

Schools and area regeneration

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Executive summary

The problems of the negative interactions between area disadvantage and educational attainment have been long-standing concerns of national and local policy. Many approaches to area regeneration have had an educational component. However, the problems have remained intractable. When the 'New' Labour government took power in 1997, it promised a new approach giving education a prominent role in tackling disadvantage and, in particular, it outlined a role for schools in 'neighbourhood renewal'. While this role opens up many opportunities for schools, it is not clearly defined and it creates tensions with schools' primary responsibility of delivering on the 'standards' agenda.

Within this context, the study reported here is concerned with the contribution to wider regeneration initiatives made by local schools serving two disadvantaged areas. It explores how the schools and other stakeholders conceptualised their roles, the activities they undertook, the successes they achieved and the problems they faced. It also makes policy recommendations for how schools' contributions could be made more effective.

Although practice in the schools was eclectic – even incoherent – three basic models of schools' contribution emerged. They were:

- the *community resourcing* model, in which schools seek to make their facilities, networks and expertise available to otherwise resource-poor communities;
- the *individual transformation* model in which schools focus exclusively on improving the life-chances of individual young people by raising their attainment;

- the *contextual transformation* model, in which schools likewise seek to raise attainments, but feel that they can only do so by involving families and the community and that they must also develop a wider range of attributes in their pupils.

Many factors impacted on the ways in which schools adopted or selected elements from these models. In particular:

- Where disadvantaged areas were large, schools had a relatively homogeneous community to which they could relate through the community resourcing and contextual transformation models. However, where areas were small, schools drew their pupils from a diverse range of communities and had an incentive to focus more exclusively on what they themselves could do to raise pupils' attainments.
- Local authorities had different approaches to regeneration and to the role of schools. These policies might incline schools towards one or other of the models.
- National education policy required schools to focus heavily on 'standards' of pupil attainment. Although there was some policy encouragement for schools to engage with their communities, the standards imperative tended to override this.
- Headteachers were particularly powerful in determining schools' approaches. Not only did the heads of different schools have different views, but newly-appointed headteachers might reverse the direction in which a school was moving.

Using any of these models, the evidence for the effectiveness of schools' work was ambiguous. Schools were engaged in a wide range of

community-oriented activities and could have considerable impact at an individual level or in specific aspects of their work. However, there was no evidence that they were able to have large-scale impacts on the communities they served as a whole, nor that they were able to bring about transformations of the life-chances of large groups of young people. Given the constraints under which they were operating and the intractable nature of the problems they were dealing with, it was unreasonable to expect anything other than this.

The current situation seems to be one in which there are many expectations of and opportunities for schools in respect of area regeneration, but little by way of a coherent and supportive policy framework which can make their work effective. A clear 'vision' of schools' roles is needed. Some principles on which this could be based are:

- the work of schools needs to be set in the context of a wide-ranging strategy to address disadvantage;
- schools need to have a clearly-defined, but holistic role;
- the 'standards agenda' needs to be rethought in ways which facilitate this role;
- funding, accountability and other policy frameworks need to be supportive of this holistic role;
- schools need to work in clusters and other extended structures;
- strategies need to be based on good information about communities' needs and wishes.

There are encouraging signs in the government's commitment to ending child poverty, in its new and more open strategy for primary education and in its interest in defining an 'extended' role for schools. These are indications that a rethinking of the role of schools as part of a wider strategy to address disadvantage is politically possible. However, this rethinking begs some fundamental questions about what we expect schools to achieve and how they should relate to local communities and to the wider society. Any real advance demands that we engage with these questions seriously and do so in respect not only of schools serving disadvantaged areas, but of the school system as a whole.

Schools and area regeneration: some policy dilemmas

The current context

This report is about the relationship between schools and the communities they serve. However, it is not simply about how schools can develop positive relationships with those communities or involve parents in the education of their children, or enlist communities in supporting a school's work. Rather, it is about how schools that serve disadvantaged communities can contribute to the regeneration of the areas where those communities live and in (or close to) which the schools are located. To this extent, this is one of the few studies which looks at school–community relations not from outside in – what the community can do for the school – but from inside out – what the school can do for the community.

The regeneration of disadvantaged areas is, of course, a long-standing concern of national and local policy. Many approaches have been attempted at various times since the 1900s – the creation of ‘model villages’, large-scale slum clearances, the establishment of new towns, local and regional economic development initiatives, the refurbishment of run-down estates and, latterly, the creation of ‘urban villages’. All of these and more have worked on the assumption that serious attempts to address disadvantage have to work in the places where people live and the communities in which they live. Many have also had an educational component. At the very least, they have assumed that the provision of good schools is essential for the well being of an area and its people. Frequently, they have gone beyond this and explored a wider range of contributions that schools can make – perhaps in developing civic virtues alongside the church and the village hall, or perhaps by offering educational opportunities to the whole community rather than simply to its children.

However, the problems of disadvantaged communities and the powerful and negative interactions between schooling and disadvantage have proved recalcitrant. It remains the case that poverty and other aspects of what has come to be called ‘social exclusion’ tend to concentrate in particular areas and within particular communities (Palmer et al, 2002; Darton et al, 2003). Indeed, if anything, the 1980s onwards have seen that concentration deepening rather than diluting (Howarth et al, 1998). Likewise, it remains the case that children who experience greatest social and economic disadvantages tend to do worst in school and that they then tend to experience further disadvantage as adults (Pearce and Hillman, 1998; Ennals, 2003).

Even more worryingly, what has become evident in recent years is that the schools which those children are most likely to attend – that is, schools serving areas of concentrated disadvantage – are also the schools which themselves experience greatest difficulties (Ofsted, 1993, 1996; Power et al, 2002; Woods and Levacic, 2002). Too often, these are schools which experience the highest levels of pupil mobility and the greatest levels of disruptive behaviour; they find it hard to recruit and retain staff; they become unattractive to aspirational families; and above all, they find it hard to raise their pupils' attainments at the same rate as other schools and the children fall even further behind their peers. Far from schools contributing to regeneration, or offering young people a path out of disadvantage, such schools are in danger of becoming trapped in a vicious circle where the decline of the area and the decline of the school reinforce one another (Power and Mumford, 1999).

When the 'New' Labour government took office in 1997, it was the end of a period in which both levels of relative disadvantage and its spatial concentration had increased rapidly (Green, 1996; Howarth et al, 1998). There were, the government believed, too many individuals, groups and whole communities which were 'socially excluded' – cut off, that is, from the opportunities, expectations and, ultimately, values which characterised the mainstream of society. Such exclusion, the government reasoned, had no single cause. Poverty was important, but social exclusion would not be overcome simply by creating jobs or raising the levels of state benefit:

[The] 'joined-up' nature of social problems is one of the key factors underlying the concept of social exclusion – a relatively new idea in British policy debate. It includes low income, but is broader and focuses on the link between problems such as, for example, unemployment, poor skills, high crime, poor housing and family breakdown. Only when these links are properly understood and addressed will policies really be effective. (SEU, 2001a, Summary, para 4)

In terms, therefore, of area regeneration, or 'neighbourhood renewal' as the government preferred to call it, there was no single approach that would work. Instead of focusing on one or other aspect of disadvantage, the task was to stimulate and then to coordinate a wide range of initiatives that would attack the multiple problems that beset the most disadvantaged areas.

As one of its first acts, the 'New' Labour government set up a Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) to bring together its policies in this field, and in September 1998 the SEU launched a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal (SEU, 1998). Now, it argued, was the time for a 'new approach' – one, it claimed, that would be "comprehensive, long-term and founded on what works" and which would focus on "bridging the gap between the poorest neighbourhoods and the rest of Britain" (SEU, 1998, Foreword). In line with the overall multidimensional approach to social exclusion, the strategy document announced the establishment of no fewer than 18 'Policy Action Teams' (PATs), each of which would explore the actions that would be needed

in a particular policy area in order to bring about renewal.

A number of these teams dealt with educational issues and one in particular – PAT 11 – focused on the potential role of schools in neighbourhood renewal. In the government's multidimensional analysis of social exclusion, education held – and still holds – a special place. As David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education from 1997 to 2001 pointed out, social exclusion cannot be understood in terms of economic poverty alone, but in terms also of poverties of aspiration, opportunity and education, which result in perpetual

"... underachievement, trapping not just individuals, but their children and their children's children into a spiral of decline." (Blunkett, 1999)

It is for this reason that education occupies a key position in the renewal not only of disadvantaged areas, but of society as a whole:

"Our vision is of nothing less than a new and stronger fabric for our society. Over the next five to ten years, we want all our young people to emerge from school with a sound basic education, committed to continuous learning and equipped with the personal skills they need to succeed as individuals and citizens. We want people of all ages engaged with learning. We want opportunity for all our people. We want people and communities once again proud of their self-determination. This is our vision: empowered and self-reliant individuals, strong families, self-sustaining communities – a nation equipped for the challenges and opportunities of the new millennium." (Blunkett, 1999)

Not surprisingly, therefore, PAT 11 looked for new ways in which schools could work with their under-achieving pupils, but saw this as intimately linked to the ways in which they related to the disadvantaged communities in which those pupils lived and to the 'fabric' of aspirations and opportunities which were woven into those communities. Its proposed strategy was to supplement the well-known characteristics of effective schools – dynamic leadership, clear targets, good teaching and so on – with a series

of additional activities to be known as 'schools plus'. These it defined as:

... activities which extend the services offered by the school, including study support, school-business links, co-location of health and other services ... schools' links with the community including parental involvement, the school as a community resource and the provider of learning opportunities for the wider community. (DfEE, 1999, para 13)

PAT 11's recommendations emerged in a context of a plethora of renewal activity at national and local level. The New Deal for Communities, supplemented by the Single Regeneration Budget and an ongoing series of other initiatives – Employment Zones, Health Action Zones, Sure Start, Education Action Zones, Excellence in Cities among others – targeted resources and created flexibility in disadvantaged areas. A national action plan in 2001 (SEU, 2001b) developed the original strategy by promising the establishment of a Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) in Whitehall and a series of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) bringing key players together at a local level, with a Neighbourhood Renewal Fund providing additional resourcing for renewal activities. It also promised a new focus on how local authorities were performing in their most deprived communities rather than simply an average across their areas, operationalised through a series of 'floor targets' (including some for education), which set out minimum levels of performance.

At the same time, a series of civil disturbances in multiethnic and multifaith areas of some towns and cities has seen a particular focus on 'community cohesion' in what in this context is called 'civil' (rather than 'neighbourhood') renewal (Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion, 2001, para 7). National guidance to local authorities (LGA, 2002) defines cohesion in terms of a sense of belonging and the acceptance and valuing of people's different backgrounds, and argues that strategies to promote cohesion in this sense should be part of existing planning mechanisms, including the work of LSPs. Latterly, the government has announced a 'pathfinder' programme to encourage local authorities to become involved in cohesion-building initiatives (NRU and Home Office, 2002).

The challenge for schools

These developments have created an exciting context for schools serving disadvantaged communities. For many years, the relationship between social and educational disadvantage was overlooked by policy makers; indeed, schools were often held largely, if not solely, responsible for the educational difficulties experienced by their disadvantaged pupils (Mortimore and Whitty, 2000). Now there is an acknowledgement that educational disadvantage has social origins and that schools have a part to play not only in raising the attainments of their pupils, but also in ensuring that,

... within 10 to 20 years, no one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live. (SEU, 2001b, para 8)

However, this wider role places demands on schools that are, to say the least, challenging, and might under certain circumstances be simply unsustainable. There are three principal reasons for this.

First, although the government's multidimensional analysis of social exclusion opens up many opportunities for schools to contribute to area regeneration, it also creates considerable uncertainty.

Government guidance (DfEE, 1999; DfES, 2002) invites schools to become involved in a wide range of community-oriented initiatives, from offering education, to setting up breakfast clubs, participating in health improvement programmes, working on crime prevention initiatives, offering parenting classes, and so on. The question for schools is how to decide which of these they should become involved in and how they should divide their limited resources and energies between them. This decision is made more problematic by the government's analysis of social exclusion. If social exclusion is multidimensional, then all activities that address one or other of its aspects are valuable. Put another way, since there is no *single* underlying cause, anything helps, but nothing takes precedence.

This problem is compounded by the proliferation of initiatives to which the multidimensional analysis gives rise. Typically, right across the public services, such initiatives are short term,

funded from non-core budgets, inadequately 'joined-up' with other initiatives, and subject to close accountability in terms of their own limited objectives (Audit Commission, 2002). What schools do, therefore, is likely to be determined as much by the requirements of the projects and funds that are available to them as by any fundamental analysis of the needs of the communities they serve.

Second, even if schools are clear about how they should contribute to their communities, they are subject to powerful pressures which might make them hesitate before making a wholehearted commitment.

While the government has undoubtedly encouraged schools – particularly those serving disadvantaged communities – to take on an extended role, the main thrust of its education policies has been in somewhat different directions (Docking, 2000; Phillips and Harper-Jones, 2003). In particular, the so-called 'standards agenda' – with its emphasis on target setting, publication of inspection and performance data, the prescription of teaching methods, and, in the most disadvantaged areas, the setting of 'floor targets' and recurrent threats to the future of 'failing schools' – gives a clear message to schools that they have to focus on the attainments of their pupils above almost everything else.

Moreover, the funding and accountability systems strongly reinforce this message. Schools continue to be funded largely on the basis of pupil numbers, on the understandable assumption that their principal costs are for teaching. This means, however, that they lack any designated and predictable funding stream for community-oriented activities, relying instead on the sort of short-term project funding described above. Similarly, the principal forms of monitoring to which they are subject – through Ofsted inspections, performance data (the annual school 'league tables') and local education authority (LEA) review – are heavily focused on pupil attainment rather than community-oriented activities. Under the circumstances, the latter can easily be seen as peripheral and rather risky ventures which simply distract schools from their core business.

Finally, there is the sheer intractability of the problems of social and educational disadvantage.

Despite the flurry of activity around 'neighbourhood renewal' and the positive movements on some indicators of social exclusion, disadvantage continues to have a distinct spatial concentration (Palmer et al, 2002). Similarly, despite 15 years of major school 'reform' and claims of real advances, the link between community disadvantage and low educational attainment remains largely unbroken (Gold, 2003), and even the most ambitious and expensive of reform efforts continue to founder on the intractability of the challenges they face (Hackett, 2003). For many years, schools have been expected, through a process of continuous improvement, to reach a point where they can 'make a difference' to the attainments of their pupils. The evidence suggests that they can do so, but that the difference they make is incremental rather than transformative (Mortimore and Whitty, 2000), and that it requires strenuous efforts over and above those which schools with more advantaged intakes have to make (Ofsted, 2000). The expectation that they will in addition 'make a difference' to the communities they serve may not be impossible to fulfil and may even complement their work on teaching and learning. However, it is inevitably challenging in the extreme.

In the remainder of this report we will look at the ways in which two groups of schools serving disadvantaged areas have responded to these challenges. We will see how they have conceptualised their role vis-à-vis the communities from which they draw their pupils. We will try to identify the problems they have encountered and assess the success or otherwise of the strategies they have developed to overcome these problems. Finally, and most important, we will ask what could now be done in terms of policy and practice to maximise the contributions similar schools elsewhere can make to their communities.

The case studies

The fieldwork for this study began in 2000, when the neighbourhood renewal strategy and its associated PAT reports were already available and when the government was in the midst of its drive to raise standards across the education system as a whole. In this context, we wished to explore the role that schools were playing, and potentially could play, in area regeneration. We selected two areas to work in that were characterised by a range of disadvantages and where wide-ranging regeneration strategies had been set in place. We then selected for detailed study those schools which educated the largest proportions of children living in those areas.

Much work on the school–community interface adopts the school’s perspective on community issues. It is concerned with how the community can support the work of the school and how the school can maximise that support. Very often it presents examples of schools that have exceptionally good community links. However, our concern was the reverse of this. We were interested in the *areas* and in the schools that served them, whether or not they saw community links as a priority. Above all, we were interested in what the school could contribute to regeneration, not in what the community could contribute to the school.

