective transformation (1975, 1978b, 1981). Mezirow (1991a, 1994) argued that the central element to the perspective transformation is critical self-reflection. Thus, reflection was identified as one of the most important components of learning in adulthood as it enabled people to recognise and modify structures of assumptions and expectations that influenced their points of view, thinking, beliefs, attitudes, and actions. Mezirow (1990a) therefore recognises that reflection enables us to correct distortions and that critical reflection involves critiquing what presuppositions have been built upon. Mezirow (1990a:1) recognises that learning may be defined as 'the process of making a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience, which guides subsequent understanding, appreciation and action.'

'Transformation', as used by Mezirow (1978a, 1991a), is the conceptual domain of consciousness raising, improving, becoming free from the past to become 'inclusive, discriminating, reflective, open, and emotionally able to change'

(Mezirow, 2003:58). Transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991a, 1995, 1996) is the process of effecting change in a frame of reference. Meaning structures (perspectives, schemes, frames of reference) are a major component of the theory of transformational learning and therefore they are understood and developed through reflection. According to Mezirow, our meaning structures consist of two dimensions, namely 'habits of mind' and resulting 'points of view' (Wiessner & Mezirow, 2000: 345). Transformative learning is experienced when one is able to reconcile contradictory information with our existing worldview to create a more comprehensive perspective that informs our future actions. Mezirow (1991a: 152) noted that transformative learning is 'irreversible once completed; that is, once our understanding is clarified and we have committed ourselves fully to taking the action it suggests, we do not regress to levels of less understanding'.

Emphasising the importance of critical reflection, Mezirow (1995) moved towards presenting three types of reflection and their roles in transforming meaning schemes and perspectives: content reflection, process reflection, and premise reflection. However, Mezirow (1998) refined this further where he presented two new aspects to critical reflection. This included: the critical reflection of assumptions, where a learner looks back and in addition to this examines the assumptions or presuppositions that were involved in the reflective process as well as the concept of critical self- reflection of assumptions. It involves 'a critique of a premise upon which the learner has defined a problem' (Mezirow, 1998: 186) and is akin to premise reflection (Mezirow, 1995).

Points of view can change continuously as we learn and 'reflect on either the content or process by which we solve problems and identify the need to modify assumptions' (Mezirow, 1997:6). However, to change one's frame of reference may take time as it 'involves an enhanced level of awareness of the context of one's beliefs and feelings, a critique of their assumptions and particularly premises, an assessment of alternative perspective, a decision to negate an old perspective in favor of a new one' (Mezirow, 1991:161). Mezirow (2000) recognised that people can change their points of view 'by trying on another's

point of view' (Mezirow, 2000: 21) but continued to emphasise that one is unable to try on someone else's habit of mind.

Transformative learning theory has undergone modifications and incorporated new constructs overtime. However, within the essence of this theory, I recognise that being critically reflective is encouraged and despite all the changes to this theory overtime, reflectivity has remained central. Within this doctoral process. I needed to find a way to be critically reflective of my own positionality- exploring my own assumptions as well as understanding the influences behind them. This theory has been critiqued by other theorists and whilst I consider their perspectives within this chapter, Mezirow's transformative learning theory influenced the development of my own self-reflection.

3.2 A description of transformative learning theory

The theory of transformative learning applies uniquely to adults (Mezirow, 2003; Taylor, 2008). Through critical self-reflection, transformative learning brings about changes in a person's views of the nature and limits of knowledge (Mezirow, 1991b; 2000; 2009; 2012) by 'elaborating existing frames of reference, by learning new frames of reference, by transforming points of view, or by transforming habits of mind' (Mezirow, 2000:19). These processes serve to enhance the individual's ability to enter into civic discourse. I recognise that it is important within this doctoral journey that I find an avenue whereby I can initially discuss my current perspectives in relation to the constructed reputation of Daisybank in order to reflect on my existing frames of reference. In addition, it is important to explore why I have developed such perspectives and assumptions. I believe that this self-reflection is crucial if I am to be able to effectively transition to new frames of reference. As I highlighted in Chapter 1, I know that I have been professionally influenced and constrained by political agendas and I have allowed myself to feel confined and restricted by the neoliberal framework that I am functioning within. My existing frames of reference have influenced the way I have perceived Daisybank to be. So, whilst I set out to I explore how other

stakeholders constructed the reputation of Daisybank, I became aware that my own understanding, my own constructions of the meaning of education, school and leadership were also challenged through my doctoral journey. In order to function in a more liberating manner, and to see where there is negotiating space within such a framework, I can now see a new way of working within civic discourse (dominated by neoliberal ideology) in a different way. Thus, I have transitioned to new frames of reference to take action and influence the constructed reputation of Daisybank, from my own, as well as other stakeholder's perspectives.

Mezirow (1997:5) explains that adults have acquired what he defines as 'frames of reference' over their lives which are 'the structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences'. Such frames influence our expectations and our perceptions as they encompass cognitive, conative and emotional components. Frames of reference influence our view of the world and result in us rejecting ideas that fail to fit within them due to habits of mind and points of view being established. Transformational learning enables an individual to move away from their world view and develop a frame of reference that is '…more inclusive, discriminating, self-reflective, and integrative of experience'. (Mezirow, 1995:5)

Mezirow (1997) suggests that the way in which we are able to transform our frames of reference is through critical reflection where our interpretations, beliefs, and habits of mind or points of view are challenged. Mezirow (1991a:104) defines reflection as: 'critically assessing the content, process or premise(s) of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to our experience'. He recognises content reflection as 'what we perceive, think, feel or act upon' (Mezirow, 1991a:107); process reflection as how we perceive, think, feel or act as we do and premise reflection as a way of understanding why we perceive, think, feel or act as we do. Critiquing the assumptions underpinning our world view to confront our habitual thinking (Mezirow, 1990b), critical self-reflection is akin to premise reflection (Kitchenham, 2008). It is arguable that premise reflection, over content and process reflection, has the most potential for transforming our perspectives due to it involving critical

reflection (Mezirow, 1991a; Cranton and King, 2003). Critical reflection is the key element of perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1990).

According to Mezirow (1991b), perspective transformation is about significant change to ones meaning perspective. Perspective transformation can be seen as a way of improving the conditions for decision making. With the use of critical reflection, the range of options and possibilities for an individual is expanded. By engaging in discourse, one is able to make a more dependable choice (Tokiwa-Fus, 2000).

Mezirow (1991b:168–169) identifies ten phases of perspective transformation. The steps include:

1. A disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame
3. A critical reassessment of epistemic, sociocultural or psychic assumptions
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated similar change
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions
6. Planning a course of action
7. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
8. Provisional trying of new roles
9. Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective.

Stages 1–4 provide triggers for action. Beginning with a disorientating dilemma, individuals may examine their feelings in response to this, leading to critical reflection. Conversations with others may happen in order to consider developed assumptions which are considered in a more critical way. Stages 5–7 are preparations for action to deal with changes in behaviour, as a result of having a

new perspective. This is where an individual may start to consider new ways of acting and plan accordingly. Stages 8–10 involve taking action. At this point an individual may be trialling new roles associated with changes in behaviour and become proficient in them. Based upon the new perspective, it is anticipated that the individual will return to everyday life with their changed behaviour.

These steps may or may not occur sequentially (Cranton, 2006). There is also recognition by some commentators that stages may be treated with flexibility and that some stages may be omitted or not be part of the individual's learning journey (Taylor, 1997; Percy, 2005; Kitchenham, 2008). Whilst such views are held in relation to the ten phases identified by Mezirow (1991a), critical reflection appears to be the fundamental component of transformational learning.

Influenced by Habermas (1981), Mezirow distinguishes three different forms of learning: instrumental, communicative and emancipatory. He recognises that critical reflection can only happen when we learn to problem solve using these forms of learning.

Instrumental learning involves having control of and manipulation of the environment or other people, with change being measured through productivity, performance or behaviour (Mezirow, 1990b, 1991a). This type of learning therefore is a process whereby an individual can 'hone proficiencies, knowledge, and understandings, as well as their ability to anticipate future outcomes' (Quinn and Sinclair, 2016:3). Communicative learning in contrast is validated through communication, or critical discourse with others. It 'involves at least two persons striving to reach an understanding of the meaning of an interpretation or the justification for a belief. Ideally, communicative learning involves reaching a consensus' (Mezirow, 1997:6). Both forms of learning are essential to adult development, helping to further their understanding of the objective and subjective realms of the individual's world (Diduck et al., 2012; Mezirow, 1991a). When instrumental and communicative learning lead an individual to question and evaluate the premises and assumptions of their understanding, transformative

learning or perspective transformation can occur (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1991a; Moyer et al., 2014).

Diduck and Mitchell (2003:341) explain that communicative learning involves an individual interpreting 'values, intentions, feelings, moral decisions and normative concepts' of themselves and others. I recognise that communicative learning is fundamental to my doctoral journey in order to explore norms that may have been created in relation to the construction of the reputation of Daisybank through dialogue with other stakeholders. It is learning that generates insights into not just our own, but others, and society's, values, beliefs and normative expectations. I work within a framework where I have become accustomed to what schools ought to be, particularly in relation to performativity, and have created my own interpretation of what I believe to be other stakeholder's perceptions when they determine the reputation of a school.

Resonating with social constructivist theories of adult learning, where the benefit of interaction with others is highlighted as being key to learning (Tusting and Barton, 2003), communicative learning encourages evidence, arguments and alternative points of view to be considered through interaction with others. Mezirow (1997:7) believes that from this 'the more interpretations of a belief available, the greater the likelihood of finding a more dependable interpretation or synthesis'. Within communicative learning, there is discourse. The discourse refers to 'the process in which we have an active dialogue with others to better understand the meaning of an experience' (Mezirow, 2000:14). In Mezirow's view, this type of critical reflection of underlying assumptions is not a solitary activity. It is however promoted, developed and enacted through dialogue devoted to assessing contested beliefs, which thereby leads to perspective transformation. Although this doctorate could appear as though it may be a solitary activity where I am the researcher, headteacher and the adult learner, it is not. An important aspect of this doctorate is the dialogue with others – stakeholders and also a peer who is situated in the same political and educational context that I am in.

Dialogue with others enabled me to explore the constructed reputation of Daisybank from different perspectives.

Transformational learning enables an adult learner to become liberated from self-limiting patterns that inhibit growth and development. It therefore provides the potential for a learner to be liberated through the emancipatory educational pedagogy.

Mezirow (2000:26) describes an emancipated person as:

> Free from unwarranted control of undesirable beliefs, unsupportable attitudes, and paucity of abilities, which can prevent one from taking charge of one's life?

He further explains that, fostering these liberating conditions from making more autonomous and informed choices and developing a sense of self-empowerment is the cardinal goal of adult education.

In emancipatory learning, 'knowledge is gained through critical self-reflection' (Mezirow, 1991a:87), and its purpose is to overcome the limitations of self-knowledge and the social constraints of one's actions and thoughts, thereby leading to self-empowerment. Emancipatory learning is therefore developing an understanding and knowledge about the nature and root causes of particular unsatisfactory circumstances in order to consider strategies to change them. According to Hart (1990), emancipatory education's primary goal is to question and critique social norms. Tisdell (1993) recognises that individuals can become empowered to liberate themselves by challenging power structures and finding different ways to work within these. This is significant in my doctoral journey. I consider how to further liberate myself from the constraints that I currently see and empower myself as a headteacher in order that I can embrace (for others) the negotiating space that exists around the constructed reputation of Daisybank. Martin (2000) identifies that individuals who want to contribute to creating a more

informed, equal and socially just society should engage in the practices and ideas associated with emancipatory learning.

Working within a neoliberal framework, I suggest that there are many inequalities, particularly in how schools are perceived in relation to performativity. Consequently, the competitive forum that schools become embroiled in can lead to growing inequalities for the more disadvantaged pupils. Having the knowledge that the system I am functioning within potentially leads to more inequalities further highlights the importance of this doctoral study. Notably, the importance of seeking a way, where the learning that takes place results in finding the negotiating space within such a framework and brings about effective change. Mezirow (1991a:167) equates emancipatory learning with perspective transformation and defines perspective transformation as:

> …the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective; and, finally, making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings.

Thus, I recognise that perspective transformation is a way of me becoming more aware of how I have been trapped by my narrow, rigid, limited patterns of thinking, feeling and acting in relation to how I work within Daisybank due to my own understanding of the constructed reputation. I hope that through this awareness, I will develop more freedom and flexibility in order to influence the constructed reputation of Daisybank more effectively. I recognise that I am acting upon my own reality that has become a constricting force for me.

Mezirow states that some frames of reference (meaning perspectives) are 'more useful in dealing with diverse or changing circumstances', and that those which are 'better able to deal with a wider range of decision-making' are 'more

emancipatory than others' (Mezirow, 1996b:238). I therefore recognise that perspective transformation would potentially enable me to make improved decisions in relation to Daisybank. By critically reflecting on my own assumptions, the range of options and possibilities visible for me are expanded. The discourse with others in the process would ultimately enable me to be more aware of the choices that have been made in relation to the school.

3.3 Theoretical orientations

There are two theoretical orientations to transformative learning: transformation for individual development and transformation for social change (Taylor, 2009). Transformation for individual development is focused on individual growth. Transformation for social change however includes personal transformation but it also has a focus on an awareness of one's own and others' perspectives in the context of a social issue. Whilst I recognise that one of my aims is to document my own professional learning journey within this doctorate, a long-term aim is not only to consider the perspective of others in relation to the constructed reputation of Daisybank, but to find an effective way of influencing such perspectives. I would hope that this would bring about some form of social change in relation to what I currently see as the constructed reputation of Daisybank.

3.4 How transformational learning is viewed

Despite the generative outputs of Mezirow's (1978a; 1981; 1990a; 1991a; 2000; 2009) conception of transformative learning, there are a variety of alternative views of transformative learning theory that focus on aspects originally overlooked in the early work of Mezirow. Taylor (1994) suggests that in his early work, Mezirow himself ignored the affective, emotional and social contexts aspects of the learning process. However, in more recent work (2000), Mezirow acknowledges the importance of each of these three contexts realising that 'asymmetrical power relationships' influence the learning process (Mezirow 2000:28). Despite his own evolution and development of transformational

learning, there are still a variety of critical responses that have emerged in relation to Mezirow's transformational learning, particularly from Taylor (1997; 1998; 2000) who argues that ' transformative learning is not just rationally and consciously driven but incorporates a variety of non-rational and unconscious modalities for revising meaning structures' (Taylor, 1997:48).

Mezirow (1997) offers a psycho-critical approach to transformational learning (Taylor, 2008), meaning the theory is based on cognitive critical reflection. Taylor (2008:7) recognises that there are a variety of alternative conceptions of transformative learning theory. Such conceptions refer to similar ideas and address factors often overlooked in the dominant theory of transformational learning such as the role of spirituality, positionality, emancipatory learning and neurobiology. Transformational learning is therefore conceptualised and reconceptualised in several different ways (Dirkx, 1998; Elias, 2000).

Whilst transformational learning has been exponential within research (Taylor and Cranton, 2013), there has been a lack of significant attention concerning the relationship of positionality (English and Irving, 2012; Johnson-Bailey, 2012). Though researchers write about 'making meaning from experience', Taylor and Cranton (2012) recognise that there is little exploration as to what is meant by experiences. They recognise the link between experience and transformational learning as:

> It is experience, particularly prior experience (that happened in one's past), that is the primary medium of a transformation, and it is the revision of the meaning of experience that is the essence of learning. (Taylor and Cranton, 2012:35)

Mezirow recognises that learning uses prior interpretations and constructs new versions, but despite the centrality of experience within transformative learning, Taylor and Cranton (2012) recognise that it is rarely defined or critically examined

and therefore question what distinguishes a transformative experience from another experience.

Taylor and Cranton (2013:4) raise concerns about the understanding of experience as a construct as 'it assumes that experience can be interpreted by an individual unproblematically' and overlooks the fact that individuals can hold contradictory perspectives of an experience at the same time (Merriam and Kim, 2012). Taylor and Cranton (2013) also highlight that where transformative learning is used in research, there is an over-reliance on retrospective interviews where there is an attempt to 'lift' an individual's 'experience' in its totality.

> Not only is the interpretation of an experience mediated by context but also the personal and historical context is significant to the evolution and outcome of a transformative experience. (Taylor and Cranton, 2013:4)

Thus, in this doctorate, I endeavoured to ensure that my learning was understood within the context that I am working within and additionally how that context has influenced my understanding of experience. My contextual experience, the nature of my role as a headteacher, and how I work within the educational arena is important in order that there can be a coherent understanding of the learning that will potentially take place. Thus, I agreed with Taylor and Cranton (2013) and positionality played a significant role in my doctoral journey.

Whilst both Mezirow (2000) and Freirè (2000) take a constructivist approach towards transformational learning, Freirè's focus is orientated by social justice. Mezirow concentrates on the importance of rational thought and reflection. Freirè (1970:75) wanted people to develop an 'ontological vocation' that allowed them to continually reflect while acting upon transformations of their world. He ultimately saw their actions aimed towards creating a more just and equitable world for all to live in. Whilst I do not fully align myself with Freirè's approach to transformational learning, I do believe that, as a result of my engagement with emancipatory learning, within this doctoral journey, it is possible that some inequalities

associated with the constructed reputation of Daisybank may be contested. Mezirow's transformative learning theory has also been critiqued due to the absence of the role of emotion, which does not figure substantially in Mezirow's work (Milley, 2009). In contrast, Freirè gives a much more pivotal role to emotion in his theory of development of consciousness and his emancipatory educational process (Sherman, 1980). Freirè's emancipatory view of transformation acknowledges social inequities and champions liberation (Baumgartner, 2001). I recognise that throughout this doctoral journey, emotion has played a role in my transformational learning. Moving on from a perceived failure to becoming liberated in my professional role has involved emotion and therefore there are aspects of this doctoral journey where I believe my own transformational learning is not rigidly functioning in line with some of Mezirow's core beliefs.

Both Daloz (1986) and Kegan (1982) offer a psycho-developmental view of transformative learning. Whilst a developmental perspective is central to Mezirow's view of transformative learning, in the work of Daloz (1986) this perspective provides a central or organising framework for understanding transformative learning as growth (Dirkx, 1998). Daloz (1999) recognises that transformational learning is intuitive, holistic and contextually based. This therefore concludes that Daloz's narrative approach humanises the transformational learning process. Transformational learning, according to Daloz, and my own understanding, has many similarities to Mezirow's theory. However, Daloz appears to be more orientated to personal change which (as described by Daloz) I hope to encounter during my doctoral journey. Significantly, this doctorate is about more than just the changes that I experience. It is about how I use such changes to influence the way I work and fundamentally how this change can effectively and positively influence the constructed reputation of Daisybank.

With a planetary view, based in nature and considering the universe as a whole, O'Sullivan (1999) promoted a transformative educational vision emphasising the importance of critique and creativity. He critiqued market-driven approaches to education, materialistic ideology and consumer culture that are dominant in

today's neoliberal society. Moreover, he viewed critical and holistic education as necessary for the survival of the planet.

> …we will have to forge an educational direction that sets the deep needs of the planet over the needs and priorities of the competitive marketplace. (O'Sullivan, 2003:326–327)

O'Sullivan (2003) expresses the need to challenge the values of market globalisation where the premise of the consumption of products, materials and services are the primary motivators for living. In this globalised world, O'Sullivan (2003:327) highlights how 'it must be acknowledged that people have been primed to want and desire commodities'. O'Sullivan sees transformational learning as a way of challenging the values of market globalisation as 'it involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions' (O'Sullivan, 2003:327). This doctoral journey for me was about finding a way to challenge the current values that I see at the heart of the education system. I expressed in Chapter 1 that a parent is no longer just referred to as a parent but can also be described as a customer (Hughes et al., 1994; Hooge et al., 2012). Schools have therefore, in my opinion, become a commodity. I see that elements of how O'Sullivan describes transformational learning may play a role within my doctoral journey since my initial disorientating dilemma was born out of the frustration of how the reputation of a school is constructed against a particular political landscape and a globalised society. I recognise that the planetary view of transformational learning may play an underlying role within this doctoral journey. This recognition further emphasises how my positionality as a headteacher, and the backdrop which I see myself functioning within, is fundamental to the specific transformational learning lens I adopt within this study.

A psychoanalytic view of transformative learning is held by Dirkx (1998; 2000) and Healy (2000) where they recognise transformational learning to have a spiritual dimension. Dirkx (1998) believes that transformational learning goes beyond the

ego-based rational and incorporates soul-based learning with an emphasis on feelings and images. Healy (2000) identifies an expanded self-awareness that leads to a deeper self-understanding after investigating transformational learning with individuals who practise meditation. According to Taylor (1998:13), the spiritual viewpoint sees resolving intrapsychic conflicts as key to transformational learning whilst emphasising that Mezirow's stance is that it is only via 'cognitive conflicts' that transformational learning occurs. Dirkx (2006:16) recognises that depth psychology is:

> …a means of helping learners working through unconscious psychic conflicts and dilemmas associated with the learning task or content, and of fostering opportunities among our learners for meaning making, deep change, and transformation.

Dirkx (2006) highlights how our emotions can be described as windows that reveal our experienced realities. Britzman (1998) suggests that unconscious emotional dynamics may contribute to resistance to learning itself and the emergence of new levels of awareness of the self-in-relation-to-others (Boyd, 1991). Based on this, I also see an element of the psychoanalytical view of transformational learning playing a role within this doctoral journey. It is important, within this thesis, that I reflect on why I have described myself as feeling frustrated with the constructed reputation of Daisybank and how it has become an antagonism for me. I believe that the driving force behind this doctorate is that I currently see the way in which a school's reputation is constructed as unfair. My own sense of working in a confined, restricted manner within education has given me the impetus to consider where the negotiating space for change could possibly be.

3.5 Limitations of some forms of transformational learning

Whilst Mezirow (1991a) has indicated that perspective transformation is a process whereby an individual can become more critically aware and understand how our own assumptions have come to constrain the way in which we understand the

world, an issue with such a process is how others are expected to enable you to do so. Mezirow suggests (1978b:109) that perspective transformation is effective when 'taking the perspectives of others who have a more critical awareness of the psychocultural assumptions which shape our histories and experience'. Collard and Law (1989:104) raise some critical questions in relation to this including:

> How do you recognise those with more critical awareness; identify the psychocultural assumptions that shapes one's history and experience; and what is the relationship between these psychocultural assumptions and their social origins?

Mezirow does not provide a clear indication of how the individuals to have dialogue with should be selected. Collard and Law (1989:106) describe this as a 'failure to address adequately questions of context, ideology, and the radical needs' as it poses some problem with perspective transformation, embodied within an emancipatory theory.

Within this doctoral journey, the perspectives of others are fundamental to explore the constructed reputation of Daisybank. Whilst I agree with Collard and Law's (1989) sentiment, I have also considered Mezirow's (1996a:163) statement: 'A transformative learning experience requires that the learner makes an informed and reflective decision to act.' This decision may '…result in a reasoned reaffirmation of an existing pattern of action' (Mezirow, 1996a:163). The centrality of self-determination within perspective transformation is not always recognised by others. That said, I recognise that within the transformative process I play a fundamental role and rather than looking to others to change my perspective, I would look to them to 'test' my own assumptions, which may change as a result of this.

Tokiwa-Fus (2000: online), after interviewing Mezirow in 1997, highlights Mezirow's interpretation of discourse. Discourse was described as '…the act of testing the validity of one's beliefs by assessing its justification, through turning to

others, asking about their experience and getting their ideas'. This highlights for me the importance of turning to another headteacher and stakeholders linked to Daisybank as I test my own beliefs in relation to the construction of a school's reputation. Thus, despite the argument posed by Collard and Law (1989), I believe that perspective transformation would enable me to do what Mezirow (1991a) highlights as being the essence of transformational learning. Mezirow (1991a:203) suggests that it is used to '… help learners construe experience in a way that allows them to understand more clearly the reasons for their problems and the action options open to them so that they can improve the quality of their decision making'.

The link between development and learning is explicit in the adult education literature (Mezirow, 1991a; Merriam & Clark, 2006), where cognitive development is cast in terms of the emergence of critical reflection and a characteristic of a higher level of cognitive functioning. Merriam (2004) proposes what could be considered a controversial stance in relation to cognition. She believes that a certain level of cognitive development has to be achieved in order to engage with transformational learning as she indicates that 'critical reflection on experience is key to transformational learning' (Merriam, 2004:65). Believing that critical reflection requires a prerequisite cognitive level to be achieved, Merriam (2004) indicates that many adults do not function at a high cognitive level and that age and maturity will have a strong influence on this. However, Kang (2007) argues that most work on critical reflection makes little room for the emotional or spiritual developments that might accompany adult learning. Research carried out by Schoenholz-Read (2000) confirms that when students report the 'broadening' or 'stretching' of their perspective, they feel emotionally affected by their learning. Changes in self-concept are also associated with the development of emotions (Stevens-Long et al., 2012).

3.6 Synthesis of transformational learning and other qualitative research

When embarking on this doctoral journey, I had limited knowledge of transformational learning and how it is and has been used within qualitative research. Therefore, my view of how to utilise such a lens within this doctoral thesis was limited. I addressed this by conducting a systematic review using the Education Resources Information Center database (ERIC).

My initial search for information on transformational learning using the phrase 'transform* learning' resulted in 5,191 papers from all text types. I narrowed this down by using the following search criteria: Adult learning, Transforma* learning, Qualitative research, Education and Professional development. Eight published papers met these criteria and three studies were of particular interest in terms of enhancing my own understanding of transformational learning within my own doctoral journey.

Study 1: Transformative professional development through the eyes of Jack Mezirow and Thomas Guskey.

Stahl (2012) recognised that access to professional development that sought to increase knowledge and skills did not appear to be transforming the classroom practice of teachers in the Dunbar Public School System. This finding highlighted the need to focus on how to change teachers' actions and pedagogy rather than just increasing knowledge. Within this study, Mezirow's theory of transformational learning was used as a conceptual framework. The three major tenets of the theory explored were: a) the emphasis in learning was about changing how an individual thinks, b) learning included cognitive, affective, interpersonal and moral aspects that involved a learner's existing knowledge and background as well as their ability to examine their own learning processes (personal context and reflection were important, and c) learner's ways' of knowing, their frames of reference. The central goal of using Mezirow's theory was to support adults in

their own learning so that they could critically evaluate how to best engage with their environment for the purpose of effecting change. This study did take account of the positionality of individual teachers but recognised personal background and prior knowledge, subject matter and grade level taught, years' experience in teaching as well as education level.

Whilst using qualitative research methods, this study was also quantitative in nature and a survey crafted around Guskey's five levels of professional development was used. Initially 266 surveys were collected but only 186 fulfilled the criteria of the study. This study confirmed that professional development that values a teacher's personal background, including their present teaching context and focuses on real time applications was considered effective by teachers and thus more likely to effect change in classroom pedagogy.

After exploring this study, I do not believe that there was enough reflection on whether individuals taking part within the study actually wanted to change or even saw the need to do so. Mezirow (2012:92) says that the goal of adult education is to 'help adults realise their potential for becoming more liberated, socially responsible and autonomous learners'. Although within this study, time was allocated for teachers to have dialogue with others, it was difficult to see, from a reader's perspective, how teachers had been influenced, due to its focus on quantitative data. Whilst inferring the use of perspective transformation by the tenets of the theory used, the authors did not articulate how the frames of reference had been changed within individuals in order to show how it influenced classroom practice or how going forward this could be used effectively in the professional development of teachers.

Study 2: Reflection after teaching a lesson: experiences of secondary school science teachers.

This study is described as having a basic qualitative research design. It investigated the process, strategies and techniques used by seven different

science teachers across several suburban districts regarding their experiences with reflection practices after teaching a single or several lessons.

The theoretical framework for this study was based on adult learning theory and transformative learning theory and this was used to provide the foundation for teachers to be critically reflective to gain and then act on new insight. The study explored how transformative learning occurs when teachers reflect in isolation as well as in a collaborative manner. It also considered how teachers use prior experiences in isolation and collaboratively to reflect after teaching a lesson.

Data was gathered by open-ended interviews where teachers involved responded to 35 questions. Whilst this study indicated that transformational learning was used as a lens, statements such as 'the individual reflection process transforms them', (Halstead, 2017:137) did not indicate how or compare it to the starting point of each teacher. Therefore, it was hard to grasp the impact of transformational learning on the individuals within the study. The study claimed that 'early and current experiences influenced the way educators collaborated with others' (Halstead, 2017:137). However due to the lack of explanation of the 'backdrop' of each individual teacher's experience, it became difficult to understand how and why experience would be so influential in this process. From my perspective, it was hard to understand how transformational learning had been integral to this study.

Study 3: Passionate scholars: transformative learning in doctoral education.

Stevens-Long et al. (2012) explored the expanded conceptualisation of doctoral education grounded in an integrative perspective on adult education and four major strands of transformative learning. This qualitative research-based study involved 59 graduates who each completed a self-administered semi-structured questionnaire.

This study was particular interesting to me as it not only broadened my own understanding of transformational learning, but also began to show how different strands of transformational learning can be applied together within research. Whilst exploring the transformational and developmental outcomes of doctoral education, Stevens-Long et al. (2012) made use of and highlighted the theory and practice in literature around these four major strands of transformational learning which included: the cognitive rational approach to changes in meaning perspectives through critical reflection (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1991a); the depth psychology approach to Jungian individuation and spiritual development through dialogue with the subconscious (Boyd, 1991; Boyd and Myers, 1988; Dirkx, 2000); the structural developmental approach to epistemological change through the life span (Daloz, 1999; Kegan, 1982; 1994); and the social emancipatory approach to education for critical consciousness and social justice (Brookfield, 1995; 2005; Freirè, 1973; Hooks, 1994; Morrow and Torres, 2002). Whilst there was little evidence of the social emancipatory approach, the conclusions were that doctoral students can experience a wide range of learning outcomes beyond intellectual development. These included advanced stages of cognitive development, new capacity for emotional experience and conceptions of self, and more reflective professional practice. As this study was exploratory, the conclusions provided were quite general overall as specific learning experiences were not highlighted and the limits of transformative learning were not considered.

Each of the three aforementioned research studies utilised transformational learning in some capacity with differing levels of success. By exploring the above studies, I am not only more convinced that a transformative lens can successfully be used within my doctoral study, but also that I need to understand clearly which aspects of transformational learning are going to have the most impact on potential learning. I see positionality and perspective transformation as being fundamental elements to my doctoral study and I feel that the first two studies demonstrated that when these aspects are not considered well, the conclusions drawn are less robust. The third study however opened up the possibilities of

going beyond the sole use of Mezirow's theory and actually enabled me to consider how I could use transformational learning more effectively.

3.7 Transformative learning an appropriate lens for this research study

The transformational theory of adult learning is particularly focused on education that enables adults to become autonomous reflective thinkers that critically engage with their environment (Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 1997). The aspect of this theory that I believe is specifically important to my role as a headteacher is how I critically engage with the whole school environment surrounding Daisybank in order to influence the constructed reputation. Such an environment, whilst taking account of teachers, governors, children and parents, goes beyond the school gates and considers its local community as a whole.

The lack of reference to positionality within the work of Mezirow, highlighted by Taylor (2008), is an aspect of the critique of his theory that I have sought to address in this thesis. The critical appraisal shows positionality is fundamental, as when it is not taken into account, it can change the conclusions drawn from qualitative research which can then be open to challenge.

According to Mezirow (1997) transformational learning is facilitated by educators who assist learners in reflections. Whilst I do not have what I see as a typical facilitator within this doctoral process, I do see the stakeholders (the interviewees linked to Daisybank) and my peer as my facilitators, who by the insights that they provided, enabled me to consider the constructed reputation outside of what I originally believed (Cranton, 2002).

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This chapter will outline the process of designing, undertaking and analysing the research reported in this thesis which explored the constructed reputation of Daisybank and considered whether there was any negotiating space within that construction to influence change.

The following research questions underpinned the research:

1. What are the perceptions of Daisybank School?
2. What factors appear to have influenced perceptions of Daisybank School?
3. Based on these narratives, to what extent can I identify any evidence of negotiating space to influence change?
4. How has this transformative learning process influenced my professional learning journey?

4.1 Rationale for the choice of research methodology

A qualitative research design was utilised to explore the complex social phenomenon of 'reputation'. The research process from conception to completion adopted elements of a grounded theory approach, and more specifically drew on a constructivist grounded theory approach to meet the research aim. Charmaz (2008:397) states that 'a social constructivist approach to grounded theory allows us to address why questions while preserving the complexity of social life'. This approach enabled me to critically explore the constructed reputation of Daisybank. Differing from a more positivistic stance, 'constructivist grounded theorists [also] attend to what and how questions' (Charmaz, 2008:398), such as, in the context of this thesis, 'what' is Daisybank's reputation and 'how' has this been constructed?

Being a novice researcher, I recognised that to meet my research aims I needed to adopt a systematic approach to guide me through the research process. Originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory offered an approach described as both flexible and practical in the examination of complex social phenomena (Charmaz, 2003). As Glaser and Strauss (1967:8) state that 'our principle aim is to stimulate other theorists to codify and publish their own methods for generating theory', it can be inferred that this approach is not wholly prescriptive or rigid but that aspects of grounded theory could be useful guide for researchers. A more flexible approach to exploring the construction of a reputation was pertinent as I recognised the challenges of exploring this complex social phenomenon. My understanding about the construction of a reputation was limited and somewhat dominated by performance data and the OFSTED grading of the school. I was also aware that my understanding was influenced by my professional role and perspective as a headteacher.

I wanted to be able to put aside some of my own biases about a reputation and open up opportunities to explore other significant issues that I may not have considered. Whilst I had formed some opinions of Daisybank's 'poor' constructed reputation, my aim was to explore other perspectives in recognition that a reputation only comes from other people's experiences – their lived realities. Thus, in exploring other stakeholder perspectives, I had the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding about the school's reputation and how it had been constructed, within my context. To achieve this, I realised that I needed a flexible methodology that enabled me to sensitively navigate and explore this complex phenomenon by reflecting on other narratives (stakeholders and an external fellow headteacher) and delving deeper into the perceptions of the participants at the heart of this study. From this, I hoped to then identify if there was any negotiating space within the construction of a reputation to influence change.

4.2 The developed theory

Glaser and Strauss (1967) believe that the researcher should only focus on generating one type of theory which can either be classified as 'formal' or 'substantive'. I recognised that whilst the concept of a reputation is an incredibly complex issue, I was working with the construction of a reputation in a particular context. Although I believe that the theory developed from this thesis could be applied to other contexts, it is a narrow area of research. Adopting an approach more in line with the work of Charmaz (2006), my doctoral journey resulted in a greater understanding of the constructed reputation of Daisybank. Whilst 'positivist theory seeks causes, favors deterministic explanations, and emphasises generality and universality' (Charmaz, 2006:126), an alternative definition of theory emphasises understanding rather than explanation (Charmaz, 2006). In a constructivist approach, the purpose of the final write-up does not seek to discover 'truth' and does not provide a generalisation either (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:180). Therefore, I have sought to provide a greater understanding of reputation based on my own interpretation of the data and from this provide recommendations which could be used beyond my own school setting by other leaders in education. The theory developed in this thesis exemplifies some of the elements that influence the constructed reputation, and in doing so highlights the complexity that exists in a school's reputation. My understanding of that complexity deepened because it included my core beliefs. I am now able to act differently to 'construct' the way Daisybank is seen. Drawing on Mezirow (1978a) and Lacan (1977), I was able to develop deeper explanations of the constructed reputation, moving beyond a construction purely based on stakeholder perspectives and understanding how reputation is a co-constructed entity.