We spent two years tracing developments in each area. In a first round of fieldwork, we collected documentary evidence, statistical information on each area and performance data on schools. We also interviewed key players in schools, in the local authority, in community organisations and other governmental organisations, as well as residents and pupils. In subsequent fieldwork, we extended the range of interviewees and identified initiatives – such as the Education Action Zones (EAZs) in each area – which we

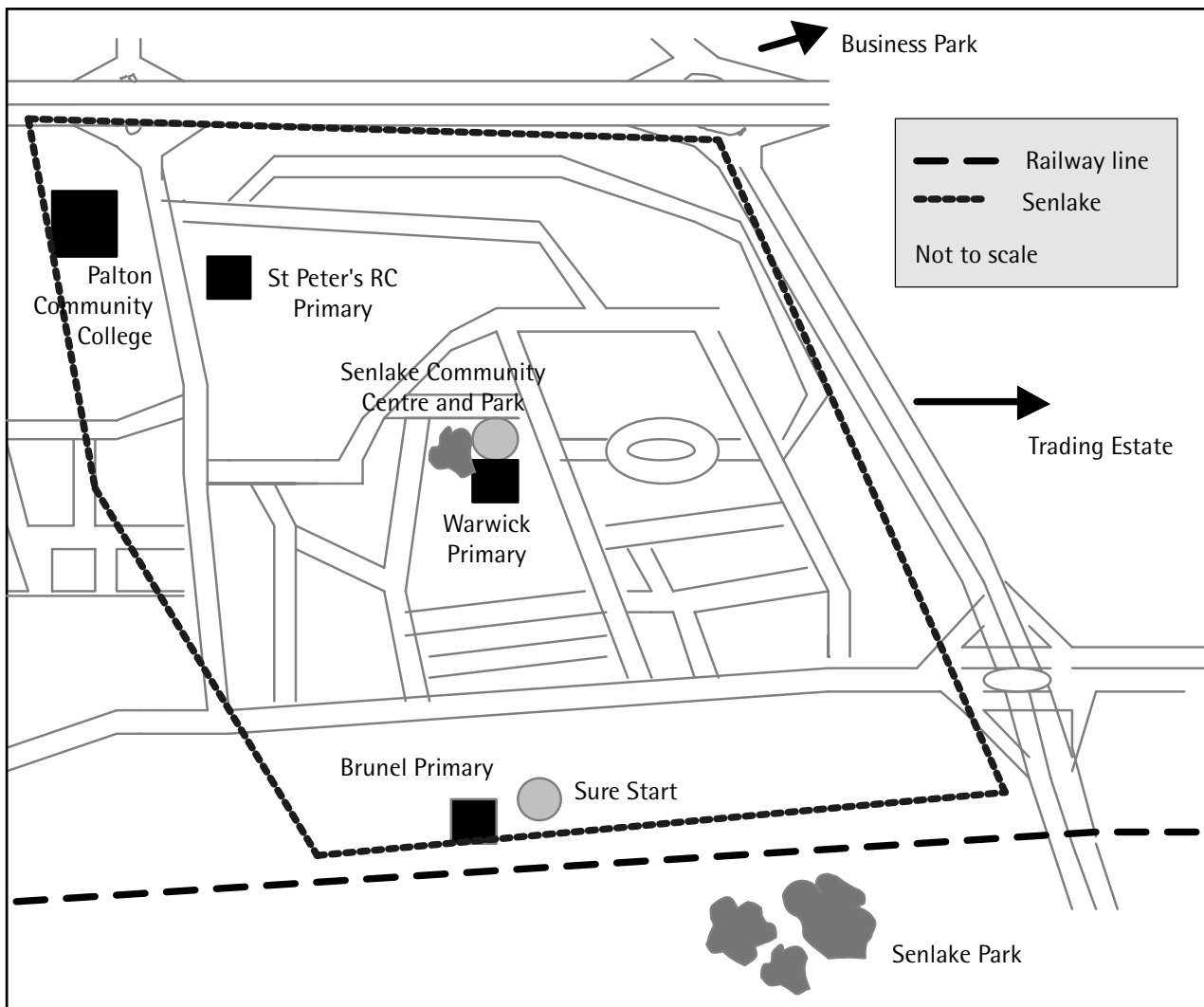
wished to follow through in more detail. We offered feedback to participants in the research on a regular basis and concluded our work with a conference to which all participants were invited. Here, we presented our findings and explored their implications for policy. Full details of our methodology and of the data we drew upon are presented in Appendices A and B respectively.

The areas: Senlake and Forest Villas

Our work was located in two residential areas in the North of England – Senlake (see Figure 1) and Forest Villas (see Figure 2). Both were areas of inter-war housing within what were originally industrialised conurbations. In both cases, traditional heavy industries had declined, leaving a familiar legacy of high unemployment (particularly among men) and low income levels, with all the associated social problems: high levels of criminality, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, and so on. These problems were compounded by the siting of new industries some distance away and by the reluctance or inability on the part of some residents to cross clear geographic boundaries which demarcated their areas. Railway lines and ring roads seemed to constitute psychological as well as physical barriers. Not surprisingly, both areas figured among the 10% most disadvantaged wards nationally (DETR, 2000).

We encountered some residents who pointed to the strengths of their areas and, in particular, to the historic cohesiveness of local communities. However, this cohesiveness had been eroded, they felt, by incoming families with marked problems. Although both areas were largely mono-cultural, with overwhelmingly white British

Figure 1: Map of Senlake



populations, they were not entirely at ease with themselves. This unease was exacerbated by a sense of threat which some residents felt from young people congregating on the streets. Young people themselves complained of the lack of proper facilities and the sense that they were under constant surveillance. There were, they said, too few organised activities. Community centres were dominated by older residents. There were open spaces, but these were unkempt, vandalised and sometimes threatening places.

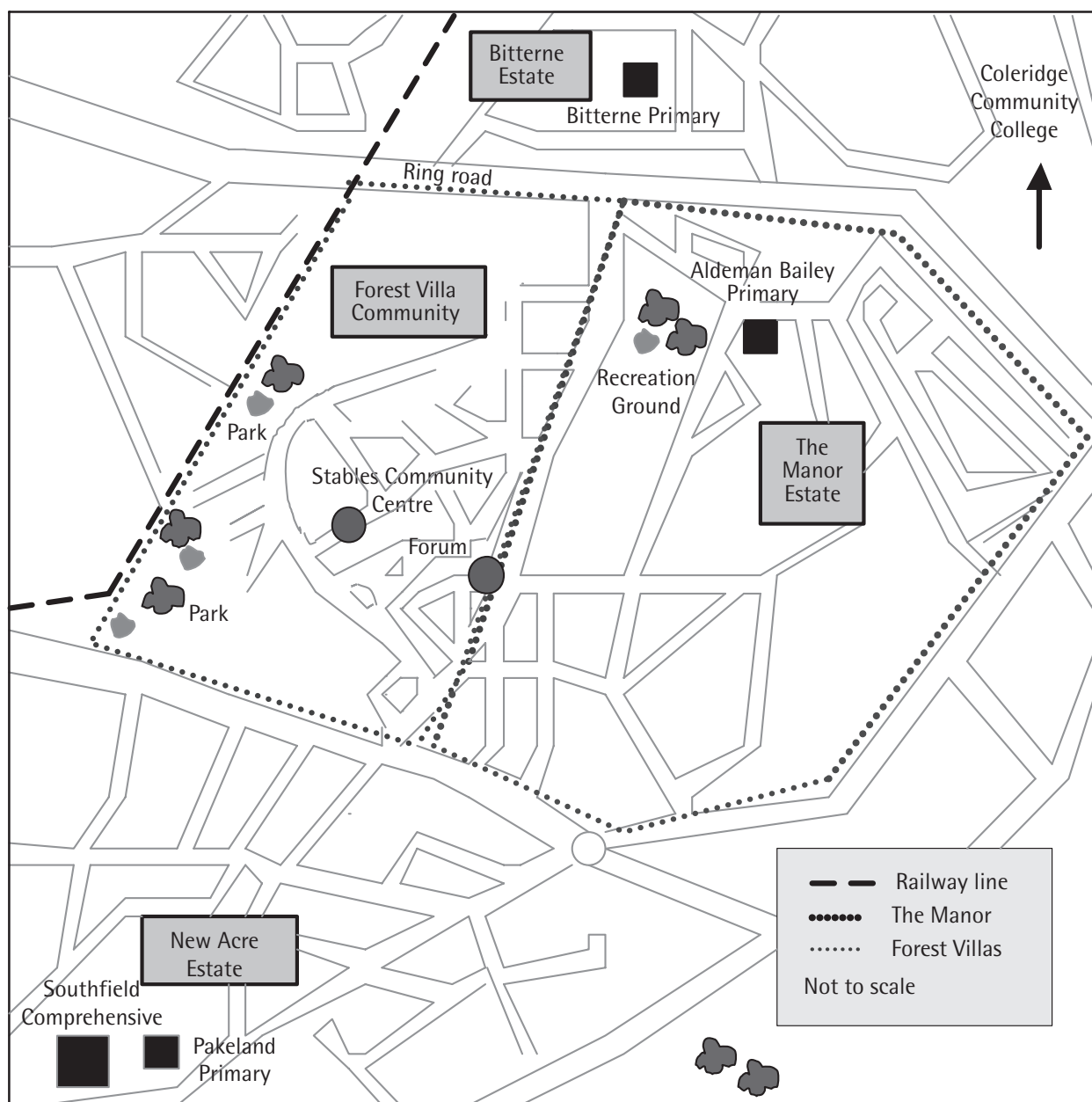
One significant difference between Senlake and Forest Villas was their relative size and their relationship to surrounding areas. The former was a large and self-contained estate of relatively homogeneous housing with a population of over 7,500. Forest Villas, on the other hand, had less than one third of that population and was internally divided into sub-areas with different types of housing and tenure. It had originally

been part of a larger council estate known as The Manor but was in reality divided geographically and psychologically from the rest of the estate by a through road. Other neighbouring areas were very different in character from Forest Villas.

Regeneration initiatives

Regeneration initiatives in Senlake and Forest Villas also had much in common, together with some important differences. Economically, the strategy at local authority level and beyond was to attract call centres and high-tech industries which would be located at some distance from these traditional residential areas. There were schemes to raise the skill levels and aspirations of residents so that they could access these employment opportunities, but inevitably many new jobs went to more highly-skilled people from elsewhere.

Figure 2: Map of Forest Villas



In both areas, there had been considerable investment in infrastructure, in terms of housing refurbishment, traffic calming measures, the upgrading of open spaces and the building of community centres. Both local authorities worked hard to involve local people in helping to shape these initiatives and in the ongoing management of community facilities, and both had the predictable mixture of success with a committed group of residents, but indifference from many others. Both areas also had the familiar raft of community support and development initiatives around crime reduction, health improvement, parenting support, adult education, and so on.

There were, however, some important differences of emphasis in these regeneration initiatives. Senlake's local authority placed particular store by working with young children and their families as a long-term strategy for regeneration through investment in human capital. As a local authority officer explained:

“The Council has a big agenda and they very much want to develop links with communities. Parental involvement is vital to this; they need to involve parents in their children's education. [The Authority] has traditionally been an area with high provision of pre-school education....

childcare is also part of economic regeneration.”

This investment was realised through a focus on preventing educational failure and raising aspirations by investing in early years provision and, specifically, through a Sure Start initiative, based next to one of the local primary schools. This aimed to offer holistic support to young children and their families, bringing together health, social work and educational specialists and offering a range of activities including parenting classes, adult education, job training, work experience schemes, childcare and leisure activities designed to attract mothers onto the site.

In Forest Villas, on the other hand, there had been a particular emphasis on housing-led regeneration. Towards the end of the 1980s, the area was in a parlous state, with run-down properties, high levels of social problems and low housing demand. The local authority decided that the only solution was a major refurbishment and remodelling, involving wide-scale demolition and new build by a private developer and by housing associations. This physical regeneration, which was undertaken in the early 1990s and funded in part through City Challenge, effectively divided the estate into three small areas with only limited links between them – one of private housing in the north of the area, one of housing association properties in the centre, and a few streets of residual, refurbished council properties in the south. One significant effect was to reduce child density in the area, which in turn reduced the population from which local schools could draw.

The scheme was innovative for its time, particularly in terms of the local authority's strenuous efforts to secure community involvement. However, its outcomes were contested. While the local authority was proud of the bold steps it had taken, others felt that the regeneration,

“... was building work and did not alter people's lives.” (community worker, Forest Villas)

In particular, some believed that the regeneration had failed to remove the stigma surrounding the estate, that the physical division of the estate had exacerbated the fragmentation in the community

and that the local authority had withdrawn its support too quickly once the refurbishment programme was complete.

Whatever the truth of these claims, it certainly seemed to be the case that the focus of economic regeneration in the authority as a whole carried threats as well as some opportunities for the area. Forest Villas was located in the north of the authority, but the major drivers of economic development were located elsewhere. As a senior local authority officer explained to us:

“The main drivers of regeneration are in the south of the borough, the call centres, the university, office developments. This may produce a population drag down to the south, which may impact on schools.”

Consequently, this officer acknowledged, there was a real possibility that disadvantaged areas such as Forest Villas would become further depopulated and residualised. It might be possible to save them by further diversification. Alternatively, they might have to be managed as residualised estates or simply abandoned and demolished.

This situation was compounded by Forest Villas' relatively small size. The estate formed only part of an electoral ward which encompassed other, less-disadvantaged areas. In principle, the advent of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and of LSPs ought to have held out new promise for Forest Villas, not least since its local authority had piloted the partnership approach. However, Forest Villas did not constitute a priority area for Neighbourhood Renewal Fund funding, for the Sure Start initiative or for the Children's Fund, and tended to be seen by some local authority services as too small to merit intensive intervention. This was very different from the situation in Senlake which, as a large area of disadvantage, more or less coterminous with an electoral ward, retained a strong voice in arguing for targeted funding and for its due share of attention from services. The impact of these differences was, as we shall shortly see, surprisingly significant.

The schools: Senlake

Schooling in Senlake was undergoing a reorganisation as our work began, moving from a

three-tier system, with first and middle schools feeding into a 13-18 high school, to two tiers of 5-11 primary schools and an 11-18 comprehensive school. This involved the closure of one of the existing middle schools. The remaining schools grew in size year on year (by taking in a new cohort or retaining an existing one), taking on new staff and undergoing considerable refurbishment and new build. In addition, there was a separate Roman Catholic system which had always been organised on a two-tier basis.

We worked most closely with four case study schools (see Appendix C for school role demographics and school performance data). These were all located in Senlake (see Figure 1) and drew a substantial portion of their intake from the area (see Appendix D). One of the primaries was a Roman Catholic-aided school, St Peter's, which recruited from a wider area than its neighbours (although still predominantly within Senlake) and transferred many of its pupils to a Roman Catholic comprehensive school outside the area. A further two primaries, Brunel and Warwick, were community schools which transferred most of their pupils to a fourth school, Patton, the newly-emerging 11-18 comprehensive. This school also recruited from a wider area than Senlake. Between them, these schools educated about half of the school-age children in the area at primary level and a little under half at secondary level. The remainder of the children attended a wide range of schools outside the immediate area, including some fairly distant schools at secondary level.

Challenges facing the schools

Given the characteristics of the area they served, it is not surprising that the schools were marked by relatively high levels of disadvantage and by relatively low levels of pupil attainment (see Appendices C and E). Teachers and others connected with the schools reported a series of problems that some, if not all, of their pupils presented. There were, they claimed, limitations in language and social skills leading to behavioural difficulties. These in turn were related to deep-seated cultural problems in the area:

“In general, pupils from Senlake area have very low aspirations. Very few aim for or

get to University. Education is not seen as a priority.” (headteacher, Senlake)

For some, this was directly related to the effects of industrial decline and generational unemployment:

“The demise of ship building in the area had a huge impact on employment figures in Senlake and had a huge impact on people's morale. One knock-on effect is that children are no longer given the aspiration to work, and instead are given the message that it is all right to be on the dole.” (community worker, Senlake)

The schools' response

The schools saw it as their task to support and encourage rather than to condemn. As one headteacher maintained:

“Anything that changes the life-chances of families, that changes parents' aspirations and hopes for their children, is top of the agenda.”

Given this analysis, it is not surprising that all of the schools sought to develop higher levels of involvement with their parent bodies and the wider community, as well as developing additional, extra-curricular activities to engage and enthuse their pupils. We say more about the rationale for and impact of these activities in due course (see Chapter 3), but it is perhaps worth noting here that much of the schools' work was congruent with a broad LEA approach to community involvement. For instance, the LEA encouraged its schools to develop facilities for community use and the childcare provision in the two community primaries was very much in accord with the LEA emphasis on early years provision. Moreover, Patton, which now styled itself a 'Community College', had until the 1990s housed even more substantial adult and community education provision as part of a network of school-based provision across the authority. Although LEA policy had changed some time ago, a number of its teachers remembered the previous system and looked back to it as something of a golden age.

The four schools in our study, together with other schools which 'fed' Patton Community

College, received additional funding under the government's Excellence in Cities (EiC) initiative. In the case of the Senlake schools, this was used to develop a 'mini-EAZ' through which the schools formulated joint approaches to common issues – raising aspirations and attainments, extending out-of-hours activities, improving links with the community, developing teaching and learning, primary–secondary transition, tackling pupil disaffection, developing a vocational curriculum for older pupils and improving school–business links. Although not all of this work was explicitly community-oriented, there was a clear sense in the schools that they had to take decisive action to meet the particular challenges presented by a disadvantaged area. The EAZ Action Plan, for instance, set out the following vision:

The area covered by this EAZ is well served by a range of initiatives that are aimed at regenerating the local economy. Our plans aim to complement and work with local initiatives to provide a joined up solution to breaking the cycle of low aspirations. As permanent resources in the community we will reinforce confidence in the education system by providing planned opportunities to achieve success.

The use of mentoring in its various guises (mentor support through the EiC initiative, peer mentoring, employee mentoring) was seen as an important way of raising pupils' expectations. Similarly, all of the schools shared a focus on sports, and to a lesser degree on arts, as a means of motivating and engaging their pupils. During the course of our fieldwork, Patton gained specialist sports college status, which itself carried with it an obligation of outreach to local schools and the wider community.

The schools: Forest Villas

We worked with five schools serving Forest Villas – two secondary and three primary. One of the comprehensives – Coleridge – styled itself a 'community' school, although it was not specially funded or constituted for this purpose and the title reflected historic practice rather than its current orientation.

In contrast to the Senlake situation, none of the schools was located in the Forest Villas area (see

Figure 2) and for none of them did Forest Villas pupils constitute the majority of their intake (see Appendix D). Access to four of the schools demanded that pupils cross main roads and enter different residential areas. The fifth school, Alderman Bailey Primary, was located on the Manor estate, had been seen as the 'estate school' for the whole area before the refurbishment of Forest Villas, and was the closest one to Forest Villas itself. However, reaching it involved pupils crossing the through road that divided Forest Villas from the Manor, both physically and psychologically.

Apart from Alderman Bailey, all of the schools served diverse areas. Coleridge Community School and Southfield Comprehensive drew a preponderance of pupils from the larger disadvantaged estates beyond Forest Villas, but Bitterne Primary and Pakeland Primary served mixed intakes that saw them placed at around the national average on indicators of disadvantage and performance.

Challenges facing the schools

The slightly more advantaged position of Bitterne and Pakeland meant that, unlike the other schools in the study, they were not faced on a daily basis by the overwhelming effects of disadvantage on a high proportion of their pupil populations. Indeed, some teachers in these schools prided themselves on not being concerned with the differences between pupils from different areas. Elsewhere, however, teachers worked in the same context of disadvantage and low attainment as did their counterparts in Senlake (see Appendices C and E for demographic and performance data). The explanations of the impacts on their pupils were very similar to those offered to us in Senlake:

"Some pupils carry a lot of baggage and this inevitably impacts on their levels of aspiration and self-esteem.... Low levels of aspiration and confidence do link to the environment in which they live." (teacher, Forest Villas)

Or again:

"There is a very high risk of some male pupils turning to crime and some female pupils falling pregnant before they

complete their education.... Peer group pressure is an enormous influencing factor, as is family life.” (headteacher, Forest Villas)

As in Senlake, then, these schools saw themselves as struggling against a cycle of low aspirations, adverse environmental factors and low attainment.

The schools' responses

Neither the local authority nor individual schools had, at the time of our fieldwork, major programmes of community involvement. Nonetheless, one-off projects, individual enthusiasms and the inevitable interactions between schools and parents generated a range of community-oriented initiatives (see Chapter 3). As in Senlake, the schools were brought together (along with others in their area) within an EAZ. Although this was funded and managed on a somewhat different basis from its Senlake counterpart, it shared similar aims and activities. The schools, like the Senlake schools, were also part of an EiC area which, coupled with the EAZ, offered a raft of initiatives – transition programmes, the enhancement of information and communication technology, programmes for developing school leadership, a focus on raising attainment, parental involvement schemes, curriculum extension programmes, and so on. Both Coleridge and Southfield Schools had extensive mentoring schemes. Although these initiatives might have been slightly less likely than in Senlake to have an explicit community orientation, they were likewise seen very much as responses to the particular challenges of schooling in a disadvantaged area.

be directed at children and young people within the schools, or at the wider community beyond the school. Was ‘regeneration’, in effect, about helping individual pupils make the most of themselves, or was it about helping whole communities out of disadvantage?

In the next chapter, we shall explore these different views in more detail and try to understand how they arose and what implications they had for the work of the schools.

Similarities and differences

There were, then, broad similarities between the two areas and the schools that served them. In both cases, the effects of economic decline and social disadvantage created a challenging context for schools characterised, we were repeatedly told, by low attainment, low aspirations and disengagement from learning. In both cases, schools felt that they had to respond to these challenges. However, it became obvious as our work progressed that there were very different views about what form such responses should take and, particularly, about how far they should

Conceptualising the role of schools in regeneration

School activities

In the previous chapter we indicated in general terms the sorts of community-oriented activities in which our schools engaged. In fact, each was engaged in activities which either brought them into contact with the communities they served or which, potentially at least, contributed to area regeneration. (For a full listing of these activities, see Appendix F.)

What was immediately striking was both the range of these activities and the fact that they imply very different approaches to the contribution schools might make to regeneration. Some of these activities reflect a view of the role of schools in the communities they serve which would have been recognisable from at least the 1970s onwards – community use of school facilities, the provision of adult education, support for a parent–teacher association, and so on. Others reflect a perhaps newer view that schools can make good some of the supposed deficits in the families and communities in which their pupils live by, for instance, offering parenting classes or drop-in consultations with the school nurse. Others again reflect the ‘New’ Labour conviction that vigorous intervention by schools outside ordinary lessons can enhance the attainments, skills and life-chances of their pupils – hence the homework clubs, breakfast clubs, mentoring schemes and the like.

We found the same diversity of approach when we talked to individuals both in and beyond schools. It was by no means uncommon for the rationales articulated by people in the same school, community or local authority, to be quite different from one another. Moreover, there were strong elements of serendipity and opportunism in what schools actually did – initiatives that

were inherited from the past, opportunities to access funding that had presented themselves more recently, the ‘pet projects’ of enthusiastic individuals, and so on.

The pattern on the ground was therefore complex. Nonetheless, within this complexity, we were able to identify three major approaches to the role of schools in area regeneration. More often than not, these approaches were only partially articulated and were left implicit in the actions of individuals or organisations and in their explanations for those actions. By making these implicit and sometimes loosely-coupled sets of assumptions explicit, however, and by showing how they relate to each other, it is possible to present these broad approaches as coherent ‘models’ of schools’ roles in area regeneration. Not only does this help to make sense of the complexity of what was happening on the ground, but it may also prove useful for other decision makers who are attempting to clarify their own thinking in this field.

The models

Model A: Community resourcing

The first model is concerned with increasing the resources of all sorts which are available to disadvantaged communities, so that the quality of life within them is maintained or improved:

“Schools are the most valuable resources in a community and they should be developed as a community resource.” (Councillor, Senlake)

To some extent, this is about material resources and physical infrastructure – the condition of its housing stock, the availability of recreational facilities, access to community centres, and so on. However, ultimately, these are important because they contribute to what one interviewee called,

“[The] life and heart of an area; about trying to ensure that residents feel happy, safe and secure in their neighbourhood. It is about asking how does an area feel when you drive into it. Do you feel threatened or comfortable? Would you consider living there? Is there culturally a range of activities available to residents?” (local authority officer, Senlake)

On this view, schools have a crucial role as a community resource. Indeed, they are in many ways the principal investment of the local authority – and ultimately of the state – into disadvantaged communities. In the words of one headteacher,

“The school remains when all else has gone.”

The quality of the school in itself adds to the attractiveness of the area:

“People often choose an allocation to be close to a school they like. If the schools aren’t doing well, families are more reluctant to move into an area.” (housing officer, Forest Villas)

Moreover, schools have meeting spaces, teaching rooms, sports facilities, computer suites and drama rooms which can be (and to some extent were) opened to community use and:

“... when the school closes at 3.30 and remains closed at the weekend and during holidays it is a waste of a public building. Schools ought to provide youth clubs and charge a small entrance fee that would contribute towards running costs ... if children and young people were not bored, there would be less vandalism on the streets.” (resident, Forest Villas)

Beyond this, schools are staffed by skilled professionals with good access to children and their families. They can, therefore, make a

contribution to tackling community problems, as in this example from Forest Villas:

“There were lots of problems about anti-social behaviour and Alderman Bailey supported initiatives with children. For example, they arranged for the police to work with children [to set up a junior crime prevention panel]. There were issues around health and safety during the refurbishment so they ran courses on this, involving children and getting them to look after the estate.” (housing officer, Forest Villas)

In other cases, the support is more individualised and ad hoc. We interviewed the headteacher of one primary school, for instance, shortly after a case had hit the national news where a group of young people from the area had overdosed on a cocktail of drugs. Even though the young people had long since left primary school and one of them had no connection with the school, it was to the headteacher that the families turned as the most accessible and approachable form of support. For him, this was a major responsibility which he felt he had to fulfil, regardless of the costs in terms of time and effort:

“Placing all energies into raising standards and ignoring community needs could create bigger problems in the long run.”

Or, as another headteacher put it,

“[This school] acts as a support system for pastoral and social problems. It is a side of education that has to be done.”

The common theme throughout this model is that, quite apart from any impact the school might have on children through its core educational functions, the school constitutes a resource for a community which might otherwise be anything but resource-rich. Because the school is accessible to the community and seeks to support the community, the area is simply a better place to live.

Model B: Individual transformation

An alternative view is less concerned with making communities better places to live than with a more dynamic attempt to transform the

future prospects of individual young people by educating them as effectively as possible, and giving them a real chance to escape disadvantage. As a senior LEA officer for Forest Villas commented:

“Regeneration must be about enhancing the life-chances of young people and education has got to be the key for that.”

In this context, ‘life-chances’ effectively translate as ‘employment opportunities’. If young people are to be employable, they have to acquire the knowledge, skills and accreditation that make them attractive to employers – especially in the context of an increasingly globalised economy where opportunities for unskilled work are declining. It follows that the role – indeed, duty – of the school is to obey the imperatives of national government and drive up levels of attainment as vigorously as possible. Hence, the hard line taken by the senior officer quoted above with schools in his LEA:

“I have a number of headteachers who will say to me that I am preoccupied and driven by, in the primary sector, by key stage 2 results and in the secondary sector by GCSE results and I will say to them, ‘Yes, of course I am preoccupied because to a large extent that is what is driving all of us’.”

This approach may well bring about changes in disadvantaged communities as individuals become more successful and bring their increased spending power into the community. Indeed, if a critical mass of individuals acquires an appropriate level of skills and knowledge, it may attract employers into the area. However, ultimately the focus of regeneration is not on the community but on the individual. This creates a somewhat ambivalent relationship between schools and the communities they notionally serve. As a senior officer in Forest Villas’ local authority explained:

“The authority concentrates on attainment. This may divorce the school from its social milieu and mean that schools are not seen as a community facility. However, this should work at the macro level.”

Even if at the ‘macro level’ focusing on individuals might ultimately benefit the community, there is no reason why schools

should work directly to resource and support those communities. Indeed, some educators saw disadvantaged communities as decidedly negative influences from which children had to be protected:

“The school aims to provide a different sort of area for pupils in which it imposes a strict uniform and discipline code.... The school is a safe haven and provides an alternative to the community.... The number one priority is raising attainment as that is what it [the school] is accountable for.... The priority is to teach pupils to read so that they can get their exams and leave Forest Villas, so they can get out of there.” (headteacher, Forest Villas)

Moreover, the notion of ‘getting out’ of disadvantaged communities indicates that it is by no means certain that the enhanced life-chances of individuals will necessarily benefit the communities from which they come:

“One consequence of this strategy is the depopulation of some areas because opportunity brings mobility. This increases the problems in some areas.” (senior officer, Forest Villas’ local authority)

The point is that the employment opportunities which a more highly-skilled workforce attracts may not be located close to one or other disadvantaged residential area; nor, indeed, is it certain that ‘successful’ individuals will wish to remain in their ‘home’ communities. These are, of course, further reasons why schools might be wary of investing too much of their limited resources in the communities they notionally serve.

Model C: Contextual transformation

This third model is as much concerned with transforming the life-chances of individual young people as is the second and like that model sees education as the key. However, it sees an exclusive focus on attainments and accreditation as too narrow because it ignores the real social contexts in which young people grow up and within which they will have to find employment. Schools, therefore, have to take on two additional tasks. First, they have to recognise that the formal academic knowledge they impart

only equates to employability if it can be set in the context of the realities of the world of work. As one Forest Villas resident succinctly put it:

“There’s no point in giving children a good education if they don’t know how to handle it.”

‘Knowing how to handle it’ means something specific in relation to the labour market where what young people learn academically is clearly not enough:

“Schools serve their communities in two ways. Firstly there is their core business of educating pupils. The national curriculum determines how this is done and limits flexibility. However, schools should try to be outward looking and include education about citizenship, employment skills and the needs of the job market. Schools must have an awareness of the job market’s requirements and attempt to match the curriculum to these.” (local authority officer, Senlake)

Second, schools have to understand – and respond positively to – the family and community contexts within which their pupils live. As one headteacher put it:

“... while the prime role of school is to educate, it is not going to be possible to drive up attainment without engaging fully with the community.” (headteacher, Senlake)

The rationale here is that, despite the arguments of those who support the ‘individual transformation’ model, schools cannot in reality detach children from the influences of their families and communities. Therefore, they have to work *with* the community to ensure that those influences are as positive as possible:

“[Schools] are seeing the children and they’re seeing the immediate results of the way those children are parented. If they want to make a difference to their entry level and their assessments as the child goes through school and develops, if they really do want to turn those children out as more capable, more confident children, they’ve got to start thinking ‘we are part of this community, what can we do in

partnership to develop that?’.” (community worker, Forest Villas)

The transformation of young people’s life-chances, therefore, depends intimately on their ability to intervene with the families and communities in which children and young people live:

“Schools’ contribution to regeneration should extend beyond educating for credentials and should also consider other aspects of regeneration such as crime and health. By doing so they will create a positive and thriving sense of community in which young people will naturally want to succeed.” (community worker, Forest Villas)

This is not simply about offering additional resources to communities, however. It is about effecting a transformation in their underlying attitudes and value systems – what were so often described as their ‘aspirations’:

“Schools can help to raise aspirations in communities by encouraging families to invest in education.... It’s about regenerating people.” (senior local authority officer, Forest Villas)

The expectation is that any investment made by schools in this transformation process will feed back into the attainments of children and young people:

“By working with parents and community members to raise aspirations and see the value of education, the school will be in a stronger position to raise standards and levels of aspiration in the school.” (teacher, Forest Villas)

Implications for action

Not only is each of these models internally coherent, they also offer a quite clear and distinct course of action. The dynamic and transformative approach of the latter two models, for instance, would suggest that schools need to focus hard on raising the attainments and capabilities of their pupils without dissipating their energies by indiscriminately offering resources to the communities they serve. On the other hand, there is an equally sharp divide between the

individual and contextual transformation models over whether schools should focus exclusively on educating their pupils, or whether such a focus is ultimately doomed to failure.

However, practice on the ground was not characterised by the strategic pursuit of one or other of these models. Certainly, it was possible to detect particular emphases in the work of schools, local authorities and others – an emphasis on the ‘individual transformation’ model in Forest Villas’ schools, on the ‘contextual transformation’ model in Senlake and on the ‘community resourcing model’ among residents and community workers in both areas. However, these emphases existed in the context of considerable eclecticism. Unfortunately, moreover, neither the emphasis on one model nor the borrowings from others necessarily represented the outcome of clear, strategic decision making. There was, for instance, little guidance available to schools as to the direction they should take. As one headteacher declared:

“I would say that they [community workers and officers] have not got a clue.... There is a lack of clarity about what constitutes community and even when I’m searching for a clear definition, you cannot then say that the school can encompass all the people within that community.”
(headteacher, Forest Villas)

In the absence of such guidance, policy and practice evolved in response to a complex set of opportunities, imperatives and constraints, mediated by the attitudes and beliefs of individuals. It is to the impact of these factors that we now turn.

Factors in the adoption of the models

Area geographies and demographics

One factor which seems to have influenced the adoption of particular models to a surprising extent is the relative size of the two areas. The large scale of Senlake meant that the schools which served it were located within the area, had their intakes dominated by pupils living in the area and unequivocally regarded themselves – and were seen by residents – as ‘Senlake schools’. This meant that, quite apart from their

ease of access to community organisations and agencies, they could see themselves, particularly under the aegis of the EAZ, as offering services and facilities or taking concerted action to address problems that were specific to Senlake in terms of low attainment and low aspirations.

The reverse was the case for schools serving Forest Villas. Their geographical position outside the area and the minority status of Forest Villas pupils in their intake meant that they had to see themselves as serving a diverse range of communities rather than one in particular. The simple pragmatics of access was an issue for some of them. For instance, the headteachers and governors of both Southfield and Pakeland schools reported that it was much easier for them to carry out activities in the (more prosperous) estate on which they were located than to walk (or, more probably, bus) their pupils the mile or so across a main road to Forest Villas. Moreover, where schools (particularly the secondaries) served multiple communities, some of which were as disadvantaged as Forest Villas, there were also multiple demands on their time as different community groups sought to involve them in their activities:

“There is a limit to what the schools can do for Forest Villas. Southfield Comprehensive and Pakeland Primary tend to have better relations with their immediate community on the New Acre estate.” (governor, Forest Villas)

For Bitterne School, the problems were even more acute and were exacerbated by some of the perverse consequences of parental ‘choice’. Originally, the school had been built to serve the private housing estate on which it was located. However, as families on the estate had matured and their children had moved on, it was left with empty places which proved very attractive to aspirational families from more disadvantaged surrounding areas. Since the school was only a short walk from Forest Villas (albeit across a main road), it attracted a growing number of families both from there and from the Manor estate as a whole. However, the headteacher reported that any attempts on her part to meet the needs and aspirations of these families were greeted with resentment by parents from elsewhere:

“The school faces tensions, if not fisticuffs, between parents from different estates. For example there have been courses run at [a community centre in a disadvantaged community] that some parents refuse to attend because of the location.”

She was also very much aware that pupils from disadvantaged areas presented challenges which the school was not resourced to meet. Indeed, both she and the LEA’s chief education officer argued that the government’s strategy of targeted area funding was divisive and created perverse consequences for schools like Bitterne which educated children from these areas but were located beyond them. As she put it,

“Bitterne School has never benefited from the regeneration money available to nearby areas such as Forest Villas. SRB money is delivered to rigid geographical areas. If the school is outside of this area they cannot receive any funds, even if they are serving communities within that area.”