4.3 Ethical considerations

Prior to conducting the research reported in this thesis, it was important to consider ethical issues that, irrespective of the methodology adopted, should be considered throughout any research study. When undertaking this doctorate, I

complied with the ethics procedures (BERA, 2011) outlined by Manchester Metropolitan and completed the ethics checklist supplied by the university. Key aspects relevant to this study are informed consent, confidentiality, accuracy of reporting and positionality. BERA (2011: 7) states:

> 'Researchers must recognize the participants' entitlement to privacy and must accord them their rights to confidentiality and anonymity, unless they or their guardians or responsible others, specifically and willingly waive that right.'

Participants were contacted directly and provided with a summary of the research and the data collection process (see Appendix 1). They were made aware of the purpose of the research, why their participation was required, and how and to whom data would be disseminated (BERA, 2011) in order that they could make an informed decision about their participation (Kvale, 2007). Having agreed to participate, and just prior to the interviews, participants completed an informed consent form (see Appendix 2) and were made aware that they could withdraw from the research at any time. At the end of the interview they were asked if they were still happy to be a part of the study. To minimise any inaccuracies through the transcription, I transcribed the interviews within days of the actual interview. Interviewees were given the opportunity to review the transcripts and suggest any amendments.

An idealised view of anonymity is that a person will never be traceable from the data presented, however guaranteeing this is deemed by some to be an 'unachievable goal' (Van den Hoonaard, 2003:141). There are however ways within research to anonymise individuals, the most common form consisting of the assigning of pseudonyms (Moore, 2012).

In this research, I used pseudonyms for all participants in an attempt to strike a balance between protecting participants' identities as much as possible while still maintaining the integrity of the data to as great an extent as possible. I also did not disclose the gender or the age of the participants, thus reducing their

identifiability further. I also used pseudonyms for the assignment of particular schools that were mentioned within the thesis and provided a general overview of the location of the school. I do however recognise that pseudonyms can only provide anonymity to a certain point. Thomson (2014) recognises that most of us are now findable online. Due to such 'findability', it is now 'almost impossible these days for someone who is a practitioner researcher or auto-ethnographer to completely disguise their location and their participants because they themselves are locatable' (Thomson, 2014:1).

Watford (2005) recognises the importance of making participants aware of the limits to anonymity despite the researcher's best efforts. This has become more prevalent in the Internet age because participants may not consider the link that could be made between their participation in research and how this could be found in some form online. As schools now have websites with staff names accessible, I recognise that my own name could potentially make the school more 'findable'. Whilst there are limits to anonymity, I believe that the participants are protected within this research but I recognise that I am visible. The participants thoughts and perceptions cannot be attributed to them, although my own journey pre-conceptions, assumptions and reflective journey can be seen by all. This is a fundamental part of my transformational journey and integral to the research.

When I started this doctoral journey, I complied with ethical governance procedures for Educational Doctorate students at the Faculty of Education at Manchester Metropolitan University. During the time passed, since my original ethical approval and the thesis submission, ethical considerations have changed and issues surrounding anonymity have become more complex due to the significant changes in the information publicly available on the internet. In light of this, I have sought permission from the school's governing body before submitting this thesis for publication and, thereby rendering the original intent to maintain anonymity of the school unlikely (given the publicly available information linking myself and the school). The governing body recognises that whilst individuals taking part in the study are highly unlikely to be identifiable, due to the length of time passed since the original data collection, the school, due to my own identity,

is potentially identifiable. The governing body has given consent for me to continue with the publication of this thesis on the grounds that in their view, that the subject area is not contestable and they recognise the benefit of this doctoral research.

4.4 Research timeline

This research inquiry took place over six years (September 2014–2020), and the research process is outlined below in Table 4.0.

Table 4.0: A description of the research journey

Phase 1 • A critical reflection and exploration of my everyday professional practice. • Explored literature linked to the notion of a reputation from a business perspective. • Identified three key stakeholders. • Conducted, transcribed and reflected on the interviews. Initial data analysis – carried out 'open coding' under the framework of the research questions. • Gathered other data – journals and log book to compliment the data from the interviews. • Wrote memos about thoughts relating to the 'open' codes. Used memos to develop more focused codes which ultimately led to the formation of theoretical codes.
Phase 2 • Critical consideration of developed 'open codes' and constant comparison between data. Used the critical discussion with headteacher to provide further insight to emerging themes. • Critical reading of theoretical literature to generate news ideas and thinking – further memos.

• Revisited the data and ensured theoretical saturation.
Phase 3 • After receiving substantial amendments to the doctorate, I reconsidered my methodological approach and consider a different lens to review the data. • Recognising my own personal journey, I started to explore transformational learning and particularly identified with Mezirow's transformational learning (perspective transformation). • Revisited the data to look at how my own thoughts had developed and to draw further conclusions – going beyond the context of the data. • Interrogated the data using a constructivist approach to grounded theory again. • Considered the data from a transformational learning lens.

4.5 Analytical strategy

Whilst there are three existing approaches to conducting grounded theory research (Glaserian, Glaser, 1978; Straussian, Strauss and Corbin, 1998; and Charmaz's, Charmaz, 2006), all grounded theory advocates generating theory from data (Wiersma and Jurs, 2005; Punch, 2001; Martin and Turner, 1986) rather than testing existing theories, thereby encouraging the research to look for insights rather than facts as they '…build a theory about a practice or phenomenon using interviews and observation as the primary data collection tools' (Ary et al., 2010:463). Having the freedom of being able to generate theory from the data made this methodological approach both appealing and appropriate. Moreover, this enabled me to consider the complexities and nuances of a constructed reputation and go beyond my own preconceptions and assumptions.

From an epistemological stance, I am more aligned with constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). For Charmaz, both Glaserian and Straussian approaches to grounded theory treat the researcher as an objective observer. Rejecting the

objective researcher, Charmaz (2006) and Mills et al. (2006) recognise that the researcher is not silent but within the constructivist approach has the opportunity to express and reflect upon his/her viewpoints and perspectives. The researcher also has the opportunity to voice his/her view points and perspectives while allowing the voices of interviewees to be heard. It allows the researcher to act as the author in rebuilding participants' experiences and understandings (Hallberg, 2006). Charmaz (2006) also believes that theory emerges from an active engagement between the researcher and participants during the interviews and other data collection stages. From the outset, I recognised that the way in which I was going to generate a greater understanding of the constructed reputation of Daisybank was via the exploration of the dialogue between myself and the participants within the thesis, thus Charmaz's (2006) approach to a grounded theory model became a preferred choice.

Current formulations of grounded theory are placed within the constructivist/interpretivist research paradigm (Ponterotto, 2005; Morrow and Smith, 2000). As grounded theory has its roots in interpretivism, which focuses on the way people make sense of their reality, this methodology was ideal to explore the construction of the reputation of Daisybank as I wanted to:

> …strive to view situations through the eyes of the participants, to catch their intentionality and their interpretations of a complex situation. (Cohen et al., 2007:384)

As this methodology centres around how humans attach meaning from their own sense of subjective reality, I used the interviewing process to enable me to explore and reflect upon the themes that emerged from the narratives of the four participants, and to consider the key influences in the constructed reputation of Daisybank from another position – the position of three stakeholder's lived realities and a fellow headteacher. Reeves and Hedberg (2003:32) note that the interpretivist paradigm stresses the need to put analysis in context. The interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding the world as it is from

subjective experiences of individuals. It is argued that, in an interpretive research paradigm, the researcher and participants co-construct meaning, rather than trying to objectively verify an existing hypothesis (Charmaz, 2006; Mills et al., 2006). The ontological components of this paradigm accept that there are multiple realities due to the fact that human experiences vary. These realities can be explored through human interaction. Thus, this paradigm enabled me to discover the various influences surrounding the construction of a reputation, while co-constructing meaning with the four participants involved to develop a more nuanced understanding of the constructed reputation of Daisybank.

Seven criteria are considered integral to a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; McCann and Clark, 2003a; 2003b):

1. Theoretical sensitivity
2. Theoretical sampling
3. Constant comparison
4. Coding and categorising data
5. Theoretical memos and diagrams
6. Referral to existing literature
7. Integration of theory.

However, the way in which the above are applied to the three main approaches to grounded theory differ. Whilst I explore some of these differences below, after careful analysis of the three approaches, I purposefully chose to adopt the constructivist grounded theory method, as proposed by Charmaz (2006).

4.6 How I used a constructivist grounded theory approach

Diagram 4.0 illustrates how I worked with criteria 1–5. As is evident from the diagram, the constructivist grounded theory methodology is an iterative, and hence non-linear, and evolutionary process.

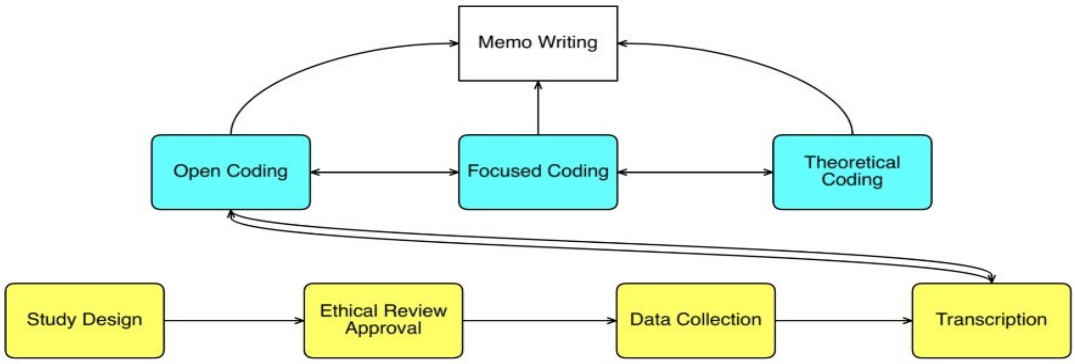


Diagram 4.0: The iterative and evolutionary process.

4.6.0 Theoretical sensitivity

Grounded theory methodology requires theoretical sensitivity (Glaser, 2004; Strauss, 1987) where one is able to be 'tuned in to… being able to pick up on relevant issues, events and happenings within the data' (Corbin and Strauss, 2008:33).

Theoretical sensitivity requires the researcher to have insight and to be able to give meaning to the data, recognising pertinent aspects (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Whilst it is rejected by Glaser (2004), Strauss and Corbin (1990) along with Charmaz (2006) identify that two of the important sources of sensitivity are the professional and personal experiences of the researcher. Researchers' different backgrounds, knowledge and experiences enable them to develop and increase their sensitivity to concepts in the data, and to identify connections between concepts (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). I recognise as a headteacher (over ten years) and teacher (nine years) that the educational experience that I have acquired has enabled me to have a good understanding of how things work in this field, why things might happen and what happens under certain conditions. This experience enabled me to identify significant influences from the data and give further meaning to them. However, reflecting on Glaser's (2004) suggestion that researchers are obliged to be conscious and maintain analytic distance, I was aware of the importance of being aware of my own prior beliefs in order not to allow them to interfere with the interview process. I tried to remain as impartial as

possible to avoid influencing the participants during the interviews. This ensured that I was open to considering reputation from different perspectives as I laid my own assumptions to one side. I believe that by explaining the backdrop to this thesis and my positionality at the outset, within Chapter 1, and outlining my professional journey within Chapter 2, this has provided an understanding of where my own bias lay at the start of this doctoral journey. Being able to reflect on my memos (see 4.0.1) enabled me to consider more fully the context that I was functioning within and highlight the questions that were causing me to feel frustrated professionally.

4.0.1 Memo example:

> *My own experience as a headteacher is that results matter from an OFSTED perspective. Of course, I want to see pupils in my school achieve well, but for me this is beyond and doesn't just encompass academic achievement, but that's all that seems to matter… Results are perhaps seen as the output of a school and if the output isn't good, then it is perhaps determined that the input isn't good either – it's just not efficient enough. (January 2nd 2019)*

This example illustrates how I had started to question performativity and, reflecting on neoliberal backdrop outlined in Chapter 1, my reflection enabled me to further understand why I had started to work in a particular way professionally.

4.6.0a Theoretical sensitivity – literature

Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Charmaz (2006) recognise engaging with literature prior to becoming immersed in the data as important to supporting theoretical sensitivity. This enables the researcher to have a good background knowledge so that they could be sensitised to the data. However, Glaser (2004) advocates that a researcher should take more of a neutral position and therefore the reading of literature should not precede data analysis. Within my inquiry, it was important to

reflect on literature within the early chapters (Chapters 1 and 2) to highlight my ontological and epistemological positioning at the start of this doctoral journey. I initially utilised literature from Ball's work (1997–2013) to explore the significance of the neoliberal structure that I was working within as I reflected on my own assumptions and previously acquired knowledge. Latterly, I engaged with transformational learning literature (see Chapter 3) to further explore my data and, importantly, to explore the significance that such a lens had on me as an adult learner. In order for transformative learning to take place, Mezirow (1991a:161) highlights that an individual must have '…an enhanced level of awareness of the context of one's beliefs and feelings, a critique of their assumptions and particularly premises…'. By firstly, making my initial positionality as headteacher and researcher explicit, and then applying a transformative lens to my journey, I was able to articulate not only my context but my beliefs prior to this journey, in order to provide comparisons at a later stage.

4.6.1 Theoretical sampling

4.6.1a Participants

Within grounded theory, two types of sampling are used, purposive and theoretical. When I began this research, I did not have a specific number of interviews in mind, however, I was interested in participants that had some significant link to Daisybank. Therefore, I adopted 'purposive sampling' (Parahoo, 1997:232) where I deliberately chose the participants based on their ability to provide necessary data about the school by virtue of their experience. In Phase 1 of the research, I interviewed three participants (Appendices 3–5) who had close links and an invested interest in Daisybank, and they are therefore referred to as 'stakeholders' throughout this doctorate. In Phase 2, I interviewed a fellow headteacher (Appendix 6).

Stakeholder 1 was a parent who lived out of the catchment area of Daisybank but had requested this school for their child. A parental perspective was important to

further understand how a parent selects a school based on a constructed reputation. Stakeholder 2 was a governor who had not sent her own children to Daisybank, but who became involved in the school when her grandchildren were enrolled at the school. This participant had been linked to Daisybank for a long period of time. This intrigued me as not only had they seen the school go through its own journey but had also experienced this for themselves. Stakeholder 3 was a councillor who knew the area very well and had been a governor at Daisybank for a significant length of time. I wanted to interview a participant who not only had a great knowledge of the school and the change it had undergone but importantly understood the area where the school was situated. In Phase 2, I interviewed an experienced fellow headteacher who worked in a different authority.

4.6.1b Interviews

I was aware of the vast array of data collection instruments that are available to the qualitative researcher, however, the issue for me was about fitness for purpose. One of the most widely used data collection techniques in grounded theory is intensive interviewing. Charmaz (2006:26) states, 'an [intensive] interview goes beneath the surface of ordinary conversation and examines earlier events, views, and feelings afresh'. Interviewing was therefore used as the data collection method to enable me to have an in-depth exploration of the 'construction of a reputation'.

As interviews enable participants to discuss their interpretation of the world (Cohen et al., 2007) and provide access inside a person's head (Tuckman, 1972), I was able to delve deeper to gain a greater understanding of the construction of a reputation. Being able to investigate an individual's interpretation of the world and what they think was fundamental to my research. Gathering individuals' interpretations of reality enabled me to explore what their thoughts about Daisybank were and what had influenced them to have such perspectives. This then allowed me to explore their narratives to gauge whether there was any negotiating space to influence change.

4.6.1c Phase 1

I conducted semi-structured interviews which initially explored stakeholders' connections to Daisybank in greater detail (Appendices 3–5). Questions then focused on what participants knew about the school and its reputation, their thoughts around the current reputation of the school, what was their perspective on this as well, and what else, if anything, did they think could be done to improve the school's reputation. This semi-structured approach enabled me to be more flexible, giving space for the development of further questions when it was felt they were needed. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:157) recognise:

> …the advantages of structured interviews, it can be argued, lie in their approach to data collection which can help to reduce the interviewer bias and lead to an easier analysis of data. This view rests on the major assumption – that structured interviews are 'context independent' and free from the influence of the interviewer so that a more objective view of the social world of the respondents emerges.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) highlight that structured interviews are more 'context independent' and this is important within my study. However, I was more inclined to agree with Rubin and Rubin (2005) who recognise semi-structured interviews as a more flexible version of the structured interview where they allow depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand the interviewee's responses. I believe that this happened naturally with each interview with some differences in questions arising due to the trajectory of the discussion.

4.6.1d Phase 2

The interview with the fellow headteacher (Appendix 6) was also semi-structured and took place after an initial analysis of stakeholder interviews. Exploring the

concept of a reputation with another headteacher, who had been subject to and influenced by the same policies and initiatives as I over a period of time, enabled me to explore key themes that arose in my initial analysis (Phase 1). This critical discussion and my further engagement with key literature (Mezirow, 1978a; Lacan, 1977) highlighted contradictions in my assumptions and understanding of the construction of a reputation in general and in relation to my own school. In my opinion, it provided a valuable outsider perspective on how a school's reputation may be constructed.

4.6.2 Data analysis

The stakeholder in-depth interviews provided rich data and most importantly enabled me to begin to explore emerging categories which all formed part of Phase 1. I used theoretical sampling after the first set of data had been analysed. It was used to collect new data to compare emerging categories related to the evolving theory (Birks and Mills, 2015).

When considering research of any kind, I believe that it is vital to critically reflect on how we assume our 'self' to be. I recognise that my motives are closely linked to my existing sense of my professional role. My understanding is that I can potentially only define myself, or certainly my professional role, through the restricted or confined prescribed bounds of the educational structure I am situated in. I acknowledged that embarking on this doctorate as a researcher, I still had to be aware of my professional role and my own assumptions and biases about Daisybank's reputation. In order to understand my own assumptions further, but more importantly to compare emerging categories (Phase 1) related to the evolving theory (Birks and Mills, 2015) and to begin to develop a more nuanced understanding about reputation, I carried out a critical discussion with a fellow headteacher (Phase 2). This added a further dimension to my data analysis where I could look at the data holistically and ensure that all major categories had been identified. Researchers use emerging theory to guide further decisions about participants, sample size, settings and the type of data to be collected (McCann

and Clark, 2003a; 2003b). My decision to use a fellow headteacher of a school with a 'good' reputation was to enable me to provide a more impartial and accurate exploration of the emergent theories in relation to the construction of a reputation.

4.6.2a Constant comparison

Constant comparison is the main approach to analysis in grounded theory (McCann and Clark, 2003a; 2003b) with data collection and analysis happening simultaneously. After each interview, I broke the transcripts down into manageable parts so that I could consider and ask questions of each transcript independently. At this point, I made brief notes on thoughts and created diagrams to begin the process of making sense of the data. Under the framework of the three research questions, I was able to make comparisons with the data, follow leads and build on previous ideas, which also supported the overall theoretical sensitivity, essential to grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014).

Table 4.1: Stakeholders' interviews: Example of constant comparison analysis

Excerpts (selected examples)	**Open coding**	**Focused coding**
(Interviewee 2) Well we moved here and I have to say,[1] I don't consider myself on the [2]estate, which may sound a bit – but I don't mean it like that, I live down that way. [3]Some people say we're on the estate others say we are not. We moved here just as my twins were going to start school. [4]We had no idea about schools here, as we had come from [a	[1] 'I don't consider myself' [2]estate [3] Differences about the positioning of the estate [4] New to area	Geographical location

different authority], so we came here and of course, this was the [5]local school. **(Interviewee 1)** I think partly, it's [1]where a school is, is [2]what people kind of base it on, and I would reference in [this area] a school like [St Lawrence] has a [3]fantastic reputation because it's in a nice area. [12]I think it's partly about where it is, [13]and you can't change what's around it. **(Interviewee 3)** The Daisybank [1]Estate had got a poor name. People thought of the Daisybank as a [2]'No go' area and outside of the estate [3]people did not like to come onto the estate and therefore the school was not recognised as a good school in the area. It just [4]didn't fit – the Daisybank was taboo!	[5] Catchment to school [1] where the school is [2] Type of people [3] reputation linked to nice area [12] where it is [13] can't change what's around [1] Estate [2] 'no go area' [3] People did not come onto the estate [4] Didn't fit	Geographical location Geographical location

As constant comparative analysis drives theoretical sampling and the ongoing collection of data (Birks and Mills, 2015), I sought more data from a fellow headteacher who has lived through the same educational policy enactments (immersed in the same neoliberal ideology) as I have. This enabled me to reflect on the emergent categories and revisit the data to ensure that I had not missed, what I perceived, to be significant to the research. This critical discussion also served to challenge my own biases and provide a more impartial exploration of the construction of a school's reputation. The following extract from my discussion with the headteacher enabled me to reflect on and move beyond the idea of 'unique selling points' as something that I saw as central to a constructed reputation within a neoliberal context.

Headteacher: Perhaps one of the things they have done is look at the community – I'm not saying this is true, but I am just thinking putting myself in that situation and thought of unique selling points that their community would see as having kudos.

This challenged me to consider how I was currently seeing the community, how I needed to work with them and recognise what was important to them. Was their perception of a 'unique selling point' in line with my thoughts?

4.6.3 Coding and categorising data

Coding is an essential step in grounded theory data analysis. Corbin and Strauss (2015) use 'open', 'axial' and 'selective' coding to identify and name concepts before reducing them to categories (Holloway and Galvin, 2017). Whereas Charmaz (2006) prescribes the three stages of coding as: open coding, focused coding and theoretical coding. Charmaz (2006:43) defines coding as the process of '…labelling a line, sentence or paragraph of interview transcripts or any other piece of data (such as segment of audio tape, video record, etc.) with a short and precise name'. Diagram 4.0 provides an example of how open codes were created.

Allan (2007:9) advises that, during open coding, the researcher should keep asking: 'What is this data a study of? What concept or category does this incident indicate? What is actually happening in this data?' My research questions provided a framework for data analysis, where I could ask myself such questions. I was able to do this initially through a process of open coding. I did not have a preconceived list of codes prior to this analysis in order that I could interpret what was actually in the data and not simply build on my own assumptions. As Allan (2007) also recommends, I did not analyse too much data in one go, and I used memos to help me process and question what I was seeing. Appendix 7 provides an example of the analysis from open coding → focused coding → theoretical coding.

Open coding resulted in the establishment of codes (labels) that were deemed pertinent to the representation of the data collected. As Diagram 4.0 highlights, considerations from the memos helped to support the transition from each coding type to another. Focused coding of codes and concepts was employed to identify emerging core categories. Theoretical coding, the last stage of coding, enabled the saturation of the core categories identified during focused coding. Supplementary data was collected and incorporated, in an attempt to further saturate these three categories. This came from an interview with a fellow headteacher which provided further insight into the areas identified. Charmaz (2006) asserts that theoretical saturation is a subjective exercise and that the constructivist grounded theory method, being an interpretive approach, acknowledges both the importance and limitations of such subjectivity.

4.6.4 Theoretical memos and diagrams

Memos are notes made by researchers to record and explicate the theory as it is developed (Charmaz, 2014). Varying in length and complexity, I used memos to record my thoughts and interrogation of data. At times I used diagrams as a way to succinctly represent conceptual theories that were emerging. As shown in Diagram 4.0. the use of memos and constant comparison between focused codes were instrumental for theoretical coding.

Diagrams were particularly useful when considering how a reputation was constructed by looking at it from the perspective of 'good' and 'bad' traits. Firstly, this enabled me to capture the thoughts of individual interviewees, and then I used them to compare the perspectives of all the interviewees. This supported a greater overall understanding of the construction of a reputation.

The use of diagrams to aid conceptual development is further explored in Chapter 6 where I articulate my professional learning and show the processes involved in my perspective transformation.

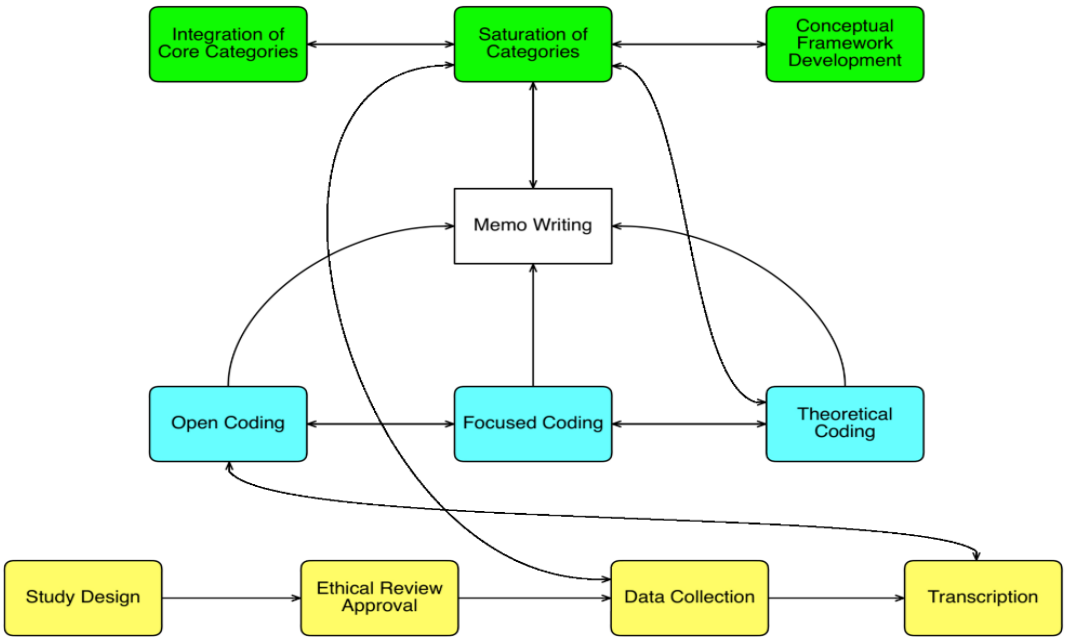


Diagram 4.1: The development of conceptual understanding through the application of grounded theory.

Diagram 4.1 illustrates the process towards achieving a conceptual framework where I was able to understand the influential elements, and the relationship between them, when considering the constructed reputation of Daisybank.

Charmaz (2006) believes that reviewing literature enables the researcher to identify gaps in extant works, place the research in context, refine, extend or revise existing theories, and to 'weave your discussion' (Charmaz, 2006:167) in the light of earlier works. I therefore draw on relevant literature and social policy in the discussion to this thesis.

4.7 Further engagement with literature

Charmaz (2006) recognises that researchers may take various routes in terms of the timeline of when they engage with literature, including whether it is necessary to postpone it until the completion of the grounded theory analysis, and thus recognises the importance of flexibility.

I referred to literature at different points within this doctoral journey. As I have previously mentioned, Chapters 1 and 2 highlighted literature linked to neoliberalism to enable me to illustrate what my understanding was at the start of this journey and show what had led to such an influence on my role as a headteacher.

4.7.0 Reflexivity

I recognise that constructivism fosters researchers' reflexivity about their own interpretations as well as those of their research participants. Thus, within this doctoral journey, I have highlighted my own bias and assumptions which has influenced my interpretations.

When considering the core themes that emerged from the data (see findings in Chapter 5), I drew on existing literature to provide further challenge and insight to main themes. This literature was not predetermined but borne out the development of the core themes. I used it to enrich and extend the research findings (not verify them) and in doing so my research findings add a new dimension to existing knowledge (Stern, 2007).

Holloway and Galvin (2017) highlight that a second, main literature review can help researchers clarify ideas, make comparisons and identify connections between the new and existing research. My literature review on the critical exploration of transformational learning came after the first data. This provided an alternate lens which I used to review the original findings from the first analysis. The transformational literature review extended the application of the findings, and it also underpinned deeper understanding of the educative experience and its effects on me both professionally and personally (explored in Chapter 6 and 7).

4.8 Justification and explanation of the use of grounded theory alongside the framing with Mezirow

The aim of this research was to explore and understand the constructed reputation of Daisybank and consider whether there was any negotiating space to bring about change within, what I believed to be, an already established reputation.

Within this thesis a constructivist grounded theory approach was utilised in the first instance and subsequently transformative learning theory provided an additional theory to further develop a theoretical understanding of the construction of Daisybank's reputation.

Within the context of constructivist grounded theory, Charmaz's (2006) recognises that both the participants and the researcher co-construct meaning during data collection and analysis. Composing reflective and analytical memos during the research process was also part of that co-construction and provided me with a deeper understanding of how stakeholders constructed the reputation of Daisybank. At the same time, this approach gave me the opportunity to express and reflect upon my viewpoints and perspectives (Mills et al., 2006) and begin to develop an understanding of what could be perceived as the 'good' and bad' traits linked to Daisybank's reputation.

However, these initial interpretations and initial developing theory about the constructed reputation of Daisybank, I believe, were limited due to what I now consider to be my lack of understanding at the time of my own positionality; how this was influencing such interpretations and how I had not given myself space to challenge my own assumptions. A constructivist grounded theory approach enabled me to meet the aim of this research and explore a complex social phenomenon such as a 'reputation'. However, to consider, and therefore otherwise to enable a possible inroad for situating my own experience and positionality as a headteacher, a researcher and an adult learner, a further theory was required. Whilst the constructivist grounded theory had started to open up an

understanding of Daisybank's reputation, it did not give me a new theory to underpin my own practice as a headteacher. I was therefore still 'stuck' in thinking and understanding the construction of a (my) school's reputation in a particular way. However, using transformational learning theory enabled me to revise such thinking and consider my own 'frames of reference', the assumptions by which I was understanding my own positionality and the constructed reputation of Daisybank.

Mezirow (1994: 222) describes transformational learning theory as 'constructivist, an orientation which holds that the way learners interpret and reinterpret their sense experience is, central to making meaning and hence learning'. I therefore drew on transformational learning theory as a lens to compliment what had already been achieved with a constructivist grounded theory approach. A defining characteristic of transformative learning that matches constructivism maintains that individuals interpret personal experiences in their own way by examining, questioning, and revising perceptions based on previous experiences (Cranton & Taylor, 2012). As transformational learning is constructivist in nature, such a lens further enabled me to continuously, throughout the research process, interpret my own perspectives and develop alternative viewpoints through dialogue with others. Constructivism assumes that there exists no single, objective reality. Rather, in both constructivism and transformational learning theory, knowledge is what an individual creates, or constructs, in the mind versus what can be scientifically measured, or what others tell us is right or wrong (Fosnot & Perry, 2005). Thus, both constructivist grounded theory and transformational learning theory sees learning, and for example coming to understand the nuances of a schools' reputation, as constructed. Both theories compliment each other, and by using both, I was able to add another layer to my understanding of the intricacies inherent in the construction of a reputation.

Transformational learning theory enabled me to revisit the data and consider it differently. By drawing on this theory I was able to further explore what I had learnt about the constructed reputation and my role within it. It opened up negotiating space within the emergent themes because I became less influenced

by the neoliberal narrative that was dominating my perspective at the outset. Consulting relevant transformative learning literature, with a focus on Mezirow, was important for the execution of this thesis to reflect on my own positionality and consider how this was restricting my perspective when I had initially engaged with the data. Such reflections enabled me to further reflect on the organic findings that emerged from using a constructivist grounded theory approach and enabled me to question whether I could really separate myself from neoliberal discourses. Transformational learning provided the opportunity to fully understand my own assumptions, pulling them apart and challenging these further, without removing myself from the research process.

Within constructivist grounded theory, the researcher's presence in the research is neither neutral nor undesirable. On the contrary, it should be explicitly acknowledged as it is this voice that shows and talks about the researched area (Charmaz & Mitchell, 1996; Clarke, 2005) Taking this stance, on the constructed nature of 'voice' enabled me, as both the researcher and adult leaner, to experience the transformational learning process. I could reflect back on prior learning from the first time I explored and considered the data, and determine whether what I had learnt was justified when reflecting over it for a second time (Mezirow, 1990a). By engaging with the data for a second time, using transformational learning as a lens, I became aware of my incomplete understanding of Daisybank's reputation and the dilemma of my own positionality.

Building theory about the reputation of Daisybank was a journey of knowledge, which was built upon after critically re-visiting the data and it resulted in a mutually co-constructed understanding of the school's reputation between the stakeholders and myself (Guido, Chavez, & Lincoln, 2010). My lived transformational learning experiences were understood via a deeply reflexive 'process of understanding - and ability to understand' (Jones, Torres & Arminio, 2006: 191). The use of a transformational learning provided an analytical lens where I was able to broaden and clarify conceptual and theoretical ideas that were grounded in the data that had emerged from using a constructivist grounded theory approach. Reflexivity, in constructivist grounded theory, does not aim to

eliminate the researcher's subjectivity from the resulting theory. It allows the data to be prioritised over the researcher's assumptions and previously acquired knowledge. As a transformative learning lens enabled me to clearly see, unchallenged knowledge, including any reviewed literature (Charmaz, 1990), existing knowledge about the constructed reputation; the purpose of education, and what school should be, was therefore not disregarded, but rather engaged with critically (Thornberg, 2012).

4.9 Summary of the chapter

Within this chapter, I have outlined the four main objectives of my research and have I have emphasised why a constructivist grounded theory was considered a fitting approach to explore the constructed reputation of Daisybank. This approach has enabled me to be part of the research process, whilst at the same time being aware of my dual role of headteacher and researcher, through proactive mutual co-construction and reflexivity, during data collection and data analysis. It has enabled me to not only consider the entangled influences within a constructed reputation, but also to explore where the negotiating spaces are to influence change. In addition, I have highlighted why I went beyond a constructivist grounded theory approach and drew on transformational learning theory to not only provide a more holistic understanding of the constructed reputation of Daisybank but also to understand and address my own and assumptions and positionality.

Chapter 5: Emerging Themes in the Construction of Daisybank's Reputation

5.0 Introduction:

Through this doctoral journey I have been seeking to understand how Daisybank's reputation is constructed and whether there is any negotiating space for reformulating this social phenomenon. In order to address this, the following research questions were devised:

1. What are the perceptions of Daisybank School?
2. What factors appear to have influenced the perceptions of Daisybank School?
3. Based on the particular narratives, to what extent can I identify any evidence of negotiating space to influence change?
4. How has the transformative learning process influenced my professional learning journey?

Within this chapter, I address the questions, firstly, by exploring themes that have emerged from a close analysis of three in-depth interviews from stakeholders' interviews. This exploration led to a specific understanding of the perspectives of the stakeholders in relation to *how* Daisybank Primary School's reputation had been constructed. It also started to open up questions as to *why* it had been constructed in such a way. These initial interviews also enabled me to explore perspectives beyond my own while challenging my own assumptions. By drawing on the insights of these stakeholders, I began to develop a more nuanced understanding of the constructed reputation.

In Phase 2 of the research I used a critical discussion with an external headteacher who was not entangled with Daisybank but who had potentially been

subject to and possibly influenced by the same policies and initiatives as I had over a considerable period of time. This provided an alternative lens as I considered my initial findings on how and why a reputation is constructed in a certain way. Critically reflecting on this dialogue facilitated a further exploration of initial themes and, moreover, influential factors at play within the construction of a reputation.