The impact of parental ‘choice’ affected other schools as well. Alderman Bailey’s headteacher, for instance, recalled nostalgically the time, prior to parental choice and prior to the refurbishment of Forest Villas, when all the Manor estate’s children came to his school and he had been able to develop close relationships with families there. Now, however, there were families he did not get to know and his close links with the area were broken:

“In the past, relations were good and Alderman Bailey was clearly Forest Villas’ school. The regeneration weakened these links greatly.... The redevelopment was potentially disastrous for Alderman Bailey and in the long term has been very damaging.”

Moreover, he felt that his school was significantly disadvantaged when parents could choose to send their children to schools with more diverse intakes and which, therefore, appeared to public perception to be ‘better’ schools:

“... in the process of trying to regenerate, [a school in a disadvantaged area] will not stand comparison with schools in stable communities and in better economic areas – and there will be people in this community

who will look and say, ‘Hang on! Our child will have to go to so-and-so [school] because they get better results’.”

The headteacher’s fears are indeed borne out when we look at the pattern of recruitment for schools serving Forest Villas. Despite the fact that Alderman Bailey was sited on the Manor, just across the road from Forest Villas, and had traditionally been seen as the ‘estate school’, over 40% of Forest Villas’ primary-aged children were educated elsewhere. The alternative schools did indeed get ‘better results’, with the consequence that, as a result of its close association with the area and despite the actual quality of education on offer, Alderman Bailey had all the appearances to the outside world of a ‘sink’ school.

There were also costs in terms of the extent to which schools could develop the sorts of coherent responses to area-based problems which were feasible in Senlake. On transition to secondary school, Pakeland’s pupils and children in other schools were distributed across a range of secondary schools, with equal concentrations, particularly in Coleridge and Southfield. There was, therefore, no direct relationship between any primary school and a single secondary school which would facilitate the development of coherent transition strategies for Forest Villas children, let alone any concerted community involvement strategy.

All of this reflected a situation in which Forest Villas was simply too small to command the undivided attention of any of the major agencies. When we spoke to service providers, there was a sense that the area had already had substantial investment through the refurbishment programme and that there were no more pressing priorities in the larger, equally disadvantaged areas by which it was surrounded. An officer in the local authority described the impact of geographical constraints:

“It is not planned to target services on such a localised level as Forest Villas. It is too small to warrant this level of service ... too small to warrant individual attention.... Councillors representing Forest Villas argue for services to target at the estate. In reality, however, the estate is too small to warrant this concentration and the council cannot accommodate these demands.”

Particularly striking was the number of times when, in view of the relative lack of interest in community involvement in the schools serving Forest Villas, we were referred to excellent examples of school–community initiatives elsewhere in the borough. Invariably, these emerged in situations like that in Senlake, where schools overwhelmingly served a single, large, disadvantaged community. Not surprisingly, Forest Villa’s residents often felt that “schools do nothing for the Forest Villas community”, and that they had been abandoned to their fate.

To make matters worse, not only was Forest Villas small, it was now divided against itself and its neighbouring communities. The division of the area into private, housing association and council properties also created both physical and psychological divisions between the residents. The Stables, for instance, which was intended as a community centre for both the whole of Forest Villas and for the Manor estate, was seen by residents of the Manor as the exclusive property of those who lived in the surrounding streets:

“Only those children from Forest Villas are allowed access to the Stables. Children from the Manor do not have access to the Centre.” (resident, Manor estate)

There were, moreover, frequent reports of inter-family feuds, occasionally spilling over into local schools:

“Parents do occupy different camps and this can be divisive. Occasionally there are outbreaks in school. There has been an attack by one parent on another in school and another attack on the way to school. The second parent is now afraid to send her daughter to school.” (headteacher, Forest Villas)

Indeed, residents generally tended to see Forest Villas estate as divided between ‘respectable’ families with a shared sense of values and shared concern with each other, on the one hand, and ‘riff raff’ – disreputable, criminally-inclined and somewhat frightening families and individuals – on the other:

“In some streets there are long-term residents and good community spirit especially in the cul-de-sacs, and on Francis Road where some residents have lived for

over 40 years, but in others there are problem families, empty houses and vandalism. The middle part of the estate is like a wilderness.” (resident, Forest Villas)

It is worth adding that, although Senlake was not subject to some of the other divisive factors which Forest Villas experienced, this sense of division between respectable and non-respectable residents was, as we indicated in the previous chapter, present there too.

Likewise, there were faith-based divisions in both Senlake and Forest Villas. In both cases, the distribution of children across a range of schools was increased by the presence of Roman Catholic schools, all of which recruited from beyond the two areas and all but one of which – St Peter’s in Senlake – were located well outside the areas. There was no evidence of any tensions between faith groups as such, but the Roman Catholic schools inevitably related to a different community than the geographical communities on which regeneration initiatives were focused.

Given these complexities, none of the schools in the study could be seen as relating to a single, clearly defined and geographically based community whose children the schools were responsible for educating. The Senlake situation approximated more nearly to this and it is not altogether surprising, therefore, that it was here that schools were more likely to see themselves as having a community role and to be able to work cooperatively in acting out that role. Neither is it surprising that, in the more divided and distributed context of Forest Villas, we found schools which were more likely to find a community role undeliverable or simply to see it as none of their business. They inevitably became more inward looking and more inclined towards an individual transformation model of their role. As the headteacher of Bitterne School said:

“We are the community of Bitterne School, whichever community that serves. We are an individual community in ourselves and we succeed in treating all children as if they are a child of the Bitterne School community so really their location is secondary to us.”

To this extent, the Forest Villas schools unwittingly exacerbated the more general flight from the area by local services.

Local authority policy

Schools' responses appeared to be influenced significantly by the policies of their local authorities in respect of both education and of regeneration. The refurbishment of Forest Villas, for instance, although involving a good deal of consultation with residents, had not centrally involved the local schools and had had little focus on educational issues. In the words of one headteacher:

“As a school we were excluded from all of the work of the regeneration of that area. We weren't allowed to be in meetings when it was talked about.... Regeneration then was looking at – well, my understanding was that it was looking at regenerating the fabric of the area which had nothing to do with the ethos of the community, but that is only my perception as I was not included in any of the discussion.”

Another headteacher was even more critical, on the grounds that the reduction in child density had reduced his school role – which, of course, had significant financial implications. This claim was disputed by senior officers in the Housing Department, but the fact that this dispute could arise at all is a clear indication of a breakdown in communication between schools and those driving the regeneration.

In terms of our models, the refurbishment of Forest Villas was premised on a community-resourcing view of regeneration, driven by housing and largely overlooking the potential contribution of schools. Subsequently, the individual transformation model, which was dominant in Forest Villas' local authority, placed schools at the centre of regeneration efforts. However, since their role was primarily to deliver on the standards agenda, there was no reason for them to concern themselves with the wider aspects of regeneration. We found, for instance, little evidence that they were kept closely in touch with the labour market situation, economic development issues or skills shortages and gaps, much less that they were encouraged to address these issues through their curricula.

Certainly, senior officers in Forest Villas' LEA, as we have seen, felt, however regretfully, that they had to give the schools a very clear message that they should focus hard on standards. As a result, whatever may have happened elsewhere in the borough, the Forest Villas schools came to feel that there was little support for them to become involved with their communities and no framework within which such involvement could take place. As one headteacher maintained, it was not a lack of will on the part of the school, but more a case of not knowing where to start and not having the time to dedicate to devising a strategy:

“The LEA offers no supportive framework or drive.... [The school] would like to do more to serve and involve the community. However, it is not sure what to do and it does not have the time to discover this due to the focus on standards.”

Senlake, on the other hand, had experienced a somewhat different approach. There was, as we have seen, a history of community education in its schools, the traces of which were still present. Regeneration initiatives were relatively broad-ranging, but with a particular focus on the development of young children and their families and an expectation that schools would engage with parents and with wider social issues. The local authority's senior management took on area responsibilities, which meant that (at this level at least) there was a cross-departmental vision, which could see how the work of schools fitted into broader policies. Moreover, the continued investment of the local authority in Senlake was more visible than in Forest Villas, where there was a sense that the local authority was trying to reduce its previously substantial commitment and hand over responsibility to local people. The consequence for schools was that there was a local authority (as opposed to purely LEA) presence in Senlake to which they could relate.

However, it is important not to overstate the extent to which schools in Senlake were given a clear and coherent strategic lead. Despite the community-oriented approach of the local authority, the LEA still put schools under considerable pressure to pursue the national standards agenda. Likewise, the linkages between local authority policy and school approach were not strong:

“Despite valuing the role of schools in regeneration, [we] are not aware of any strategy or ‘grand plan’ which would facilitate this.” (local authority officer, Senlake)

Nor did local authority officers necessarily have much information about, let alone control over, schools’ work:

“Nobody knows what the school’s strategy is.” (local authority officer, Senlake)

The impact of the local authorities seems, therefore, to be a mixture of a strong lead from the LEA in respect of the standards agenda, perhaps coupled with a broad cultural influence in respect of community role. However, in Senlake as in Forest Villas, there does not seem to have been a coherent strategic framework which made clear to schools how they might relate to their communities or what their most effective contributions to area regeneration might be.

Government policy

In a situation where all local services, and particularly education, have been brought under increasing levels of central control, the policies pursued by local authorities cannot be viewed separately from the policies of central government. Inevitably, these impacted on both areas, although in slightly different ways.

We have already seen, for instance, how parental choice and area-based funding impacted perversely on Forest Villas. Similarly, we have seen how LEA officers in Forest Villas clearly felt that they could not escape the dominant standards agenda and that they were operating within a framework that gave them little flexibility. This view was reflected by other educators. As another senior educator in Forest Villas’ schools put it:

“If results are not improved then raising standards is the main focus and there is little scope for schools to work on improving community.”

The reality was that no one involved in education in either area could entirely escape this agenda. True, Senlake’s headteachers were

more likely to see this as only part of a wider educational challenge. However, there too, the priorities were clear:

“Even if clear structures were in place, some headteachers would opt out of contributing to community regeneration initiatives because of the strong standards push from national government.” (LEA officer, Senlake)

Moreover, LEAs and schools in both areas felt the direct impact of tight central control. Both of the EAZs were originally intended to have significant community elements, but in each case, we were told, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (as it now is) put pressure on the schools to reshape their proposals with a clearer and more limited focus on standards:

“Schools recognise the problems in the communities they serve but are unable to do anything about them. The EAZ plan wanted to include high levels of community involvement, especially of the ICT facilities.... However, the DfE[S] have given standards priority.” (headteacher, Forest Villas)

Moreover, in both areas, schools (like other agencies) were pursuing not only performance targets but also multiple central initiatives supported by multiple sources of short-term funding. It was these initiatives that were intended to enable the schools to meet the particular challenges presented by their disadvantaged intakes. However, they in turn created the challenge of devising a sustainable and coherent approach out of diverse, short-term projects with somewhat different aims:

“We already have too many of our headteachers saying to us, ‘There are too many different streams of funding coming into the school’, and it is making their jobs more complex because they all bring with them a different accountability stream.” (senior local authority officer, Forest Villas)

Given this policy context, it is not surprising if most educators favoured the two transformation models over the community-resourcing model, since it was those models which accorded most fully with their ‘core business’ of raising standards. Even apparently community-oriented initiatives tended to be recast in terms of

standards. For instance, when Patton Community College applied to become an 'extended' (that is, community-focused) school (DfES, 2002), the rationale was explained in this way:

"This is a key part of the bid for the extended school model ... we think we've hit a sort of plateau when you look at the indicators like the 5A-C grades and we tend to hit this plateau around about the 35% mark and we can't seem to shift it more than 1 or 2 percent above that and we think that the way to get it up to the 40s and 50s, which is the next step up, is through the extended school model." (teacher, Patton Community College)

As a local authority officer acknowledged:

"If they are actually a great community school that don't quite meet the standards, people will take no notice of the other work that they do." (local authority officer, Forest Villas)

Headteacher attitudes

Within the constraints of external policy, headteachers have always been extraordinarily powerful in determining the direction their schools will take. If, in recent years, the external control of central government and of governing bodies has been strengthened, the control of LEAs has been significantly weakened and an even greater emphasis has been put on the centrality of the headteacher's role. Certainly, we noticed a marked 'headteacher effect' in terms of the approach schools took to their communities.

This was evident, for instance, in the generally liberal educational values espoused by the headteachers of the Senlake primaries. It was suggested to us that this was in part related to the fact that, due to the reorganisation of schooling in the area, a number of headteachers had gained their experience in first schools, protected to some extent from the dominant focus on standards and league tables. As a result, they had developed a more early years-oriented view of education, seeing it as about personal development rather than simply academic attainment.

However, it was even more evident in the impact which changes of headteacher had in some cases. In four out of the nine schools, there was a change of headteacher at around the time of our fieldwork and in two cases there was more than one change. Each time this happened, the school's orientation towards the community changed and sometimes went into full reverse. We therefore had more than one case of community-oriented headteachers being replaced by headteachers who distanced themselves from the community, and vice versa.

In principle, perhaps, governing bodies, as the representatives of a wider community interest, should have been able to damp down these oscillations and give the schools a steadier and more considered community orientation. However, there is no reason to believe that governors do not feel the weight of the standards agenda as much as headteachers. As an LEA officer in Senlake told us, some governors do indeed have a wider agenda, but,

"... the governors may not necessarily be representative of the community as a whole and their aspirations for pupils and the community may not necessarily be universal."

In any case, finding governors was far from easy for some schools:

"I am having this particular problem to try and encourage people to join the governing body as we have two spaces at the moment ... it is a bit discouraging when you are wanting to get these people in and represent the views of parents and the community." (headteacher, Senlake)

Not surprisingly, therefore, community involvement continued to be dependent on the attitudes of headteachers unchecked by any effective community voice.

Effort – or effectiveness?

These headteacher attitudes were combined with national and local policy imperatives and with local 'area effects' to create a complex mix of factors which pushed schools towards one or other of our models, or which encouraged them to borrow eclectically from all three. The result

was far from coherent: schools' orientations changed rapidly; practices pointed in different directions; neighbouring schools adopted different approaches; local and national policy pulled schools this way and that without offering clear guidance.

Nonetheless, many initiatives were in place and much hard work was being done. The schools were, above all else, busy places and much of what they were doing in response to their disadvantaged communities was over and above what schools elsewhere might expect to do. The question which arises, therefore, is what effect all this hard work was having. Was there any evidence that schools' efforts were indeed contributing to the regeneration of these areas – and, if so, did any one approach seem to be more effective than the others? It is to these questions that we turn in the next chapter.

What worked – and what did not

For all their schematic nature, the models set out in the previous chapter offer a means of assessing the impact of the work that schools are currently doing. Given the complexities of practice on the ground, we have no way of knowing what *might* have been achieved in an ideal situation where one or other of these models was pursued systematically. However, we can ask what actually *was* achieved and that may well give us an indication as to what it is reasonable to expect from schools in terms of a contribution to regeneration.

The 'community resourcing' model: evidence of impact

Schools and area desirability

A number of interviewees pointed out that it is reasonable to suppose that 'popular' schools will attract families into an area and will make them feel better about the area once there. Certainly, we had credible reports from both areas of families moving out, on (or even before) transition to secondary school, in order to give their children access to more prestigious schools. We also had evidence of a rising roll in Patton College as the new headteacher raised its status in the community, and it might not be unreasonable to suppose that this was a factor in encouraging some families at least to stay in the Senlake area.

However, our evidence was even stronger that families remained in the area but then made choices about which schools their children should attend. All the parents and children we spoke to had a clear idea as to what was the local pecking order of schools and why they had

made their own choices. Hence, the Forest Villas 'estate school', Alderman Bailey, which, we were told, endured a low reputation, now educated less than 60% of local pupils. The headteacher of Bitterne School, one of its 'competitors', explained what she believed was happening:

"The population [of the school] is growing because parents like what we are doing with the kids and like the standards we are giving the kids and because they do not like other schools."

The same is true in Senlake where around half of all children went to schools other than those in the immediate area.

All of this confirms the growing evidence from research on how processes of choice operate in an educational market (Gewirtz et al, 1995; Woods et al, 1998). However, the very fact that families could remain in these areas and yet send their children to higher-status schools elsewhere suggests that the link between school status and area desirability might not be as strong as is sometimes supposed, at least in areas such as Forest Villas and Senlake. Where, as here, viable and attractive alternatives to 'local' schools exist, some families at least will choose those alternatives. The implication would seem to be that the presence of a less attractive local school need not necessarily impact significantly on the desirability of the area as a whole. Indeed, the impact of differential school reputations seems not to have been to reduce the overall desirability of the areas, but to encourage families to choose schools other than their most local one and hence to loosen the ties between particular schools and particular neighbourhoods.

Community cohesion

This in turn has implications for the role played by schools in developing community cohesion. The complex links between schools and communities meant that schools did not and could not act as a unifying force in their areas. On the contrary, they tended, particularly in Forest Villas, to draw children and families out of their communities and towards different, non-geographical communities. Since schools then either promoted the importance of school-based community at the expense of geographical community, or at best focused their community work on the areas where they were located (which might well not be where their pupils lived), it is difficult to see that they were making a significant contribution to community cohesion.

Set against this are the efforts of the Senlake schools to promote themselves as a 'family' with a coordinated approach to their area. A senior educator working in the area noted:

"There is a very strong concept of family, they really do operate as a family.... I see everyone quite altruistically saying that it is in all of our interests to operate together."