I want to understand the constructed reputation surrounding Daisybank but I also want to consider my own role within this as I navigate through what has become a 'disorientating dilemma' for me. Drawing on transformational learning as outlined earlier, I consider aspects of the data with the theory of perspective transformation in mind. Mezirow (1991a) describes perspective transformation as the process through which adult learners become aware of how and why their assumptions (presuppositions) have come to restrain the way they perceive, understand and feel about their world (see Chapter 3). To enable me to develop a more nuanced understanding of the constructed reputation of Daisybank, it was imperative that I challenged my own perceptions and assumptions. Thus, through dialogue with stakeholders from Daisybank, I became more aware of other perspectives and began to view the constructed reputation from a different angle. It became apparent that to fully understand how my presuppositions have come to restrain the way I think I had to further explore these perspectives.

In this chapter, I explore three significant themes linked specifically to the constructed reputation for my own school setting, where the research is situated:

Theme 1: Geographical influences
Theme 2: Anecdotal words – what is being said?
Theme 3: Perceived effective leadership traits

Borne out of the stakeholder's interviews, the perceptions of the constructed reputation of Daisybank Primary are captured within each of the above overarching themes. The complexity of each theme led to the creation of

subcategories (referred to as entangled influential factors), which enabled me to consider the overarching themes from a more rounded perspective (see Table 5.0).

Table 5.0: The following table demonstrates the subcategories for each theme

Theme 1: Geographical influences	5.1.1 Aesthetic appearance 5.1.2 History 5.1.3 Deprived area
Theme 2: What is being said?	5.2.1 Performativity and the democratisation of 'expert' opinion
Theme 3: Influence of leadership	5.3.1 Headteacher role from the perspective of another headteacher 5.3.2 Headteacher role from the perspective of stakeholders

5.1 Perceptions of Daisybank: Stakeholders – Theme 1: Geographical influences

Two of the stakeholders, who had known the school for a long period of time (15–25 years), drew on their historical knowledge about the school and where it was situated when they were questioned about their perceptions of Daisybank. What became apparent from these interviews is that this school was not perceived by these stakeholders as being 'located' in an actual position where it could flourish. A number of, what can be described as, detrimental factors were identified by the participants that worked to suppress the school's ability to flourish and appeal to the local community. This was reaffirmed by the one stakeholder (Interviewee 1), a parent, who when describing her thoughts about Daisybank and parents selecting schools explained: '*Just because of its location, people wouldn't ordinarily consider it.'* This would suggest that the positioning of the school could

potentially influence how individuals might view the school. It could be argued that such a view could determine whether that school is selected by a parent in the first place.

Interestingly, all three of the stakeholders saw the reputation of the school as intertwined with the whole geographical area in some way. The area was perceived as an 'estate' and did not fit with the whole socio-economic demographic surrounding it.

> *The Daisybank Estate had got a poor name. People thought of the Daisybank as a 'No go' area and outside of the estate people did not like to come onto the estate and therefore the school was not recognised as a good school in the area. It just didn't fit – the Daisybank was taboo! (Interviewee 3)*

Surrounded by affluence, Daisybank, where deprivation was above the national picture, was highlighted as not fitting within the wider position of where it was situated (Interviewee 3). In attempting to understand the stakeholder's perception, I began to reflect on Woods et al. (2005:151) notion of a 'micro-environmental domain' and noted that the local area and the adjacent community are part of the 'micro-environmental domain', not just the school. This prompted me to consider what was at work within the geographical location of Daisybank that may have played a role in the construction of its reputation.

5.1.0 The entanglement of reputations

The insights provided by these stakeholders enabled me to see the complexity of other entangled influential factors caught up with Daisybank's geographical location. I started to see that that the geographical location was a bigger entity than just a physical space – there were many dimensions unfolding within it. This began to highlight that the constructed reputation of Daisybank was not just linked to the school itself, but also to the adjacent community. This understanding

highlighted that there are perhaps times when a reputation is not a sole entity. In effect, a reputation can meet another and sometimes the lines between both become blurred. Thus, it could be argued, creating more complexity when delving into how one particular reputation is constructed.

In relation to reputations, Kearns et al. (2013:1) highlight that '…all places have identities, but some places also have reputations'. This is reflected in the stakeholders' perceptions of Daisybank Estate – it had a reputation. From the stakeholders' perspectives, the estate was well known to the local community: '*Daisybank Estate had got a poor name'* (Interviewee 3); it appeared to be known for unwanted reasons: '*it's got a terrible reputation, it's awful, got bad results, everything'* (Interviewee 2). It was described as a place where people just did not want to come or even be associated with: *'I don't consider myself on the estate'* (Interviewee 2). The Daisybank Estate appears to have its own specific characteristics which has resulted in it being less desirable and a 'No go' area (Interviewee 3). Such characteristics appear to have also become attributed to the school, thus highlighting that Daisybank Primary is synonymous with 'the estate' and the preconceptions associated with an 'estate'.

While all of the stakeholders alluded to how the school's geographical location played a role in the reputation of Daisybank, it became clear to me by reflecting on their dialogue that the location alone was not the only factor at play. The geographical location was in fact more complex than it first appeared. Conceptualising Daisybank Estate as a 'micro-environmental domain' three significant influences were highlighted as having some control over the constructed reputation. These included: the aesthetic appearance, the history and the deprivation linked to Daisybank. Considering the geographical location in this way, I was able to deconstruct its meaning and reconceptualise it by exploring these influences further.

5.1.1 Aesthetic appearance

One of the key historical issues identified by Interviewee 3 was vandalism:

> *If I could go back 15 years ish, we were getting quite a lot of vandalism in the school and I can remember occasions when we had 90 windows broken in the school. (Interviewee 3)*

This vandalism resulted in a poor image of the school due to '*spikes on the roof being used to prevent people from climbing onto the roof and smashing windows on top of the school'* (Interviewee 3). Whilst the spikes were used as a deterrent, it was also inferred by Interviewee 3 that the resulting physical appearance (i.e., aesthetic) of the building presented a particular image about the school from the outside. This is turn could have impacted on what the local and wider community believed to be happening on the inside of the actual school itself.

Although vandalism had been a significant historical concern for the school, I understood, through the stakeholders' anecdotes, that even with such an issue there was negotiating space to bring about change. Exploring this objectively enabled me to step back and consider that it was perhaps not necessarily the vandalism that was the main issue but things associated with such an act. Vandalism is a just a product of other underlying issues and I did not necessarily know or understand all of the issues that were contributing to this. Throughout the interview process there was a significant change in how all three stakeholders referred to the aesthetic appearance of the school when they compared the school to how it was historically (from 1970 to 1998)[4] to the present day. It became apparent that this physical transformation had perhaps enabled the interviewees to see that positive change was happening and that this was a way of articulating of more complex changes that were actually taking place. From my perspective it was more than a physical and aesthetic thing. That change was a result of other

[4] Information found from historical log books of the school and from information given by Interviewee 3.

more complex changes coming from within Daisybank. From the perspective of Interviewee 3, Daisybank appeared to have developed the capacity to address issues such as vandalism:

> *She removed all the spikes off the roof, which prevented these youngsters getting on the roof and doing the damage, because the children didn't bother to climb up on the roof for some reason or other.* (Interviewee 3)

Despite the vandalism still being a concern, the headteacher at the time removed, what was supposed to be, the deterrent (the spikes) as she clearly believed that there was an alternative way to control the wider and more complex issues. The headteacher was highlighted as making some radical changes to how the school had been and was bringing about change. Whilst the spikes were perhaps a physical sign to Interviewee 3, he noted that '*she changed the school quite dramatically really, in that discipline started to come back in the school'.*

When reflecting on this stakeholder's account of the reputation of Daisybank, there appeared to be a link between the reduction in vandalism and an increase in discipline. As the discipline started to come back into the school, other changes could be made, such as removing the spikes, as climbing on the roof became less appealing. Whilst it is perhaps a simplistic correlation at this stage, I am suggesting that the changes that were taking place within school, being led by the headteacher at the time, were not only changing the school on the inside but that this was starting to filter through to what was happening outside the school gates. The changes were also more than just removing spikes off the school roof.

Interviewee 3 highlighted his perspective as being:

> *The main reason for change was that the headteacher and her discipline and getting the message over to the children to take a pride in the school, I think that was the main thing that changed the school.*

This quote suggests that at the time there was a lack of discipline and pride within the school and the headteacher, with whatever actions she took, started to change this. The pride that was perhaps being instilled from this leader on the inside, '*getting the message over'*, was starting to be reflected on the outside, where the pupils did not want to cause damage to this building that they were now proud to be a part of – but what had she actually done to bring about this change? Whilst Brunsma (2006) has made claims that school uniforms and the policies to implement them do not help to create positive school climates or increase the educational atmosphere at any level of schooling, contrary to this, Interviewee 3 stating, '*Uniforms were changed, and everybody had uniforms and became smart'* highlights the connection between school uniform and pupil behaviour. The headteacher at the time changed the uniforms and this stakeholder's perception was that it had a fundamental role in improving the discipline. I am sure that the children may have become 'smarter' in their physical appearance with everyone wearing the same clothes. However, I believe that this quote is suggesting that the uniform was playing a greater role in how the pupils started to perceive themselves in that they had a greater sense of belonging and community. Perhaps the headteacher, in making this decision to create a 'new' identity for the school by having a 'new look', was also working to foster a sense of pride within the pupils, reinforcing that they were all part of the same community.

With Interviewee 2, it was noted how the school had changed physically since she had been attached to the school (15 years): '*The school looks tremendous; it looks tremendous – beautiful things, like the garden.'* Going from a school that was consistently vandalised to one where the gardens are now deemed beautiful emphasises a noticeable change for this school. The removal of spikes off the roof appears to mark a significant change in approach to how anti-social behaviour was addressed. It also began to demonstrate that the way something looks, even when it is an educational establishment, influences perspectives and the

construction of a reputation overall. I believe that these external physical representations enable the onlooker to see in a more simplistic way that positive change is occurring. Whilst spikes on the roof may suggest a problem with anti-social behaviour, the removal of them almost provides the impression that this problem has been dealt with.

This notion of changing a school physically was also raised within the critical discussion with a fellow headteacher:

> *So, in these schools that, for instance, have turned around it is because initially they have come from a place where the word of mouth has been bad behaviour, unruliness, not good teaching, so they change it aesthetically firstly by changing uniform, policy, strict policy and procedure, so they give the appearance of a big change happening.* (Headteacher interviewee)

The physical transformations of a building or uniform are highlighted further as a way of providing a picture that '*big change is happening within the school'*, even if this is not the case.

As part of perspective transformation, Mezirow (1991b; 2000; 2009; 2012) highlights that through critical self-reflection, transformative learning can bring about a change in an individual viewpoint and lead to developing new frames of reference. The insights from the stakeholders enabled me to see change differently, and the use of Mezirow enabled me to see change differently. I had become obsessed with improving the school's performativity and driving school improvement plans forward. However, this exploration has enabled me to question myself whether the changes I wanted to implement had become restricted due to the neoliberal framework I had allowed myself to become supressed by. Whilst I held an informative understanding of the changes taking place within the school,

these internal changes were not necessarily seen by the wider community. On reflection, this did not necessarily matter as long as the wider community were seeing the results of such internal changes such as pride in the school and pupils attending it. The interactions between my own internal and the stakeholder outsider perspectives have challenged my own self-narrative and habitual ways of being to consider why I choose to make certain changes within Daisybank and whether such changes are perhaps the right decision for Daisybank. Prior to this inquiry I had not really considered the changes that were potentially required within the community and how as a school and with positive interactions with the local community we could influence change beyond the school gate. It also made me consider the importance of understanding how others view change, not only what change is important to the wider community but actually how they understand it as change. Considering Mezirow took me beyond simply a description of the problems of a neoliberal framework. As a headteacher I had become so entrenched and the commitment to 'listening' within this doctoral journey led me to actually think differently. Such a change in my own thinking suggests to me that this type of adult learning theory could support existing and future leaders.

5.1.2 History

As two of the interviewees had been linked to the school for a significant period of time, they were knowledgeable about the school's history. The history of the school appeared to have significance when exploring the current reputation of Daisybank and the estate where it is located. When I considered two of the interviewees perceptions of Daisybank further, it was clear that they drew on their historical knowledge about the school, not only in relation to the historical vandalism, which I have previously referred to, but phrases such as:

> *…the children of this estate were being bussed out to various schools in the area because they just didn't want to come to the Daisybank.* (Interviewee 3)

This suggested that negative opinions of the school had been in existence for quite some time, and even within the actual estate itself, Daisybank was not a choice school for parents. Historically the school had been placed into 'special measures' by OFSTED which had perhaps influenced the reputation of the school and comments such as '*so, the attitude was we were fighting a losing battle at that time'* (Interviewee 2) gave the impression that Daisybank had developed a poor name and had almost lost hope from an inside and outside perspective. From the interviewees' comments, such opinions had also perhaps become engrained perspectives with members of the wider community and maybe they were still influencing how the school was viewed. This was particularly evidenced with Interviewee 2, who had prevented her own children coming to the school due to the comments that she had heard about the poor reputation of the estate, which also appeared to encapsulate the school.

- *'Do not go'*
- *Oh, don't go there it's terrible*
- *Bad results, everything*
- *Terrible reputation (school)*
- *Bad reputation for everything.*

The above sentiments serve to highlight that over time Daisybank had developed a '*bad reputation for everything'.* This starts to demonstrate the way in which schools are spoken about by parents, family members and the wider community and how this information is passed on and can influence the construction of a reputation. The way in which this process can impact on and indeed perpetuate a reputation was further highlighted in the headteacher interview when she stated:

> *So, if your community does not change that much, so that word of mouth is handed down, family to family, cousin to cousin, friend to friend, it's unlikely to change quickly because your community stays quite static.*

The quote, from another headteacher's perspective, appears to confirm what was becoming evident with Daisybank. Her opinion highlights how information can become deep rooted within a community and how this information (whatever that may be and even how true it may be) is possibly passed through family members and friends. This information can become embedded and difficult to change, particularly when the community is static. Due to the large proportion of council owned properties on the Daisybank Estate, families have remained for long periods of time and even when the choice of being able to purchase such properties arose, families still remained, linking generations of particular families to the estate.

I recognise that the market culture within education where parental choice is in existence creates competition between schools. This added to my dilemma in terms of how the school is perceived by the wider community and those who know the history of the school. As stated previously, I understand reputation to be a socially constructed entity and therefore I have come to realise that it is important to understand some of the deep-rooted opinions and why they have arisen. Not only to understand the construction of a reputation of Daisybank but also to navigate through these perceptions to consider where there may be negotiating space for me to influence the reconstructing or indeed enhancement of Daisybank's reputation. I also understand that constructions, such a reputation can also be deconstructed. In 2002, Payne provides an alternative meaning of experience by de/reconstructing 'critical outdoor education' (Payne, 2002:1). This doctoral journey has enabled me to see reputation differently and as new meanings of 'reputation' emerged I have now started to act differently at a professional level to influence change.

Daisybank's reputation is influenced by its history and there will potentially be members of the community who have either been static themselves or who have, through word of mouth, long been immersed in the particular narratives associated with Daisybank. The historical issues surrounding Daisybank will perhaps always therefore be in existence to some extent as this is a fairly static

community. Reconstructing the reputation of Daisybank is therefore problematic and complex as there appears to be a resistance to change viewpoints that have become embedded within a static community. I recognise from the interviews that it is not necessarily just how Daisybank presents itself now, but also how historical events may have created particular truths which years on may still be the dominant discourse and a reality for some. However, although 'history' may have, or in fact may still be playing a role in the construction of the school's reputation, I recognise that there is still negotiating space for me to work within this. Whilst Interviewee 2 did not allow her own children to attend the school, after meeting the headteacher at the time, the impression that this headteacher gave (I was really impressed with her), resulted in Interviewee 2 supporting her grandchildren to attend the school. Historical viewpoints can, over time, become less dominant and make way for new opinions to be formed. However, what has become apparent throughout this thesis is that individuals vary in how they are influenced. Thus, there is not just one approach to changing the way history influences present day perspectives and this thesis opens up what other possible influences there may be.

5.1.3 Deprived area

During the interview process, I used the term 'estate' to describe the immediate location of the school. As I explored stakeholder's perceptions and experiences further it became apparent that the word 'estate' perhaps has more complex meanings or particular connotations that I had not fully considered. Interviewee 2 seeks to clarify her own geographical positioning within the extract as not being on the estate, and the word 'estate' invoked a particular response: *'I don't consider myself on the estate'* – a detaching from the estate possibly highlighting that it is not a good thing to be part of an estate. There is recognition that some other people do believe that she is on the estate, highlighting that there are potentially different interpretations of what the actual estate encompasses and also perhaps how the word 'estate' is interpreted. This could purely be just a matter a perspective of where the border of the estate may be, and the

interviewee here may just be pinpointing the exact location as she knows it. However, for me, the word 'estate' appeared to go beyond its explicit meaning and became an umbrella term for other factors. For me, the interviewee's statement says – I am here, and the estate is there. This is where I am and that is different – I am not part of that as I am part of this. There is a sense of detachment away from the estate and in the above extract it may simply be about geographical positioning. For me, this opens up further avenues for exploration in the thesis in terms of how we see ourselves and how this influences our perspectives of things. I see the word 'estate' saying that it is a place dominated by social housing; a place where deprivation and some unemployment exists.

Interviewee 3 had a direct link with many of the families from the estate, beyond his role with the school.

> *Having been [a significant period of time] on the estate, obviously, I know the families on the estate, and it is a deprived area. There were lots of occasions when I had to visit the families in the homes to sort out maybe problems of their needs, furniture, bathrooms, kitchens and all sort of things – provided an emphasis of why such an area would be described as deprived*.

This perhaps starts to re-emphasise why this school had been previously described as a 'misfit', where surrounding the school there were families with financial struggles. Yet just beyond the immediate school's locality there was affluence. The current picture of the school is that there are a large proportion of children who are eligible for pupil premium, a current indicator of the deprivation that exists within the school and yet the immediate locality is one of affluence. The difference between the social deprivation that exists within Daisybank School compared to the locality is highlighted by Interviewee 1 as being influential in how prospective parents may view the school.

I looked at the proportion of children receiving free school meals as an indication of the type of person – do I want to choose to place my child in a school where more than the average are on those sorts of systems and what does that mean in terms of a mix?

The response begins to demonstrate the influential nature of social class and starts to highlight how the make-up of Daisybank, and the families within it, can be a determining factor for some in how they make a decision about a school. '*I think partly, it's where a school is, is what people kind of base it on' (Interviewee 1).* My inference, from the discussion with this parent, is that when parents select a school, they take into consideration the area where it is. Daisybank is in a deprived area, which possibility leads individuals to question the types of pupils that attend, or family types within the community. Interviewee 1, when talking about schools and reputations, suggested that '…*a school like [St Lawrence] has a fantastic reputation because it's in a nice area'.* This therefore suggests that perceptions of a school's reputation are inextricably linked to how the geographical area in which it is located is viewed.

Deconstructing an entity such as geographical location has enabled me to see this as a 'micro-environmental domain' that is governed by a number of varying influences such as the actual demographics that make up a particular area. I suggest that for some individuals, issues such as where the school is situated, the make-up of the community and the overall characteristics of the school community influence how they construct a reputation about a school. The stakeholder's perceptions begin to highlight that for some, when social deprivation exists within an area, that area can be perceived as less desirable. The social deprivation linked to Daisybank appears to not only be influencing the way in which the wider community perceives it but also influences those parents who have high expectations and want 'more' for their children. Daisybank School becomes less favourable because of this.

The interviewed parent, along perhaps with many others, may look at the perceived types of parents that are in the playground when they drop their child off, how the children behave or interact with their parents, and how parents interact with each other and with teachers. They may also look at the social housing which surrounds the school in question, look at how much crime exists in the area and make a judgement on what they perceive the school to be like. All these factors would influence their individual construction of the school's reputation. I started to see that the judgements they made were based on such perceptions. The judgements determined the extent to which they believed that there is a common identity between themselves and others around them, such as those on the Daisybank Estate. Interviewee 2 appears to have developed an understanding of where she believes she sits socially and has not only captured herself in a particular image, but also has compared herself to others around her. The captured image highlights how this parent understands herself in relation to the world in which she lives, an understanding which is different from others around her.

Parents who understand themselves in relation to the school community in question may position themselves in a different place based on their perceptions of what the school can offer. For example, imagining that society is a ladder, with social deprivation on the bottom rung and affluence on the top rung, parents will place themselves on a particular rung. If the school community in question is perceived to be made up of people on a lower rung, then they may believe that there is not a common identity or a sense of belonging to that community. The sense of belonging to a community is a perennial part of what we desire as humans (Delanty, 2003; Esposito, 2010). Where parents believe that a sense of belonging cannot possibly exist because there is such a social divide between themselves and the other parents may shed light on why some schools are selected over others. It also emphasises that whilst the issue of social distance may not appear to directly link to the construction of a reputation, the understanding of community, and social mix within this, is recognised as influential in the construction of a reputation for Daisybank.

Whilst the physical geographical location of a school is fixed, and therefore could be deemed to be unchangeable in terms of the construction of a reputation, a response from the parent (Interviewee 1) began to highlight some negotiating space for me by enabling me to look at what I had deemed to be fixed in a new light. Whilst Interviewee 1 acknowledged: '*I think it's partly about where it is, and you can't change what's around it'*, highlighting that geographical location can potentially be an unfortunate and unchangeable influence, she later added: '*I think it is partly location and then it is about what the school shows in terms its outer face and how it interacts'.* This starts to put a new perspective on how a reputation can be reconstructed, even changed. Interacting with the community is highlighted as a possible way to do this. The interactions between the school, teachers, parents and indeed the wider community may work to limit the perceived social divide that appears to be in existence around Daisybank School.

5.1.4 Summary of geographical influences

Contextual factors linked to the geographical location of Daisybank, such as: vandalism, historical issues and social demographic variables have been highlighted by the stakeholders as having an impact on why Daisybank is perceived in a certain way. This has led me to believe that the 'micro-environmental domain' of any school and its positioning against others locally, will have an impact on the way the reputation, both good and bad, is constructed for the school. For me, with Daisybank, it also implies that the location can lead to a certain type of reputation by default. Although Daisybank School and the geographical location of it may have individual reputations because of the school's positioning, the reputations appear to be entangled, where it is difficult at times to differentiate one from the other. Thus, they are potentially perceived as one which in some cases, like Daisybank, can have a detrimental effect. The physical location of a school is also entangled with the social positioning of the community it serves, adding further complexity. The ability to engage with the wider community is difficult when there are already engrained perceptions about the area where

Daisybank is located. Thus, making it more challenging for Daisybank to compete with other local primary schools where domain characteristics are deemed more desirable.

I recognise that dialogue with stakeholders and their insights has challenged me as a headteacher to consider how I interact within the 'micro-environmental domain' (geographical location) of Daisybank. Whilst there may be some difficult issues to address within the micro-environmental domain, I see potential to consider ways in which I can engage in a less restricted manner. This could involve creating more positive interactions with the wider community with a view to influencing change linked to the construction of a reputation. I recognise that whilst I am experienced within my role, as I highlighted in the previous chapter, Taylor and Cranton (2013:3) indicate that '…it is the revision of the meaning of experience that is the essence of learning'. By challenging my current sense of responsibility as a headteacher in considering such insights, I see that there are ways that I can navigate through the educational arena that I work within more effectively.

5.2 Perceptions of Daisybank: Stakeholders – Theme 2: What is being said?

When I considered the narratives of stakeholders, I recognised that perceptions of Daisybank were based on different sources which included both factual- and opinion-based perspectives. Factual perspectives were generated from OFSTED and league tables which provided a picture relating to the performativity of the school. Notably, before embarking on this doctoral journey, as a headteacher, I primarily focused on this narrative. Opinion-based perspectives on Daisybank were derived from anecdotal words from members of the local community, as well as historically engrained opinions and stakeholder's experiences. What was being said at a factual- and opinion-based level appeared to influence the overall construction of a reputation. Notably, both objective and subjective impressions are very much a part of Daisybank's reputation.

Interestingly, Hoyer and MacInnis (2001) describe the notion of 'word of mouth' as the most credible and objective influence on corporate reputation. When I explored the stakeholder's perspectives it was highlighted that it is also fundamental to Daisybank's reputation. In the broadest sense, I am defining 'word of mouth' to include 'any information about the target object or brand transferred from one individual to another' (Brown et al., 2005:125). I started to see a link between what I understand about word of mouth influencing a corporate reputation and how this can also be fundamental to how the reputation of a school is constructed.

The significance of word of mouth for schools in general was further emphasised within my critical discussion with another headteacher, when we discussed how parents or members of the community might view a school:

> *I think 'word of mouth', is bigger than OFSTED to be perfectly honest… the most important thing and especially if you live in or your school is within an estate, as my school is.*

This opinion resonated with what I was seeing in relation to Daisybank. Whilst Daisybank had experienced successful inspections, poor opinions about the school prevailed. Moreover, there was consistent evidence in relation to pupil numbers that it was not a school selected by parents. This suggested to me that word of mouth may have played a more influential role than OFSTED reports in the construction of the schools' reputation.

Notably, two stakeholders appeared to have been influenced by word of mouth in relation to school selection. Therefore, this leads me to suggest that when a decision is important to a prospective parent, word of mouth plays a central role in providing information, which is then treated as a trustworthy source of information, especially when it is received from someone who is known to them. Interviewee 1 was led to Daisybank by a childminder, '…*so I spoke to our*

childminder who said that she had links with the school', highlighting a positive influence of word of mouth for Daisybank. Interviewee 2 listened to a close relative who shared her own negative perspective about Daisybank: '*Do not go to Daisybank School, it's got a terrible reputation*.' Word of mouth here appears to have had both a positive and negative influence on the construction of a reputation for Daisybank. For me, this starts to highlight the complexity surrounding this construction as word of mouth is in itself complicated as it is hard to anticipate how an individual may receive and process information shared with them and how this may then become part of their decision making process. As Ball (2004) would describe markets, of any kind, as complex phenomena due to being multi-faceted, untidy and often unpredictable in manner – so too is the word of mouth linked to Daisybank and its reputation. How a reputation is constructed appears unpredictable because it is dependent upon individuals and in this case word of mouth.

Not only was word of mouth emphasised by Interviewees 1 and 2 but the way in which this influenced and impacted on decisions they then made started to highlight that we are in what Brown (1990:65) would term the age of 'parentocracy'. In effect, the power that parents have appears to be the requisite for being a school that is selected or not. This parental choice, where schools have to be seen as 'desirable' in order for parents to select them, is appearing to be detrimental to Daisybank School. When I considered the parent interviewee it became more obvious why parents can be seen as the primary stakeholders in school (Skallerud, 2011), and when functioning within a globalised society they are considered to be acting as consumers (Hughes et al., 1994) in relation to their child's education.

Trying to understand the theme 'What is being said?' further, I now consider what I deemed to be the main influences highlighted by the three stakeholders in relation to Daisybank: OFSTED and performativity.

5.2.0 Performativity and the democratisation of 'expert' opinion

Formed under the Education (Schools) Act 1992, OFSTED was developed as a way of providing information to parents about schools in order that they could make a choice about where to send their child. Whilst Daisybank has had two successful OFSTED inspections during my time as a headteacher, I have questioned how significant the results of such an inspection are. Despite the inspections being defined as good they appear to have had little influence on the reputation of Daisybank and whether a parent selects Daisybank based on such a report. Interestingly the headteacher who participated in the critical discussion with me highlighted that:

> *Every single parent who comes to look around the school has read my OFSTED report without exception.* (Headteacher interviewee)

Whilst my own experience at Daisybank appears to differ from this, it demonstrates that perhaps for some parents OFSTED reports are important and may influence their decision about selecting a school. Performance data was a recurring theme within the interviews and I had presumed this would have the most influence on a constructed reputation. However, Interviewee 1 highlighted OFSTED, which is influenced by performance data, as only a part of the picture. They acknowledged that:

> *OFSTED is one part, but it is where is the school, it is accessibility, what does the school have in terms of before and after school in terms of clubs and care-taking facilities… but I do not think I would pull a child out because the grading went down.* (Interviewee 1)

Not removing a child from a school where a grading has gone down is an indication that the OFSTED report, a factual 'expert' opinion, has less influence on the construction of a reputation compared to the other entangled influences such

as accessibility and extra-curricular provision. For some, such things hold more significance in terms of how a school is viewed. This is positive for Daisybank as the school has worked hard to provide a plethora of different low cost extra-curricular activities as well as 'wrap-around' care at a low cost. This example highlights that parental viewpoints, influenced through direct experiences and/or word of mouth, are, in addition to 'expert' opinions from an authorised body such as OFSTED, influential to the construction of Daisybank's reputation.

The culture of competitive performativity, which is fuelled by OFSTED and league tables, has brought about another way in which schools can be compared, identified and selected. It defines educational effectiveness (Cowen, 1997) ensuring that schools have a responsibility of transforming themselves to stand out from others. The dominance of performativity and the responsibility that a school has to meet specific expectations is however marginalised by Interviewee 1. The parent offers alternative influences, such as accessibility, extra-curricular activities and care-taking. These may not be a part of the current performative culture; however, they impact on the welfare of the pupils which is shown to be important in the way a parent constructs a reputation in relation to Daisybank. The democratisation of an 'expert' opinion from this stakeholder is further emphasised through my critical discussion with another headteacher where she believes that:

> *Even if you have a bad OFSTED, if the word of mouth of your school is good, I think that can overcome a bad OFSTED result, because OFSTED is a snap judgement that takes place every three years if you are lucky, but word of mouth is day to day, all the time.* (Headteacher interviewee)

Beyond the performative culture, the headteacher highlights that parents perhaps talk about other things in relation to a school. Being able to overcome a bad OFSTED result indicates further that there are many more influences in relation to a school that can have greater meaning and significance, particularly to a parent. The experiential opinion that comes via word of mouth influences perspectives

and perhaps opens up what desirables are on offer and of value. Thus, clearly identifying aspects of school life, other than performance, that may act as negotiating space for reconfiguring a reputation that is perhaps steeped in negative bad press from other discourses, is crucial. Although parental viewpoints may not be backed up with certain 'expert credentials', they exert power and influence. Engaging with stakeholders during this research process has given me the opportunity to develop a more nuanced understanding of reputation and see it beyond performativity.

Identifying accessibility as being a key influence, Interviewee 1, emphasised that how convenient the school was had significance. The school was almost presented as something that had to 'fit in' with already established family routines for it to be considered as favourable:

> *It's accessibility, what does the school have in terms of before and after school in terms of clubs and care-taking facilities. The biggest thing for us in the first instance was the links with the childminder because they would do the picking up and dropping off.* (Interviewee 1)

Being convenient in a number of ways, Daisybank was identified by two stakeholders as a preferable school. This particular example has emphasised the importance of getting to know the wider community and parental needs. Whilst education is important to parents, there are also other factors that are important to them.

Whilst 'expert' opinions such as OFSTED exist, the stakeholder interviews highlighted a move away from factual opinion being the dominant influence. This opened up other ways that parents had potentially constructed their reputation about Daisybank through their own personal preferences and desires. The constructed reputation of Daisybank has been emphasised as stakeholder group specific – for some parents this was the ability of a school to provide 'wrap-around care', whilst for others support for the academically able was crucial. Whilst there

may be an 'inter group bias' (Hewstone et al., 2002) mentality in existence, and to some extent there has to be an acceptance that there are such opposing preferences, I can see that it is important that in leading a school, I can demonstrate how I can effectively work parental preferences.

Drawing on transformational learning enabled me to go beyond the traditional acceptance that stakeholders have different opinions about what is significant to them and how this influences how a they construct a school's reputation, to challenging what a school could and should actually mean.

I believe that I have previously limited my understanding of what school is as primarily a place for educating children, and whilst I still recognise this, my own assumptions have been challenged within this doctoral journey. I realise that my version of school and education is influenced by the neoliberal framework I am working within. What I wanted to achieve at Daisybank had become quite narrow as I had restricted the definition of what a school and education is. Whilst despising the 'norm' that I see being politically imposed, I have become a part of it because I have become entrenched within a restricted system striving to create a school that met performative standards successfully. I highlighted within the literature review that Mezirow (1991a) describes perspective transformation as the process through which adult learners become aware of how and why their assumptions (presuppositions) have come to restrain the way they perceive, understand and feel about their world. This doctoral journey has enabled me to reflect on why I had defined my school in such a way. It has enabled me to see that school is more than the educational outcomes it achieves and that it is naïve to think that it is only school that plays a role in educational outcomes.

The Marmot Review (2010) indicates that to reduce educational inequalities, I require an understanding of the interaction between social determents of educational outcomes, including family background, neighbourhood and relations with peers, as well as what goes on in schools. It suggests that families are more influential to educational attainment than schools and thus recommends that

closer links between schools, the family and the local community are needed. In addition, it highlights that in order for schools to reduce social inequalities in life skills, schools should extend their role and support families and communities by taking on a 'whole child' approach to education.

Initially I interpreted the quote from Interviewee 1 to highlight school as a place of convenience; a place that offers child care in order that parents can go to work and not have to be concerned about children at the 'end' of the school day because school should encompass all the requirements needed including wrap-around care. However, when considering the Marmot Review (2010), I started to see this differently and actually by providing such a service I was taking into consideration the 'whole child'. Within a neoliberal view of education, it might seem controversial to consider school as being more than an educational establishment. However, when I distance myself from such a view and see school in a different way, I understand that it should be and is more than this. Moreover, viewing the school in such a way and supporting families and communities may actually influence educational outcomes more positively.

It seems that the quote from Interviewee 1 highlights that schools almost have to reflect the needs of the community they serve. Accessibility and convenience can support the educational outcomes achieved, indicating that education and how it is perceived is complex. I believe that a school has to understand the many influences on educational outcomes and respond accordingly. The geographical location of the school and the community it serves potentially determines what other roles the school may need to play. It could be argued here that how a school balances such roles influences its constructed reputation. Therefore, I as headteacher need to navigate what school needs to be to members of my own school community.

My commitment to my own self as a professional and my responsibility as a headteacher for pupils is dominated by ensuring that the pupils achieve the results that I believe they are capable of, or ones in fact that the government requires of

them. However, this parent highlights that this sense of responsibility may requires a shift in thinking and for me to embrace a different perspective. My own understanding of school improvement has been framed by neoliberal principles. It has been located within particular performance indicators set out from political agendas (Ball, 2012c). Here I recognise that I need to move out from parameters that have become fixed within my own professional journey

Despite recognising the negotiating space in relation to the democratisation of experts, which was apparent within the narratives of the three stakeholders, Daisybank was highlighted as having '*bad results'* (Interviewee 2). This factual-based information prevented Interviewee 2 from sending her children to Daisybank. She also stated that one way that she believed it was possible to influence reputational change was through '*results, results – in a grammar area I think results'.* This starts to indicate that for some stakeholders the performativity of Daisybank is significant and begins to open up the belief that the way in which a school performs can 'encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an organisation' (Ball, 2004:14). Within a grammar school locality this appears to be more prominent where entrance exams and results are more influential than they would be in a different locality. Daisybank, historically and still presently, is unfortunately not standing out for high results. Daisybank Primary School's position in the league table identifies it as an academically low performing school. This not only impacting on it being selected as a preferred school when the local grammar school is the ultimate choice, but also influencing and playing a key role in the overall construction of its reputation. This point is raised by one of the stakeholders as they contemplate how to enhance Daisybank's reputation.

> *If we can up the level on the league, then I think that would be the best thing because people look at results unfortunately and not the value added, they just think about what the results are.* (Interviewee 2)

The reference here to league tables and 'upping the level' starts to demonstrate how Daisybank and schools in general can become wrapped up in a performative

culture. It indicates that league tables are used by some as a comparative mechanism for selection, where comparisons between schools are made in terms of the successful output of results. For Daisybank, it appears that it is necessary to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the outputs of learning in order to increase the opportunity of choice for the 'consumers' of education (Ball, 1998). Interviewee 2 identified that increased performativity will impact positively on the school '*because people look at results'*. It can therefore be assumed that high ratings of performativity could improve Daisybank's attraction to parents and students in the educational market place. It also emphasises that there are perhaps a minority of parents who value certain forms of differentiation between schools – the statement '*the grammar was the ultimate to go'* (Interviewee 2) emphasises that within this community, where a selective system exists, if this is the ultimate goal, then a school which is perhaps positioned to generate more 'grammar school pupils' may be favourable.

Performativity is further emphasised as being important by a headteacher for two reasons:

> *You can't lose sight of the fact that you're an educator because at the end of the day, those results matter – they make you viable as well.*
> (Headteacher interviewee)

Firstly, schools are educators, and secondly, results help to make a school viable. Whilst this journey has challenged me to consider the nature of what a school actually is and how the performance of a school is potentially not the only area of a school that parents may consider – I am still reminded through the discussion with the headteacher that I cannot lose sight that I am an educator. This sentiment really challenged my thoughts on why the performance of Daisybank has become so important. It is without doubt that I want children within my school to achieve. However, I also know that results matter because when performativity is a political definition of success, it also influences the viability of a school.

The viability of Daisybank has become more important for me to consider as lower pupils numbers results in less funding coming into the school. This headteacher states that she recognises there to be a link between results and viability and this perhaps starts to provide some explanation as to why Daisybank is not a choice school for some and thus its viability is becoming questionable. I understand that in a neoliberal world the results that Daisybank achieves have significance because a neoliberal culture manipulates what results mean and imposes the idea that better results equate to a better education. This not only matters because of the locality of Daisybank but because of its very viability. The purpose of education in such a world becomes more about preparing pupils to fit into the neoliberal view of society where they can contribute to economic production via the skills which they acquire through the deliberate investments in education (Little, 2003). This problematises the construction of a reputation as it highlights that when education is performance driven, a school is potentially viewed through the lens of results. This resonates with what I understand to be happening at Daisybank. Despite successful OFSTED inspections and the understanding that an 'expert' opinion is not always influential, I recognise that Daisybank is still functioning and is accountable to a neoliberal system that heralds performance as a fundamental measure of the success of a school and creates a normalisation of what this should look like.

> *I am a person that is not really in favour with league tables, the results of the children and the qualifications they are obtaining in the various subjects is important, but to compare one school with another school because of the catchment areas varying enormously, it is not fair to judge A against B – that's my view on that.* (Interviewee 3)

Interviewee 3 acknowledged that schools are compared against each other, something that they question due to the enormous variation in catchment areas. This highlights how he has recognised that schools are different. The 'unfairness' of such a regime is highlighted by this interviewee, but whilst he identifies this

flaw, there is a recognition that others do not. This begins to highlight different perspectives of the role of education in society. Whilst fending off popular views of childhood development such as those suggested by Piaget and Dewey, Egan (1990) suggests that education needs to be redefined and theories need to be relevant and pertinent to the process of education. In doing so Egan (1990) has attempted to analyse how the school curriculum might adapt itself to correspond more appropriately to the changes in the predisposition of the children and, I would argue, the community it serves.

Whilst I recognise that league tables are a fabricated indication of how well a school has achieved and that it is a 'manufactured representation' (Ball, 1997:318) of what the school is like, I recognise that they are a potential influential factor in how Daisybank's reputation has been constructed. Perhaps these indicators of academic achievement are perceived as important due to the neoliberal framework in which education is situated. However, when I consider Egan (1990), I see how he looks beyond neoliberal principles for education and how, when tailoring a curriculum to the children within a community that Daisybank serves, I need to go beyond performativity and explore what education needs to be for this community.

5.2.1 Summary of what is being said

It would appear that stakeholders have highlighted that 'what is being said' about Daisybank comes from a factual- or opinion-based perspective. Whilst an OFSTED grading and the performance of Daisybank was recognised as playing a role in the construction of its reputation, the democratisation of experts became apparent through the stakeholders' comments thus highlighting negotiating space within this factual-based perspective. This opened up how opinion-based perspectives are at times marginalising factual-based perspectives, giving rise to word of mouth and opinion-based perspectives as an influential factor that has greater dominance.

The stakeholders interviewed in relation to Daisybank appear to be influenced by the discourses which are most important to them and their own understanding of reality. The discourses that they have been potentially subject to are not necessarily school data related but can also be attributed to the impression that Daisybank gives or has given to the community over time.

The construction of Daisybank's reputation is highlighted as problematic due to the fact that opinions and perspectives are, at times, fixed. I recognise from the interviewees, when considering the influence of word of mouth, that it is not necessarily just how Daisybank presents itself now, but also how historical events may have created particular truths, and years on may still be the dominant discourse and a reality for some.

Word of mouth appears to have both a positive and negative influence on the construction of a reputation about Daisybank. It highlights the complexity surrounding this construction, as word of mouth is in itself complicated, and as it is hard to anticipate how a parent may receive and process information shared with them and how this then may become part of their decision making process.

However, using a transformative lens, I have identified some of my own assumptions and thus I have been able to look at the perspectives from all of the interviewees, and see that there is a way of negotiating with what is being said about Daisybank. It appears that interacting with the community and understanding what a particular community both wants and needs can significantly influence how a school is spoken about. This further highlights the importance of understanding what a school actually means to a community. Whilst controversial, ensuring that the school is tailored to the community, just like a person would have a suit tailored to make it the right fit, is paramount. The school needs to fit the community. This is not about marketing the school to the local community, but more about dialogue between the community and school in order that a shared understanding of education can be developed.

5.3 Perceptions of Daisybank: Stakeholders – Theme 3: Perceived effective leadership traits

Within this thesis the understanding of the role of a headteacher and traits that they have that can play a role in the construction and reconstruction of the school's reputation was highlighted from the perspective of both the stakeholders and the external headteacher. Interestingly the stakeholders and external headteacher's perspectives differed. From my perspective, the opinions differed because the headteacher appeared to describe her role from what I would consider a business approach. Whereas the stakeholders identified leadership characteristics such as strength and dedication that I would envisage any good headteacher would have. Whilst they held differing perspectives on what these traits would look like in practise, it became apparent that the headteacher role was fundamental to how a school was perceived and how school improvement was addressed. At the same time, how they enacted that role was influenced and shaped by the neoliberal structure/s within which they were situated. The latter was particularly noticeable with the external headteacher where she highlighted herself battling between managing a business and being an educator – a problem, in my opinion, that has arisen due to such a structure.

More than 20 years ago, within the document Excellence in Schools (Department for Education and Employment [DfEE], 1997), written under the New Labour government of the time, the significance of the role of a headteacher was highlighted. It states: 'The quality of the head often makes the difference between the success or failure of a school. Good heads can transform a school' (DfEE, 1997:46). More than 20 years later, whilst under a new guise of 'transformational leadership', the headteacher role is still considered significant, but is perhaps more to do with how the headteacher works with members of the learning community to improve from within (Gunn, 2018). Transformational leaders do not simply run a school but instead such leaders look at how to make things better through genuine collaboration between the school and stakeholders. (Gunn, 2018). After engaging with transformational learning, this has made me question how someone

can be a transformational leader if they have not experienced transformational learning themself. If someone does not embrace critical reflection individually, how is it possible to support and empower others.

Whilst facilitating the National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership, *Turn the ship around* (Marquet, 2013) was used to highlight transformational leadership. The book narrates how Captain David Marquet successfully transforms USS *Santa Fe* from the worst performing submarine fleet to the best in less than a year. This was achieved by developing a 'leader-leader' model rather than a 'leader-follower' model. A structure of giving up control, delegating responsibilities to all levels within the organisation whilst providing clarity and purpose led to such a change. In order to embrace a leader-leader model in which there is 'genuine collaboration', I believe that a headteacher needs to relinquish control to an extent to open up dialogue and spaces for transformation and change.

As I started to explore what the stakeholders and the headteacher I interviewed were saying about leadership and how this linked to the construction of a school reputation, three distinctive areas were highlighted: the headteacher role, managing and leading staff and interactions, and relationships with the community. Such areas opened up for me what leadership can and should mean.

5.3.0 Headteacher role from the perspective of another headteacher

In the introductory chapter I highlighted the assumption that there is a dilemma facing schools when they are debating the question whether they are:

> …first and foremost, purveyors of education, or businesses that need to operate with an eye on the marketplace in order to survive. (Tait, 2016:1)

When I consider this dilemma (Tait,2016), I recognise that the role of the headteacher within this is presented as two separate ideals in opposing positions as education and business are polarised in their functionality. Education is fundamentally about learning and business essentially about profit. The understanding that a school is now a business was emphasised in the external

headteacher's interview when she stated: '*We (schools) most definitely are businesses and we are funded by bums on seats.'* Further within the discussion she stated*: 'So, if you drop to a certain level that is not viable, so you cease to be.'*

The above sentiment, highlighted for me the harsh reality that she faced as leader of a school. Maintaining financial viability is emphasised as being a crucial consideration to the role of a headteacher otherwise there are apparent consequences that may include redundancy, being taken over or closing down. Although the financial state of a school may be determined by a number of things, the number of pupils within a school is one fundamental factor in a school's viability and ultimate survival. Pupil numbers was identified by the interviewed headteacher as 'bums on seats' which perhaps demonstrates that there has been a shift away from headteachers purely focusing on the pupils they have to now operating with an eye on the marketplace in order to draw more pupils in. Such a shift begins to emphasise how this headteacher has been influenced by the neoliberal context that she is working within and provides an example of the assertion that Ball (2012a:1) makes: 'The unstated and usually unexamined subtext of neoliberalism is not doctrine but money.' This is evident here as pupils appear to have become a form of wealth to a school. Therefore, one measure of success for schools could be linked to how efficient a school is in attracting pupils, and yet the paradox is that you can possibly only attract pupils when there is a good reputation linked to the school. Ceasing to be viable is an unwanted result but the reality is clearly apparent for this headteacher and the discussion indicates that headteachers may be in a position where they are required to look at the ways in which they can make their schools attractive to new pupils, and perhaps arguably more importantly to their parents who are the customers. Thus, headteachers are drawn into a balancing act. Balancing business and education simultaneously appears to be the new norm.

> *I think, and it goes against my grain, absolutely against the grain, but I think we are businesses.* (Headteacher interviewee)

This statement highlights how this headteacher is faced into a moral dilemma with the decisions she makes. There appears to be a tension between what she educationally or even as a professional believes is right for the children within her setting, and what is going to attract the most children to the setting. This may indicate that headteachers are potentially put in a position where they are required to set aside their personal values and commitment as to what they believe schools should be about in order to fabricate a veneer of professional competence in order to work effectively within a neoliberal climate for which they are held accountable (Carr, 2016). This professional competence, which has now become intertwined with the neoliberal version of professional competence, embraces a new world beyond just being educators. This shift has also had an impact on what a good school looks like. This internalised adjustment (Lacey, 1977) where headteachers are influenced and mandated to be a certain way is forcing headteachers towards the defining neoliberal process of normalisation (Hayler, 2016) where there is, despite it going against the grain, an acceptance and no doubt that schools are businesses. In my opinion education is about achieving the best possible outcomes for each individual child, taking into consideration their starting points. However, when I consider education from a business perspective, it will purely be about the output, irrespective of starting points. Therefore, whilst there may be an acceptance to a degree, there is also tension. External power structures, where social injustices related to discrimination and political interests are at work, impact on and determine knowledge of what a school should be and in my opinion the reputation that a particular school develops. There is a contradiction and a battle between the realities of a neoliberal marketised education, where competition, league tables and performativity are imposed and the other wider discourses of education which include equality, empowerment and fairness (Goodson and Rudd, 2017). This problematises the construction of reputation further as it opens up the tensions that are in existence when I begin to question what a school should or has to be to survive a neoliberal structure.

The following discussion with the external headteacher highlighted that there may be an acceptance that schools are businesses:

> *You have to view it as a business alongside being educators. You can't lose sight of the fact that you're an educator because at the end of the day, those results matter – they make you viable as well.* (Headteacher interviewee)

However, it also reiterated a tension as she strived to achieve a balance while recognising her fundamental role as an educator. My professional colleague in the above quote has the view that business works alongside education. However, her statement appears to limit the understanding of education to results. Whilst I recognise and want to work in a way that education is deemed to be more than results, I equally have been drawn into such a restricted regime.

'*You can't lose sight of the fact that you are an educator'* indicates for this headteacher that when there is such a dilemma between business and education, it is perhaps easy to lose sight of what education is. However, the premise that a co-existence is possible here emphasises that we can work within a neoliberal regime without being dominated by it. Thus, there is negotiating space that I see for all schools but here particularly for Daisybank where bums on seats are only part of the bigger picture. With courage and conviction, I, like my fellow headteachers, can implement what I educationally and professionally believe is right for children within my setting. Thus, education can also go beyond just the definition of results and start to be something, as highlighted previously in the chapter, that can become an education linked to the community that is being served.

The discussion with the headteacher indicated that the reputation of a school is therefore not only about the education that is provided but it is also linked to the number of 'bums on seats'. As the number of 'bums on seats' is determined by so

many other factors, the most obvious being linked to parental choice, the complexity of a school's reputation is emphasised.

Parents, who are given the power of choice, highlight apparent deficiencies simply by making a choice. Schools become winners and losers within the market place as some are positioned as more desirable than others in terms of what they offer or are perceived to offer by parents or specific communities. My own experience at Daisybank, due to the annual low pupil numbers within reception, indicates that within a neoliberal climate, Daisybank is a 'loser'. However, when I look beyond this, my understanding of Daisybank changes. It is not a 'loser'. Whilst Daisybank might have to survive the market place, it can do so without being entrenched in such a regime.

As a headteacher, I do feel like I am performing a balancing act, trying to balance the viability of the school with the education that I want to offer at Daisybank. I feel that this doctoral journey has challenged my understanding of the role of the headteacher. I had often seen myself as a driver in new initiatives in the school, but actually I have become aware more of my role as listener and facilitator as I open up spaces for negotiation and potential change.

Developed by Vygotsky (1896–1934), the zone of proximal development best understands how learners move on to new concepts through scaffolding, highlighting the social context of learning and that knowledge is mutually built and constructed. 'Scaffolding refers to the way the adult guides the child's learning via focused questions and positive interactions' (Balaban, 1995:52). This highlights the social context of learning and that knowledge is mutually built and constructed. Whilst this is an educational theory, I see how this can relate to my role and interactions with the community. Through deeply attuned listening to the local community, I can begin to scaffold appropriately to the local needs. This links with my developed understanding about what a school is. Perhaps why the reputation of Daisybank had become such a dilemma for me was that I was fighting or disregarding the perspectives of the community.

5.3.1 Headteacher role from the perspective of stakeholders

Moving from the headteacher perspective to that of the stakeholders, I saw a change in how the headteacher role was spoken about. The stakeholders highlighted some key characteristics of what they deemed to be an 'effective' headteacher in relation to the reputation of a school, as well as emphasising some of the changes that a former headteacher had made which made a significant difference to Daisybank.

As two of the stakeholders have been linked to Daisybank for a long period of time (20–25years) they had experienced the school under different leadership.

> *The headteacher at the time (25 years ago) had quite a difficult job in controlling the vandalism that there was in the area, and also, he used to on occasions be embarrassed by the methods by which the parents had approached him in that at one time, he even had a baseball bat at the side of his desk for fear of being attacked by parents.* (Interviewee 3)

At this point in history, Daisybank was highlighted as a school which appeared to be out of control. There was a distinct lack of respect towards the headteacher and there was clearly a lack of collaboration between parents, the community and the school.

The behaviour of the parents was identified as being out of control by the way it was described:

> *…the first word we heard in the playground was the 'f' word and I thought 'Oh my God, what have I done?'* (Interviewee 2)

> *No, I think parents were a big problem. I came in here with parents screaming and shouting who I thought they were going to hit the head.* (Interviewee 2)

Parents were exhibiting behaviour that not only demonstrated a lack of respect towards the headteacher but to other parents, making them question their choice of school (Interviewee 2). The behaviour of some parents at this time was having a detrimental impact on the reputation of Daisybank.

Within the narrative, Interviewee 3 recalls when a new headteacher came to Daisybank:

> *We had a new headteacher who joined the school about 14 years ago now, and in her time at the school, she changed the school quite dramatically really, in that discipline started to come back in the school.*

Interviewee 2 highlighted that the new headteacher at the time provided her with a new perspective about Daisybank Primary, stating: '*I was really impressed with her',* which emphasises that the headteacher had clearly said or behaved in a particular way to create such a positive response. The interviewee did not really extrapolate on what had created such a positive opinion of the headteacher apart from initially that there was perhaps a sense of common ground or familiarity, '*she reminded me of what sort of teachers I had when I was young'.* A sense of respect comes across in the interview which influenced the choice to 'give it a try' (referring to Daisybank).

This headteacher had been an influential factor in the choice that this interviewee made about Daisybank which suggests that headteachers in general could have a role in the choices people make about a school and ultimately how they construct a school's reputation.

This headteacher was seen as:

> *…being tough… she came here changing things and telling them what to do and telling the parents what to do and how to behave and they didn't like it.* (Interviewee 2)

Although it was not necessarily stated, the headteacher appeared to come in to Daisybank with a clear vision about what she wanted for the school. Being described as tough perhaps indicates that she was secure in her beliefs and her commitment to the school and did not sway from this, despite opposition at times.

> *That fortitude of the head carried on sorting staff out and getting staff to come on board, but it was very, very hard and a very gradual change.* (Interviewee 2)

The dedication and strength of the headteacher came via this sentiment, which also highlighted the transformational aspects of her leadership starting collaboration with staff and getting them to be a positive part of the change happening within Daisybank.

It also came across from Interviewee 2, that despite some initial opposition from parents, a respect from the headteacher was developing:

> *I think she stopped them smoking in the playground as well. I think they just learned that there were things they could do and things they could not do.* (Interviewee 2)

The developing respect led to what can be described as simple changes, but clearly important enough for both this interviewee and Interviewee 3 to recall: `*…there are less people smoking at the entrance gate. Things like that were really unpleasant'* (Interviewee 3). The whole school environment appeared to be changing for the better where a mutual respect was developing between all stakeholders that resulted in what was described by Interviewee 3 as

'*a settled school with good behaviour and children that respected it and a slowing down of people leaving to go to other schools within the area'.*

The role of the headteacher at Daisybank was highlighted by Interviewee 3 as being pivotal in the positive changes happening within the school:

> *The main reason for change was that the headteacher and her discipline and getting the message over to the children to take a pride in the school.* (Interviewee 3)

> *We have got a fabulous headteacher and she is doing a wonderful job and I think the reasons for this are her attitude towards the children – she knows them all by name and the parents respect her and what I would also like is that she has a disciplinary manner as well and doesn't let the children get away with anything.* (Interviewee 3)

Whilst transformational leadership was not stated explicitly, the principles of such a leadership model is emphasised in the above narratives where collaboration between all stakeholders appears to be fundamental in bringing about change. It begins to highlight how the headteacher of Daisybank at the time knew the school community: she could communicate her vision well and was prepared for the challenges inherent in implementing this vision and bringing about successful change. The narratives from all of the interviewees at some point have indicated that in order to know the school community well, there has to be an understanding of the wider community and the opinions that surround the school.

5.3.2 Summary of perceived effective leadership traits

The perspectives of the stakeholders and a fellow headteacher have further opened up my thoughts about the role of a headteacher, and the complex nature of education and schools. I now see an effective leader as an individual that can

adapt their school and education to their own school community. This comes through attuned listening to the community and by understanding that knowledge is mutually challenged and constructed, thus recognising that the role of the headteacher goes beyond the drive for school improvement and results. At times it involves a process of active listening and critical reflection in order to understand the local community. It is argued here that while we can identify key characteristics of effective leadership, in reality they are only truly effective if they are cognisant of and attuned to the needs of the local community the school serves.

5.4 Summary of the chapter

Within this chapter, I have explored and interrogated the construction of Daisybank's reputation which I recognise as a socially constructed entity. In addition, I have critically examined a range of potentially influential factors associated with the constructed reputation of Daisybank. As I further explored these influential factors, a clear picture of the entangled issues that surround the construction of a reputation emerged. By applying a transformational lens to my own learning as part of this doctoral journey, I have been able to present an account of insider and outsider views of how a school's reputation is constructed. More importantly, I have stepped outside of my own narrative and reflected fully on the role that my own assumptions have played in the constructed reputation of Daisybank. This has enabled me to consider how I could work in a different way to find the negotiating space within some of the dominant influences that became particularly apparent to me in the construction of Daisybank's reputation. The dominant influences were geographical location, what is being said and perceived effective traits of leadership. I have not tried to determine or, at this point, understand if there is a hierarchy between the influential factors identified. Nonetheless, I do recognise that for my stakeholders and headteacher the degree to which such factors are perceived as influential (or not) will vary. This highlights a further complexity to the construction of a reputation.

Drawing on transformational learning has enabled me to look beyond the 'school' as I strive to conceptualise the construction of Daisybank's reputation. This process has helped me challenge my assumptions and positionality at the start of this journey, and questions the ways in which I was working within a neoliberal structure. Whilst I recognise that I still do not have all of the answers, I see things differently. As well as questioning what a school is to my community, I have also realised that it is perhaps not only for me to define and that school means different things to different people. As headteachers and educators we are charged with balancing politically driven initiatives but within this must not lose sight of the unique needs of our local community. Therefore, as a headteacher it is my role to find ways to open up negotiating spaces within that community with a view to bringing about change in how Daisybank's is perceived. A starting point on this journey would be, as already stated, to be cognisant of and more acutely attuned to the needs of the local community that my school serves.

Chapter 6: My Transformational Learning Journey

6.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I demonstrate my own transformational journey from a personal and professional perspective. I show how by engaging with the literature flexibly (Charmaz, 2006) I was able to utilise Mezirow's (1978a) transformational learning as an alternative lens to review the original findings from my doctorate. This process enabled me to develop a deeper understanding of this educative experience and its effects on me both professionally and personally.

6.1 Personal transformational journey

In the period since the original presentation of my thesis, as well as re-analysing the complex social phenomena of constructed reputation, I have also legitimised the exploration of my own development. Responses and recommended changes from the examiners presented me with an unexpected 'disorientating dilemma' – what Mezirow (1991a) describes as the initial step to perspective transformation. Without realising it at the time, I embarked on a personal perspective transformation, where the way in which I managed such responses, enabled me not only to learn more about myself on a personal level but also, more importantly, to gain another opportunity to see and act on the data generated within this doctorate in new and a more effective manner. Whilst I do not believe that I sequentially transitioned through all the steps of perspective transformation described by Mezirow (1991a), I identified with a number. This worked aligned with Taylor (1997), Percy (2005) and Kitchenham (2008) who all recognised that the stages may be treated with flexibility and that some stages may be omitted or not considered part of the individual's learning journey.

I knew that I had become entrenched in the neoliberal workings of education and that this had influenced the way in which I functioned as a headteacher at Daisybank. However, on reflection I saw how within my first presented doctorate,

I had barely moved away from this from a professional stance. I had not given myself the freedom to really challenge my own assumptions and I was restricted in how I interpreted the data because I did not have s specific lens where I could view or be supported in seeing the data differently. Such an understanding came via conversations with others and this dialogue supported me in considering my developed assumptions in a more critical way (steps 3 and 4 of Mezirow's transformational learning – see Chapter 2).

On a personal level steps 5–7 of Mezirow's transformational learning was learning to look at the changes that were required in a different way. Rather than seeing it as an onerous task, the sense of failure that I had initially encountered subsided, as I began to consider the benefits that revisiting the data could bring.

Stages 8–10 of Mezirow's transformational learning involves taking action. Revisiting all of the data with not only a constructivist grounded theory approach but also with transformational learning as a theoretical lens enabled me to not only generate a more nuanced understanding in relation to the constructed reputation of Daisybank, but also enabled me to explore the data beyond its context. The critical exploration of transformational learning in Chapter 3 highlighted two key areas of my own doctoral journey: positionality and perspective transformation.

My new approach to this doctoral journey challenged how I viewed a reputation. Drawing on Lacan (1977), I know that I viewed Daisybank's 'mirror image' in relation to neoliberal ideologies and thus I saw it as having a 'poor' constructed reputation. However, by changing the way I looked at the 'mirror image' presented me with a liberating feeling as I started to see 'negotiating space' and Daisybank beyond neoliberal ideologies. Diagrams are used within this chapter to illustrate how my own transformational learning led to this point (e.g., Diagram 6.3)

6.2 Professional transformational learning journey

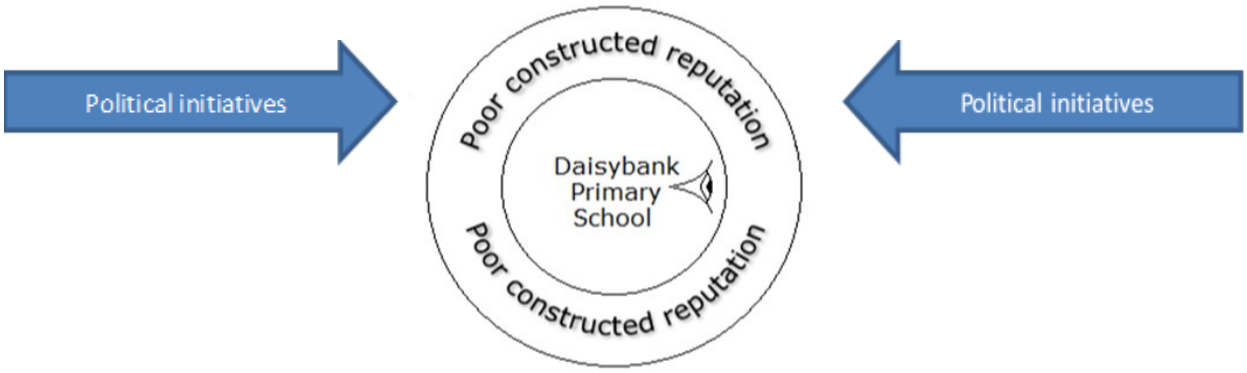


Diagram 6.0: Phase 1 – A diagram to depict my ontological starting point.

This diagram depicts my 'disorientating dilemma' (step 1 of Mezirow's transformational learning) and begins to illustrate what my frustrations were borne out of at the start of this professional doctoral journey (step 2 of Mezirow's transformational learning). My ontological position as this journey commenced was entrenched in neoliberal principles; however, my growing frustrations working within what I saw as a restricted regime led me to question the construction of Daisybank's reputation. Illustrated in Diagram 6.0, my eye is lying within the Daisybank circle. Being close to the school, and an integral part of it, I could see Daisybank from an internal perspective. My eye is, however, facing outwards towards the poor constructed reputation that I saw based on my understanding of reputation at the time.

Diagram 6.0 is circular to depict how the poor reputation totally surrounds Daisybank. Before one could even 'see' the school, the barrier of this poor constructed reputation, from my perspective, was hindering what I truly believed the school to be and what it had the potential to become. Hence the reason the poor reputation surrounds Daisybank from the outside. I recognise that the 'mirror image' (Lacan, 1977) that I saw was entrenched in neoliberal principles.

This assumption was based on my own interpretation of evidence that I was aware of:

- Despite the local schools being oversubscribed, Daisybank had low pupil numbers and annual evidence demonstrated that Daisybank was not the preferred school for parents
- Performative data was lower than the national average
- Anecdotal evidence – comments heard from wider members of the community
- We were not able to 'keep up' with the imposed political initiatives.

My lack of understanding and the frustration of my assumptions relating to the poor constructed reputation of Daisybank provided the impetus for me to critically reflect and search for further explanations to understand how and why this poor reputation was in existence. But this learning was beyond an elaboration of the paradigm in existence. Recognising that my view of Daisybank's reputation was restricted, I knew that it was important for me to find a way to challenge some of my assumptions in order that I could support Daisybank in making any necessary changes to improve what I believed to be this poor constructed reputation surrounding it. I needed an opportunity to reformulate my thinking about the reputation of Daisybank and embark on a transformative learning process to understand, beyond my own perspective, what was happening in and around to re-shape the reputation of my school. In wanting to challenge my own assumptions and generalisations and learn more about the constructed reputation of Daisybank, I considered ways to explore how Daisybank's reputation was perceived by others and made an initial plan to address the dilemma that I was facing.

According to Mezirow (1991a:198):

> …we all depend on consensual validation to establish the meaning of our assertions, especially in the communicative domains of learning and …an ideal set of conditions for participation in critical discourse is implicit in the very nature of human communication.

I wanted some consensual validation that Daisybank did not warrant the poor reputation that I believed it had. In addition, I wanted to understand how Daisybank's reputation had been constructed and explore both the 'good' and 'bad' traits associated with such a construct. In recognising that my gaze and perceptions were limited, I sought and took other perspectives into account with a view to either challenging or validating the conclusions that I had started to draw.

My perspective was limited because I had been professionally drawn into the micropolitical struggles of how to lead Daisybank. I considered that the performativity of the school was a key determining factor for parental choice and a fundamental part of a school's reputation. I was looking at the other schools as my competition. Due to their successful results and filled pupil places, I considered others to be the 'ideal' school due to the way in which the insidious operation of neoliberalism, where performativity, productivity and standing out as a lead competitor, had impacted on the way in which I understood Daisybank should be (Ball, 2003a). Neoliberalism had become embedded within the education system that I knew and as I highlighted in Chapter 1 became the 'water in which I swam' (Ball 2013a:132); it had intruded into the way in which I was leading and judging Daisybank.

After critically looking at my own ontological and epistemological position, I recognised the need to draw on the perspectives of others to uncover and further understand my perception of Daisybank's reputation as well as to learn more about the constructed reputation that was in existence around Daisybank at that moment in time. Charmaz (2006) asserts that in qualitative research we have to enter the world we are studying and that we need to learn from the inside. I needed to learn from other stakeholders. In an attempt to illustrate this, Diagram 6.1 (see below) shows me leaving my own assumptions and bias aside. This is shown by the movement of my eye which has now moved to the outer circle. This is where I have now positioned myself as the researcher from the outside looking in. The word 'poor' has also been removed from the outer circle in order to further

illustrate my own assumptions being put aside and that in embarking on this research process I was open to explore other perspectives without any preconceived ideas. This is where I see myself transitioning to steps 3 and 4 of Mezirow's transformational learning where dialogue with others enabled me to consider my own assumptions in a more critical way and learn about the constructed reputation from a different angle. This enabled me to start to see the 'mirror image' (Lacan, 1977) in a new way.

6.3 Emerging themes

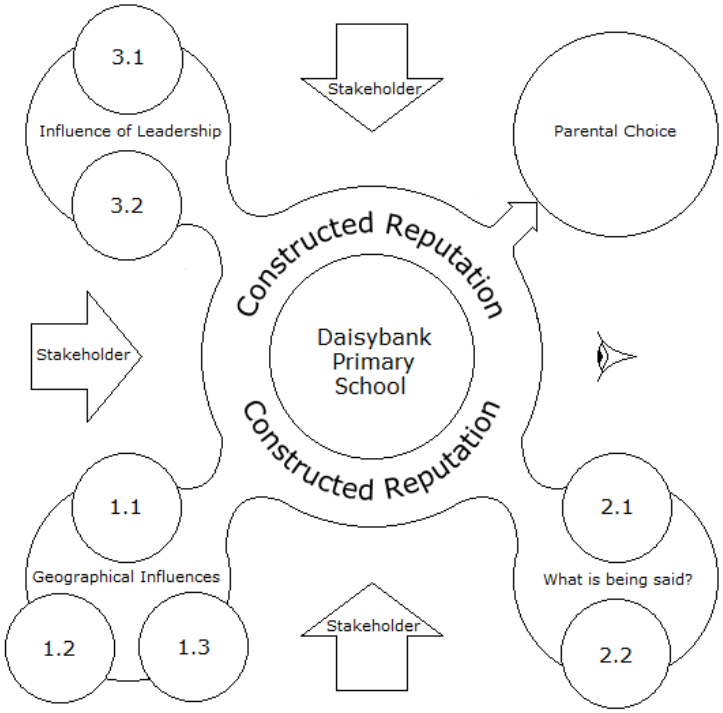


Diagram 6.1: Phase 1 – A diagram to indicate the emerging themes from stakeholder interviews.

The three stakeholder arrows represent the three in-depth interviews that took place as part of the research process. The stakeholders are facing inwards towards Daisybank, as I had asked them to reflect their own view points about the constructed reputation. By listening to their lived experiences and perspectives

within the interview process, it became apparent how all of the stakeholders saw the constructed reputation from a different angle and that each individual perspective not only draws on personal experiences but also on personal beliefs and values. Thus, the arrows are situated in different places around the diagram. This enabled me to add their insights to my own initial reflections and, further, to now co-construct an understanding of the constructed reputation of Daisybank.

By adopting a constructivist grounded theory approach to the research, I was able to identify a range of themes and entangled reputational influences. The entangled influences within the constructed reputation of Daisybank are represented via the small circles labelled 1.1–3.3. I was able to group aspects of the narratives from the three stakeholders to generate influences that were embedded within the core major themes. Each circle is similar in size to reflect that from the data I did not perceive any to have dominance over the other. The entangled reputational influences were identified in Chapter 5 as follows:

(5) 1.1 Aesthetic appearance
(5) 1.2 History
(5) 1.3 Deprived area

Geographical influences

(5) 2.1 OFSTED and performative results

What is being said?

(5) 3.1 Headteacher role from the perspective of a headteacher
(5) 3.2 Headteacher role from the perspective of stakeholders

Influence of leadership

Three of the larger circles surrounding the constructed reputation of Daisybank highlight the key themes of geographical influence, what is being said and perceived effective traits of leadership. The fourth circle highlights how parents play a fundamental role in the constructed reputation of Daisybank and illustrates what I believe influences parents to form such perspectives. Therefore, the arrow

pointing to parents illustrates how they could be influenced by any of the key themes identified.

The circles are attached by a thin adjoining strip to illustrate how they feed into the overall constructed reputation. The circles are equal in size to show that whilst individual stakeholders highlighted particular influences to them personally, due to there being a difference with each stakeholder, I wanted to illustrate that this research highlighted that different factors might come to mean more to some people than others. Diagram 6.1 illustrates how exploring and interrogating the data from the three interviews enabled me to see and reflect on this socially constructed phenomenon from the perspective of others. At this point within the research, my own assumptions and generalisations about this constructed reputation started to be challenged as I became more aware of other influences that were at work.

Within a grounded theory approach, constant comparison is considered integral (Glaser and Strauss 1967; McCann and Clark 2003a; 2003b). Charmaz (2006:167) defines it as 'a method of analysis that generates successively more abstract concepts'. I explored what the stakeholders were saying in relation to each of the main themes that I had established and issues surrounding the construction of Daisybank became more obvious and visible. Revisiting the data at a later stage after sharing a critical discussion with a fellow headteacher and then using a transformational learning lens enabled me to compare the data further and start to explore the meaning of the data beyond the context of Daisybank. I started to see how my own positionality was changing and that through dialogue with others, I was developing new frames of reference in relation to key concepts.