In part, as a headteacher of a school in the 'family' explained, this was a deliberate attempt to damp down the impact of parental choice and to encourage families to see all the area's schools as offering a common service:

"We are providing the same vision to the children, providing them with the same opportunities so we can have seamless transition and we are not seen as separate schools."

The growth in Patton's roll can be seen as evidence of some success for this strategy and in the longer term it is not inconceivable that the family of schools will come to be seen as a rallying point for the community as a whole. However, at this early stage none of our interviews suggested that community members had yet 'heard' the message of the family approach.

Resourcing individuals, families and communities

We have better evidence – although inevitably somewhat anecdotal – in terms of schools' impact in offering support to individuals and families and enhancing the resources available to communities. Headteachers in both areas were able to tell us of the time they had spent on individual problematic cases, working with children and their families and linking families to other agencies. For some, this was a major, ongoing task and they had a clear sense that if they did not take on this role, no one else would. Similarly, many of the schools were opening (or planning to open) some of their facilities for community use. This was certainly a major aim of the sports focus in the Senlake schools, while both of the Forest Villas' secondaries acted as a base for extensive adult education programmes.

However, once again, the picture is far from simple. At Coleridge, for instance, the 'community' which used the school's facilities was, by and large, not the community which sent its children to the school. Rather, the headteacher told us, adults drove to the school at night from some distance away. More generally, although headteachers saw themselves as working hard at community involvement, the parents and residents we spoke to in both areas almost universally felt that schools were doing far less than they could. The explanation may well be that schools were working hard *within the constraints under which they had to operate*, while community members were envisaging an 'ideal' scenario.

Nonetheless, the implication would seem to be that schools were having only a limited impact on the resources available in their areas. This is indicated nowhere more clearly than by the repeated complaint from children and young people in the area (and, indeed, common in many areas) that, despite the schools' best efforts, there was simply 'nothing to do' outside school hours, or when the after-school clubs had finished. Young people reported having 'nowhere to meet friends', 'nowhere to play football' and so on, commenting that schools could offer provision such as a youth club or offer access to the sports facilities and IT suite for educational and recreational purposes.

'Individual and contextual transformation': educational outcomes for children and young people

Both of the 'transformation' models of regeneration start from the assumption that schools have a primary responsibility for teaching children effectively, enhancing their knowledge and skills and thus making them attractive to employers in a knowledge-based economy. It seems reasonable to ask, therefore, how successful they were in this enterprise.

However, we should enter a caveat at this point. It is only possible here to summarise in fairly broad terms some of the data on school performance and pupil attainment to which we had access. Readers are invited to inspect the more detailed data presented in the appendices and on the project's website (at www.man.ac.uk/include/regen.htm). Even there, we can give no more than a snapshot of a limited range of school outcomes at a particular point in time and interrogate them for evidence of large-scale 'transformative' effects. It is important to remember that this falls a long way short of a comprehensive analyses of all the schools' effects or of their overall effectiveness.

Attainment at school

There are two ways in which our question can be answered in terms of children's and young people's school attainments. The first is by looking at absolute levels of attainment in school. The government tends to talk in terms of 'national expectations' of attainment – level 4 in national assessments at the end of primary schooling and 5A*-C grade GCSEs at the end of secondary schooling. At institutional level, there were national targets at the time of our fieldwork for 80% of pupils to achieve level 4 in English and 75% in Maths. Similarly, the proportion of young people achieving 5A*-Cs nationally was 51.5% (DfES, 2003a) These targets and expectations are, of course, more or less arbitrary, but they do provide an easy means of assessing how one group (in this case, Senlake and Forest Villas' pupils) perform in relation to their peers nationally – against whom they have to compete for places in further and higher education and, ultimately, in the labour market.

Figures 3 to 5 show the attainments of pupils in their key stage 2 (end of primary school) national assessments and in the national GCSE and GNVQ examinations usually taken at the end of secondary schooling.

Figure 3: Forest Villas and Senlake pupils' attainment in key stage 2 English assessments

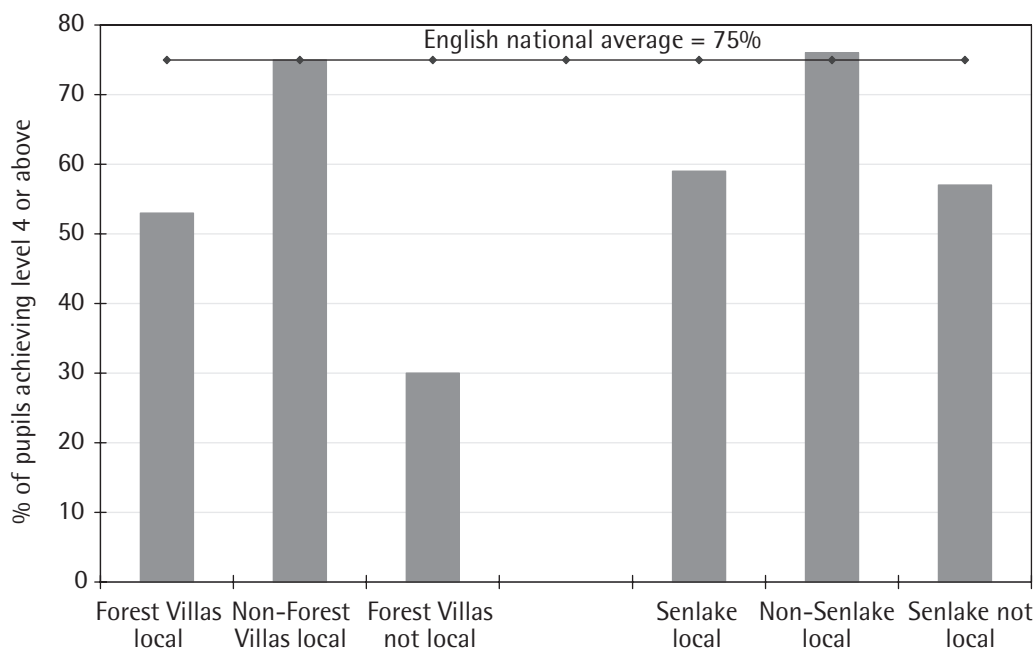


Figure 4: Forest Villas and Senlake pupils' attainment in key stage 2 Maths assessments

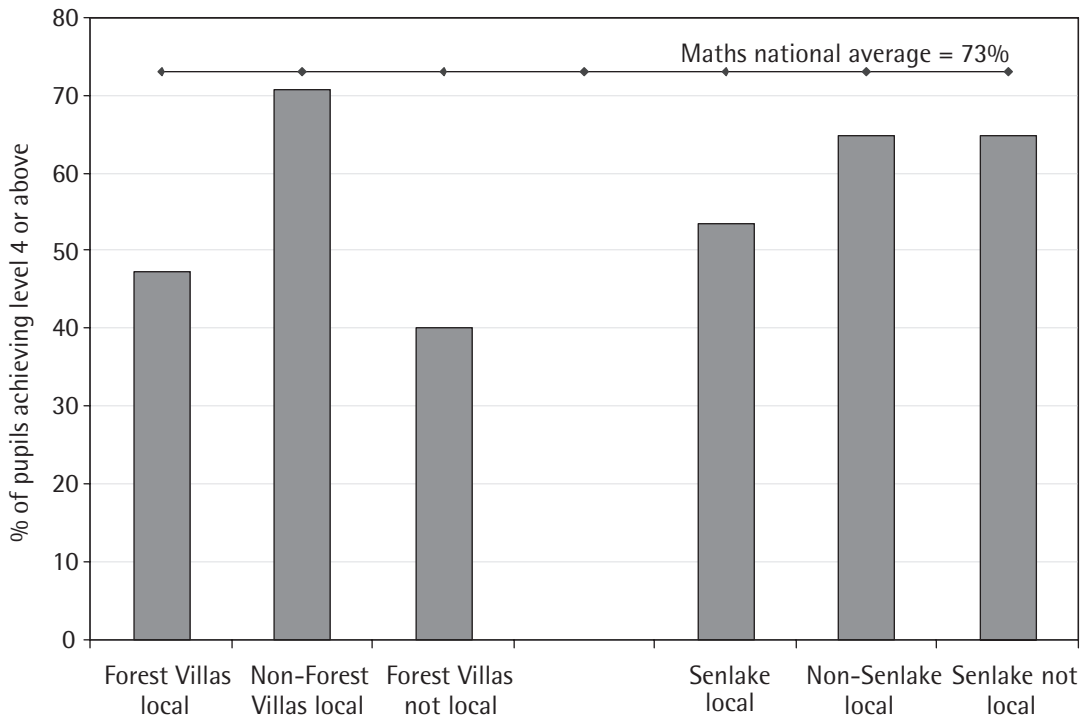
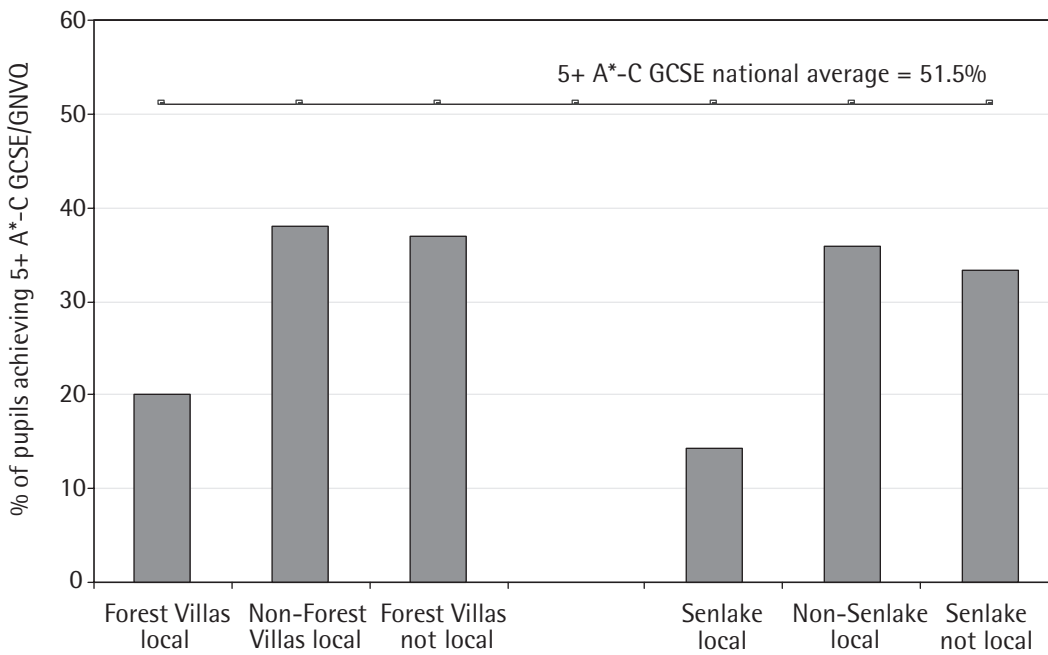


Figure 5: Forest Villas and Senlake pupils' attainment in GCSE and GNVQ examinations



Notes: 'Forest Villas/Senlake local' refers to pupils living in the case study areas and attending case study schools. 'Forest Villas/Senlake not local' refers to pupils living outside the case study areas but attending case study schools. 'Non-Forest Villas/Senlake local' refers to pupils living in the case study areas but attending schools elsewhere.

Source: DFES (2002) and researchers' calculations

Looking at children who live in our case study areas and attend our case study schools (the first bar in each group of three), it is immediately clear that they achieve well below national expectations. This is true in both Senlake and Forest Villas, regardless of differences of approach, policy and context. It is, of course, very much what one would expect in schools serving disadvantaged areas. The point, however, is that the schools serving these areas are not able to overcome the effects of disadvantage to the extent that their pupils achieve levels which will enable them to compete with the majority of their peers on an equal footing.

It is not surprising that pupils in these same schools from other, often more favoured areas (the second bar in each group of three), do somewhat better – although this again points to the difficulty which schools have in overcoming the effects of disadvantage. What is perhaps more surprising, however, is that children from Forest Villas and Senlake who attend schools elsewhere (the third bar in each group of three) do not *necessarily* do better than their peers who attend local schools. On none of the measures do they achieve national expectations and at key stage 2 they may actually do worse than those who remain behind. There is no evidence here to

suggest that distributing children from Forest Villas and Senlake to schools elsewhere would be enough *in itself* to overcome the effects of disadvantage.

Progress at school

The second way of testing schools' success is in terms of the 'value added' they generate. The government has recently introduced value-added scores which take into account not only the pupil's end-point level of attainment, but also their starting level and the progress made between the two. For simplicity, these measures are standardised, so that children who progress at the same rate as the national average score 100. Every point above or below 100 then represents a notional term's progress more or less than that made on average by children nationally starting from the same base line. This is the case regardless of the child's starting level of attainment. We have value-added scores for all three secondary schools. We have also been able to calculate scores for the Forest Villas' primaries since the LEA's data management systems were particularly well developed. (Comparable data were not available for Senlake.) These are shown in Tables 1 to 3.

Table 1: Key stage 2 to key stage 3 value added

Schools	Measure Based on progress between key stages 2 and 3	Coverage % of eligible pupils included in our calculation
Southfield, Forest Villas	96.8	83
Coleridge, Forest Villas	98.9	92
Patton, Senlake	97.3	87.5

Source: 2002 performance data supplied by LEAs and schools, and researchers' calculation

Table 2: Key stage 3 to GCSE/GNVQ value added

Schools	Measure Based on progress between key stage 3 and GCSE/GNVQ	Coverage % of eligible pupils included in our calculation
Southfield, Forest Villas	98.0	98.4
Coleridge, Forest Villas	99.6	100
Patton, Senlake	96.0	98.1

Source: 2002 performance data supplied by LEAs and schools, and researchers' calculation

Table 3: Key stage 1 to key stage 2 value added

Schools	Measure Based on progress between key stages 1 and 2	Coverage % of eligible pupils included in our calculation
Bitterne, Forest Villas	98.6	95.5
Pakeland, Forest Villas	99.6	96.5
Alderman Bailey, Forest Villas	98.6	91.2

Source: 2002 performance data supplied by LEAs and schools, and researchers' calculation

It is possible that, even if pupils from Forest Villas and Senlake have relatively low levels of attainment, their schools are enabling them to make such good progress that they are beginning to catch up with their more advantaged peers. This would show as value-added scores above 100. In the event, this is not the case in any of the schools or on any of the measures. Some of the scores come so close to 100 for us to be able to say that pupils are making the same progress as they would be likely to make in schools elsewhere. This is particularly true of the key stage 3-GCSE/GNVQ measure in Coleridge and of the key stages 1-2 measure in Pakeland. The headteachers of both of these schools had a particularly clear focus on the standards agenda and it is arguable that this clarity is reflected in these levels of progress. Likewise, Southfield's value added for its older pupils is *broadly* in line with national averages. However, even in these cases we are at best talking about 'keeping pace' rather than 'catching up' and there is certainly no evidence of any 'transformation' taking place. Elsewhere, of course, pupils are not even keeping pace. On the contrary, they are falling even further behind peers who started from similar – often similarly low – baselines.

The quality of schooling

It is possible, of course, that the failure of our case study schools to make much impact on the effects of disadvantage simply means that they are not very 'effective' schools, perhaps because there are weaknesses in their teaching or leadership. We have two ways of checking this. First, the latest Ofsted inspection reports for the schools indicate the overall quality of teaching and leadership. They do indeed identify Warwick School as having 'serious weaknesses' and therefore suggest that better outcomes for its pupils might have been possible given different

styles of working. However, we know that schools which do badly in Ofsted inspections tend to be concentrated disproportionately in disadvantaged areas (Power et al, 2002) and, in any case, this is not true of the other sample schools which all receive clean bills of health.

The second check is in terms of how the schools perform against other, comparable schools. Ofsted allocates schools two grades, in terms of how the outcomes they produce for their pupils compare with schools elsewhere. One of these grades relates to a comparison with other schools nationally; the other relates to comparisons with schools which have similarly advantaged or disadvantaged intakes (as indicated by pupil entitlement to free school meals).

This is how our schools perform on these measures:

- In terms of national norms, most of the schools, unsurprisingly, do badly. Only Pakeland and Bitterne (which contain relatively few Forest Villas pupils) achieve grades in the average range.
- In terms of comparisons with 'like' schools, they fare much better. Two of the nine are significantly above the average; four are around the average; and three (including Warwick) are significantly below the average. (See Appendix G for a more detailed analysis.)

It is true that, in narrow performance terms at least, we are certainly not dealing with outstandingly successful schools. There are schools elsewhere that are doing better – including some schools in similar circumstances. On the other hand, neither is there anything to suggest that these schools as a group are performing so differently from 'like' schools that this alone is the explanation for their pupils' low attainments. If Warwick has particular difficulties,

then schools like St Peter’s, Patton and Southfield perform at similar levels to most other schools serving disadvantaged areas. Coleridge does better than most. None of them, however, is able to transform the achievements of their pupils en masse. Something more than marginal improvements in leadership and management would, it seems, be needed if they were indeed to bring about such a transformation.