I embarked on this journey with the premise that all schools individually have a constructed reputation. However, what became apparent with expressions such as, '*I don't consider myself to live on the estate* and *the estate has got a poor name'* (Chapter 5) is that the geographical location and the community where it is positioned have a constructed reputation. Within the theme 'geographical

influences', I started to see that this can have a bearing on the way in which the school's reputation is also constructed as it was with Daisybank. I recognised that whilst a school, such as Daisybank, and the geographical location surrounding it may have a particular reputation, because of the school's connection to its physical positioning, these reputations can become entangled. It becomes difficult to differentiate one from the other, thus, they are potentially perceived as one. Anholt (2010:4) suggests that places with a reputation for being poor:

> …find that everything that they do or their citizens try and achieve outside their own neighbourhood is harder, and the burden is always on their side to prove that they don't conform to the national stereotype.

All three stakeholders identified that the estate where Daisybank is physically positioned has a perceived poor reputation. I started to recognise that because of the link between the school and Daisybank Estate, that just as Anholt (2010) described, what we were trying to do within the school was harder. We had the added burden of trying to prove that just because the surrounding estate had a poor perceived reputation, Daisybank did not necessarily conform to this. The school was part of a micro-environmental domain.

The picture that Daisybank Estate portrayed and how it was interpreted and understood led to stereotypical and distorted views about Daisybank apparently based on its location. There were prejudices about the place or what was referred to as the estate in which Daisybank was situated and the inhabitants within it (Shields, 1991). Questioning why such prejudices may have arisen I considered the impact of education being situated within a neoliberal society. While markets within a neoliberal framework are more open and competitive, the structural changes within it may result in some individuals gaining but others losing out. It has been argued that such a structure can lead to profound challenges to the well-being of many groups, communities and individuals (Hall and Lamont, 2012). Due to its history (1.1), aesthetic appearance (1.2) and deprivation (1.3) (see Diagram 6.1 and Chapter 5), I believed that Daisybank was missing out due to it

not being able to compete with the neoliberal ideas that were being used by individuals to define how they should live their lives, what they are capable of, and for what they can hope (Hall and Lamont, 2012). Reflecting on Daisybank's existing reputation, it was becoming more apparent that against the backdrop of a neoliberal society and due to its own history, the reputation of Daisybank Estate was having a detrimental effect on the whole community since:

> …a discourse that elevates market criteria of worth tends to classify people who are affluent into abounded community and to marginalize those with fewer economic resources. (Hall and Lamont, 2012:19)

Stakeholders 1 and 2 demonstrated how they were classifying themselves – elevating themselves above what they believed Daisybank Estate could provide (see Chapter 5). This is where I started to see that community is complex and at times it appears as Young (1990:300) describes as an 'understandable dream'. The flawed ideal of a community can exclude as many people as it includes, potentially silencing values, cultures and experiences which do not conform to the ideas and ideals that a community seeks to share (Young, 1990). From the stakeholder perspectives, I was gathering more of an understanding of the complexities surrounding Daisybank School. The difference in affluence and where individuals saw themselves on the 'social ladder' influenced their perspective about Daisybank School. What had perhaps become the 'established norms' of this community, particularly in relation to social positioning, and although they would appeal to some where they would feel a sense of belonging, the interviews with Stakeholders 1 and 2 highlighted that 'established norms' can also alienate others who may feel ostracised due to their differences.

The comment from Stakeholder 1, '*One of my concerns is some children I am not desperately comfortable about my children mixing with outside of school*' (Chapter 5), became a further learning point. I became more aware of the impact that the social mix was having within my school community. Outside perspectives seemed to show what Hewstone et al. (2002) would term as 'intergroup bias'

appeared to be at work. Stakeholder 1 demonstrated through this comment how she has captured herself in a particular image and understanding of where she is in relation to the world around her (Lacan, 1977), favouring her own 'in-group' to the one that she is confronted with. This highlighted how individuals have a view of themselves and decide whether they 'fit' into the distinctive group which has been created. Where they do, they experience a sense of belonging and security and thus the geographical influence is marginalised because it is less important as a sense of belonging is more desirable. However, where there may be a disparity between an individual and how they perceive the make-up of the community, the discourse impacts more prevalently on the constructed reputation of the school, and in this case Daisybank.

The human desires of community were highlighted at this point by the way in which Stakeholders 1 and 2 associate themselves with an area or with a particular group of people. The sense of being able to be part of a community, feeling comfortable within it and feeling as though there are shared values and norms were shown to be influential in the way they made decisions about a school in general and indeed Daisybank and how it influenced their construction of the reputation of Daisybank.

6.4 Changes in behaviour

According to Alfred (2002:1), learners must be able to 'participate in the discourse of learning without sacrificing their personal and cultural identity'.

Whilst Diagram 6.1 demonstrated how I took on the role of a researcher to limit the influences of my own assumptions and biases, within Diagram 6.2 (see below), I show how I am participating in the learning process *without sacrificing* my role as a serving headteacher. It is at this point where I see myself embracing steps 5–7 of Mezirow's transformational learning process (see Chapter 3) where I prepare for action to deal with changes in behaviour due to my new perspective. I not only consider the data as a researcher but also this diagram illustrates how I

apply my knowledge as a headteacher to what the stakeholders were communicating about their perspectives of the constructed reputation of Daisybank. Both roles are represented by an eye. The eye focusing inwards towards Daisybank is my position as the researcher and the eye lying near Daisybank identifies my position as headteacher.

The stakeholders enabled me to see what was at work from an outsider's perspective in influencing the construction of the reputation of Daisybank. Considering their perspectives in relation to the 'mirror image' (Lacan, 1977) of Daisybank enabled me to see the 'negotiating space' in relation to each of the key influences and I started to see the image differently. Diagram 6.2 (see below) highlights this 'negotiating space' with small arrows pushing inwards on each of the larger circles hosting the key themes. I had moved away from understanding that such themes were fixed. The once fixed circle representing the constructed reputation now has a wavy line over it. I chose to keep both lines as I realised that it was important how such a constructed reputation was viewed by a leader taking on an outsider's perspective. Such 'negotiating space' had always been there, I just had not seen it and therefore I had not appreciated or utilised it. As a leader I had become so entrenched with working to fit in with the created market place of performativity, competition and success that I had failed to see how I could navigate this more effectively and draw on the negotiating space to facilitate change.

6.5 My sense of professionalism

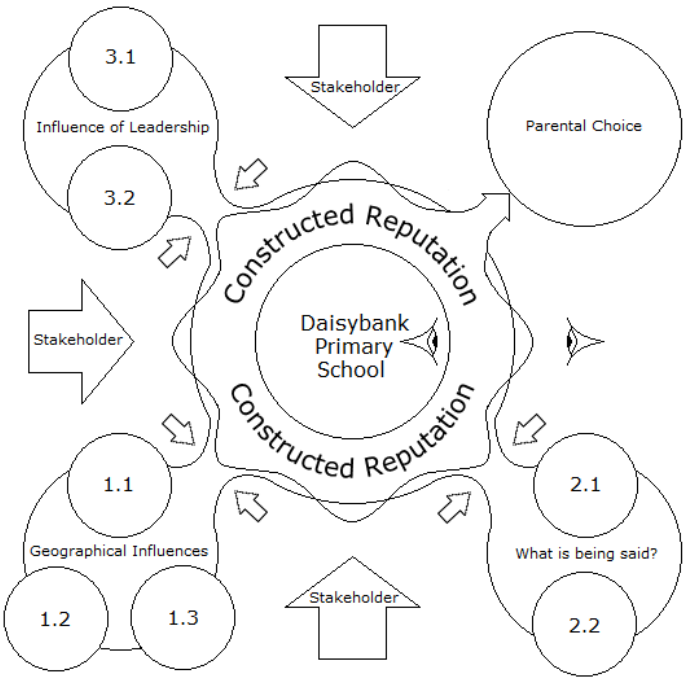


Diagram 6.2: Phase 2 – A diagram to illustrate me starting to see things differently.

My own sense of professionalism had been set against and regulated by the audit culture. My sense of responsibility, as a leader, was dominated by the educational outcomes that Daisybank achieved. Trnka and Trundle (2014) challenge dominant constructions of responsibility within a neoliberal framework by highlighting the:

> …multiple framings of responsibility [that] at times require a switch between neoliberal logics of self-responsibility and care of self, and other forms of interpersonal responsibility and obligation. (Trnka and Trundle, 2014:144).

The interview with Stakeholder 2, a parent, was a key turning point in my research journey in how I started to see the constructed reputation of Daisybank. Notably, this enabled me to see that I could work more effectively within the

performative culture that I had become so bogged down with. I started to see 'negotiating space' within the key theme of 'what is being said'. The importance that I had placed on a performative culture was presented in a different way by this parent and this began to highlight that school can mean different things to different people. Although league tables and OFSTED grading, which I see as 'expert opinions', were recognised as having a role in the construction of a reputation by all of the stakeholders, one of the significant emerging influences arising from the parental perspective was actually that she required a school that was 'convenient' and one that fitted in with the life of her family. As a fulltime working parent her requirements were specific. Extra-curricular activities and childminding were highlighted as being important to her and influential in the way in which she constructs a reputation. This opened up my understanding of my own sense of responsibility as a leader further, and I started to see that it was important for me to move beyond the 'sociality of performativity' (Keddie, 2018:137) and that I needed to start to encompass more 'socially progressive goals' (Keddie, 2018:137). Whilst accommodating the performative aspects within the school, supporting family life more effectively was also something that I could strive towards. Reflecting on this opened up other aspects for consideration such as student and staff well-being, enhancements to the curriculum and the development of pupil voice. This realisation provided me with what I saw as negotiating space to work within what I had deemed to be a rigid framework. When I reflected over my gaze from an inside perspective, it was easy to become immersed in the rigid framework of a performative culture, but by considering the outside perspective, this became less rigid.

6.6 Democratisation of experts

It could be argued that this is perhaps reflective of Maasen and Weingart (2005) who have identified significant changes within the political system which has led to a democratisation of experts. This democratisation of experts that I saw within the interviews has opened up spaces for other viewpoints and thus the construction of the reputation of Daisybank. Although these other viewpoints may not be backed

up with what could be described as 'expert credentials', I recognised from the stakeholder's perspectives that they can exert a power and influence, but I started to see this power in a less threatening manner. At the start of this journey I believed that I had to market Daisybank to parents whom I saw as consumers. However, it was at this point within the doctoral journey that the transformational learning lens really opened up the data beyond the context of Daisybank. My understanding of 'school' took on a whole new meaning. Whilst school is perhaps the place which one would describe as an educational establishment, the parental viewpoint challenged this assumption. The educational role of school, how I had defined it in relation to performativity, was put to one side and a convenience element was brought to the forefront. I saw school move beyond the neoliberal framework, and I saw education meaning more than performativity. Having such a dialogue with this stakeholder opened up the meaning of school from other perspectives. Though I have perhaps, in the past, looked at such adjustments as being part of neoliberal principles and working towards what the market wants, I now recognise that I could just describe it as working collaboratively with the community. Working collaboratively ensures that I not only know the community make-up but I listen to, understand the needs of and, more importantly, respond to them. By considering the needs that surround the school provides a freedom from dominant political agendas.

6.7 A balancing act

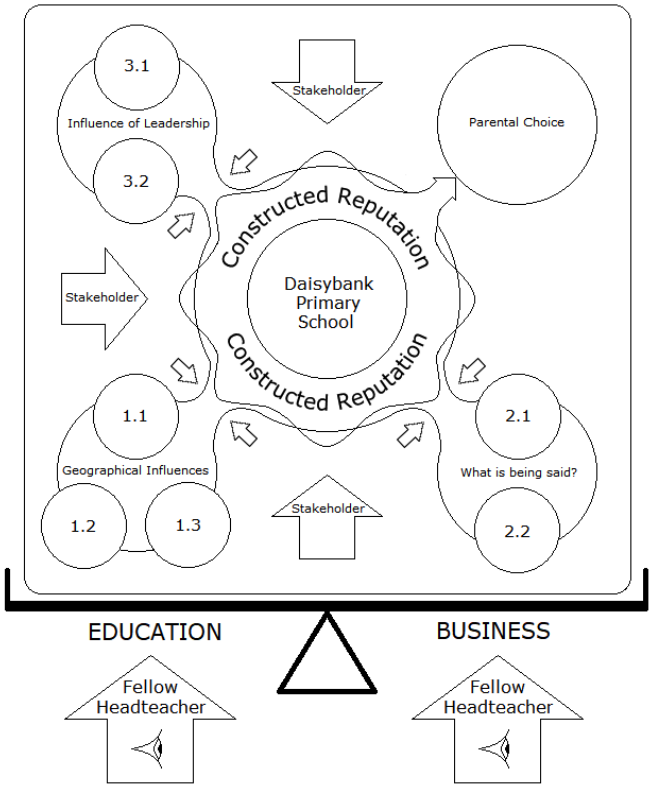


Diagram 6.3: A diagram to illustrate a headteacher's balancing act.

Diagram 6.3 illustrates some of the learning that I gleaned from having a critical discussion with a fellow headteacher in relation to the construction of Daisybank's reputation. Throughout this doctoral process, I had made a conscious effort to place myself within the role of the researcher and at times put aside my professional role as a headteacher. However, at this point within the research, I wanted to view what I had learned through the lens of another headteacher in order to explore more deeply what I had started to understand, not only from a research perspective but also within my role as a headteacher. Thus, I engaged with steps 8–10 of Mezirow's transformational learning (see Chapter 3) where I trialled new roles associated with changes in behaviour and becoming more proficient in them. It was at this stage within the doctoral journey that I brought the insider and outsider perspective together as I explored the construction of a

reputation with another headteacher. Thus, the two eyes at the bottom of the diagram, both of which belong to the fellow headteacher, show that I am considering and challenging my own understanding alongside hers.

I believe that Daisybank is subject to hierarchical observation: a visible authoritative gaze, which is able to see everything constantly (Foucault, 1977). This is represented at this stage by a closed box surrounding everything to do with Daisybank. I recognise that governmental policies, entrenched with neoliberal principles, can encapsulate a school and that they can become inscribed in the heart of the practice of teaching. It illustrates that Daisybank is not free from constraint as this authoritative gaze is watching and determining whether external performative expectations are being met.

When I consider the way in which I lead Daisybank, I recognise that neoliberalism is at work and I see parallels with this construct through the movie *The Truman Show* (1998). Truman Burbank, the main character, unbeknown to him, literally lives in a giant bubble, a climate-controlled dome, where all aspects of his life are filmed and broadcasted to a worldwide audience. Life to Truman appears free but is actually governed by the show's producer Christof. Truman believes that his desires are freely chosen, and yet they are scripted and predetermined. If Truman could only get outside the bubble, outside the mimetic manipulation of Christof, he could desire authentically, he could 'freely' choose.

As a headteacher I have many freedoms including recruiting staff, the overall day-to-day working of the school and the appearance of the school. However, I recognise that there is a controlling power, such as highlighted within *The Truman Show*, a way of working within a political structure, over me which exerts itself in ways for me to reach the 'norm' – a 'norm' which is so crucial if I am deemed to have a good or successful school, leader and headteacher within a globalised arena.

This 'dilemma' here, however, presents an assumption that schools are questioning whether they are still educators or are now, in fact, a business. At the heart of the 'business of education', educators set out to emancipate and enlarge experience (Dewey, 1933:240) whilst a business endeavours to 'provide goods and/ or services and make money as a result' (Adam, 2009:1). Education and business could therefore be described as polarised in their functionality: education fundamentally being about learning and business essentially being about profit. They present two separate ideals in opposing positions.

Whilst I saw myself battling against such an idea that a school is a business, the discussion with the headteacher saw her respond: '*We (schools) most definitely are businesses and we are funded by bums on seats*.' Schools function more like a business and, despite there being arguments against such a transition (Singer, 2017), neoliberalism perpetuates and amplifies that schools are a conflation of education and business (Tait, 2016). My fellow headteacher highlighted a concern with 'bums on seats' as she equated pupil numbers with funding. For this headteacher there had been a shift away from purely focusing on the education within her setting so that she operated with an eye on the marketplace to draw pupils in. 'The unstated and usually unexamined subtext of neoliberalism is not doctrine but money' (Ball, 2012a:1). This became evident within this discussion that pupils have become a form of wealth to a school. This is a reality for schools and certainly for me at Daisybank where there have been concerns over low entry numbers.

The above diagram, Diagram 6.3, depicts education and business as a set of balancing scales. I have shown them balancing to show that they are now what I believe to be of equal importance when considering the constructed reputation of Daisybank. However, it is also vital that I, in leading the school, ensure that they remain in this balanced state. This diagram brings me back to the quote I highlighted in Chapters 1 and 5 with the dilemma as to whether schools are

> …first and foremost, purveyors of education, or businesses that need to operate with an eye on the marketplace in order to survive. (Tait, 2016:1)

I recognise that schools are both of these and whilst this is embedded within neoliberal principles, the diagram continues to highlight, via the curvy line, that there is still negotiating space in everything that influences how the school is a purveyor of education as well as a business. I believe that the way in which a headteacher considers their role has the most influence on how this negotiating space is utilised. There will always be outside perspectives that exert influence on the constructed reputation on Daisybank, but how I engage, interact and navigate through them will enable such a constructed reputation to change or be seen in a different way. The 'mirror image' of Daisybank transitioned through this doctoral journey because I had allowed my own thoughts and understanding to be challenged by entering into dialogue with others.

In my final chapter, I show how my transformational learning journey has enabled me to develop new insights not only on a constructed reputation but also on my understandings of school and education.

Chapter 7: Concluding the Research

7.0 Introduction

At the start of this doctoral journey, I had a particular 'mirror image' (Lacan, 1977) of the constructed reputation of Daisybank that was entrenched in neoliberal principles, which led me to believe that it had a 'poor' constructed reputation. Neoliberalism was identified as being the 'water in which I swam' (Ball, 2013a:132). I now recognise this 'water' will always change and be subject to political agendas at any given time. Therefore, my question then was 'do we swim against, within or out of these waters, or is it possible to swim within them while looking to the horizon and beyond?'

Using a constructivist grounded theory approach, as well as a transformational learning lens enabled me to engage with the concept of a constructed reputation at deeper level. I was able to look beyond the context of Daisybank and raise my head above the parapet and rhetoric of neoliberalism. In doing so I was able to engage with some of the deeper and more substantial issues surrounding the complex concept of reputation and its construction. Deeper insights from all four participants' perspectives challenged my thoughts and encouraged self-reflection. This process brought about changes in my views of what school and education means to me and to others. I am now in a position where I not only understand the key influences behind the constructed reputation but am also able to highlight the negotiating space within them. Consequently, I feel liberated from my ontological starting position and I believe this process of emancipatory learning has opened up new ways for me to function as a leader within Daisybank.

The journey through this doctoral process has enabled me to see that my own emancipation lies with my own conceptions of responsibility in leading and also towards how I view Daisybank. Thus, it has supported my developed understanding of what a reputation is and can be. Whilst I may work in line with

neoliberal principles and function within a market-based educational world, I also recognise that I can move, shift and work with the nuances of the school by considering, in a more holistic manner, what works best for the school and its standing within the community. I recognise and accept the performative aspects of my role but I understand that aspects of what I believe my responsibility to be may lie in conflict with the neoliberal version of a headteacher's role. This means that I sometimes grapple with my personal view of professionalism and the demands of a performative culture, which has been described as engendering 'values schizophrenia' (Ball, 2003a:220). However, I recognise that I can negotiate the demands of the performative culture whilst holding onto, and delivering, other aspects of education that I also believe to be my responsibility, such as building on a sense of belonging and nurture. This has given me a new way of looking at the constructed reputation of Daisybank.

7.1 My developed understanding of reputation

The reputation of Daisybank was an antagonism for me when I embarked on this doctoral journey. I saw it as a social phenomenon that was complex and difficult to comprehend. However, drawing on a constructivist grounded theory approach, and additionally transformational learning theory, I was able to generate a theory to explain the contextual complexities of the constructed reputation of Daisybank.

My initial contributions to knowledge from this research emerged after using constructivist grounded theory as a methodology where I was able to identify possible traits that could either enhance or negatively contribute to the reputation of a school. Key components were highlighted that appeared to determine whether the reputation was deemed to be good or poor. Whilst these traits were considered within and specific to Daisybank and the community it serves, to improve any school reputation, it appears as though you need to almost step away from the 'insider' perspective and see it from an 'outsider' perspective. As I did this, I began to understand what the dominant influences were for my school.

The table below indicates the 'good' and 'poor' traits identified from dialogue with the stakeholders linked to Daisybank. Whilst I recognise such traits are linked to Daisybank, I believe that they can play an influential role in the construction of any school's reputation.

Table 7.0: A description of good and poor traits

Good traits	**Poor traits**
Extra-curricular activities	Geographical location
Wrap around care	History of vandalism
The headteacher	Results
Improved discipline	Static community
Improved appearance	High deprivation
Good OFSTED	Word of mouth
Convenient	Poorly behaved parents
Word of mouth	

Whilst I recognise the value of what I had explored to this point within the research, I also wanted a more holistic understanding of the constructed reputation and to find a way of considering the data beyond my original neoliberal outlook. Therefore, I needed to find a way to challenge my assumptions and see the data from a different perspective. I understood that my own unconscious bias had influenced my interpretations of the data to this point. The use of transformational learning theory enabled me to re-visit the data and explore what I had learned about the constructed reputation and my role within it. It was by using this as a lens that negotiating space within the constructed reputation for Daisybank was opened up as I became less dominated by the neoliberal background that I was dominated by at the outset. This enabled me to move beyond an understanding of reputation as a binary entity, which was classified as either good or poor, to seeing it in a more holistic manner. This brought about a re-framing of my understanding in terms of clarifying that the definitions of what a school and education are, are integral, not only in how Daisybank's reputation is constructed, but how any school's reputation is constructed.

This research recognises that a reputation is not a dichotomous entity but that it is multi-layered and multi-dimensional. This doctoral journey has enabled me to identify the layers that make up Daisybank's constructed reputation and generate a theory of what potentially constructs any school's reputation.

The diagram below begins to illustrates the layers that I recognise to be fundamental in the constructed reputation of Daisybank.

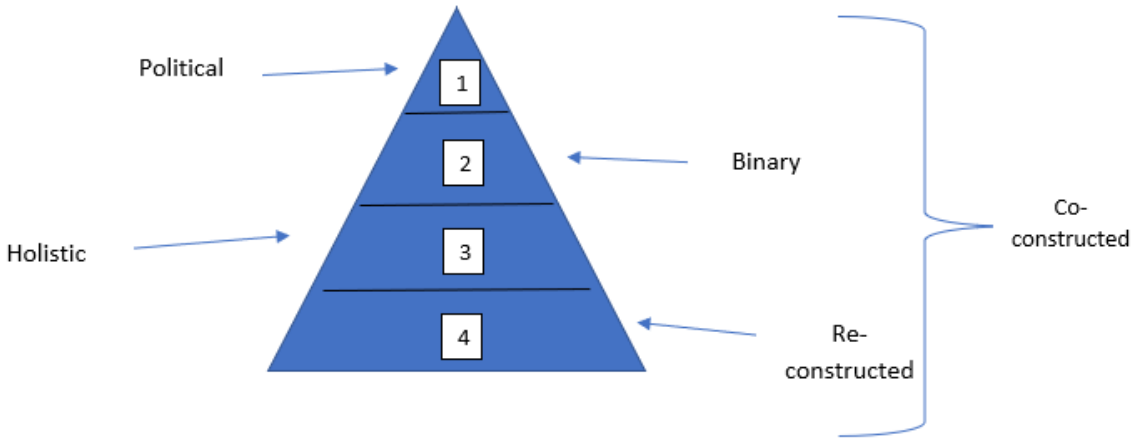


Diagram 7.0: The layers of a constructed reputation.

From my own knowledge and experience as a headteacher, I recognise that a school reputation can be politically influenced. Schools are categorised by OFSTED and their judgements often consider the performativity of the school against a particular criteria. I recognise that it is very easy to become entrenched in tier 1, as I was when I embarked on this doctoral journey, where the focus can be predominantly on performativity as the only way to improve how a school is viewed.

Having dialogue with stakeholders linked to the school, opened up an 'outsider' perspective on the constructed reputation of the school. This began to differentiate between traits that were considered positive but also contrary to that, traits that may detrimentally construct a negative reputation. Such traits identified were still predominantly underpinned by a neoliberal outlook.

The constructed reputation of Daisybank could be addressed by improving the 'poor traits' if one were to remain at the second tier and, in my opinion, would influence the constructed reputation of a school in a more positive light. However, what I came to recognise after using transformational learning theory, and becoming more aware of my own positionality, is that tier two still does not provide a holistic understanding of reputation. It still does not enable one to progress beyond a neoliberal rhetoric and see where negotiating space is. Whilst the 'outsider' opinion is heard, the influences behind such opinions can still be traced back to a neoliberal outlook.

Recognising that my own understanding of Daisybank's reputation had been influenced and entrenched in a neoliberal outlook, I found tier 3, to be a liberating transition. The use of transformational learning theory provided a way to reinterpret how I had come to understand reputation from both tiers 1 and 2. Carefully considering the themes that emerged from the data, as well as challenging my own assumptions, led to the identification of 'negotiating' space within all elements of the constructed reputation where I could see that stakeholder's perspectives can be influenced to bring about change. My own knowledge of reputation changed as it was not just about addressing the 'poor traits' identified in tier 2, it was about realising that reputation was more than good or bad traits. By embracing transformational learning, I was able to challenge my own assumptions. I stepped away from a neoliberal outlook and began to consider the definitions of both what a school is/should be and what education is/should be within the context of the community that I serve. I transitioned from a point of my focus being purely focused on the constructed reputation of Daisybank to thinking about a school's core purpose and identity within a community. I therefore do not believe that there can be a tick list of things that one can do to improve the constructed reputation of a school, but that it is only by understanding what a school and education is and should be for a school's community that a change in reputation can happen effectively and thereby transitioning to tier 4, where the reputation can be re-constructed. It can

be re-constructed at this point as it has become more than just the reputation. The focus on the core purpose of the school and how this permeates through the local community provides a whole new and more purposeful outlook.

At all levels of the constructed reputation of Daisybank, I recognise that there has been a co-construction of ideas and perspectives. At tier 1 my own understanding was influenced by the political landscape which played a role within the constructed reputation of the school. Dialogue at tier 2, opened up 'outsider' perspectives but I still played a role in how I interpreted the data. After drawing on the perspective of another headteacher, as well as revisiting the data using a transformational learning lens, the co-construction of perspectives led to, what I define as, a more holistic understanding of Daisybank's reputation. Moving beyond good or poor traits, the reputation became about the school's interconnectedness with the community.

Dialogue with others during this doctoral journey provided alternative perspectives but also 'negotiating space' within the previously identified good and poor traits. Working with the negotiating space, which was constructed by the stakeholders, and more visible to me with a transformational lens, led me to questioning the value of thinking about reputation. My thinking transitioned to consider the identity and purpose of Daisybank from both an 'insider' and 'outsider' perspective.

7.2 My contribution to new knowledge

I recognise that data alone would not have given me a transformative learning experience within this doctoral journey. I recognise that for any researcher exploring a complex phenomenon such as a 'reputation', the data generated from the research study, on its own, does not tell the complete story. In the context of my doctorate, drawing on transformational learning theory enabled me to successfully move beyond the data and further consider the data alongside my own positionality. I recognise that I have a greater understanding of the

constructed reputation of Daisybank, and the constructed reputation of schools in general. However, this doctoral journey has taken me beyond what we know about a binary understanding of a school's reputation to a recognition that a focus on the identity of a school is integral to fully comprehending the holistic nature, the interconnectedness with the community, of a reputation.

I embarked on this doctoral journey because I was unsettled with how Daisybank's reputation appeared to be within the local community and I recognise that it is only when such a provocation occurs that core beliefs about something can be challenged. This doctoral journey has raised questions about what a school is/should be and what education is/should be by my own assumptions being challenged beyond a neoliberal outlook. It has therefore opened up how as headteachers that we not only need to find ways of challenging our own assumptions but also how we can challenge the identity of the school within the community.

Dialogue has played a fundamental role in this doctoral journey as I have been given an opportunity to listen and understand how others see reputation and the reputation of Daisybank. Mezirow (2000) recognised that people can change their points of view 'by trying on another's point of view' (Mezirow, 2000: 21) but continued to emphasise that one is unable to try on someone else's habit of mind. I could see things from the other stakeholder's and my fellow headteacher's perspective within this doctoral journey, but it was not until I used transformational learning theory and deeply reflected that I came to change my own perspective. The theory has therefore worked for me on a personal and professional level, as well as working as a theoretical basis to explain my findings. How I responded to the dialogue has enabled me to see more clearly what the surrounding community needs from the school and what the education needs to be. I recognise therefore that the school needs to become more permeable within the community and that identity has to be more fluid. Identity is not just created from within the school, but it should be a co-constructed understanding, that moves in line with the community being served.

As such it starts to highlight that there is perhaps more consideration that needs to be taken when thinking about how headteachers are trained and the leadership behaviours that are considered. After completing the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) a number of years ago, I recognise the significance of the learning leadership behaviours which this professional course identifies as being fundamental to effective leadership. The behaviours include: commitment, collaboration, personal drive, resilience, awareness, integrity and respect. However, if time is not given to self-reflection on an individual's positionality when considering such behaviours, I believe that there can be a narrowing in what they can truly mean and how then a headteacher would embark on leading and driving school improvement forward. I believe that finding a way to get prospective headteachers to challenge what their beliefs have become and why, prior to embarking on headship, would result in the identity of schools being less dominated by a neoliberal outlook but instead driven by the community.

7.3 What is education?

My version of a good education was restricted to the academic outcomes that a child achieves. Whilst I still recognise that education is synonymous with a child's academic outcomes, I now understand how it is and how it must be more. Insights from the stakeholders, as well as being influenced by the Marmot Review (2010), challenged my understanding of education. By using a transformational learning lens, I saw that my version of education had been trapped in a neoliberal world and by being self-critical and entering into dialogue with others, I was able to develop a transformed way of looking at education. Whilst education will inevitably be influenced by 'expert opinions' and political agendas at any given time, I understand that education does not and must not be dominated by them. Education can be defined beyond a performative culture.

Stakeholder 2 started to open up opportunities for me to consider education beyond what happens in the classroom and academia, by highlighting the importance of extra-curricular activities and wrap-around care, and how influential they are as to how she would view a school. Whilst I acknowledge from this stakeholder's perspective that convenience lay at the heart of it, when I considered it alongside the Marmot Review (2010), I saw a deeper explanation. This review highlights that in order to reduce social inequalities in life skills, schools should extend their role and support families and communities by taking on a 'whole child' approach to education and thus this review became my antidote to neoliberalism. Consequently, how I saw extra-curricular activities and wrap-around care took on a new meaning. Their function is beyond that of convenience for parents to enable them to work, but actually they form part of what education is. Education needs to adapt to the needs of the community in question and therefore leaders of education need to see this as a holistic approach to educating a child.

Such a change in how I have come to view what education is has been particularly influential in the way in which I am currently leading Daisybank through the COVID-19 pandemic (2020). This unprecedented time changed the way in which we all view what is normal. Whilst bringing all aspects of everyday life into question, leading a school during this time has been and is still challenging. The pandemic continues to highlight the inequalities that are in existence within the school community. However, I believe that the way in which I have adapted as a leader during this time has resulted in such inequalities being less detrimental to the children and their families in the school community.

Specifically, during the lock down period (March to May) where we were once providing an education to lead to particular academic outcomes, we suddenly became a care-taking facility for pupils of key workers and vulnerable children and our whole approach changed. My transitioned understanding of education enabled me to embrace such a significant change. During this time, I saw education and the role of the school differently. A primary role for Daisybank was to ensure that

families within the school's community had enough food and that we were supporting the needs of the most vulnerable pupils. Although my work ethic had always adopted the principles of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, where physiological needs are the most important, I lived the realities of how important this actually was during this time. Mental health and well-being became the primary focus of Daisybank due to our understanding of what our local community needed. I do not believe that any headteacher anticipated such a change, but I do believe that I was able to adapt quickly and effectively during this time due to my own learning as part of this doctoral journey.

7.4 What is a school?

My neoliberal version of a school was that Daisybank needed to stand out against its competitors. To stand out the school had to be marketed to potential 'customers' and demonstrate it could achieve the academic outcomes associated with a good reputation. Whilst I had always alluded to the phrase 'the school is at the heart of the community', on reflection, my understanding of what this really meant, and indeed of the community in which Daisybank is situated, was somewhat limited. Community was more than just the geographical location of the school.

I was able to deconstruct and reconceptualise the geographical location. After drawing on the work of Woods et al. (2005) I saw it as a 'micro-environmental domain' that encapsulates more than the physical space. In relation to Daisybank this included aesthetic appearance, history and deprivation. Consequently, I now believe that the geographical physical positioning of a school is entangled with the idea of a community (the actual place and the people who live within that place). Understanding this connection has not only enabled me to look at the construction of a reputation in a different way, but also the way in which I consider what a school is.

In conclusion, it is important to understand how the community around a school works and understand the key issues as well as the strengths inherent in such a community. I recognise, that in relation to Daisybank, my responsibility as a headteacher has to shift to where it is not just me deciding on areas for improvement. Through a close dialogue and deeper listening with the community, I can understand local needs and address these more effectively. Together we are united in our endeavours to place Daisybank at the heart of our community. Therefore, I do not believe that I should market the school to the local community to improve the reputation. A school should be the heart of a community but, in order to achieve this, attuned dialogue and interaction with the local community is paramount. Only then can we understand, identify and respond to the specific needs of the community in question.

7.5 Limitations of the inquiry

At the time of carrying out this research, a constructivist grounded theory approach and transformational learning lens were appropriate. Other approaches may have provided a more objective understanding of the constructed reputation of a school. However, as a reputation is a complex social phenomenon and, to address my research aims and questions, I needed to adopt a research strategy and theoretical lens that enabled me to authentically bring participants (and my) experiences and perceptions of 'reputation' to life.

This inquiry was a small study linked with one primary school and only four participants. This research offers an understanding of how stakeholders connected to my school construct a reputation and enabled me to challenge the way in which I work professionally. I understand that in order to understand my community in a deeper way, dialogue would need to go beyond such a small sample. In addition, to understand the constructed reputation on a larger scale, more schools and participants should be involved.

7.6 The significance of this thesis

By considering the work of Lacan (1977) I recognise how easy it is to become entangled into a fantastical image of what a school should be in order to attain a good reputation. There is a neoliberal infusion permeating in our whole society which has become entrenched into the educational arena. I believe that it is imperative that headteachers learn how to swim within a neoliberal market but swim with a focus on the horizon and beyond. The thesis, I believe, shows why we should do this and also how we can do this without having a diminished focus on what education is.