Pupil destinations

Further indicators of outcomes from schools are the destinations of their pupils at the end of statutory schooling. If young people are to go on to become employable in a fluid and highly competitive labour market, they will need at the age of 16 to either stay in education or move into training. Indeed, the development of a skilled workforce has been a particular thrust of regeneration policy in the region where Senlake and Forest Villas are located. A few young people may move directly into employment – although this may not represent a successful transition unless the employment is stable and, preferably, includes training opportunities.

Despite the importance of these outcomes both in real terms and in terms of the rationales we were offered by schools and LEAs, evidence was not easy to come by. This was partly due simply to the difficulties in obtaining data at the level at which more detailed analysis could be carried out. For instance, pupil-level destinations data was difficult to obtain at ward level and even where aggregated ward-level data was available, it was not categorised in the same way as national data. Moreover, some interviewees believed that the available data was somewhat unreliable.

Nevertheless, the school-level data we collected enabled us to identify some patterns and trends (see Table 4). What is evident from these figures is that the secondary schools serving both areas are unsuccessful, relative to national norms and the ambitions of regional regeneration policy, in retaining young people within the education system post-16. Instead, young people tend to go into training, employment or unemployment. These trends are particularly marked in the two schools serving Forest Villas, where post-16 retention rates are especially low. It may well be that the situation here is compounded by the fact

Table 4: 2000 and 2001 school-level destinations data

2000 figures	Full-time education	Employment	Training	Unemployment	Moved away	Not known
Southfield School	56 (41.5%)	8 (5.9%)	31 (23.0%)	13 (9.6%)	4 (3.0%)	23 (17.0%)
Coleridge School	76 (48.4%)	9 (5.7%)	39 (24.8%)	10 (6.4%)	– (–)	23 (14.6%)
Patton Community College	119 (62.96%)	16 (8.47%)	22 (11.65%)	24 (12.7%)	2 (1.6%)	6 (3.18%)
<i>National</i>	<i>71%</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>5% across both</i>	
2001 figures	Full-time education	Employment	Training	Unemployment	Moved away	Not known
Southfield School	83 (55.7%)	8 (5.4%)	24 (16.1%)	15 (10.1%)	3 (2.0%)	16 (10.7%)
Coleridge School	89 (46.4%)	17 (8.9%)	37 (19.3%)	27 (14.1%)	5 (2.6%)	17 (8.8%)
Patton Community College	108 (61.37%)	20 (11.36%)	15 (8.53%)	22 (12.50%)	5 (2.84%)	6 (3.41%)
<i>National</i>	<i>72%</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>5% across both</i>	

Note: national figures do not add up to 100% due to the effect of rounding.

Source: ONS and Careers Service or equivalents

that these schools (unlike Patton) have no sixth form and young people have to opt positively to transfer to sixth form or a further education college.

For all three secondary schools the percentage of students going into unemployment is high compared with national figures, and, again, in relation to regional policy. However, the progression of Patton students to employment is not too far from the national norms. This may represent efforts the school has made to forge stronger working links with employers in recent years, although this may be, as we indicated above, a mixed blessing.

Contextual transformation: the wider impacts of schools

What we have called the ‘contextual transformation’ model of schools’ role in regeneration, unlike the individual model, does not depend on raised attainments alone. It works with a broader notion of employability which is not entirely attainment-related and sees development of families and communities as inextricably linked to the development of individual children and young people. How effective were our schools, then, in delivering this model?

It is undeniable that many of the schools that we studied – particularly those in Senlake – were undertaking a wide range of activities which had the potential to engage families and communities in learning, to enlist their support for the education of students, to motivate disaffected students and to develop employability skills that were not restricted simply to academic attainments. Evidence of impact was, inevitably, anecdotal, but its cumulative effect was convincing. For instance:

- Patton Community College had established links with a local community initiative. The project workers identified outcomes in terms of ‘enthusiasm’ and ‘commitment’ from pupils, the establishment of an effective peer mentoring scheme and the recruitment of more local people to the various programmes the initiative offers the community.
- Southfield School encouraged its pupils to work alongside pensioners and teach them IT

skills. The teacher managing this project observed:

“Pupils are benefiting from working with the OAPs by developing their social and interaction skills and developing their IT skills further. Also, pupils are able to obtain a better understanding of older people in their community and the older people are gaining a better understanding of young people.”

- Coleridge School established a ‘positive parenting’ class which likewise had multiple impacts:

“For many parents it takes away the fear of crossing the school gates and it also introduces parents to the teaching staff at the school. Some of the parents have also become classroom assistants.”
(headteacher, Coleridge)

- Those schools which had set up breakfast clubs reported similar dual effects:

“The club offers a healthy breakfast and also enables parents to get to work for normal office hours.” (headteacher, Alderman Bailey School)

There was also ample evidence of interventions making a significant difference to particular individuals and groups that were about more than simply raising their academic attainments. All three of the secondary schools in the study were undertaking initiatives aimed at re-engaging disaffected young people into learning – vocational curricula, work experience placements, mentoring, the establishment of Learning Support Units (LSUs) of various kinds, and so on. At Patton, where these initiatives were particularly well developed and where we were able to talk to the young people in some depth, they were enthusiastic about their impact:

“The work experience will help me when I go and get a job.”

“I haven’t truanted here [the LSU] because I now enjoy coming to school.”

“[Name of mentor] is always coming in and out to see if I need any help and she is

always getting me stuff to help me towards my GCSEs.”

Attendance rates for the target group at Patton did, in fact, improve markedly (from 43% to 75%) and we were offered anecdotal evidence about the development of key skills and life skills. A senior teacher commented:

“The social development has been very evident among most of the group and I think that is very encouraging because I think some of the group in year nine were almost socially withdrawn ... they found it difficult to communicate.... It sounds clichéd but they are blossoming, they are coming along and those skills are developing.”

There was also evidence that schools (usually in collaboration with partner organisations) were enabling adults to re-engage with learning and to support their children’s schooling more effectively. What we saw for ourselves confirmed what the organiser of courses for parents in Senlake told us:

“The immediate outcome ... is that parents have become involved in their children’s learning ... long-term outcomes include increased self-esteem and confidence for all. Parents become armed with inside knowledge and this empowers them to speak to teachers. Some parents become keen to be involved in the school as helpers. Others have progressed to further and improved skills ... participating in [the course] is often a step onto the first rung of the ladder. People are introduced to what else is available in adult education and some go on to further education and training.”

Examples such as this could be multiplied many times. The pattern which emerges is of schools making various small interventions which make a difference to vulnerable or disaffected pupils, to their families and to members of their wider communities. The immediate impact of these interventions was undeniable. However, many professionals in and around school were convinced that local communities suffered from the blighting experience of intergenerational unemployment which had depressed aspirations and expectations and had resulted in a

disengagement from learning for both adults and children. The question which arises, therefore, is whether the sorts of interventions which schools were able to make with the limited resources at their disposal were capable of bringing about the widespread cultural transformation for which this situation seemed to call.

One common experience was a problem with targeting the most vulnerable or disaffected individuals. The EAZ of which Forest Villas’ schools were a part, for instance, set up a scheme whereby children could take laptop computers home to work on, in the expectation that their families would also learn how to use them. In practice, however, children from Forest Villas did not ask to loan the laptops, and in any case the schools had concerns about how secure they would be. Likewise, some students on the vocational programme at Patton Community College behaved so disruptively on their placement at the local FE college that the college refused to have them back, even though these were precisely the young people who seemed to be most in need of ‘re-engagement’.

More generally, the immediate families of the pupils of any one school formed only a minority of community members and those who participated in any of the schools’ outreach activities a smaller minority again. Moreover, by no means all of those who participated came from the most disadvantaged communities. A group of parents we met at Alderman Bailey, for instance, who were following a family learning course, numbered only seven, of whom only one lived in Forest Villas itself. They themselves were distinctly vitriolic about what they saw as the majority of parents in the area who did not attend courses such as this because they remained uninterested in their children’s learning. As one parent rather graphically expressed it,

“Lots of parents don’t give a toss about the kids.”

Perhaps unsurprisingly, all of the parents in the family learning course were women. Men were noticeably absent from school-related activities, to the point where a number of schools in both areas felt they had to set up special, one-off ‘Dads and Lads’ activities – not always with success.

Activities aimed at re-engaging and widening the experience of children and young people tended to be somewhat limited in their scope. For the most part, the focus was on ‘rescuing’ older students long after disengagement had become a reality. Despite the fact, for instance, that there were real attempts in the Senlake area particularly to develop a ‘motivational’ sports focus across both primary and secondary schools, so-called disaffection among older secondary students remained a priority. Moreover, all of these initiatives had to be ‘bolted on’ to a rather inflexible curriculum which centred on rather traditional academic skills and knowledge. For most children, the curriculum remained largely untouched and their overall impact on what most children experienced, therefore, was necessarily limited.

For some commentators outside education, this inflexibility was seen to create a gulf between the educational opportunities even the most holistically inclined schools were able to offer and the real demands of the adult world. As a senior officer in Senlake’s local authority put it:

“Schools ought to be doing more than striving for academic attainment, they must also be concerned with unlocking the practical skills of pupils.... Schools are not just about churning [results] out. One issue in regeneration is the need to raise aspiration ... they should be turning out citizens of the future who should be equipped with skills needed to live in a community. Education is failing if it is just giving kids bits of paper.”

While commentators such as this pointed to the limitations of schools’ approaches, they often also acknowledged that individual headteachers and teachers shared their views. However, they felt that these individuals had little freedom of action. Indeed, some felt that, far from schools reaching out to their communities, they were driven by such a powerful external agenda that they were prepared to sacrifice their pupils and communities in the interests of their own priorities, and particularly, in the interests of the standards agenda. As a community worker in Senlake told us:

“Schools are like a monster, they eat everything in their path, then spit it back out again.... Schools are like a secret

society. They make plans that involve others but the others are always the last to know. Others are used by schools for their own ends; they’re self-interested.”

This view is all the more striking given the (so far as we could judge very genuine) commitment of local schools to community involvement.

The scale of schools’ contributions

If we look across these three broad approaches to schools’ role in area regeneration, the evidence of impact is complex and ambiguous. Nonetheless, there is a pattern that emerges if we think in terms of a distinction between impacts that are small-scale, local and individual, on the one hand, and those which are more fundamental and wide-ranging on the other.

We have good evidence that schools were having multiple, small-scale effects. We came across countless stories of adults, children and young people for whom schools had, in one way or another, made a difference. Even the somewhat disappointing outcomes in terms of academic attainments should not be underestimated in this respect. Although relatively few young people were gaining good qualifications and going on to higher levels of the education system, there is no doubt that, for those who did, a pathway out of the entrenched disadvantage in their community was opening up.

Likewise, it is important not to underestimate what the schools were achieving in an ameliorative sense. The communities they served undoubtedly benefited as a result of the resources the schools made available and the work they undertook with their communities. Whatever the limitations of that work, it seems certain that the communities would have been the poorer in many respects had the schools not existed, or, more importantly, had they made less strenuous efforts.

Looked at in this way, the contribution of schools to the communities they serve is undoubtedly a glass that is at least half full. However, looked at from the perspective of what the models of regeneration seemed to imply, the glass seems at best half empty. None of the efforts made by schools resulted in fundamental changes in the lives of communities or in the life-

chances of significant numbers of people within them. The resources which schools could offer directly to their communities were no doubt beneficial, but they did not change those communities from resource-poor to resource-rich ones. Likewise, individual success stories did not break the pattern of low attainment and limited life-chances which was the norm in these communities. Nor was there any reason to suppose that schools' attempts to engage families and communities were bringing about widespread cultural change.

One response to this situation is to suggest that the schools should try harder. However, these were, for the most part, at least 'good-enough' schools, staffed by committed teachers and in many cases making strenuous efforts to counteract the effects of community disadvantage. If these schools were not succeeding, the likelihood is that the majority of schools elsewhere in similar contexts are having similarly disappointing effects. Something more is needed than further exhortations to schools. In the next chapter, we consider what this 'something more' might be.

5

Towards a coherent approach

Schools and the challenges of area regeneration

In the first chapter we outlined some of the challenges facing schools as they developed their contributions to area regeneration. We explained that we would trace the way they met these challenges and seek to identify what helped them and what hindered them. Having looked in some depth at what was happening in our case study areas and schools, we are now in a position to attempt this task.

If, in the light of our case studies, we were to give a status report on schools and area regeneration, it would probably be to this effect:

- Many activities that schools undertake as a matter of course – and, in particular, their pursuit of higher levels of attainment and accreditation for all of their pupils – make a contribution to the life-chances of their pupils and to that extent to the regeneration of the communities in which those pupils live. In addition, schools typically undertake a wide range of other activities that are community-oriented and/or are regenerative in effect.
- Most of the impacts which schools have seem to be small-scale, local and/or individual. At this level, these impacts are important and can be profound for the people directly concerned. Disadvantaged individuals and communities would be worse off without the strenuous efforts that schools often make on their behalf.
- Schools alone – or at least the schools we studied – seem not to have the capacity to make the sorts of impacts which would transform whole communities. The causes of

disadvantage are deep-seated and schools are not yet able to counteract its reproduction.

If, likewise, we were to identify from our work the factors which actually do, or which potentially might, maximise the contribution which schools can make, the list would look something like this:

- There is considerable commitment from individual teachers, headteachers and schools. Although the teachers we spoke to took very different views of how schools might best contribute to their communities, and some were reluctant to become involved with those communities directly, all saw the issue of disadvantage as central to their work. At the very least, they all saw it as their task to raise the attainments of all of their pupils, and many willingly took on a far more extended role than this.
- The issue of disadvantage is on the political agenda and is an issue for all local authorities, LEAs and schools – again, at the very least in the form of issues around raising attainment and frequently around a much broader agenda.
- As a consequence, there are multiple opportunities for initiatives to address disadvantage and hence to contribute to area regeneration. Although we had many discussions with teachers and local authority officers about whether the current initiatives were effective and whether an initiative-led approach was the best one, we had no complaints about any lack of opportunity to act or – surprisingly, perhaps – about an *overall* lack of resources.
- There are interesting examples of groups of schools beginning to work together and with other agencies to develop a more coherent

approach to community issues. Even where this was not the case, we had no sense that the inter-school competition which characterised (some would say, bedevilled) the school system in the 1990s was seen as a major barrier to work in this area.

- We spoke to many residents, community workers and other agencies who were keen for schools to make a contribution to the regeneration agenda and had clear ideas as to what that contribution might be. There is no shortage of willingness to work with schools and there were many small-scale examples of fruitful collaboration.
- We were able to identify a limited number of coherent rationales for schools' contribution to regeneration which were implicit in their views and actions and seemed to offer clear alternative courses. The array of alternatives and the eclecticism with which schools move among that array may be confusing, but it is also rich with possibilities.

On the other hand, our evidence suggests that there is also a series of factors which significantly inhibit schools' capacity to make a contribution to regeneration. In particular:

- Although there are a number of coherent, implicit models of schools' roles, there is no single, *explicit* model which commands widespread support. Consequently, schools' approaches tend to be somewhat eclectic and unfocused.
- The opportunities for action which present themselves to schools tend to take the form of multiple, short-term initiatives which may or may not be clearly related to community issues. These do not help schools to work within a coherent, long-term strategy to address underlying problems.
- The major national policy imperative which schools must follow is the concern with raising levels of attainment and accreditation known as the standards agenda. Although this is not necessarily unrelated to issues of disadvantage and regeneration, its dominance is such that schools often feel they have little opportunity to explore other forms of community engagement. Moreover, it is not certain that any successes in terms of raised attainment *necessarily* translate into the skills, attitudes and levels of engagement with lifelong learning that economic regeneration seems to demand.

- Local authorities in general and LEAs in particular operate under the same pressures and constraints as schools. They are not necessarily able, therefore, to offer a coherent policy framework to schools. They may simply 'transmit' the standards agenda, or may undertake regeneration initiatives which have little school involvement, or may have expectations of schools which the schools have no means of realising.
- In the absence of a clear policy framework, the views of individual headteachers become particularly important. This creates incoherence and instability as headteachers serving the same communities may have different approaches and as headteachers leaving schools may be replaced by others with very different views.
- The relationships of schools to the areas and communities they serve are sometimes complex. There are inherent complexities of geography and demography and pupils living in disadvantaged areas may well not be present in large numbers in any of the local schools. These complexities are compounded by the operation of parental 'choice' and of faith schools, making it difficult for some schools to establish clear one-to-one relationships with particular communities.
- Schools do not necessarily have access to a clear community 'voice' through their governing bodies. More generally, although schools come to conclusions about community 'needs', it is not clear what information they can access in order to make their analyses and others involved with communities may see those needs differently.

These are powerful inhibiting factors and overcoming them is unlikely to prove speedy or straightforward. However, abandoning the attempt is unthinkable. Schools remain the single greatest investment by the state in the lives of most children and perhaps the single most important resource in areas that are otherwise resource-poor. In particular, the teachers and other adults who work in and around schools remain the professionals who have the most direct and extensive involvement with children and their families. Moreover, our evidence is not that schools have *no* impact on regeneration, but that their impacts are constrained by the sorts of inhibitors set out above.