In order to strive for and maintain a reputation that is beyond the rhetoric of neoliberalism, one needs to be aware of all of the key influences surrounding a school establishment, which may vary from one school to another. It is not about the performative data within an unequal system, although this may be a part. It is not about the OFSTED grading, although this too could be a part. It is about keeping a holistic view of school and education and thereby influencing the construction of a reputation attached to the school in question. It is about developing a deeper awareness of the positioning of the school, its history and the community that it serves whilst recognising that within each of the influential discourses linked to a school, there is an open space or negotiating space for adjustment. Acknowledging that we function within what I earlier describe as the 'Truman bubble' my research has shown how headteachers must develop their conception of responsibility. Beyond the political ideals, there are other things that matter that may lie in conflict with neoliberal principles, but that can be incorporated and work alongside these principles. Developing leadership programmes where headteachers become more consciously aware of how to manage failure, how to challenge ideologies and how to co-construct a reputation from attuned dialogue with a school community would ensure that school and education remain more than the restricted definitions within a neoliberal context. Maybe then as we 'swim with the water', 'with an eye on the future', we can together place community at the heart of our schools.

References

Adam, G. (2009) *Economics: the purpose of business*. Science 2.0. 23rd October. [Online] [Accessed on 20th November 2014] http://www.science20.com/gerhard_adam/economics_purpose_business

Alfred, M. V. (2002) 'The promise of sociocultural theory in democratizing adult education.' *In* Alfred, M. V. (ed.) *Learning and sociocultural contexts. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education,* 96 pp. 3–14.

Allan, G. (2007). *The use of the grounded theory methodology in investigating practitioners integration of COTS components in information systems.* Paper presented at the 28th International Conference on Information Systems. Montréal, Canada: ICIS.

Allen, R., Burgess, S. and McKenna, L. (2014) *School performance and parental choice of school: secondary school analysis.* UK: Department for Education. [Online] [Accessed on 22nd November 2013] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/275938/RR310_School_performance_and_parental_choice_of_school.pdf

Anholt, S. (2010) *Places: identity, image and reputation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C. and Sorensen, C. K. (2010) *Introduction to research in education*. 8th ed., Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.

Balaban, N. (1995) 'Seeing the child, knowing the person.' *In* Ayers, W. (ed.) *To become a teacher.* NY: Teachers College Press, pp. 52–100.

Ball, S. J. (1997) 'Good school/bad school: paradox and fabrication.' *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 18(3) pp. 317–336.

Ball, S. J. (1998) 'Performativity and fragmentation in postmodern schooling.' *In* Carter, J. (ed.) *Postmodernity and the fragmentation of welfare*. London: Routledge, pp. 187–203.

Ball, S. J. (2003a) 'The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity.' *Journal of Education Policy*, 18(2) pp. 215–228.

Ball, S. J. (2003b) *Class strategies and the education market the middle classes and social advantage*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Ball, S. J. (2004) *Education for sale! The commodification of everything?* King's Annual Education Lecture 17th June 2004. London: Institute of Education, University of London.

Ball, S. J. (2012a). 'Show me the money! Neoliberalism at work in education.' *Forum*, 54(1) pp. 23–28.

Ball, S. J. (2012b) 'The making of a neoliberal academic.' *Research in Secondary Teacher Education*, 2(1) pp. 29–31.

Ball, S. J. (2012c) 'Performativity, commodification and commitment: an I-Spy guide to the neoliberal university.' *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 60(1) pp. 17–28.

Ball, S. J. (2013a) *Foucault, power and education*. London: Routledge.

Ball, S. J. (2013b) *Education, justice and democracy: the struggle over ignorance and opportunity.* Centre for Labour and Social Studies. [Online] [Accessed on

22nd November 2013] http://classonline.org.uk/docs/2013_Policy_Paper_-_Education,_justice_and_democracy_(Stephen_Ball).pdf

Barrs, M. and Rustin, M. (2018) 'What has happened to our schools?: The first instalment of the soundings futures analysis of education.' *Soundings: A Journal of Politics and Culture, Project MUSE*, 67 pp. 8–33.

Birks, M. and Mills, J. (2015) *Grounded theory: a practical guide*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Bond, T. G. and King, J. A. (2003) 'Measuring client satisfaction with public education II: comparing schools with state benchmarks.' *Journal of Applied Measurement,* 4(2) pp. 258–268.

Boyd, R. D. (1991) (ed.) *Personal transformations in small groups: a Jungian perspective.* London: Routledge.

Boyd, R. D. and Myers, J. G. (1988) 'Transformative education.' *International Journal of Lifelong Education 7, no. 4 (October–December 1988)* 4 pp. 261–284.

Brackmann, S. M. (2015) 'Community engagement in a neoliberal paradigm.' *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 19(4) pp. 115–146.

Brancaleone, D. and O'Brien, S. (2011) 'Educational commodification and the (economic) value of learning outcomes.' *British Journal of Education Sociology*, 32(4) pp. 501–519.

British Educational Research Association (BERA), (2011) *Ethical guidelines for educational research*. 1st ed. [Online] [Accessed: 20 November 2018] https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/bera-ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2011

Britzman, D. P. (1998) *Lost subjects, contested objects: toward a psychoanalytic inquiry of learning.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Brookfield, S. (1995) *Becoming a critically reflective teacher.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Brookfield, S. (2005) *The power of critical theory: liberating adult learning and teaching.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Brown, P. (1990) 'The third wave: education and the ideology of parentocracy.' *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 11(1) pp. 65–85.

Brown, T. and Heggs, D. (2009) 'From hermeneutics to poststructuralism to psychoanalysis.' *In* Somekh, B. and Lewin, C. (eds.) *Research methods in the social sciences.* Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 293–301.

Brown, T. J., Barry, T. E., Dacin, T. A. and Gunst, R. F. (2005) 'Spreading the word: investigating antecedents of consumers' positive word-of-mouth intentions and behaviors in a retailing context.' *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 33(2) pp. 123–138.

Brunsma, D. L. (2006) 'School uniform policies in public schools.' *Principal*, 85(3) pp. 50–53.

Carr, S. (2016) *Motivation educational policy and achievement: a critical perspective*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Charmaz, K. (1990) 'Discovering chronic illness: Using grounded theory.' *Social Science & Medicine*, 30(11) pp. 1161–1172.

Charmaz, K. (2000) 'Grounded theory: objectivist and constructivist methods.' *In* Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. (eds.) *The handbook of qualitative research*. 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 509–535

Charmaz, K. (2003). 'Grounded theory.' *In* Smith, J. A. (ed.) *Qualitative psychology: a practical guide to research methods*, London: Sage, pp. 81–110

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: a practical guide through qualitative analysis.* London: Sage.

Charmaz, K. (2008) 'Constructionism and the Grounded Theory.' *In* Holstein, J. A. and Gubrium, J. F. (eds.), *Handbook of Constructionist Research.* New York: The Guilford Press, pp. 397–412.

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory.* 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Charmaz, K. and Richard, M. (1996) 'The myth of silent authorship: Self, substance, and style in ethnographic writing.' *Symbolic Interaction*, 19(4) pp. 285–302.

Clarke, A. (2005) *Situational analysis: Grounded theory after the postmodern turn.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2007) *Research Methods in Education*. London: Routledge.

Collard, S. and Law, M. (1989) 'The limits of perspective transformation: a critique of Mezirow's theory.' *Adult Education Quarterly*, 39 pp. 99–107.

Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. L. (2008) *Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Corbin, J. And Strauss, A. (2015) *Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. 4th ed., Newbury Park: Sage.

Cowen, R. (1997) 'Autonomy, citizenship, the market and education.' *In* Bridges, D. (ed.) *Education, autonomy, and democratic citizenship: philosophy in a changing world*. London: Routledge, pp. 2–61.

Cranton, P. (2002) 'Teaching for transformation.' *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education,* 93*.* Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

Cranton, P. (2006) *Understanding and promoting transformative learning: a guide for educators of adults.* 2nd ed., San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Cranton, P. and King, K. (2003) 'Transformative learning as a professional development goal.' *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education,* 98 pp. 31–37.

Cranton, P. and Taylor, E. W. (2012) 'Transformative learning theory: Seeking a more unified theory.' *In* Taylor, E. W. and Cranton, P. (eds.) *The handbook of transformative learning: Theory, research, and practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp. 3–20.

Crossley, N. (1998) 'Emotion and communicative action: Habermas, linguistic philosophy and existentialism.' *In* Bendelow, G. and Williams, S. (eds.) *Emotions in social life*. London: Routledge.

Croxford, L. and Raffe, D. (2007) 'Education markets and social class inequality.' *International Studies in Educational Inequality, Theory and Policy,* pp. 710–737.

Daloz, L. (1986) *Effective teaching and mentoring: realizing the transformational power of adult learning experiences.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Daloz, L. (1999) *Mentor: guiding the journey of adult learners.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Davies, B. and Ellison, L. (1991) *Marketing the secondary school: issues in school management*. Harlow: Longman.

Delanty, G. (2003) *Community*. London: Routledge.

De Marcellis-Warin, N. and Teodoresco, S. (2012) *Corporate reputation: is your most strategic asset at risk?* Center for Interuniversity Research and Analysis on Organizations, Burgundy Report. Canada: Cirano. [Online] [Accessed on 20th November 2014] http://www.cirano.qc.ca/files/publications/2012RB-01.pdf

Department for Education and Employment (1997) *Excellence in Schools: White Paper*. DfEE Publications, London.

Department for Education (2010) *The importance of teaching: the schools white paper*. CMND. 7980, London: TSO.

Department for Education (2014) *National curriculum and assessment from September 2014: information for schools.* [Online] [Accessed on 20th November 2014] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/358070/NC_assessment_quals_factsheet_Sept_update.pdf

Department for Education (2016) *Compare school and college performance.* [Online] [Accessed on 20th November 2014] https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/

Dewey, J. (1933) *How We Think. A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process*. Revised ed., Boston: D. C. Heath.

Diduck, A. and Mitchell, B. (2003) 'Learning, public involvement and environmental assessment: a Canadian case study.' *Journal of Environmental Assessment*, 5 pp. 339–364.

Diduck, A., Sinclair, A. J., Hostetler, G. and Fitzpatrick, P. (2012) 'Transformative learning theory, public involvement, and natural resource and environmental management.' *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management,* 55 pp. 1311–1330.

Dirkx, J. (1998) 'Transformative learning theory in the practice of adult education: an overview.' *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning,* 7 pp. 1–14.

Dirkx, J. (2000) *Transformative learning and the journey of individuation*. (ERIC Digests No. 223; ED 448305). Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearing house on Adult, Career, & Vocational Education.

Dirkx, J. (2006) 'Engaging emotions in adult learning: a Jungian perspective on emotion and transformative learning.' *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education,* 109 pp. 27–35.

Downes, R. (2010) *Not enough school in Trafford ahead of BBC move, mum says.* Messenger*.* [Online] [Accessed on 20th November 2014] http://www.messengernewspapers.co.uk/news/8488806.School_place_chaos_on_the_cards__BBC_family_warns/

Education Reform Act (1988) (c.40) London: HMSO.

Education (Schools) Act (1992) (c.38) London: HMSO.

Egan, K. (1990) *Romantic understanding: the development of rationality and imagination, ages 8–15.* Oxford: Routledge.

Elias, J. (2000) 'One strategy for facilitating transformative learning: synergic inquiry.' *In* Wiessner, C. A., Meyer, S. R. and Fuller, D. A. (eds.) *The third international transformative learning conference: challenges of practice-transformative learning in action.* New York: Columbia University.

English, L. M. and Irving, C. J. (2012) 'Women and transformative learning.' *In* Taylor, E. W. and Cranton, P. (eds.) *Handbook of transformative learning: theory, research and practice.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp. 245–259.

Esposito, R. (2010) *The origin and destiny of community.* Translated by T. Campbell. California: Stanford University Press.

Fosnot, C. T. and Perry, R. S. (2005) *Constructivism: A psychological theory of learning*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison*. New York: Vintage.

Freirè, P. (1970) *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: Herter and Herter.

Freirè, P. (1973) *Education for critical consciousness.* New York: Seabury Press.

Freirè, P. (2000) *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* 30th anniversary ed., New York: Continuum.

Friedman, B. A., Bobrowski, P. E. and Geraci, J. (2006) 'Parents' school satisfaction: ethnic similarities and differences.' *Journal of Educational Administration*, 44(5) pp. 471–486.

Gardberg, N. A. and Fombrun, C. J. (2002) 'The global reputation quotient project: first steps towards a cross nationally valid measure of corporate reputation.' *Corporate reputation review*, 4(4) pp. 309–315.

Gibbons, S. (2012) *Big ideas: valuing schooling through house prices.* CentrePiece*,* Vol.17(2). [Online] [Accessed on 20th November 2014] http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/48622/1/blogs.lse.ac.uk-The_link_between_schools_and_house_prices_is_now_an_established_fact.pdf

Glaser, B. G. (1978) *Theoretical sensitivity.* Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (2004) 'Naturalist inquiry and grounded theory.' *Forum Qualitative Sozialforchung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 5(17) pp. 1–9.

Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. L. (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory strategies for qualitative research*. London: Aldine Transaction.

Goodson, I. F. and Rudd, T. (2017) 'The Limits of neoliberal education.' *In* Goodson, I. F. and Rudd, T. (eds.) *Negotiating neoliberalism: developing alternative educational visions.* 1st ed., Rotterdam: Sense, pp. 183–200.

Gottdiener, M. (2000) (ed.) *New forms of consumption: consumers, culture, and commodification*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Grek, S. and Ozga, J. (2008) *Governing by numbers? Shaping education through data*. No. 44. [Online] [Accessed on 20th November 2014] http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/174686.pdf

Guba, G. and Lincoln, S. (1989) *Fourth generation evaluation.* London: Sage Publications.

Guido, F. M., Chávez, A. F. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2010) 'Underlying paradigms in student affairs research and practice.' *Journal of student affairs research and practice,* 47(1) pp. 1–22.

Gunn, A. S. (2018) 'Metrics and methodologies for measuring teaching quality in higher education: developing the teaching excellence framework (TEF).' *Educational Review,* 70(2) pp. 129–148.

Gunter, H. (2001) *Leaders and leadership in education*. London: Sage.

Gunter, H. and Gleeson, D. (2001) 'The performing school and the modernisation of teachers.' *In* Gleeson, D. and Husbands, C. (eds.) *The performing school: managing, teaching and learning in a performance culture*. London: Routledge-Falmer, pp. 139–158.

Habermas, J. (1971) *Knowledge of human interests.* Boston: Beacon.

Habermas, J. (1981) *The theory of communicative action. Vol. 1: reason and the realization of society.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Habermas, J. (1984) *The theory of communicative action. Vol. 1: reason and the rationalization of society.* Translated by T. McCarthy. Boston: Beacon Press.

Hall, P. and Lamont, M. (2012) (eds.) *Social resilience in the neoliberal era*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hallberg, I. R-M. (2006) 'The "core category" of grounded theory: making constant comparisons.' *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being,* pp. 141–148.

Halstead, M. A. (2017) *Reflection after teaching a lesson: Experiences of secondary school science teachers.* Minneapolis: Capella University.

Hart, M. (1990) 'Critical theory and beyond: further perspectives on emancipatory education.' *Adult Education Quarterly,* 40 pp. 125–131.

Harvey, D. (2005) *A Brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hatcher, R. (2006) 'Privatization and sponsorship: the re-agenting of the school system in England.' *Journal of Education Policy*, 21(5) pp. 599–619.

Hayler, M. (2016) 'Here, there and everywhere.' *In* Goodson, I. F. and Rudd, T. (eds.) *Negotiating neoliberalism: developing alternative educational visions.* 1st ed., Rotterdam: Sense, pp. 13–26.

Healy, M. (2000) 'East meets West: transformational learning and Buddhist meditation.' *In* Sork, T., Lee, V. and St. Claire, R. (eds.), *AERC, an international conference: proceedings from the 41st Annual Adult Education Research Conference.* Vancouver: University of British Columbia.

Hepburn, S. (2014) *Marketing your school*. Milton Keynes: Lightning Source UK Ltd.

Hewstone, M., Rubin, M. and Willis, H. (2002) 'Intergroup bias.' *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53 pp. 575–604.

Hitchcock, G. and Hughes, D. (1995) *Research and the teacher: a qualitative introduction to school-based research*. London: Routledge.

Holloway, I. and Galvin, K. (2017) *Qualitative research in nursing and healthcare.* 4th ed., Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.

Hooge, E., Burns, T. and Wilkoszewski, H. (2012) *Looking beyond the numbers: stakeholders and multiple school accountability.* OECD Education Working

Papers, No.85, Paris: OECD Publishing. [Online] [Accessed on 20th November 2014] http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5k91dl7ct6q6-en

Hooks, D. (1994) *Teaching to transgress.* London: Routledge.

Hoyer, W. D. and MacInnis, D. J. (2001) *Consumer behaviour*. Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin.

Hughes, M., Wikeley, F. and Nash, T. (1994) *Parents and their children's schools*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Johnson-Bailey, J. (2012) 'Positionality and transformative learning: a tale of inclusion and exclusion.' *In* Taylor, E. W. and Cranton, P. (eds.) *Handbook of transformative learning: theory, research and practice.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp. 260–273.

Jones, S. R., Torres, V. and Arminio, J. (2006) *Negotiating the complexities of qualitative research in higher education*. New York: Routledge.

Kang, D. (2007) 'Rhizoactivity: toward a postmodern theory of life-long learning.' *Adult Education Quarterly*, 57 pp. 205–220.

Kearns, A., Kearns, O. and Lawson, L. (2013) 'Notorious places: image, reputation, stigma. The role of newspapers in area reputations for social housing estates.' *Housing studies*, 28(4) pp. 579–598.

Keddie, A. (2018) 'Conceptions of responsibility within and beyond neoliberal frames: a story of leadership in an English primary school.' *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 46(1) pp. 124–139.

Kegan, R. (1982) *The evolving self: problem and process in human development.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kegan, R. (1994) *In over our heads.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kegan, R. (2000) 'What "form" transforms? A constructive-developmental perspective on transformational learning.' *In* Mezirow, J. and Associates (eds.) *Learning as transformation: critical perspectives on a theory in progress.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kegan, R. (2009) 'What "form" transforms?: A constructive-developmental perspective on transformational learning.' *In* Illeris, K. (ed.) *Contemporary theories of learning: learning theorists in their own words*. London: Routledge, pp. 35–54.

Kitchenham, A. (2008) 'The evolution of John Mezirow's transformative learning theory.' *Journal of Transformative Education,* 6(2) pp. 104–123.

Kromydas, T. (2017) 'Rethinking higher education and its relationship with social inequalities: past knowledge, present state and future potential.' *Palgrave Commun,* 3(1).

Kuhn, T. (1962) *The structure of scientific revolutions.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kvale, S. (2007) *Doing interviews*. London: Sage.

Lacan, J. (1977) *Ecrits: a selection*. London: Routledge.

Lacey, C. (1977) *The socialization of teachers.* London: Methuen.

Leys, C. and Harriss-white, B. (2012) *Commodification: the essence of our time.* Open Democracy UK. [Online] [Accessed on 20th November 2014]

https://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/colin-leys-barbara-harriss-white/commodification-essence-of-our-time

Little, A. (2003) 'Motivating learning and the development of human capital.' *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 33(4) pp. 437–452.

Maasen, S. and Weingart, P. (2005) 'What's new in scientific advice to politics? Introductory essay.' *In* Maasen, S. and Weingart, P. (eds.) *Democratization of expertise? Exploring novel forms of scientific advice in political decision-making*. Netherlands: Springer, pp. 1–20.

Marmot Review (2010) *Strategic review of health inequalities in England post-2010. Fair society, healthier lives: the Marmot review*. [Online] [Accessed on 20th November 2014] http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review-full-report.pdf

Martin, I. (2000) *Talking with dinosaurs.* New York: Continuum.

Martin, P. Y. and Turner, B. A. (1986) 'Grounded theory and organisational research.' *The Journal of Applied Behavioural Science*, 22(2) pp. 141–157.

Marx, K. (1952) *Capital.* Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica.

McCann, T. V., and Clark, E. (2003a) 'Grounded theory in nursing research: part 2–critique.' *Nurse Researcher,* 11(2) pp. 19–28.

McCann, T. V., and Clark, E. (2003b) 'Grounded theory in nursing research: part 1–methodology.*' Nurse Researcher*, 11(2) pp. 7–18.

Merriam, S. B. (2004) 'The role of cognitive development in Mezirow's transformational learning theory.' *Adult Education Quarterly,* 55 pp. 60–68.

Merriam, S. B. and Clark, M. (2006) 'Learning and development: the connection in adulthood.' *In* Hoare, C. (ed.) *Handbook of adult development and learning.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, pp. 27–51.

Merriam, S. B. and Kim, S. (2012) 'Studying transformative learning: what methodology?' *In* Taylor, E. W. and Cranton, P. (eds.) *Handbook of transformative learning: theory, research, and practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp. 56–72.

Mezirow, J. (1969) *Toward a Theory of Practice in Education with Particular Reference to the Education of Adults. Paper presented to Adult Education Research Conference, Minneapolis, 1970.* [Online] [Accessed on 10th November 2020] https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED036755.pdf

Mezirow, J. (1978a) *Education for perspective transformation: women's re-entry programs in community colleges.* New York: Teacher's College Press.

Mezirow, J. (1978b) 'Perspective transformation.' *Adult Education*, 28 pp. 100–110.

Mezirow, J. (1981) 'A critical theory of adult learning and education.' *Adult Education,* 32(1) pp. 3–24.

Mezirow, J. (1985) *A critical theory of self-directed learning. In* S. Brookfield (ed.) *Self-directed learning: From theory to practice (New Directions for Continuing Education, 25)*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (1998) 'On critical reflection.' *Adult Learning Quarterly,* 48(3) pp. 185–198

Mezirow, J. (1990a) 'Preface.' *In* Mezirow, J. and Associates (eds.) *Fostering critical reflection in adulthood: a guide to transformative and emancipatory learning.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (1990b) 'How critical reflection triggers transformative learning.' *In* Mezirow, J. and Associates (eds.) *Fostering critical reflection in adulthood: a guide to transformative and emancipatory learning.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (1991a) *Transformative dimensions of adult learning.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (1991b) 'Transformation theory and cultural context: a reply to Clark and Wilson.' *Adult Education Quarterly,* 41(3) pp. 188–192.

Mezirow, J. (1994) 'Understanding transformation theory.' *Adult Education Quarterly,* 44(4) pp. 222–232

Mezirow, J. (1996a) 'Contemporary paradigms of learning.' *Adult Education Quarterly,* 46(3) pp. 158–172.

Mezirow, J. (1996b) 'Beyond Freire and Habermas: Confusion – A response to Bruce Pietrykowski', *Adult Education Quarterly,* 46(4) pp. 237-239.

Mezirow, J. (1997) 'Transformative learning: theory to practice.' *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education,* 74 pp. 5–12.

Mezirow, J. (2000) *Learning to think like an adult: core concepts of transformation theory. In* Mezirow and Associates (eds.) *Learning as transformation: critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (2003) 'Transformative learning as discourse.' *Journal of Transformative Education,* 1 pp. 58–63.

Mezirow, J. (2009) 'An overview on transformative learning.' *In* Illeris, K. (ed.) *Contemporary theories of learning: learning theorists… in their own words. Oxon:* Routledge.

Mezirow, J. (2012) 'Learning to think like an adult: core concepts of transformative learning theory.' *In* Taylor, E. and Cranton, P. (eds.) *The handbook of transformative learning: theory, research, and practice.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, pp. 73–95.

Milley, P. (2009) *Towards a critical theory of emotions in educational leadership and administration: building on concepts from Jürgen Habermas*. [Online] [Accessed on 10th November 2016] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326957085_Towards_a_critical_theory_of_emotions_in_educational_leadership_and_administration_Building_on_concepts_from_Jurgen_Habermas.

Mills, J., Bonner, A. and Francis, K. (2006) 'The development of constructivist grounded theory.' *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,* 5(1) pp. 1–10.

Monbiot, G. (2016) *Neoliberalism – the ideology at the root of all our problems.* The Guardian. [Online] [Accessed on 10th November 2016] https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/apr/15/neoliberalism-ideology-problem-george-monbiot

Moore, N. (2012) 'The politics and ethics of naming: questioning anonymisation in (archival) research.' *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 15(4) pp. 331–340.

Morrow, R. A. and Torres, C. A. (2002) *Reading Freirè and Habermas: critical pedagogy and transformative social change.* New York: Teacher's College Press.

Morrow, S. L. and Smith, M. L. (2000) 'Qualitative research for counseling psychology.' *In* Brown, S. D. and Lent, R. W. (eds.) *Handbook of counseling psychology*. 3rd ed., New York: Wiley, pp. 199–230.

Moyer, J. M., Sinclair, A. J. and Diduck, A. P. (2014) 'Learning for sustainability among faith-based organizations in Kenya.' *Environmental Management,* 54 pp. 360–372.

O'Brien, S. (2017) 'Resisting neoliberal education. For freedom's sake.' *In* Rudd, T. and Goodson, I. F. (eds.) *Negotiating neoliberalism: developing alternative educational visions.* 1st ed., Rotterdam: Sense, pp. 149–166.

O'Brien, S. and Brancaleone, D. (2011) 'Evaluating learning outcomes: in search of lost knowledge.' *Irish Educational Studies*, 30(1) pp. 5–21.

O'Sullivan, E. (1999) *Transformative learning: educational vision for the 21st century.* Canada: University of Toronto.

O'Sullivan, E. (2003) 'Bringing a perspective of transformative learning to globalized consumption.' *International Journal of Consumer Studies,* 27(4) pp. 326–330.

Parahoo K. (1997) *Nursing research: principles, process and issues*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Patrick, F. (2013) *Neoliberalism, the knowledge economy, and the learner: challenging the inevitability of the commodified self as an outcome of education*. Hindawi Publishing Corporation. [Online] [Accessed on 14th September 2014] http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/79975/1/79975.pdf

Percy, R. (2005) 'The contribution of transformative learning theory to the practice of participatory research and extension: theoretical reflections.' *Agriculture and Human Values.* London: Springer, 22 pp. 127–136.

Ponterotto, J. G. (2005) 'Qualitative research in counseling psychology: a primer on research paradigms and philosophy of science.' *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52 pp. 126–136.

Punch, K. F. (2001) *Introduction to social research: quantitative and qualitative approaches*. London: Sage.

Quinn, L. J. and Sinclair, A. J. (2016) 'Undressing transformative learning: the roles of instrumental and communicative learning in the shift to clothing sustainability'. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 66(3) pp. 199–218.

Rao, H. (1994) 'The social construction of reputation: certification contests, legitimation, and the survival of organizations in the American automobile industry: 1895–1912.' *Strategic Management Journal*, 15 pp. 29–44.

Reay, D. and Lucey, H. (2003) 'The limits of "choice": children and inner city schooling.' *Sociology*, 37(1) pp. 121–142.

Reeves, T. C. and Hedberg, J. G. (2003) *Interactive learning systems evaluation*. New Jersey: Educational Technology Publications.

Robertson, S. L. (2007) 'Remaking the world: neoliberalism and the transformation of education and teachers' labour.' *In* Weis, L. and Compton, M. (eds.) *The global assault on teachers, teaching and their unions*. New York: Palgrave.

Ross, E. W. and Gibson, R. (2006) (eds.) *Neoliberalism and education reform.* Cresskil, NJ: Hampton Press.

Rubin, H. J. and Rubin, I. S. (2005) *Qualitative interviewing – the art of hearing data*. 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Rustin, M. (2016) 'The neoliberal university and its alternatives.' *Soundings*, 63 pp. 147–176.

Safon, V. (2009) 'Measuring the reputation of top US business schools: a MIMIC modelling approach.' *Corporate Reputation Review*, 12(3) pp. 204–228.

Schoenholz-Read, J. (2000*) Interim report on student development and diversity study.* Unpublished manuscript. Santa Barbara, CA: Fielding Graduate Institute.

Sherman, A. L. (1980) 'Two views of emotion in the writings of Paulo Freirè.' *Educational Theory*, 30 pp. 35–38.

Shields, R. (1991) *Places on the margin: alternative geographies of modernity*. London: Routledge.

Shore, C. and Wright, S. (1999) 'Audit culture and anthropology: neo-liberalism in British higher education.' *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 5(4) pp. 557–575.

Shumar, W. (1997) *College for sale: a critique of the commodification of higher education*. London: Falmer Press.

Singer, S. (2017) *Why schools should NOT be run like businesses*. Common dreams. [Online] [Accessed on 24th November 2017] https://www.commondreams.org/views/2017/01/05/why-schools-should-not-be-run-businesses

Skallerud, K. (2011) 'School reputation and its relation to parents' satisfaction and loyalty.' *International Journal of Educational Management*, 25(7) pp. 671–686.

Slater, D. and Tonkiss, F. (2001) *Market society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Stahl, L. D. (2012) 'Transformative professional development through the eyes of Jack Mezirow and Thomas Guskey'. *Electronic Theses and Dissertations,* p. 624.

Stern, P. N. (2007) 'On solid ground: essential properties for growing grounded theory.' *In* Bryant, A. and Charmaz, K. (eds.) *The SAGE handbook of grounded theory.* Los Angeles: Sage, pp. 114–126.

Stevens-Long, J., Schapiro, S. and McClintock, C. (2012) 'Passionate scholars: transformative learning in doctoral education.' *Adult Education Quarterly*, 62(1) pp. 180–198.

Strauss, A. L. (1987) *Qualitative analysis for social sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Strauss, A. L. and Corbin, J. (1990) *Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Strauss, A. L. and Corbin, J. (1998) *Basics of qualitative research techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Tait, P. (2016) *Schools as businesses: when education doesn't always come first.* The Telegraph. [Online] [Accessed on 10th November 2016] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2016/05/27/schools-as-businesses-when-education-doesnt-always-come-first/

Taylor, E. W. (1994) 'Intercultural competency: a transformative learning process.' *Adult Education Quarterly*, 44(3) pp. 154–174.

Taylor, E. W. (1997) 'Building upon the theoretical debate: a critical review of the empirical studies of Mezirow's transformative learning theory.' *Adult Education Quarterly,* 48 pp. 32–57.

Taylor, E. W. (1998) *Transformative learning: a critical review (Information series No. 374).* Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education.

Taylor, E. W. (2000) 'Research in transformative learning.' *In* Mezirow, J. and Associates (eds.) *Learning as transformation.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, pp. 285–328.

Taylor, E. W. (2007) 'An update of transformative learning theory: a critical review of the empirical research (1999–2005).' *International Journal of Lifelong Education,* 26 pp. 173–191.

Taylor, E. W. (2008) 'New directions for adult and continuing education.' *Third Update on Adult Learning Theory Autumn (Fall) 2008*, pp. 5–15.

Taylor, E. W. (2009) 'Fostering transformative learning'*. In* Mezirow, J., Taylor, E. W. and Associates (eds.) *Transformative learning in practice.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp. 3–17.

Taylor, E. W. and Cranton, P. (2012) *The handbook of transformative learning: theory, research, and practice.* John Wiley & Sons, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Taylor, E. W. and Cranton, P. (2013) 'A theory in progress? Issues in transformative learning theory.' *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults,* 4(1) pp. 33–47.

The Truman Show. (1998) Directed by P. Weir. [Film] California, USA: Scott Rudin Productions.

Thomson, P. (2014) *Anonymity in research – how now?* Pat Thomson. [Online] [Accessed on 20th November 2020] https://patthomson.net/2014/05/01/anonymity-in-research-how-now/

Thornberg, R. (2012) 'Informed grounded theory.' *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 56(3) pp. 243–259.

Tisdell, E. J. (1993) 'Interlocking systems of power, privilege, and oppression in adult higher education classes.' *Adult Education Quarterly,* 43(4) pp. 203–226.

Tokiwa-Fus, M. (2000) *Including Mezirow's concept of perspective transformation in the study of adult education Ochanomizu University, Japan.* SCUTREA, 30th Annual Conference. University of Nottingham [Online] [Accessed on 15th June 2014] http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00001446.htm

Trnka, S. and Trundle, C. (2014) 'Competing responsibilities: moving beyond neoliberal responsibilisation.' *Anthropological Forum*, 24(2) pp. 136–153.

Tuckman, B. (1972) *Conducting educational research*. London: Harcourt Brace Javanovich.

Tusting, K. and Barton, D. (2003) *Models of adult learning: a literature review.* Leicester: National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy.

Ulrich, W. (1983) *Critical heuristics of social planning: a new approach to practical philosophy.* Chichester, UK: Wiley.

Ulrich, W. and Reynolds, M. (2010) 'Critical systems heuristics.' *In* Reynolds, M. and Holwell, S. (eds.) *Systems approaches to managing change: a practical guide.* London: Springer, pp. 243–292.

United Nations (2011) *Universal Declaration of Human Rights.* [online] [Accessed 20th November 2014] https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf

Van den Hoonaard, W. and Van den Hoonaard, D. (2013) *Essentials of thinking ethically in qualitative research.* Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Van der Walt, J. L. (2017) *Neoliberalism and education: a reformational-pedagogical perspective (part 1).* Koers – Bulletin for Christian Scholarship, Vol.82(1). [Online] [Accessed 20th November 2014] https://doi.org/10.19108/KOERS.82.1.2275

Vidaver-Cohen, D. (2007) 'Reputation beyond the rankings: a conceptual framework for business school research.' *Corporate Reputation Review*, 10(4) pp. 278–304.

Vincent, C. (2001) 'Social class and parental agency.' *Journal of Education Policy*, 16(4) pp. 347–364.

Walford, G. (2005) 'Research ethical guidelines and anonymity.' *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 28(1) pp. 83–93.

Walker, J., Pearce, C., Boe, K. and Lawson, M. (2019) *The power of education to fight inequality: how increasing educational equality and quality is crucial to fighting economic and gender inequality*. Oxfam. [Online] [Accessed 20th November 2014] https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/bp-education-inequality-170919-summ-en.pdf

Wiessner, C., A. and Mezirow, J. (2000) *Theory Building and the Search for Common Ground. In* Mezirow, J. and Associates (eds.) *Learning as Transformation. Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wiersma, W. and Jurs, S. G. (2005) *Research methods in education: an introduction.* Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Williams, M. (2016) *Is competition between schools restricting collaboration.* The Guardian. [Online] [Accessed on 10th November 2016] https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2016/oct/31/is-competition-between-schools-restricting-collaboration

Woods, P., Bagley, C. and Glatter, R. (2005) *School choice and competition: markets in the public interest?* London: Routledge.

Young, I. (1990) 'The ideal of community and the politics of difference.' *In* Nicholson, L. (ed.) *Feminism/postmodernism*. New York: Routledge, pp. 300–323.

Appendix 1: Example consent letter and supporting information

Dear

I am currently undertaking a research project to investigate how a school's reputation is constructed. I would value your input and would like to invite you to take part an interview on <date>. I would also ask you to consider granting me permission to use audio recording for the interview.

Before you decide if you would like to take part in this research, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the attached information sheet carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Thank you for your time and co-operation

Yours sincerely

Appendix 2: Example consent form

Title of the study: How does a reputation get established and how does it change – if at all?

Researcher:

I have read the research information sheet and I am aware of the purpose of this research study. I am willing to be part of this study and have been given the researcher's contact details if I need further information.

My signature confirms that I have decided to participate having read and understood the information given and had an opportunity to ask questions.

I …… give my permission for my data to be used as part of this study and understand that I can withdraw at any time and my data will be destroyed.

Signature…… Date……

DIRECT QUOTES

I …… give my permission for direct quotes form my interview to be used as part of this study.

I have explained the nature of the study to the subject and in my opinion the subject is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent to participate.

Signature…….. Date……..

Appendix 3: Interview 1 with a parent

Head:I'd like you describe how you are currently linked with the school?

Interviewee 1: Yes, as a parent I have a child in the nursery and a child in year 1-2.

Head: And interestingly enough was this your allocated school, was it a school that you chose, or how did you come about coming to the Daisybank?

Interviewee 1: Well we lived in [outside the catchment area] and I was a bit concerned that the schools around are very er… I didn't know much about the schools, but I was seriously concerned about the social mix at some of the schools around our way, and so I spoke to our childminder who said that she had links with the school, at the time that was [Kids Looked After]. So, she had links here, and this was where [Mary] was just 3, and so it was when [Mary] had just started here in nursery.

Head: Right, so what had you heard about this school?

Interviewee 1: I hadn't heard very much, what I had heard was the school was good , there were some social issues with the school, but that the school had a very good reputation in terms of its education, and when we started here, we didn't actually visit it until [Mary] started, and I was impressed with the small class size in nursery that she was in and everything seemed to be very good, so I could acknowledge there were social issues but I could see that she was getting good input.

Head: So, has your opinion about the reputation of the school changed now that you have your children fully integrated into the school?

Interviewee 1: It has, I am more confident that the school is doing an awful lot and the school is moving forward. I am confident now that I know more of the teachers as well, that my children are getting a really good education. And I know they're bright children so would probably thrive in most environments but, and there are small groups of children that I am happy for them to spend time with out of school. One of my concerns is some children I'm not desperately comfortable about my children mixing with outside of school, and I think that makes it a little bit difficult particularly about a 6 to 7 year old child who wants to play, and have play days with everybody, it's like [William], you are never going to so and so's house, they can come here but you're never going there, and that's quite difficult and that's not what I grew up with and that's not what my husband grew up with either, so that's the bit that concerns me.

Head: So, from a parental perspective, what do you believe has the greatest impact on providing the reputation of the school?

Interviewee 1: I think partly, it's where a school is, is what people kind of base it on, and I would reference in [this area] a school like [St Lawrence] has a fantastic reputation because it's in a nice area and I know nothing about the teaching and it wasn't until I visited recently, I found out how huge it was and good heavens, I would never want my children to go, we would never have got a place anyway, but I would never have wanted them to go to a school that's so big. So, I think it's something that takes a long time to change and I've seen this happen with hospitals. I know there are examples of hospitals [in a different city] that have a very bad reputation and [Hospital A], even though the hospital had completely turned around the local opinion was still very poor for a long time and it took a long time to shift it. So, I think it's partly about where it is, and you can't change what's around it, but I think it is about how the school interacts with the community, so for example, the work you do with [other agencies] and other organisations, the fact that you've got the [media] coming in, so the fact that the school is seen to be doing stuff, obviously with secondary schools it works with businesses. Things like the resources that you have and the dance classes that

[Mary] comes to, not run by the school but at the school, children come from all round to those and teachers say how often parents are impressed by the resources that they can see available here. Just because of its location, people wouldn't ordinarily consider it. So I think it is partly location and then is about what the school shows in terms its outer face and how it interacts and things like the [exercise] classes, the links with the Children's centre, the parental groups and I guess the work starting with the 2 year olds as well, helps to demonstrate how the school is trying to work with the community as part of it, but I do think it takes a very long time to shift perception. I think it's moved. I'm sure the perception of the school within the community has changed in the last three years or so, because it's changed so much.

Head: Can you pinpoint one thing that you think has changed most? What do you think that is?

Interviewee 1: I would say the school feels more open. Little things, it doesn't bother me in the slightest. It's always been a healthy school but there were these rules that there couldn't be sweets anywhere near the school, even if it was a birthday, stuff couldn't be given out and that's changed. There are less, it occasionally happens still but there are less people smoking at the entrance gate. Things like that were really unpleasant. I think there are more attempts to interact, I can see lots of things, attempts to interact with the parents. Things like the text messaging, a simple thing, but I get a text two or three times a week with the name of the school, so the school is constantly communicating with me, so I would say that the school feels more open. But there is the thing that when I started, when [Mary] started, I was quite new to it, so I am more confident in my interaction with the school.

Head: Can I ask as a parent how much do OFSTED reports or league tables impact on your perception?

Interviewee 1: I think it's very difficult when you are looking at a school. I think they are part of one of the things you look at but when I was looking at schools, when [Mary] started nursery, I did look at other schools for reception. We didn't actually manage to get a place anywhere else for reception because of demand for places but the things I looked at were the OFSTED reports, and as I said to another parent I looked at the proportion of children receiving free school meals as an indication of the type of person – and that sounds – that's something I would wish to look at. I certainly have no problem with that and I think it is a great system, but do I want to choose to place my child in a school where more than the average are on those sorts of systems and what does that mean in terms of a mix? So, OFSTED is one part, but it is where is the school, its accessibility, what does the school have in terms of before and after school in terms of clubs and care-taking facilities. The biggest thing for us in the first instance was the links with the childminder because they would do the picking up and dropping off, so there is a whole range of things and OFSTED is a part of it because if OFSTED had said this is poor then it would have an impact, but I don't think I would pull a child out because the grading went down, but I don't think there was anywhere else to send them at the moment, but no, it's only a part of it.

Head: And what changes if any do you feel we need to make as a school, if we want to improve our reputation even further?

Interviewee 1: Well I may not know about other stuff linking with the community, I know there are lots of attempts to work with parents, but it is evident, I can see around the school there are lots of issues around unemployment and things like that. I mean, the school isn't a Job Centre, but the school does have resources in terms of computers, and a bit like the argument you may build a fantastic library, we go to that all the time… and that's great, because it's part of a school, not saying bring strangers in to use the computers but think about if there are ways of generating employment opportunities and things like that. I know there are some parent's training for teaching assistants and things like that and in terms of my role in health and the work that's going on

in sector reform. I know that there is a lot of stuff around getting more people into employment. I'm not saying come and work in the school but if you've got computers, for example, I know lots of people have computers at home now, but if you've got resources that are not going to be used for the next ten weeks – I know there's obviously security and other issues but are there ways of getting the community involved in school. I know there are a lot of people who didn't have a very good experience of school and that's a reason why it takes the reputation a very long time to change, because until those people have changed their views which were based on tender and very unhappy years, they could have been a long time ago, because it's what your parents think and what your grandparents think isn't it?

But potentially that's a big ask and it's not something I would expect a school to do on its own, but something done in collaboration with other organisations.

Head: Thank you very much for the interview today.

Appendix 4: Interview 2 with a grandparent/governor

Head: Can I ask how you are linked to the school?

Interviewee 2: Right, I am linked to the school initially, from when my first granddaughter came here to school and because it's down the road from where I am. So, for the first year I was just a grandparent, then after that became a LEA governor, as I was recommended by the outgoing government.

Head: So how did your granddaughter end up coming to the school and how did you feel about it at the time?

Interviewee 2: Very, very concerned! I hadn't let my own children come here.

Head: Even though you lived on the estate?
Well we moved here and I have to say, I don't consider myself on the estate, which may sound a bit – but I don't mean it like that, I live down that way. Some people say we're on the estate others say we are not. We moved here just as my twins were going to start school. We had no idea about schools here, as we had come from [a different authority], so we came here and of course, this was the local school.

My cousin, who lives in [a closer city], had a friend who was local and the first thing she said was, 'Do not go to Daisybank School, it's got a terrible reputation it's awful, got bad results, everything'. So, of course, I didn't know anything about the school, but I was alerted to that, and then I found we couldn't get in to [Greybank] School, because it was on the wrong side of the road at the time, so I ended up paying for them privately to go to [Stonebank], which cost an absolute fortune. So that really was my background to not coming to the school.

However, when my daughter was 18, she had a baby – she wasn't married, and I had a business [nearby], so [Sarah] went to [Limestone] a local nursery [nearby]

– a full time nursery down the road from my business. When it came for her to come to school, to reception, there was a bit of a quandary because my daughter was working, and I was doing a lot of helping out and I had to think. I was going in to work three days per week, so I had to think what was the best all round. So really I found this school was nearer to come, so I came to school and spoke to the head – she had only been here a year then, and I was really impressed with her, she reminded me of what sort of teachers I had when I was young, which funnily enough, I found out a year later, she went to a sister school that I went to, so I thought to myself, she deserves some interested families, I thought we'd give it a try, and that's how we came to come here. I have to say the first day I brought my granddaughter, the first word we heard in the playground was the 'f' word and I thought 'Oh my God, what have I done?' Anyway, we carried on and there was a lot of that in the playground at the time, but we were there, and I was still impressed with the head, so I kept coming. I thought well, it's the best I can do at the moment and it was convenient and I had to think of the convenience to the family, with all the juggling around with work and everything.

Head: So, at that point, what did you think, it was by 'word of mouth' that you'd heard of the reputation but was there anything else that had made you think initially that you didn't want your granddaughter or your children going there, what gave you that bad or poor reputation.

Interviewee 2: because it had that bad reputation for everything, bad results. When we came to [this authority], I was thinking of the Grammar, so that had been my thought. We moved pretty quickly here from [a different authority] so I hadn't been given it an awful lot of thought until we landed here and then all of a sudden, my cousin said, 'Oh don't go there, it's terrible' and that was for my children. I didn't pursue it much more than that. I have to say when it came to [my granddaughter], my neighbours over the road, said that their daughter was coming here at the time, and she was recommending the school too, so that was how I came to the school to see the head. Having said that, a year or so later,

they took their child away because they had a lot of staff changes and the Deputy Head was off with sickness a lot. We lost several good children.

Head: Right so how do you think, obviously, you are a governor as well in the school. How do you think the school has changed from when you started out as a governor to your position now?

Interviewee 2: Amazingly, because what I saw was the best thing to do to see what was going on was to become a governor but I wasn't a parent so I couldn't be a parent governor, but I happened to be at an event here and [Matthew], who was the governor then was here and our children happened to go to school together and he said 'You should be a governor, I'll recommend you', and I said 'Well, I'm not political', but he said 'you don't have to be, so he recommended me and the next thing I knew I was a governor and the head said to me 'That is the best news I've heard in a long time'.

That's how I came to become a governor, so the attitude was we were fighting a losing battle at that time and then within a year, OFSTED were in and they put us into 'special measures' and I, of course, was devastated. The school had started to improve, but I looked at it positively – they got £50K to put towards improving things, so I said to the head – look at it positively, you've got this extra money in play, so we gradually, with a lot of hard work that the head and staff put in, started to move in the right direction.

Head: Do you think parents started to see a change at that point?

Interviewee 2: No, I think parents were a big problem. I came in here with parents screaming and shouting who I thought they were going to hit the head. I think their attitude was they didn't like the head and they didn't like being told what to do basically, because she was being tough – and her staff as well. So, it's like 'naughty children' they have to be taught lessons and they didn't like it. I think with the staff as well, because of the way it had been, with the Head – he'd gone

off, I think with sickness, because he wasn't here when I came, but the deputy was off a lot and the staff I think, for a long time, had been doing what they liked and then the new head came here changing things and telling them what to do and telling the parents what to do and how to behave and they didn't like it.

Head: Do you think that was half of the problem in terms of the reputation that was being built up from the school from within as well as on the estate?

Interviewee 2: Well the school had had a bad reputation before that. The school – no matter how positive things were, the reputation was not improved, it took years. It was probably, certainly, seven or eight years before we started to feel, that was before it started to turn.

Head: What do you think initially, started to turn around the reputation?

Interviewee 2: I think it helped when we got rid of the resource centre because I think the behaviour was better I think there was an improvement in behaviour, although we had some very challenging children, like you always get, and I think the parents started to improve as well. But you see at that time, I was in the playground for quite a bit, which I'm not now, and then I think she stopped them smoking in the playground as well. I think they just learned that there were things they could do and things they couldn't do but it was very, I don't know how the head stayed to be honest. I couldn't have dealt with all that and I believe the Deputy Head had a bat in his room, a terrible thing, but that's that. A lot of hard work was going on and I believe that the head really you know, she helped so many people. That fortitude of the head carried on sorting staff out and getting staff to come on board, but it was very, very hard and a very gradual change.

Head: Do you think that where the school is situated just in itself, adds to the reputation of the school?

Interviewee 2: Yes, probably, probably because – oh there's lots of nice people around, but unfortunately the Daisybank had a very bad reputation.

Head: So how do you feel the school is viewed now in 2014?

Interviewee 2: Well, I'm not in the playground now, so I can't say anything about the playground, but I think gradually, there has been a much more supported staff in school. I think you don't hear the negative so much and occasionally I have heard negatives, I can't remember particulars, but I always tell them what a nice school we've got and what a lovely school it is, and the children are lovely. There are some problems, but in general we've got lovely children and I think we are getting better parents. I always tell people 'you should get involved and come and see the school because the atmosphere is lovely in here'.

Head: What, ultimately, do you think will help us to improve our reputation even further?

Interviewee 2: Results, results – in a grammar area I think results. Having said that I think that we, and other than emotional problems she's actually in the top set at [the local high school] and doing extremely well. I no longer worry about – when I came here, the grammar was the ultimate to go to, but we went there but it wasn't the right place for all three of them, and I only see that in retrospect but I still think that results, the SATs results, if we can up the level on the league, then I think that would be the best thing because people look at results unfortunately and not the value added, they just think about what the results are.

So what else as a school do you think we can continue to do to make things even better, to improve?

The booster classes, for a long time we were concentrating too much on the lower end, the kids with difficulties, and I think that the middle and higher level were not so good, and I think it was the government at the time always rating the

bottom and I think it's very hard at times, particularly when you've got a school that's got problems – problem families etc. but I think that you are doing a lot now to boost everybody, but that's only come in, in the last maybe 5–6 years when we started to work on the gifted and talented and I think it's very crucial to keep the kids that are in the middle because they can float off very easily. In the secondary schools if you are in the middle you float more. I think that's the problem. Let me think what else.

I know this is a question that OFSTED will probably ask on how to do more than you do already. You're giving the booster classes, you're giving the extra curriculum stuff, you're getting specialist people in. Staff are getting extra training. Well I know you are trying to do more sports things, externally.

Head: Do you think our work within the community and our preschool and how we are building on adult learning will help?

Interviewee 2: Yes well we've had adult learning for a few years and I think you are doing more of that and I think it will be very good, because you've got to consider that a lot of families have no education and that is key at least to read and write and fill in forms, I think it gives them the self-confidence, so I'm hoping as you do more of that, that will improve matters for families as well. The two-year provision, I'm hoping that will go out to everybody because I know that it's hard because I know people think it's only the free meals, I know they are not earning lot of money and they would have to pay, for, I know they go to work because they can't afford it. I would like to see that that is rolled out to everybody, but I know you can't always do that because of funding but that I think would be good to extend our pre-nursery to everybody rather than just free school meals, but I don't know that we've got the capacity to do that.

I think that it's where we are that's the problem and I know you've got an outsized school but after-school club that takes children. We did try an after-school club, but it wasn't funding itself and people didn't take it because they

didn't need to – they were not working. I think it would be good to do at the other end of the school, but I know that brings in more problems with OFSTED and costs, etc.

Maybe, I can't remember all the clubs you've got, do you still have a chess club? No – the previous head started chess club – I can't play chess but that was her particular like. I don't know if we could extend on clubs. I don't know if there are more people in the community who would come in on a voluntary basis to do things. We've done some beautiful things, like the garden, is there someone else who is doing that now? You said there was. The school looks tremendous, it looks tremendous. I mean it was not like this when the previous head came, it started to improve. The children never went on outings. The head started outings which we continue, which is good.

Appendix 5: Interview 3 with a governor/councillor

Head: Can I ask how you are linked to the school?

Interviewee 3: Well, I've been linked with the school for some 30 odd years, really. Having been [a significant period of time] on the estate, obviously, I know the families on the estate and it is a deprived area, but we have got some lovely families and things have changed dramatically over the [significant period of time] I have been in the school.

Head: Going on from that question how would you describe how perhaps the school has changed maybe in the last ten years say. Do you feel that there have been any changes or are things pretty much the same?

Interviewee 3: If I could go back 15 years ish, we were getting quite a lot of vandalism in the school and I can remember occasions when we had 90 windows broken in the school and the headteacher at the time had quite a difficult job in controlling the vandalism that there was in the area, and also, he used to on occasions be embarrassed by the methods by which the parents had approached him in that at one time, he even had a baseball bat at the side of his desk for fear of being attacked by parents. These things on and around the roof – we had spikes on the roof to prevent people from climbing onto the roof and smashing windows on top of the school. However, we had a new headteacher who joined the school about 14 years ago now and in her time at the school, she changed the school quite dramatically really, in that discipline started to come back in the school. She removed all the spikes off the roof to prevent these youngsters getting on the roof and doing the damage and took the spikes off and stopped the damage because the children didn't bother to climb up on the roof for some reason or other. In the question of discipline, uniforms were changed, and everybody had uniforms and became smart within the school and seemed to start to appreciate what the school was doing for them and the parents also appreciated what the school were doing for them and this was a change and at

one time the children of this estate were being bussed out to various schools in the area because they just didn't want to come to the Daisybank. That gradually changed and towards the end of her career, we had a school that had built slightly in numbers and we have a settled school with good behaviour and children that respected it and a slowing down of people leaving to go to other schools within the area. So, there was quite a lot of change in that way.

Head: definitely, and do you feel that the community saw that change as well, maybe from your positions that you hold? What did you sense the communities feel about the school?

Interviewee 3: Well I think I could see it in both ways, both as a governor of the school, and indeed as a Councillor, because there were lots of occasions when I had to visit the families in the homes to sort out maybe problems of their needs, furniture, bathrooms, kitchens and all sort of things. By getting to meet the people and talk to them, they said how the school was changing and how it had improved… the school was changing for the good, so those ten years under the previous head, did in fact, change the whole atmosphere around the school.

Head: Do you think that was predominantly linked to how she dealt with behaviour within the school, or did the school become very involved with the community. What changed their opinion?

I know at some point, the Daisybank Partnership was set up, you know, around there. Do you think that had a positive impact on the school?

Interviewee 3: It had a linking between the school and the general public and residents within the estate. That did link up there, but that wasn't the main reason for change. The main reason for change was that the headteacher and her discipline and getting the message over to the children to take a pride in the school, I think that was the main thing that changed the school.

Head: How do think the school still at that time was viewed by people outside of the Daisybank Estate.

Interviewee 3: The Daisybank Estate had got a poor name. People thought of the Daisybank as a 'No go' area and outside of the estate people did not like to come onto the estate and therefore the school was not recognised as a good school in the area. It just didn't fit – the Daisybank was taboo!

Head: and what do you think about the reputation of the school now?

Interviewee 3: The reputation of the school now has changed dramatically, since the previous head retired because we have a headteacher now who is probably the best appointment I have ever made. This head has done a wonderful job in the school and her attitude and I don't speak alone in this, I know the whole governing body are so proud of what we have got in the school. We have got a fabulous headteacher and she is doing a wonderful job and I think the reasons for this are her attitude towards the children – she knows them all by name and the parents respect her and what I would also like is that she has a disciplinary manner as well and doesn't let the children get away with anything. They have got to behave in school. Anybody that visits the school now, knows the atmosphere has changed and the children are enjoying school and they themselves are all taking pride within the school. The change that's happened, I mentioned earlier, about people being bussed out to various other schools in our area – these were the favourite schools, but now there has been a change and in this two years, we are now seeing the results of the hard work of the headteacher and her staff – she has a good staff and she has respect from all the members of staff as a headteacher and the improvements that have been made in the school are tremendous and one thing that has happened is the numbers in our school have expanded and are now well above the 200 mark when she arrived at the school has gone up to nearly 300 already and the future looks tremendous because we are hoping to extend the school very shortly and we have got the staff and the buildings that can cope with the expansion.

Head: How do you think the school is viewed again from your point of view, maybe within the council or people within the community? Do you think they view it differently?

Interviewee 3: I am very proud to be talking about the Daisybank School with fellow councillors and leaders of council and in fact brought the leader of Council down to the school along with the rectors from this [authority], and they can see with their own eyes what tremendous advances have been made at the school and they too have gone back highly recommending the Daisybank School now.

Head: Do you think that OFSTED reports and league tables have an impact on the reputation of a school?

Interviewee 3: I am a person that is not really in favour with league tables, the result s of the children and the qualifications they are obtaining in the various subjects is important, but to compare one school with another school because of the catchment areas varying enormously, it's not fair to judge A against B – that's my view on that.

Head: Do you think that's what parent's look at though?

Interviewee 3: A lot of parents, because of the grammar school system within [this authority], which is a good system, and parents that do spend a lot of time with their children working with them and training them, there's only one aim and is to get in the grammar schools, but in the area we do have excellent secondary schools as well, but what we need here really is to keep this bond between the headteacher, staff and parents, to try to bring the standards higher, not to compete against other schools but to lift the standard of education within the school and for those who can achieve grammar school, well its really well done to the school.

Head: So, taking everything into consideration, what in your opinion has the biggest impact on the reputation of a school?

Interviewee 3: I think the manner in which the children are behaving. If children are respecting themselves and the school and all the various assets that the school has, if they can respect these things and are well mannered, they will achieve higher rating in education.

Head: and be seen better by other people.

Interviewee 3: Absolutely

Head: So what changes, if any, do you feel need to take place within the school in order to improve the reputation even further?

Interviewee 3: I think the headteacher that we have will be able to – she has already got in mind ways of moving forward with the school, both educationally, physically and spiritually. It has to move forward in a very positive way so the people outside this Daisybank Estate will – they are already recognising it has taken huge steps forward. I would also like to personally see an increase in the physical provision of the school, because I believe tremendously that if you can teach people to be fit and healthy – we already provide healthy eating within the school, that that will improve. I feel, possibly, we may be a little bit short in providing the physical aspect – keeping the children fit and not obese.

Head: Fantastic, thank you ever so much for your interview today.

Appendix 6: Critical discussion with a fellow headteacher

Headteacher 1: So, one of the things that I am really struggling with at the moment – I have been a Headteacher of a school for a number of years now and I've been working hard, I believe, on the school's reputation. The school has been through two successful OFSTEDs and has come out with 'Good' with 'Outstanding features'; results have improved; even numbers fairly recently have started to increase but what I really still struggle with is the fact that every year when you find out your reception numbers and you find out which parents have selected your school for their children, that it's always well below the school PAN, and that my school still isn't one of the first schools that would be selected by parents. From where the school is and the estate it is on, apparently it had a particular name and for some of these parents, or what I hear by the off chance or even parents who have phoned the school or come to visit the school, perhaps as a prospective place for their children to come, they talked about 'Well the area doesn't have a good reputation and the school hasn't always had a good reputation'. I think I really struggle with that because it's trying to 'unpick' what it is they are actually looking for and what they are seeing when they actually see my school, because I look at the internal workings of the school – I've worked hard to change things as a headteacher, how I work with the staff within the school, like I have said results have improved, from an OFSTED perspective we're looking good but then I still hear parents talk about or I've had letters saying that parents don't want children to come to my school and I am really intrigued as to what it is that they see when they are talking about a 'good reputation' because in my head, I have always thought of an OFSTED as being quite an important thing or improving results being quite an important thing in how somebody would view your school but it just doesn't seem to be that way for my school. I guess the issue is what are people actually seeing when they look at my school and how they are forming their opinions about the school and what is influencing that, and ultimately, what they are thinking about the school opinion is that forming their opinions about my school; and ultimately what they are thinking

about the school and has my school become known by what they are thinking about it?

So, I would say from my experience at my school – one of the biggest factors, I think is 'word of mouth', bigger than OFSTED to be perfectly honest. Even if you have a bad OFSTED, if the word of mouth of your school is good, I think that can overcome a bad OFSTED result, because OFSTED is a snap judgement that takes place every three years if you are lucky, but word of mouth is day to day, all the time.

Headteacher 1: But where people are passing on that 'word of mouth' how do you think that people have formed those judgements about your school, because some people for me – word of mouth, I think, has worked in a really negative manner and people who haven't even come to my school and haven't had children at the school, they've heard, or heard about the school which may be historic from years and years ago, that it has a bad reputation.

Headteacher 2: That is exactly why I think it is the most important thing in a school's reputation – word of mouth I think is **the** most important thing and especially if you live in or your school is within an estate, as my school is. So, if your community does not change that much, so that word of mouth is handed down, family to family, cousin to cousin, friend to friend, it's unlikely to change quickly because your community stays quite static.

Headteacher 1: How then can you ever change a school's reputation; because if you are fixed in that community your school is fixed in that geographical location, you've almost got the community that you're with. Parents can choose now where they want their children to go, so parent's 'voice' is important. But we have heard about schools turning or schools being turned around, but they haven't changed the community. So, what have they done?

Headteacher 2: Perhaps one of the things they have done is look at the community – I'm not saying this is true, but I am just thinking putting myself in that situation and thought of unique selling points that their community would see as having kudos. So, in these schools that for instance have turned around it is because initially they have come from a place where the word of mouth has been bad behaviour, unruliness, not good teaching, so they change it aesthetically firstly by changing uniform, policy, strict policy and procedure, so they give the appearance of a big change happening. That's one of the things that I am thinking.

Headteacher 1: Yes, one of the things I am interested in that you said is about appealing to the community and again, this is where I guess I am struggling. When you are thinking about your school, are you thinking: are we educators or actually now, are we running a business? Parents are becoming like customers where we have always got to appeal to them for those parents then to actually select our school for their children. So, for you, do you believe that there is a bit of a dilemma for schools and whether we are actually purveyors of education or are we becoming more like businesses who need to be aware of the market?

Headteacher 2: I think, and it goes against my grain, absolutely against the grain, but I think we are businesses. We most definitely are businesses and we are funded by bums on seats. You are talking about your 'PAN' and you were saying you don't ever have that initial reception class up to that PAN. So, if you drop to a certain level that is not viable, so you cease to be. You have to view it as a business alongside being educators. You can't lose sight of the fact that you're an educator because at the end of the day, those results matter – they make you viable as well.

Headteacher 1: But then if parents are the customers, every parent wants a different thing, and do you then see the education of the school being part of a product and you have to appeal to the majority? How do you then find out what it is that your parents are looking for? From my experience they are not

all looking at the OFSTED report because if they did look at the OFSTED report, arguably, they would want to come to my school; they would read it and they would see how good teaching and learning was, they would see how we have moved on but that doesn't seem to be a big thing. So, if we are appealing to the market, what is it you believe parents are actually looking for?

Headteacher 2: So, in my school, I don't know what your parents would be looking for, that is probably something to come back to, but in my school because I have very young children, nurture is one of the most important things that my parents look for and they want to hear. So, they want to hear all about 'safeguarding', medicines, illness and how you are going to nurture those young children. They want to know about their play, where they are going to play, if their play is purposeful and they are very interested in their social and emotional well-being. So, I would say one of my unique selling points in my school is really nurturing their social and emotional well-being and making sure that they are open to learning every single day and I sell to my parents they are the foundation blocks on which my children will become good learners and that's how I get good results.

Headteacher 1: So, is performance… do you think parents in your school still look for performance in your school? Is that important to your parents?

Headteacher 2: Every single parent who comes to look around the school has read my OFSTED report without exception. There's not one exception; every parent I have sat with has read it. They have read it on my website and they have been all over my website as well, so I would say for you, it would be looking at your website front facing and know what is that selling about your school to your community? So, how does your website reflect your school?

Headteacher 1: To me, it's not that I am against that, I am working within this and I think I am trying to understand why I feel I have changed the way I work as a Head and I am almost reflecting on that to try and understand

reputation a little bit more but do you see yourself as a Head, when you talked about your website then, working in a more corporate fashion and what do you think has influenced that?

Headteacher 2: I definitely see myself working in a more corporate fashion and I think even back when I did my own NPQH which was very many years ago, we were already talking about that – about Headship being more corporate, about selling your business, about community use of your school, and making sure it's a hub of the community, providing wrap-around care. So, making sure that your school is the most important place in your community alongside those other key institutions, i.e. the Church, the Police, etc. Just coming back to your school, I would say work out your strong selling point. What would you say your unique selling point is and what would your parents want it to be?

Headteacher 1: I think that's what I still am not sure I could answer. I could give you an answer, but I think that would be my personal opinion about the school. I think what I am looking at is that I have a number of children in my school and do all of those parents want the same thing? I would say that my school is very inclusive, but I have also seen that to be a detrimental factor to the school because then you almost get all the parents who have children with special educational needs, come to your school which then, parent who have very high achieving children in an authority where they are determined to get their child into grammar school – your school then doesn't fit for their child. I think what is really tricky is when you are opening up to the market per se, is that I don't want the school to be just there for certain types of children. But then the way that we are working within our school environment, we are almost trying to create a certain type of child in terms of performance and where we've got to get each child. So, even though I am very happy that my school would be classed as inclusive and that I do feel that we provide great opportunities for all types of children, I am not sure that is always seen from the outside as a positive thing.

Headteacher 2: I would completely agree with you and to back up what you have just said completely, my OFSTED result this academic year had a line in it which said 'This school is chosen by parents more and more who have children with special educational needs' and the word on the grapevine, just from speaking to other people in my community, is that that is a little off-putting for people at my school. So, I am actively now combating that as something that could go against my school in word of mouth and make people not choose my school. So, whenever I do parent meetings or open days, I actually talk about that line in the OFSTED inspection and talk about why it isn't a bad thing but a good thing that my children are diverse and they all have different starting points in life and they are all full of empathy for different people and see their strengths and their difficulties and help one another.

Headteacher 1: Do you believe that your school's reputation goes beyond just your parents? Do you feel it is influenced or even established as a reputation by anybody else?

Headteacher 2: I think mostly it's my parents; it's the wider community – so for instance, local church groups talk about my school because my school is so big, quite a lot of the families in the locality have had somebody at my school at some point in time. So, the word of mouth goes beyond in church groups, scout groups, brownies, etc. My school is linked – at the moment I am just linking the sports group and it is again, to make sure we are well established in that community with a positive reputation.

Headteacher 1: I think when I look at my school, I do believe we are at the heart of the community; I do believe that we offer a lot for the parents within the community and arguably, I would say that a lot of people within the community are happier with the school and that things have started to be talked about in a more positive light, use the local newspapers and you publicise what your school is doing really well. I think what I still find off-putting is that where we border a council estate with a more affluent estate within the area, it's how that affluent area or people within that area, still look

down upon where your school is positioned and what it's perhaps got to offer, and when they are offered a place at my school they are almost insulted that that's where there is perhaps an only place within the authority and I think, maybe I shouldn't really be concerned about them because they are not directly within my community, but I've seen word of mouth work both positively and negatively and it's trying to really understand the key influences that help to form a judgement within a parent's mind about a school. Do you think it is different for every parent or do you think the majority of parents look for a particular thing?

Headteacher 2: I think the majority look for a particular thing. There will always be anomalies where people will want something different and you can't please everybody. Basically, I work on the principle that if one person comes to me to say something they don't like about my school, there will probably be 10 – 20 others who think the same thing but haven't come to speak to me. So, I always treat that as quite significant that they are representing a group that haven't got a voice to come forward. So, I always make sure that I'll invest a lot of time in that person and work with that person to change their opinion throughout their time in my school. I've been quite successful in that, not all the time, but I've never used the press. My school is never in the press. And I don't ever publicise anything in the press because I think sometimes, particularly in my catchment area they perceive it as trying to sell your school and so my parents would see that as you're not doing very well because you have to put your school in the press all the time.

Headteacher 1: OK

Headteacher 2: So, you will never see my school in the press.

Headteacher 1: I find that really interesting because my parents love, they love the fact that I've got twitter now and we celebrate things there and they love the fact that they've seen their children in the newspaper and that they see it as a celebration.

Headteacher 2: No, I don't think my parents view it like that and I certainly don't see it like that either. I see it more as a distraction. We use Twitter, we do a lot on the website and we've not had a PTA, we are just forming a PTA at the moment with very trusted parents for fund raising and publicity, but again, not in the newspapers. Our publicity is around joining other community groups – that's how we get publicity, not from press.

Headteacher 1: Just changing the subject slightly and thinking more about how education is subject to whichever government is in place at any given time, what external or political pressures do you as a Headteacher feel pressure to and has that perhaps changed the way you lead your school. And a further question is, do you think that changes the way parents view a school?

Headteacher 2: It's a really difficult one – I feel political pressure, not locally. I don't feel pressure locally at a political level, the only time I've felt pressure locally at a political level, well on two occasions I have felt it, one where I've needed support in my school and was denied because we were in ?? and so they weren't able to help because it might be seen as ?? and the other time is if a parent has a complaint and goes to a councillor and I sometimes feel that the councillor is publicising themselves through that complaint and not looking at it fairly.

I have only had that on two occasions; I don't have a lot of councillor involvement in my school at all. So, at a local level very, very little. At government level, huge political pressure and I find that quite difficult. What I find I have to do, and I'm sure you feel the same – do tell me, is I find I have to be very, very clear about my vision for my school and what I see as a good school and what I think my parents see is a good school and not be swayed by political agendas that send me down a path that would conflict with that.

Headteacher 1: What do you see is a good school?

Headteacher 2: A good school I see is a school that prepares – we've got very young children, so a school that prepares very young children to be learners for life and to be really successful members of the community and to reach their full potential. So, I don't want to be, although I am, because it is a pressure, I don't want to be governed by what another body think is successful, I want my children to be literate, numerate, I want them to be creative thinkers, I want them to be confident, I want them to be able to talk to people, express themselves. All of those useful skills that you need to be a member of the community, to succeed and to be useful.

Headteacher 1: So, what if you believed as a Head that you had all of those things in your school and yet people appeared to still not want to come or that your school still wasn't first choice and that your numbers every year were still significantly lower? And as people go through my school my numbers do get bigger, but it appears that at that crucial point when parents have the right to make a choice and put a school's name down on a form to say – that's where I want my child to go – that doesn't happen for me.

Headteacher 2: I would be really upset with that situation, I'm sure you are too. I would be really upset, and I would want to know why. I hold one open day per year and if I was in your position I think I would probably hold more so that I was getting those parents who are moving into the area to get an opportunity to come to my school all of the time and experience what I think is special about it and talk to them about it.

Headteacher 1: What does a good reputation look like to you?

Headteacher 2: So, to me, it's hearing – so for instance, if I have an auntie come and pick up – its hearing from that auntie – I came here, we really wanted him to come here, we know how good this school is, we know what your results are like, how happy the children are, how well they are looked

after. I suppose its hearing from my community feedback about how we are meeting their needs. That's a good school to me.

Headteacher 1: What type of schools do you believe have the best reputation?

Headteacher 2: I think that's a really, really difficult question. Really difficult because I think that some really challenging schools can have amazing reputations for the fact that they deal with challenging situations and are very inclusive and they have a brilliant reputation based on that. But then another school that I would see as quite formal, not providing those community links will still have a great reputation in their community, so I suppose, a good school is one that provides what their community needs and prepares their children.

Headteacher 1: But do you think because we're all bothered about money or getting bums on seats, looking to mark our schools in a particular way so that almost we're standing out to be 'Come to us', do you believe that between schools there is cause for more competition.

Headteacher 2: I think it is heading that way. I don't think that it is necessarily like that at the moment. I think that schools are actually working together really well to make sure children are placed in schools that are right for them because different schools offer different things and what's good for one child and one family isn't necessarily good for another one. So, I actually think that schools work together very well in local authorities at the moment to place children. And I think things like, managed moves or suggestions are a really good thing and what I have seen is schools working really good together on that. Moving forward, I mean, we have experienced a boom at the moment so bums on seats isn't actually an issue at the moment, but I would say if numbers dropped then that might be? And I would be encouraged to do that from a local government.