In the first chapter, we cited David Blunkett's 'vision',

"... of nothing less than a new and stronger fabric for our society. Over the next five to ten years, we want all our young people to emerge from school with a sound basic education, committed to continuous learning and equipped with the personal skills they need to succeed as individuals and citizens. We want people of all ages engaged with learning. We want opportunity for all our people. We want people and communities once again proud of their self-determination. This is our vision: empowered and self-reliant individuals, strong families, self-sustaining communities – a nation equipped for the challenges and opportunities of the new millennium." (Blunkett, 1999)

This remains a vision to which schools have to be integral if ever it is to be realised. However, it has to be set alongside a current reality which was captured trenchantly by a community worker in Senlake:

"There is no agreement, certainty or clarity at national and other levels as to the role of schools in meeting community needs. There are lots of visions coming from central government but no single, coherent vision."

The question to which we now turn, therefore, is what must be done for such a 'single, coherent vision' to begin to emerge.

From 'visions' to 'vision': defining the principles

Our evidence leads us to suggest that future policy might be built on a set of six principles:

- the work of schools needs to be set in the context of a wide-ranging strategy to address disadvantage;
- schools need to have a clearly-defined, but holistic role;
- the 'standards agenda' needs to be rethought in ways which facilitate this role;
- funding, accountability and other policy frameworks need to be supportive of this holistic role;

- schools need to work in clusters and other extended structures;
- strategies need to be based on good information about communities' needs and wishes.

In the following sections we will address each of these in turn.

Developing an overarching strategy

A recent overview of the current situation with regard to policies aimed at 'tackling disadvantage' concludes that real progress is possible, but that,

... none of this can be achieved overnight.... Critically, this requires persistent, simultaneous action on a range of fronts, where sporadic or disjointed efforts would be ineffective. (Darton et al, 2003, p 44)

It seems to us that this speaks clearly to the situation we found in Senlake and Forest Villas and, more generally, to the contributions which schools might make to area regeneration. It is clear that there are limits to what schools alone can achieve in the face of deep-rooted patterns of disadvantage. This needs to be acknowledged. Placing unrealistic expectations on schools distorts their work as they seek to achieve the impossible, leads to their being blamed when they fail and in the meantime tempts policy makers to believe that complex problems can be addressed through single-strand solutions.

At the same time, the very real contributions that schools might make are limited and weakened by the absence of a coherent, overarching strategy which might reinforce and maximise their effect. Such a strategy, it seems to us, has to have three components:

- It has to address not simply the manifestations of disadvantage (such as low educational attainments) but also its underlying structural causes. It has to be, as recent reports have suggested, far-reaching, ambitious and long term (Darton et al, 2003; Ennals 2003).
- It has to generate clear policy frameworks and clear structures at national and local level through which it can be realised. In particular, those frameworks and structures have to align the work of schools with that of other agencies and stakeholders so that all actors are

clear as to their roles and so that their actions support and reinforce one another. In the words of one community worker:

“For schools to have an impact on regeneration, they would have to work with other initiatives in the area in a coherent way.” (community worker, Forest Villas)

This is not simply to echo repeated calls for ‘joined-up’ action. There are, we suggest, important differences between, on the one hand, ‘joining up’ policy initiatives that have different aims, time-scales, funding streams and accountability mechanisms and, on the other hand, making distinct contributions to an overarching strategy which is *inherently* coherent.

- This in turn implies that it has to be led in such a way as to maximise coherence. In other words, there needs to be, at both national and local government level, a ‘corporate’ direction which is strong enough to resist being derailed by departmentalism and fragmentation. In terms of the concerns which have been central to this report, this specifically means that the work of schools cannot be the exclusive business of educators and education decision makers. On the contrary, schools have to contribute to an agenda which may in part be set beyond their own four walls, beyond their LEAs and, indeed, beyond the DfES.

We do not see these requirements as lying beyond the realm of what is politically possible. The current government’s commitment to end child poverty within a generation is clearly a major strand in any overarching strategy and indicates a willingness to think in the long term. Likewise, the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy is based on an explicit intention to move away from fragmentation and short-termism in order to make possible a concerted attack on fundamental problems. The issue now may be to see such commitments through and to think more deeply about how schools can be involved in their delivery.

Defining a holistic role

Our evidence suggests that, left to their own devices, schools will carve out for themselves a wide range of different roles, often internally incoherent and by no means always sustained over time. The implication would seem to be that, while any overarching strategy must leave space for local responses to local contexts, it also needs to define the sorts of contributions that schools might realistically be asked to make.

In looking at what schools do currently, we identified three implicit ‘models’ for their role. Each of these has much to commend it, but each also has its limitations. In particular:

- The ‘community resourcing’ model rightly emphasises the ways in which schools can enhance the resources available to disadvantaged communities – opening their facilities to community use, offering support to families, acting as a pathway to other agencies, and so on. However, this is essentially a static model, based on maintenance or at best incremental improvement. It overlooks the possibilities for more transformatory action and the contribution schools might make to such action.
- The ‘individual transformation’ model cannot be faulted in this respect and makes schools central to the regeneration process. However, it is far from clear whether the ambition of raising attainments by focusing on internal school and classroom processes is a realistic one. Even if it is, there are real doubts about the links between higher levels of attainment and accreditation on the one hand, and regeneration on the other. As some of our informants made clear, young people may need a wider set of skills to prosper in the labour market and, as recent economic critiques have pointed out, there is very little evidence that an exclusively educational strategy delivers large-scale improvements in the economy or redistribution of wealth (Robinson, 1997; Wolf, 2002).
- The ‘contextual transformation’ model acknowledges the importance of raising levels of attainment and accreditation, but sets this within a broader context which is likely to make it more achievable. By locating the work of schools more firmly within wider regeneration strategies, moreover, it is likely to maximise the impact of that work. However,

this model generates tensions of its own as schools seek to balance the demands of improving teaching and learning with the ill-defined demands of developing a community role.

Given both the possibilities and the difficulties associated with each of these models, it seems to us that the best way forward is neither that schools should focus on one or other of these models alone, nor that they should select elements of each in the current somewhat ad hoc manner. Rather, they should think in terms of a hierarchy of contributions they might make, ordered in terms of how close each contribution is to the school's 'core business' of teaching and learning. Figure 6 sets out an indicative hierarchy, although there are doubtless many other contributions which could be identified and scope for considerable debate about where, precisely, they fit in the hierarchy.

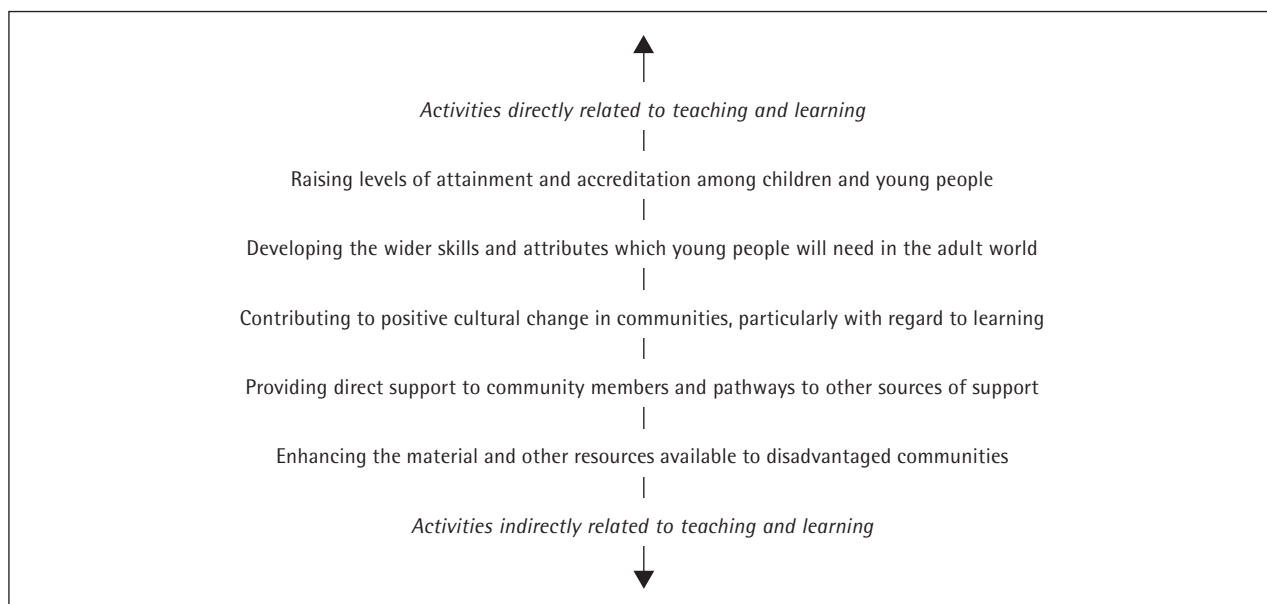
The problem for schools, as we have seen, is not whether they have contributions to make in each of these areas, but how they manage these multiple contributions in a way that is coherent and viable. It seems to us that this problem is insoluble so long as the work of schools is seen in isolation. Faced with a long list of potential activities, it is inevitable that many schools will retreat to their 'core business' and that those which do not will run the risk of dissipating their energies and resources in uncoordinated action.

However, schools' *contributions* are just that – they are partial contributions to a much wider regeneration effort.

This means that the school hierarchy is paralleled by another which is its mirror image – that of contributions from other agencies and actors. In activities which are remote from teaching and learning, this is obviously the case. If a school opens its classrooms for community groups to meet, for instance, this is likely to be just one of a range of formal and informal meeting spaces which are or could be available within and beyond the area. However, this is also true of the school's core activities. Its impact on attainments, for instance, is crucial, but it is supplemented by a whole host of other policies and interventions which shape cultural values, impact on parenting, promote individual health and well-being and so on. It follows that *the choice of which activities to undertake and where to deploy energy and resource is one that cannot sensibly be taken by the school alone*. It has to take into account the overall strategy of which the school's contributions form a part and the sorts of contributions that are being made by other partners.

Although, therefore, it is not possible to prescribe a detailed role for schools which can be implemented in all contexts, there are two important senses in which that role could be thought of as 'holistic':

Figure 6: An indicative hierarchy of schools' contributions to area regeneration



- it should take into account the full range of contributions which schools can make to regeneration, and not simply those which are closest to the 'core business' of teaching and learning; but
- it should determine the precise contribution a particular school should make in the light of the contributions made by other partners working with the same communities.

Rethinking the standards agenda

The notions of a coherent strategic framework and of a holistic role for schools have particular implications for the way in which educational agendas have been determined in recent years. When the 'New' Labour government came to power in 1997, it saw the standards agenda as central to tackling issues of disadvantage:

To overcome economic and social disadvantage and to make equality of opportunity a reality, we must strive to eliminate, and never excuse, under-achievement in the most deprived parts of our country. Educational attainment encourages aspiration and self-belief in the next generation, and it is through family learning, as well as scholarship through formal schooling, that success will come. (DfEE, 1997, p 3)

Undoubtedly, much has been achieved as a result of the focus on standards and educational indicators of social exclusion have probably moved further in the intended direction than those in any other policy area (Palmer et al, 2002). However, it is also clear from our evidence that the dominance of the standards agenda in schools and LEAs is beginning to act as an inhibitor of the wider contributions that schools might make and to isolate them from their potential partners in the community and in other agencies. What has gone wrong?

Our tentative answer rests on the view that the 'standards agenda' is, in fact, a complex mixture of aims – the enhancement of learning and improvement of schooling – and of delivery mechanisms – target-setting, testing, public accountability, high levels of central prescription, and so on. In effect, we suggest, these two distinct components have become confused.

Means have been elevated to the status of ends to the point where meeting the targets, passing the tests and coming through the inspection have become more important than enhancing learning, improving schools or, crucially, making real impacts on the life-chances of disadvantaged young people.

If we are serious about a 'holistic' role for schools, therefore, the time may now have come to separate out the commitment to enhancing learning from delivery mechanisms which may have served a useful purpose once but are now beginning to look somewhat dysfunctional. Alternative mechanisms, based on a wider role for schools and broader approach to what counts as 'learning' might in fact be the best way of impacting on young people's life-chances and, indeed, of building on the real improvements to schooling that have been made in recent years. Again, the government's new primary strategy (DfES, 2003b), with its somewhat broader approach to the purposes of schooling, suggests that this might be within the realm of the politically possible.

Developing supportive frameworks

In advocating a holistic role for schools, we do not in the least minimise the demands this will place on them, particularly if they become involved in an extended range of activities. However, we believe that there are policy steps which could be taken to make this role more manageable. As a senior officer in Forest Villas' LEA commented when contemplating a dual 'standards' and 'community' role:

"OK if it is both ... let's say it's both and let's fund it and let's measure it as well and let's give the schools credit for doing all of those things that [they] can do...."

It is worth unpacking this statement a little, to see what might be implied by each of its elements.

Saying it

Schools are currently unreliable contributors to any regeneration effort because so much depends on what the individuals who lead them see as their priorities. It seems to us that if

schools' contributions are important, they cannot simply be left to individual inclination. One of our informants (a community worker in Senlake) advocated legislative action to define a role for schools. This is certainly one option, although one that might be politically impracticable. However, some judicious mixture of formal guidance, pressure and incentives might well be acceptable. An interesting analogy is with schools' roles regarding, say, the teaching of literacy. It would be unthinkable for a headteacher to say that teaching literacy was not a part of their school's role – and yet we found headteachers who said that involvement in regeneration efforts was not a priority for them. The two cases are not identical, but it is at least worth asking whether the same sorts of supports and pressures should not be brought to bear in both areas.

'Saying it' in this sense also has direct implications for leadership, since, even within a more directive system, headteachers would be likely to retain considerable power over the way new frameworks were interpreted in practice. Leaders therefore need to be developed to guide schools into a more holistic role. As a non-educator (significantly, perhaps) observed:

"Where I've ever worked with schools it has required there to be a particular headteacher or senior teacher there who has actually got a degree of vision and recognised that schools are more than just nine till three." (local authority officer, Forest Villas)

Our own evidence certainly bears out the crucial importance of the attitudes and values of those in leadership positions and it may be that these things should not be left to chance. In a context where senior staff in schools have for some years been encouraged to focus on a relatively narrow range of activities, there would seem to be implications for the way job descriptions are constructed, for the criteria that are applied to appointments and, above all, perhaps, to the professional development opportunities that are available to would-be leaders. This, of course, has clear implications for the National College for School Leadership which is charged in England with developing the quality of leadership in schools.

Funding it

"There is a feeling that community involvement is often given lip service but it is never backed up with funding. Schools need resources and a clear direction from the local authority." (headteacher, Senlake)

Although school funding is complex and there are many local variations, it is nonetheless largely true that most schools have no money in their budgets for substantial involvement with their communities. The funds which many of them access, therefore, tend to be tied to specific, small-scale and short-term projects. Any reconceptualisation of schools' roles would need to be tied to an equivalent reconceptualisation of their funding, which would itself need to yield predictable levels of resource appropriate to the scale of the role that was envisaged. There are many ways in which this might be done – a separate, dedicated funding stream, a dedicated budget devolved to local level, the pooling of existing budgets, and so on – and there are real issues about whether new or redirected money is needed, whether control should be at school or local level and whether there should be uniformity or local variation. What would also need to be considered is the use to which such funding might be put. For instance, some schools did not want more budgets to manage, so much as specialist staff to do the work:

"Schools no longer have the time to commit to community involvement. It is certainly not practical for teachers to take on any added responsibilities. It would perhaps be better if there was a member of staff dedicated to community relations, a bit like a GP practice manager." (headteacher, Senlake)

Measuring it and giving credit

What we said above about rethinking the standards agenda implies also rethinking the ways in which schools are held to account. Currently, schools perceive themselves (rightly or wrongly) to be accountable only for their work in raising attainment:

"Heads would support community involvement in principle, but they are being forced to think solely in terms of standards

and will be inspected on this.... The government is afraid to give an inch on the attainment agenda.” (senior local authority officer, Forest Villas)

The question, therefore, is whether the government can ‘give an inch’ without sacrificing whatever gains have been made by the relentless focus on standards. Our evidence suggests that, while schools were certainly asking to be evaluated in terms of realistic expectations of what they could achieve, none of them was seeking to deflect attention from their role in raising standards by arguing for a wider role. On the contrary, schools saw the wider role as the *means* of raising standards. The implication would seem to be that an accountability regime could be developed which would retain a clear focus on standards but within the broader context of what schools can realistically achieve and what wider role they might need to adopt in order to maximise those achievements.

Again, there are many options for how this might be done. Published performance data and inspection frameworks might be modified to reflect a wider range of issues. The unit of monitoring might be shifted from the individual school to locality services. Kite-marking and special types of school status, financial rewards and flexibilities might be used to give schools credit for their work. The immediate priority, however, is to use some or all of these measures to remove what schools perceive to be the unfairly punitive aspect of the current accountability regime.

Building supportive structures

The call for ‘joined-up working’ is as frequent – and as frequently unheeded – as the call for ‘joined-up policy’. However, our evidence leads us to propose something more radical than collaboration between otherwise separate institutions and agencies. There are two reasons for this.

First, it is difficult to see how coordinated and sustained strategies to address deep-rooted causes of disadvantage can be developed in a situation that is characterised by short-term, shifting alliances, let alone one where:

“Each headteacher is their own emperor of their school and the culture of that school is very much linked to the particular teacher and if the teacher changes often the attitude does.” (local authority officer, Forest Villas)

There would seem to be a clear need for structures which not only transcend organisational boundaries, but which also offer some prospect of stability. It may be that the new LSPs will provide such structures, although, like many previous efforts, they rely on persuading essentially separate organisations to collaborate despite their different practices and priorities. If they turn out not to be the answer, the detail of any alternative and more radical structures will need considerable thought, but interesting examples are now beginning to emerge, for instance in some of the bolder ‘extended schools’ initiatives (DfES, 2002) or in the reconfiguring of services around joint education-social services departments (Dyson and Millward, 2001), or the nascent Children’s Trusts.