Headteacher 1: So, if you could sum up the key influences of a school's reputation, what would they be for you?

Headteacher 2: I think the biggest influence is your actual school environment, how it is viewed from the people who have to look at it on a daily basis and be around it. So, I think you need to be very mindful of your neighbours. I think that is really important because that can cause a lot of problems. I think initially that a very physical environment. Beyond that, I think it is the relationships within the school – between teachers, teachers and children, teachers and parents and then going wider than that it is those community links – being a hub and a part of the community that's always involved in things that are going on. Most importantly, it's having happy children, polite children – I think that's so important because if your children are not polite and they are going out into the community, it comes back to you tenfold. And your results, you know, actually performing well. And then I'll always say, it's your unique selling point – that is really important, whether it be creativity, whether that be nurture, whether that be results. It's your unique selling point.

Headteacher 1: Do you believe that a reputation can be changed?

Headteacher 2: Absolutely yes. I think it is very hard work, but I do, I think it definitely can.

Headteacher 1: Thank you.

Appendix 7: Example of analysing data

Coding

1. What are the perceptions of Daisybank School?

2. What factors appear to have influenced perceptions of Daisybank School?

3. Based on these narratives, to what extent can I identify any evidence of negotiating space to influence change?

Phase 1 – Interview 1:

	Open coding	Focused codes	Theoretical codes
Head: Even though you lived on the estate? Well we moved here and I have to say,[1] I don't consider myself on the [2]estate, which may sound a bit – but I don't mean it like that, I live down that way. [3]Some people say we're on the estate others say we are not. We moved here just as my twins were going to start school. [4]We had no idea about schools here, as we had come from [a different authority], so we came here and of course, this was the [5]local school. [6]My cousin, who lives in [a closer city], had a friend who was local and the first thing she said was,[7] 'Do not go to Daisybank School, it's got a [8]terrible reputation it's awful, got [9]bad results, everything'. So, of course, I didn't know anything about the school, but I was alerted to that, and then I found we couldn't get in to [Greybank] School, because it was on the [10]wrong side of the road at the time, so I ended up paying for them [11]privately to go to [Stonebank], which cost an absolute fortune. So that really was my background to not coming to the school.	[1] 'I don't consider myself' [2]estate [3] Differences about the positioning of the estate [4] New to area [5] Catchment to school [6] Familiarity [7] 'Do not go' [8] Terrible reputation [9] Bad results, everything [10] Wrong catchment [11] Private education	Location Perspectives Performativity	Self Society/community Neoliberalism

December 27th:

When I reflect over my initial question, I'm not sure why I used the word 'estate'; however, I know that the word 'estate' is often used in conjunction with Daisybank Primary School. When people have asked me where the school is, I've often had responses such as: is that on the estate? Or that's on a rough estate isn't it? Even when I talk about the school, I refer to it as being on a council estate as the reality for me is that the school is predominantly surrounded by social housing, and so estate, and one of the definitions that I attach to the word, seems an appropriate term. Yet within this extract, it begins to highlight that the word 'estate' perhaps has more complex meanings or particular connotations that I haven't fully considered. Does attaching the word 'estate' to Daisybank Primary give a particular impression? What does it say about the school?

The interviewee seeks to clarify her own geographical positioning within the extract as not being on the estate and the word invoked a particular response: 'I don't consider myself on the estate' – a detaching from the estate. There is recognition that that some other people do, highlighting that there are potentially different interpretations of what the actual estate encompasses and also perhaps how the word estate is interpreted. Whilst this could purely be just a matter a perspective of where the border of the estate may be, and the interviewee here may just be pinpointing the exact location with what she knows, is there a possibility that the word estate goes beyond its explicit meaning and may actually be an umbrella term for other factors? What else is this word portraying? Where does the estate begin and end? Does it matter?

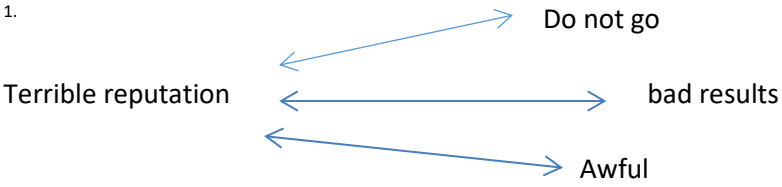
When I reflect on the geographical location of the school, I see a school that is surrounded by social housing, a place where deprivation and some unemployment exists and I know that I have described the school with this terminology and therefore when I attach the word estate to the school – do I use it to encapsulate these other meanings?

'I don't consider myself on the estate' – where does this interviewee consider herself? If I lived near the school would I consider myself on the estate? For me this statement says – I'm here and the estate is there. This is where I am and that is different – I'm not part of that as I'm part of this. There is a sense of detachment away from the estate, and whilst in the above extract it may be about geographical positioning, it opens up further avenues of potential exploration in the thesis of how we see ourselves and how this influences our perspectives of things.

December 28th:

I find the phrase – It's got a terrible reputation – perplexing. First of all, how has this individual come to this decision? What gives something a terrible reputation? When I consider this I think that for something to be considered terrible there must be an understanding of what someone believes to be good – what therefore is a good reputation? There must be a comparison. I recognise that I make value judgements about things every day based on what I understand to be valuable, valid or worthy – I say that things are good or bad. I select particular names of products because of what I understand and believe about them.

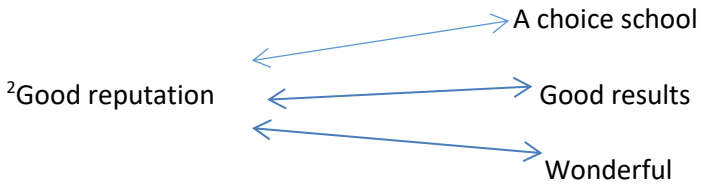
1.



Who I believe I am perhaps gives me a way of interpreting the world around me. I categorise things in alignment with the values that I hold, which becomes my own reality. Here value judgements are starting to be seen in relation to the reputation of Daisybank, which I see as this particular individual's reality. I don't believe that Daisybank is terrible, perhaps because I am a part of the school, but also, I am functioning within it and therefore have a very different perspective or just want to believe something different about the school. Here Daisybank is considered to have a terrible reputation – it's considered awful, everything about it. 'Bad results' perhaps starts to open up one of perhaps many reasons why this school is considered terrible. It's a more tangible concept that is easy to understand and one which creates an understandable correlation for some. Is it always the case that: If something has bad results then it is likely to have a terrible reputation?

The above diagram begins to summarise what I am starting to see within this interview. Associated with a terrible reputation is that it is a school where you wouldn't go to; a school that is awful and that has bad results. This thesis is about exploring the construction of a reputation of a school which is why it is perhaps useful to see the above diagram from the other way – A school that has bad results; one that is considered awful is a school that wouldn't be selected which perhaps could lead to a terrible reputation.

The diagram could also be looked at from a positive perspective and starts to highlight questions: Is a school with a good reputation a choice school? Does a school with a good reputation have good results? Is it considered wonderful? It begins to show that there is perhaps a duality to the term reputation – is a reputation either good or bad?



Whilst I don't believe Daisybank to be terrible, someone else does. This starts to highlight that there is a freedom in how something is perceived and that perceptions lead to form assessments about something. As judgements are not always in alignment with each other – what does that say about how a reputation is constructed? A complexity appears to exist within the construction as whilst I am attempting to explore different perspectives, I will perhaps be highlighting further such varied differences in how something is perceived and therefore is it possible to unravel what is actually behind the construction of a reputation?

December 29th:

	Open coding	Focused coding	Theoretical coding
However, when my daughter was 18, she had a baby – she wasn't married, and I had a business [nearby], so [Sarah] went to [Limestone] a local nursery [nearby] – a full time nursery down the road from my business. When it came for her to come to school, to reception, there was a bit of a [1]quandary because my daughter was working, and I was doing a lot of helping out and I had to think. I was going in to work three days per week, so I had to think what was the [2]best all round. So really I found this [3]school was nearer to come, so I came to school and spoke to the head – she had only been here a year then, and I was really [4]impressed with her, [5]she	[1] Quandary [2] Best all round [3] School close by [4] Impressed with headteacher [5] Familiarity [6] Deserves interested families [7] Give it a try	Convenience Headteacher	Commodification Leadership

reminded me of what sort of teachers I had when I was young, which funnily enough, I found out a year later, she went to a sister school that I went to, so I thought to myself, she [6]deserves some interested families, I thought we'd [7]give it a try, and that's how we came to come here. I have to say the first day I brought my grandaughter, the first word we heard in the playground was the [8]'f' word and I thought 'Oh my God, what have I done?' Anyway, we carried on and there was a [9]lot of that in the playground at the time, but we were there, and I was still impressed with the head, so [10]I kept coming. I thought well, it's the [11]best I can do at the moment and it was [12]convenient and I had to think of the convenience to the family, with all the [13]juggling around with work and everything	[8] Language [9] A lot of that [10] Kept coming [11] Best I can do [12] Convenient [13] Juggling	Convenience	Commodification

[3]Juggling

Best I can do

School close by

Best all round

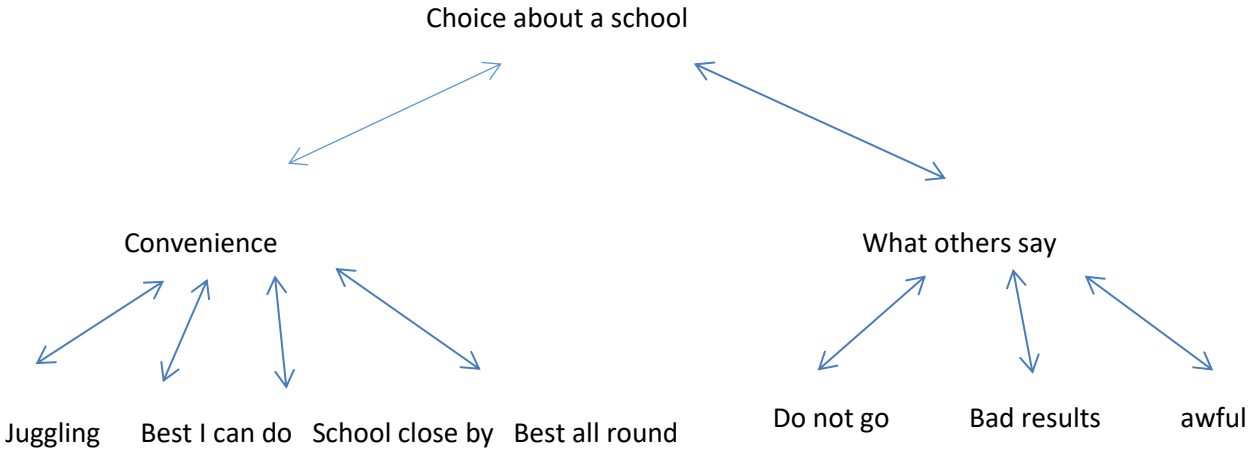
Convenience

Choice – why do we make the decisions we do? I know that I often make choices from the experience that I have. I select one brand over another because I prefer it but how do I make a choice when I'm doing it for the first time? I understand that I might weigh up the pros and cons of something but ultimately, it's about what I believe I prefer.

'Best I can do, school nearby and best all round all seem to link to the choice about the school being made because it is convenient. Convenience is also mentioned twice which further emphasises that perhaps at times choices are made rationally – what is deemed to be the greatest benefit at that moment in time. Here that is convenience. Earlier in the interview

though, the interviewee appeared to use choice in a different way. New to the area, the local school hadn't been selected because of another individual's perspective, which resulted in private education being selected. How does choice change? How is choice influenced? What do we 'anchor' our decisions on?

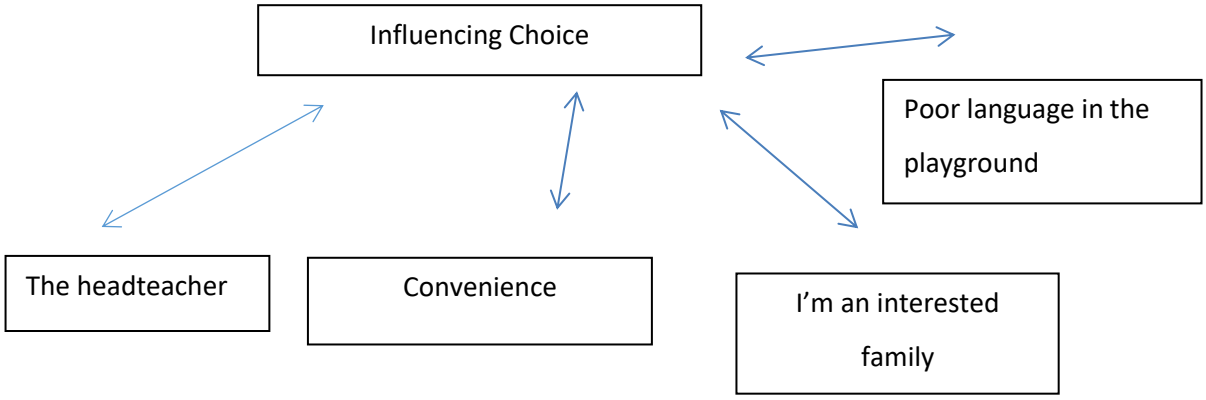
The interviewee's choice appears to have been on a transitional journey. The 'terrible' reputation of the school, whilst it hadn't diminished, had perhaps been put aside, as now the school was a convenient one to attend-this had perhaps become a more dominant preference which influenced the choice made. It perhaps also shows that our choice is determined by what is important to us at any given time, which may change. To perhaps further understand the complexity associated with the construction of a reputation, it seems that reasons for choice about a school need to be explored to a point.



December 30th:

'I was really impressed with her'. What did this headteacher do that made this interviewee come away feeling that she was so impressed with her? When I think about people who impress me, I know that I respond well to people who are honest; that demonstrate integrity; that work hard and that are passionate – things that I would hope that people would say about me. I don't know what impressed the interviewee here, apart from that there was perhaps a sense of common ground or familiarity 'she reminded me of what sort of teachers I had when I was young'. A sense of respect comes across in the interview which influenced the choice to 'give it a try'. To me it almost makes me feel that the interviewee felt sorry for the headteacher when she describes – 'she deserves some interested families'. What made her believe that there weren't interested families already? Is she now an interested party because the school has been selected? Does this have any link to how the interviewee distanced herself from the estate?

The headteacher comes across as an influential factor in the choice that this interviewee made about the school – is this starting to suggest that headteachers have a role in the choices people make about a school? Being impressed with the headteacher and the convenience of the school seems to dominate over the offence at the language heard on the playground. If convenience wasn't a factor – would it be a different story? This starts to highlight that whilst there may be many factors that present themselves when we are making a choice, and things that we may consider – something always has dominance which seems to outweigh the others.



What other factors influence choice? How does this relate to the school reputation? Does making a choice about a school correlate to you believing it has a good reputation? Do you construct a reputation as you make a choice?

	Open coding	Focused coding	Theoretical coding
because it had that [1]bad reputation for everything, [2]bad results. When we came to [this authority], I was thinking of the Grammar, so that had been my thought. We moved pretty quickly here from [a different authority] so I hadn't been given it an awful lot of thought until we landed here and then all of a sudden, my cousin said,[4] 'Oh don't go there, it's terrible' and that was for my children.[5] I didn't pursue it much more than that. I	[1] bad reputation for everything [2] Bad results [3] Thinking of the grammar [4] Oh don't go there it's terrible [5] I didn't pursue it [6] Neighbours [7] Recommending the school	Performativity Word of mouth	Neoliberalism 'Expert' opinion – democratisation

have to say when it came to [my granddaughter], my [6]neighbours over the road, said that their daughter was coming here at the time, and she was [7]recommending the school too, so that was how [8]I came to the school to see the head. Having said that, a year or so later, they [9]took their child away because they had a lot of [10]staff changes and the [11]Deputy Head was off with sickness a lot. [12]We lost several good children.	[8] I came to see the head [9] Took child away [10] Staff changes [11] Deputy head off sick [12] lost several good children	Headteacher	Leadership

January 2nd:

There is a link to what was previously discussed in the interview again here. There is a further emphasis on the reputation of the school – that everything about it is bad. The further emphasis of bad results and the warning of: Don't go there it's terrible. There is now the opening up of the importance of perhaps attending a grammar school in the future. Grammar schools are known for their high academic achievement and it therefore perhaps becomes more obvious that results here are important. What are bad results though? Are results interpreted differently? My own experience as a headteacher is that results matter from an OFSTED perspective. Of course, I want to see pupils in my school achieve well, but for me this is beyond and doesn't just encompass academic achievement, but that's all that seems to matter. However, I know that I am accountable for results. Results are published and I recognise that they provide a 'picture' of how well the school is performing to particular criteria. I know I am frustrated by results because for me they only explain a limited view on how well a school is doing and I believe that I, along with the staff, work hard and that this isn't valued because of the results. Results are perhaps seen as the output of a school and if the output isn't good, then it is perhaps determined that the input isn't good either – it's just not efficient enough. Here bad results are not explained and there is not an indication of how this interviewee has an understanding that the results are bad, apart from the fact that someone has told her that they are. Bad results are undesirable with good results appearing to be desirable.

Trust – I know that I trust a doctor to tell me what's wrong with me and I trust that they know how to heal me. I trust some people but not others. I don't feel like I trust the government but I know that some do. I recognise that the word trust is used in everyday language and that it is used in diverse ways. Within the above extract, I see an element of trust. Whilst it appears that a very definite decision had been made in relation to the school, I find it interesting that the recommendation from the neighbours and the headteacher (which has been identified again) have been highlighted as influential. The cousin, whom the interviewee had previously shown trust in, in relation to the school is perhaps now being overlooked, as are the bad results and the bad reputation. Whose recommendations do we trust? What conditions are necessary for trust to exist?

That's how I came to become a governor, so the attitude was we were [1]fighting a losing battle at that time and then within a year, [2]OFSTED were in and they put us into[3] 'special measures' and I, of course, was devastated. The school had started to improve, but I looked at it positively – they got[4] £50K to put towards improving things, so I said to the head – look at it positively, you've got this extra money in play, so we gradually, with a lot of [5]hard work that the [6]head and staff put in, started to [7]move in the right direction.	[1] Fighting a losing battle [2] OFSTED were in [3] Special measures [4] 50K to improve things [5] Hard work [6] Head and staff [7] Move in the right direction	OFSTED Change	'Expert' opinion-democratisation

The attitude was that we were 'fighting a losing battle' – Here there is a sense that something was trying to be achieved but there was a knowledge or belief that there wasn't the possibility of success – but how is success defined? Do we want schools to be a particular way? If they're not – are they failing? Schools are often described in the press as 'failing'. It's a failing school. What gives them such a definition? The school being put into special measures almost appeared to be the stamp of failure that was expected. What are the definitions of a good school or a failing school? If individuals use such terms – they must have a criteria by which they are following and comparing against.

‘Move in the right direction – what does that mean? The school is perhaps seen to be in a negative place – fighting a losing battle, special measures and yet certain interventions are bringing about change – what are they? The school had previously been identified as having a terrible reputation and yet here there appears to be hope, albeit a small glimmer, evidence that things can change or at least transition (move in the right direction).

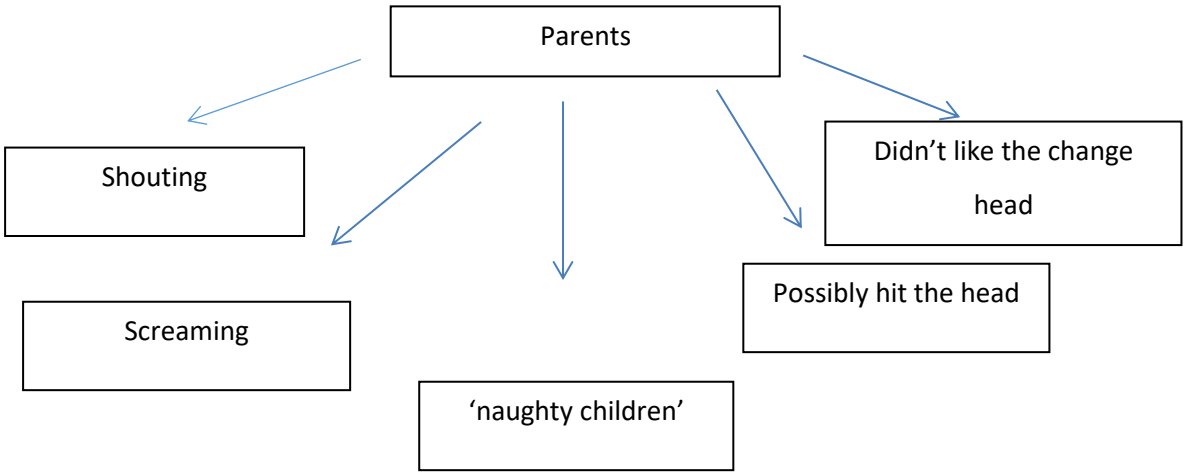
Here change is linked to the following:

Money + Hard work + staff and headteacher → Move in the right direction → change

Whilst in the interview it doesn’t necessarily highlight what the issues were. Drawing on my experience as a headteacher, I understand that special measures is the worst category a school can be labelled. From their perspective there must have been issues with results, teaching and learning, behaviour, the curriculum – most things for it to be placed there. The report is then published publicly so how does an OFSTED grading impact on a school’s reputation?

No, I think [1]parents were a big problem. I came in here with parents [2]screaming and shouting who I thought they were going to [3]hit the head. I think their attitude was [4]they didn’t like the head and [5]they didn’t like being told what to do basically, because[6] she was being tough – and her staff as well. So, it’s like [7]‘naughty children’ they have to be taught lessons and they didn’t like it. I think with the staff as well, because of the way it had been, with the Head – he’d gone off, I think with sickness, because he wasn’t here when I came, but the deputy was off a lot and the staff I think, for a long time, [8]had been doing what they liked and then the new head came here [9]changing things and [10]telling them what to do and [11]telling the parents what to do and [12]how to behave and they didn’t like it.	[1] Parents were a big problem [2] Screaming and shouting [3] Hit the head [4] They didn’t like the head [5] They didn’t like being told what to do [6] She was being tough [7] ‘naughty children’ [8] Doing what they liked (staff) [9] Changing things [10] Telling them what to do (staff) [11] Telling the parents what to do	Unruly behaviour Headteacher Unruly behaviour Rules	Society/community Leadership Society/community

	[12] How to behave		



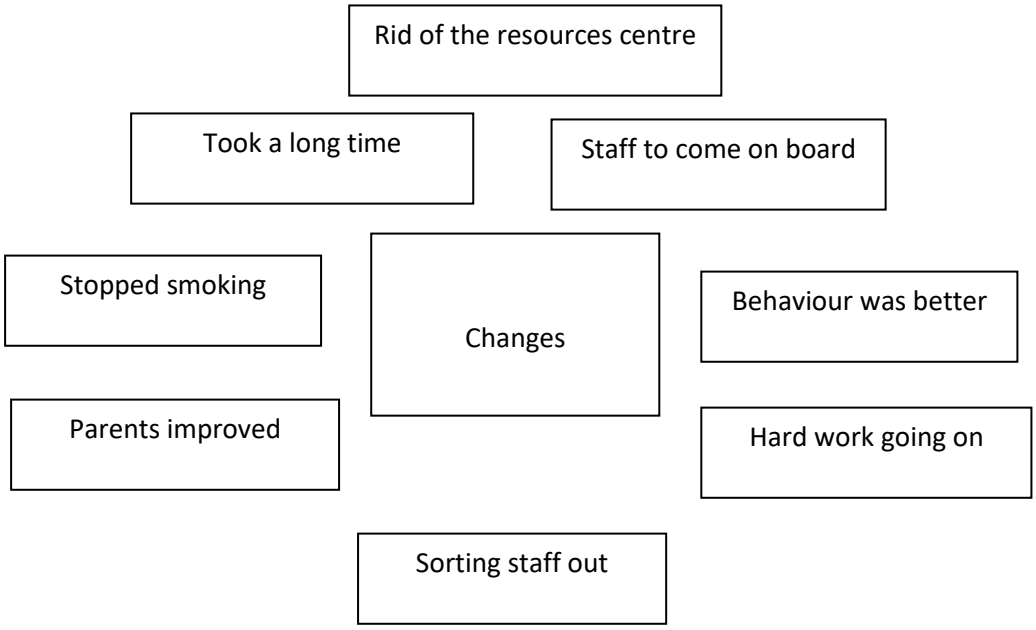
January 6th: 'naughty children'

The behaviour of the parents almost seems out of control by the way it is being described – being described as 'naughty children' indicates that parents were exhibiting behaviour that we would normally associate with children who are perhaps pushing the boundaries – shouting, screaming and having a tantrum. They were perhaps behaving in a way that wasn't considered the 'norm' to this interviewee. Does anybody like being told what to do? I know that I don't like being told what to do. I believe that I have a moral compass and know the difference between right and wrong and yet I understand that how I view this difference is perhaps very different to others. What is 'acceptable' behaviour? There appears to be a 'battle' here between what is and isn't acceptable. It is highlighting a difference in life conditions and perhaps what people are used to.

There appears to be a lack of respect here – if you don't value yourself, you can't value others. The parents appear to have a lack of respect for someone in an authoritative position.

Children are often described as 'naughty' as they learn what is acceptable and boundaries are put into place. Boundaries create a sense a safety – when children don't feel secure; they react in a particular manner. I see the parents reacting in a way that not only suggests a lack of respect, working together, but also a lack of feeling safe. There is uncertainty.

Well the school had had a [1]bad reputation [2]before that. The school – no matter how positive things were, [3]the reputation was not improved, it took years. It was probably, certainly, [4]seven or eight years before we started to feel, that was before it started to turn. I think it helped when we got [5]rid of the resource centre because I think the [6]behaviour was better I think there was an improvement in behaviour, although we had some very challenging children, like you always get, and I think the [7]parents started to improve as well. But you see at that time, I was in the playground for quite a bit, which I'm not now, and then I think she [8]stopped them smoking in the playground as well. I think they just learned that there were [9]things they could do and things they couldn't do but it was very, I don't know how the head stayed to be honest. I couldn't have dealt with all that and I believe the [10]Deputy Head had a bat in his room, a terrible thing, but that's that. A lot of [11]hard work was going on and I believe that the head really you know, [12]she helped so many people. That [13]fortitude of the head carried on [14]sorting staff out and getting [15]staff to come on board, but it was [16]very, very hard and a [17]very gradual change.	[1] Bad reputation [2] Before that [3] The reputation was not improved [4] seven or eight years before it started to turn [5] Rid of the resources centre [6] Behaviour was better [7] Parents started to improve [8] Stopped them smoking [9] Things they could do and things they couldn't [10] Deputy had a bat [11] Hard work going on [12] she helped so many people [13] Fortitude of the head [14] Sorting staff out [15] Staff to come on board [16] very, very hard [17] Very gradual change	Changes Headteacher Change	'good' things Society/community Leadership



January 8th:

Lots of changes were highlighted here – transitioning the school from was is described as having a bad reputation to now something that appeared to be on a journey to make things 'better'. These were seen as positive changes that appear to make a difference in how the school is viewed. What is the significance of such changes?

Parents improved? What had changed?

January 10th

This interviewee appears to have been on a transitional journey. Starting with very negative perspectives which she had heard from others – word of mouth – from family members, she came across other individuals who had a different opinion. Seeing what the school was like for herself also had an impact – convenience and the headteacher positive attributes to bringing about such a change. The language used here also appears to have changed. Lovely is used on numerous occasions – the school, children, and atmosphere. This interviewee has now become someone who promotes the school – this starts to highlight that change is

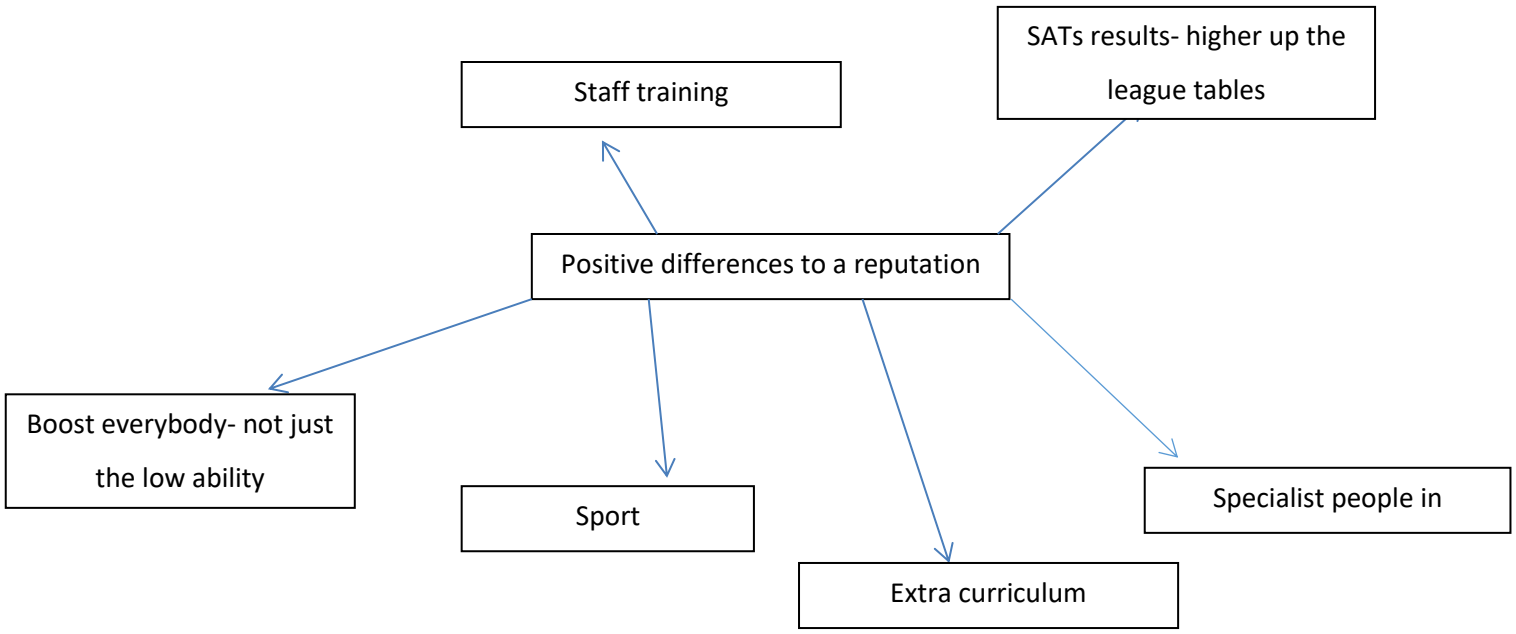
Yes, probably, probably because – oh [1]there's lots of nice people around, but unfortunately the [2]Daisybank had a very bad reputation. Well, I'm not in the playground now, so I can't say anything about the playground, but I think gradually, there has been a [3]much more supported staff in school. I think you [4]don't hear the negative so much and [5]occasionally I have heard negatives, I can't remember particulars, but I [6]always tell them what a nice school we've got and what a lovely school it is, and the children are lovely. There are some problems, but in general we've got lovely children and I think we are getting better parents. I always tell people [7]you should get involved and come and see the school because the [8]atmosphere is lovely in here.	[1] Lots of nice people around [2] Daisybank had a very bad reputation [3] Much more supported staff [4] Don't hear the negatives so much [5] Occasionally heard negatives [6] Always tell them-nice school, lovely school, lovely children, better parents [7] you should get involved [8] Atmosphere is lovely	Geographical Location Word of mouth Perspectives	Society/community 'Expert' opinion – democratisation 'good' things

possible, but perhaps not always in the ways that might be expected. This opens up questions about change and that it's perhaps not always the school that has to make specific changes but that the individual's interpretation of what is already there may just change, which influences their perspectives on something.

[1]Results, results – in a grammar area I think results. Having said that I think that we, and other than emotional problems she's actually in the top set at [the local high school] and doing extremely well. I no longer worry about – when I came here, the [2]grammar was the ultimate to go to, but we went there but it wasn't the right place for all three of them, and [3]I only see that in retrospect but I still think that results, the [4]SATs results, if we can[5] up the level on the league, then I think that would be the [6]best thing because [7]people look at results unfortunately and not the value added, they just think about what the results are. The booster classes, for a long time we were [8]concentrating too much on the lower end, the kids with difficulties, and I think that the middle and higher level were not so good, and I think it was the government at the time always rating the bottom and I think it's very hard at times, particularly [9]when you've got a school that's got problems – problem families etc. but I think that you are doing a lot now to [10]boost everybody, but that's only come in, in the last maybe 5–6 years when we started to work on the [11]gifted and talented and I think it's very crucial to keep the kids that are in the middle because they can float off very easily. In the secondary schools if you	[1] Results [2] Grammar was the ultimate [3] I only see that in retrospect [4] SATs results [5] Up the level on the league [6] Best thing [7] People look at results [8] Concentrating too much on the lower end [9] When you've got a school with problems – problem families [10] Boost everybody [11] Gifted and talented [12] Booster classes [13] Extra curriculum [14] Specialist people in [15] Staff are getting extra training [16] Sports things	Performativity Social mix Changes	Neoliberalism Society/community 'good' things

are in the middle you float more. I think that's the problem. Let me think what else. I know this is a question that OFSTED will probably ask on how to do more than you do already. You're giving the [12]booster classes, you're giving the[13] extra curriculum stuff, you're getting[14] specialist people in. [15]Staff are getting extra training. Well I know you are trying to do more [16]sports things, externally.			

January 12th



Yes well we've had [1]adult learning for a few years and I think you are doing more of that and I think it will be very	[1] adult learning		Society/community

good, because you've got to consider that a lot of families have no education and that is key at least to read and write and fill in forms, I think it gives them the self-confidence, so I'm hoping as you do more of that, that will[2] improve matters for families as well. The [3]two-year provision, I'm hoping that will go out to everybody because I know that it's hard because I know people think it's only the [4]free meals, I know they are not earning lot of money and they would have to pay, for, I know they go to work because they can't afford it. I would like to see that that is rolled out to everybody, but I know you can't always do that because of funding but that I think would be good to [5]extend our pre-nursery to everybody rather than just free school meals, but I don't know that we've got the capacity to do that. I think that it's [6]where we are that's the problem and I know you've got an [7]outsized school but after-school club that takes children. We did try an after-school club, but it wasn't funding itself and people didn't take it because they didn't need to – they were not working. I think it would be good to do at the other end of the school, but I know that brings in more problems with OFSTED and costs, etc. Maybe, I can't remember all the clubs you've got, do you still have a chess club? No – the previous head started chess club – I can't play chess but that was her particular	[2] Improve matters for families [3] Two-year provision [4] Free meals [5] Extend the preschool to everybody [6] Where we are that's the problem [7] Outsized school [8] Extend on clubs	Social mix Geographical location	

like. I don't know if we could [8]extend on clubs. I don't know if there are more people in the community who would come in on a[9] voluntary basis to do things. We've done some [10] beautiful things, like the garden, is there someone else who is doing that now? You said there was. The [11]school looks tremendous, it looks tremendous. I mean it was not like this when the previous head came, it started to improve. The children never went on outings. The [12]head started outings which we continue, which is good.	[9] Volunteers [10] Beautiful things [11] School looks tremendous [12] Head started outings	Perspectives	'good' things

January 13th