Second, it is difficult to see how single schools can develop relationships with single communities in a situation where schools compete against each other to draw their ‘customers’ from many different communities. As a senior officer in Forest Villas’ LEA put it,

“You cannot on the one hand be talking about parental choice ... and then on the other hand actually expect schools to be at the heart of their community.”

However, if the one school-one community model is no longer (and may never have been) viable, an alternative way forward is for groups of schools to work together in order to serve wider areas and the multiple communities within those areas. This would, in principle at least, damp down the more perverse effects of parental choice and enable schools to identify within their areas with what one informant (a senior officer in Senlake’s LEA) called the diverse “communities of interest” with which they might develop a more stable relationship. It could in turn maximise the resources available to serve those diverse communities and create a unit of sufficient size to act as a focus for other services and agencies.

Such a move, like the establishment of new service delivery structures, needs much detailed thought. Nonetheless, the Senlake ‘family’ of

schools would seem to be an embryonic form of what such a grouping might look like. Moreover, the new headteacher of Southfield School in Forest Villas was similarly contemplating the creation of a 'federation' of three secondary schools which could serve a much wider area than any one of them alone and, he hoped, develop a powerful community strategy.

Accessing information

We have remarked elsewhere on the partial nature of the information which schools had about the communities they served. Certainly, there was a widespread feeling among residents and community workers that even the apparently most community-oriented schools failed to understand the community's needs and had agendas of their own which over-rode the community's wishes. Moreover, the structures for bringing a community voice to bear on the work of schools were far from universally effective: governors were not necessarily representative of their communities and in any case were difficult to recruit; likewise, the newly formed LSPs showed few signs as yet of making any real impact on schools.

The more actively schools become involved with communities and the wider the roles they undertake, the more problematic these issues become. In particular, the notion of 'transforming' the life-chances of individuals and communities carries with it the very real danger that schools will be encouraged to pathologise disadvantaged people and to ride roughshod over their wishes on the grounds that it is 'in their best interests'. It is already worrying enough that some of those closest to these communities regard local schools as 'monsters'.

There are no easy solutions to these problems, but we can at least identify some promising ways forward:

- The development of what we have called a 'holistic' role for schools, with appropriately adjusted funding and accountability mechanisms, should enable schools to move away from an exclusively standards-oriented view of their pupils and of the families and communities within which they live.
- The increasing availability of detailed performance data makes it possible for schools

to undertake more sophisticated, fine-grained analyses of their pupils' progress and attainments and of their own performance. Hitherto, schools have been largely restricted to viewing these matters through the lens of 'headline' performance data relating to the attainments of whole cohorts of pupils. However, individual-level pupil data and value-added data of the sort we used in our analyses are now readily available. Although schools may need help with the task, there is no reason why they should not look much more closely at how well they are doing in relation to a wide range of sub-groups within their populations.

- If schools' work forms part of a broader, coherent strategy, it ought to be possible for it to be informed by the rationale that makes that strategy coherent. If, in turn, that rationale is developed through proper corporate processes and with appropriate community consultation, schools' work should be informed by a much wider range of perspectives than is often now the case. Similarly, if schools become part of larger federations or clusters, there is the prospect, at least, that they will be able to develop more effective mechanisms for community consultation and involvement in decision making than is the case with single-school governing bodies.

A final dilemma

Underpinning many of our findings is, we believe, a fundamental dilemma in policy approaches to disadvantage. Such approaches inevitably involve a trade-off between 'targeted' and 'universal' strategies (Moss et al, 1999). Although the current government places considerable emphasis on developing the quality of universal services such as hospitals, police services and, of course, schools, it also retains a good deal of faith in more targeted approaches. It continues to believe, in particular, that it is possible to identify individuals, groups and communities which are at risk of 'social exclusion' and then to devise customised strategies which will result in their 'inclusion'. The communities of Senlake and Forest Villas, for instance, fall into the 'at-risk' category and hence are targeted with a range of strategies – Education Action Zones, Excellence in Cities,

Sure Start, Health Action Zones, and so on – which are intended to address their particular problems.

The danger of this approach is that a gulf opens up between universal services and targeted strategies (Moss et al, 1999; Audit Commission, 2002). Energy and resources are drawn into generating a multiplicity of initiatives which are difficult to manage coherently, draw arbitrary distinctions between groups and are difficult to incorporate into mainstream practice. In the meantime, universal services – particularly as they come under pressure to deliver enhanced performance – focus increasingly on working with groups who are not deemed to be ‘at-risk’ and become less rather than more capable of responding to the needs of disadvantaged people. We can see this pattern emerging, to some extent at least, in the Senlake and Forest Villas schools as they struggle to make sense of the multiple targeted initiatives with which they are involved, yet feel themselves to be prevented by the dominance of the standards agenda from taking actions which would meet the real needs of the communities they serve.

And yet, this is precisely the problem that the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal has identified as needing to be tackled. As the SEU argues, government policies have sometimes,

... been part of the problem. Departments have worked at cross-purposes on problems that required a joined-up response. Too much reliance was put on short-term regeneration initiatives in a handful of areas and too little was done about the failure of mainstream public services in hundreds of neighbourhoods. (SEU, 2001b, para 7)

Clearly, what is needed is not more numerous and more powerful targeted strategies, but a real effort to develop the capacity of universal services to meet a range of needs. This in turn may be about more than simply bolstering those services in the most disadvantaged areas. It may also involve thinking more profoundly about what we expect services to achieve and how we expect them to operate.

In the context of schools’ contribution to area regeneration, this may mean reframing the question we ask of them. Instead of,

How can schools contribute to the regeneration of disadvantaged areas alongside their ‘core business’?

we may need to ask,

What is it about schools’ core business that enhances the life-chances of all children in all communities they serve (including those which experience disadvantage)?

This is not a merely semantic change. It involves thinking more profoundly about a series of questions:

- What is it that we expect *all* schools to achieve for their pupils and what is the appropriate balance between academic attainments and the development of other sorts of knowledge, skills and attributes?
- What are the appropriate relationships between schools, families and communities? What levels of engagement do we think are appropriate and what do we expect each to bring to the other? How accountable do we wish schools to be to families and communities, and through what mechanisms?
- What is the appropriate relationship between schools, the labour market and the rest of civil society? What does it mean to ‘enhance the life-chances’ of young people or to ‘prepare them for adult life’?
- What is the appropriate relationship between schools, LEAs and other public services? How autonomous should schools be in terms of their aims, governance and practice?

These are questions which, in some ways, are so obvious that the answers are taken for granted. Those answers, however, have profound implications for the way we understand the purposes of education, the role of schools and the relationship between social and educational disadvantage. Typically, we only begin to consider issues such as these when schools face particular challenges and then apply our conclusions only to those schools. Our view, however, is that we must be prepared to engage with these questions seriously and to do so in respect of the school system *as a whole*. Only then will we begin to create schools which have the capacity to respond affirmatively to all their pupils and all the communities they serve.

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A

Appendix A: Methodology

The fieldwork was conducted over a two-year period, from September 2000 until November 2002, and fell into four broad stages. A first round of interviews was carried out with key stakeholders with the aim of gathering perceptions and some factual information about the communities and the schools serving those communities. The aim of the second round of interviews was to take the foci of the research to a more strategic level, hence the interviewees identified were those (for example, local authority officers) with a strategic overview of education and regeneration policy. A subsequent round of interviews was concerned with exploring the impact of area-based initiatives, with the focus centred on the Education Action Zones in each area.

Feedback to and validation from participants in the research was a major feature of the methodology through recurrent interviewing with key informants and a formal feedback event at the end of the study's first year. The fourth stage of the research was likewise concerned primarily with feedback and updating through a series of re-interviews, particularly in schools, and a conference for all interviewees at which findings and policy implications were discussed.

The geographical areas of investigation for this study were identified as having been subject to regeneration initiatives in recent years. The case study schools were chosen as they are the schools that serve the largest proportion of pupils from the respective areas and not because of the extent of community engagement or involvement in the regeneration of the area they serve.

Interviewees were selected on the basis that they were community stakeholders or were in some way related to the communities, the schools serving those communities or the local authority serving those communities. Some interviewees (for instance, headteachers and senior local authority officers) were identified as key informants at the start of the study. Others were identified through 'snowball' sampling, in which

interviewees identified other useful informants. Speaking with key stakeholders in the community and schools did not prove problematic, but speaking with residents proved more difficult and was achieved in part through opportunistic and snowball sampling. The research team endeavoured to speak to a wide range of interviewees (see Appendix B for a 'map' of the sources of interview and other data) to ensure that the source of information was broad and that all perspectives were taken into account. Over the course of the fieldwork the research team spoke with over 300 individuals, many of whom were interviewed on more than one occasion.

Most interviews were individual and face-to-face, although we also undertook some focus group discussions with residents, parents and pupils. All interviews were structured through a topic guide, supplemented by specific questions as appropriate. Interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed in full or in part, and interview notes were taken. All data was subsequently analysed using a qualitative data analysis software package. Data was coded initially using the categories from the topic guide.

Quantitative data was obtained from public sources (notably, the DfES statistics website www.dfes.gov.uk/statistics) wherever possible. However, more detailed data often had to be sought direct from the local authorities and the schools. This enabled us to carry out more complex analyses than those normally done on school performance data. However, because local data management procedures differ, it was not always possible to access comparable data in each area. In these cases, we accepted the nearest equivalent data and this explains why analyses may differ slightly. These analyses were undertaken in Excel and are explained in greater detail in the text, in other appendices or on the project website (www.man.ac.uk/include/regen.htm).

All data relate to the 2001-02 school year unless stated otherwise.

B

Appendix B: Data source maps

The following tables map the sources of data – interviews and documentation – which we accessed in each area during our fieldwork. They map sources in terms of the policy areas and the levels of decision making to which they most clearly relate.

Senlake levels	Policy areas			
	Strategic	Education and training	Economic	Social
National	Policy documents National context			↑
Regional	Policy documents from Government Office (GO) and the Regional Development Association, Director education, skills, enterprise and regeneration, GO			↑
Sub-regional	Policy documents	Learning and Skills Councils	Connexions	↑
Local	Policy documents from LSP and LA Director regeneration Chief executives Cabinet councillors Mayor Education business partnerships	Advisers, school services Adult education – widening participation and education Director education Education statisticians Sure Start Initiatives – family learning	Education business partnerships Director economic regeneration Economic Development Unit Sub-regional Economic Development Plan	Director social services Police Community partnerships
Area Senlake	Community forum Ward councillors Community leaders	Schools – headteachers, governors, teaching staff, auxiliaries EAZ – director, curriculum development, LSU manager Learning mentors, FE colleges	Area team	Community police officers, area housing, youth work, faith community, health, community workers, community partnerships, voluntary organisations
Community and families	Resident representatives on the community forum	Parents Pupils	Workers	Residents

Policy areas				
Forest Villas levels	Strategic	Education and training	Economic	Social
National	Policy documents National context			↑
Regional	Policy documents from Government Office (GO) and the Regional Development Association, Director education, skills, enterprise and regeneration, GO			↑
Sub-regional	Policy documents	Learning and Skills Councils	Connexions	↑
Local	Policy documents from LSP and LA Leader of the council Chief executives LSPs Regeneration specialists	Advisers Director Education Education statisticians Lifelong learning Family learning coordinator	Director economic regeneration	Director housing Director social services Police <i>Community Plan – 2001-04</i>
Area Forest Villas	Community forum Ward councillors Community leaders	Schools – headteachers, governors, teaching staff, auxiliaries EAZ – director, curriculum development, LSU managers, mentors, community education programmes	Job shop on the estate	Community police officers, area housing, faith community, community workers, youth workers
Community and families	Residents who work voluntarily for community forum	Parents Pupils	Workers	Residents

C

Appendix C: Descriptive school data

2001-02 school level performance, special educational needs (SEN) and attendance data												
School	Case study area	Age range	Number on roll	Pupils with statements of SEN	Pupils with SEN without statements	Key stage 3 English (% of pupils achieving level 5 or above)	Key stage 3 Maths (% of pupils achieving level 5 or above)	Key stage 3 Science (% of pupils achieving level 5 or above)	GCSE (% of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE/ GNVO at A*-C)	GCSE (% of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE/ GNVO at A*-G)	Average point score at key stages 2 and 4	Authorised absence (Unauthorised absence)
Patton Community College	Senlake	11-18	1,022	20 (2.0%)	259 (25.3%)	52%	57%	54%	30%	86%	28.1	8.3% (1.5%)
Coleridge Community High School	Forest Villas	11-16	866	49 (5.7%)	159 (18.4%)	66%	52%	51%	41%	85%	28.4	8.2% (1.3%)
Southfield Comprehensive	Forest Villas	11-16	657	34 (5.2%)	258 (39.3%)	40%	43%	40%	26%	84%	25.7	9.1% (1.1%)

Source: DfES performance tables (2001-02)

School level SEN, attendance, exclusion and performance data, 2000-02 for the primary schools												
School	Case study area	Age range	Number on roll	Pupils with statements of SEN	Pupils with SEN without statements	Key stage 2 English (% of pupils achieving level 4 or above)	Key stage 2 Maths (% of pupils achieving level 4 or above)	Key stage 2 Science (% of pupils achieving level 4 or above)	GCSE (% of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE/ GNVQ at A*-C)	GCSE (% of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE/ GNVQ at A*-G)	Average point score at key stages 2 and 4	Authorised absence (Unauthorised absence)
St Peter's Primary	Senlake	3-11	395	2 (0.5%)	61 (15.4%)	78%	61%	83%	NA	NA	26.5	5.6% (0.0%)
Warwick Primary	Senlake	3-11	386	5 (1.3%)	134 (34.7%)	52%	48%	56%	NA	NA	24.0	6.3% (0.0%)
Brunel Primary	Senlake	3-11	390	5 (1.3%)	111 (28.5%)	52%	56%	78%	NA	NA	24.9	5.3% (0.6%)
Bitterne Primary	Forest Villas	3-11	331	2 (0.6)	45 (13.6)	75%	70%	84%	NA	NA	27.1	5.9% (0.1%)
Alderman Bailey Primary	Forest Villas	3-11	330	5 (1.5%)	65 (19.7%)	57%	60%	62%	NA	NA	24.6	6.6% (0.2%)
Pakeland Primary	Forest Villas	3-11	475	2 (0.4%)	59 (12.4%)	84%	75%	95%	NA	NA	27.7	6.4% (0.4%)

Source: DfES performance tables (2001-02)

D

Appendix D: School recruitment patterns

Source for all data: Local authority and school statistics

The population of children living in Senlake in years 2, 6, 9 and 11 in 2001-02 in the case study schools				
	Number (and %) of Senlake pupils		Number (and %) of Senlake pupils	
	Number of pupils		Number of pupils	
Primary schools	Year 2		Year 6	
Warwick Primary	43	40 (93)	46	43 (93)
St Peter's RC Primary	48	34 (71)	64	43 (67)
Brunel Primary	35	22 (63)	54	41 (76)
Secondary school	Year 9		Year 11	
Patton Community College	184	93 (51)	159	70 (44)

Schools attended by children living in Senlake in years 2, 9 and 11 in 2001-02				
	Number of Senlake pupils		Number of Senlake pupils	
	% of Senlake pupils		% of Senlake pupils	
Primary schools	Year 2		Year 6	
Warwick Primary	40	22	43	19.5
St Peter's RC Primary	34	19	43	19.5
Brunel Primary	22	12	41	18.6
Other schools	85	46	94	42.5
Total	183	100	221	100
Secondary schools (two schools included which take large numbers of Senlake pupils)	Year 9		Year 11	
Patton Community College	93	44	70	47
Bracknell Comprehensive	58	28	39	26
St Agnes RC Comprehensive	36	17	27	18
Other schools	24	11	12	8
Total	211	100	148	100

The population of children living in Forest Villas in the case study schools in 2001-02		
Primary schools	Number of pupils	Number (and %) of Forest Villas pupils
Pakeland Primary	386	13 (3)
Bitterne Primary	254	31 (12)
Alderman Bailey Primary	277	103 (37)
Secondary schools	Number of pupils	Number (and %) of Forest Villas pupils
Southfield Comprehensive	544	52 (10)
Coleridge Community High	690	35 (5)

Schools attended by children living in Forest Villas in 2001-02		
Primary schools	Number of Forest Villas pupils	% of Forest Villas pupils
Pakeland Primary	13	7.1
Bitterne Primary	31	17.0
Alderman Bailey Primary	103	56.6
Other schools	35	19.0
Total	182	100
Secondary schools	Number of Forest Villas pupils	% of Forest Villas pupils
Southfield Comprehensive	52	49
Coleridge Community High	35	33
Other schools	19	18
Total	106	100

E

Appendix E: Measures of disadvantage in the schools

The standard way of measuring the relative levels of disadvantage in school populations is through the percentage of pupils entitled to claim free school meals (FSM). The equivalent national average figures (from DfES statistics) are:

Primary 17%
Secondary 15%

FSM entitlement in Senlake schools	
School	% of pupils entitled to FSM
Patton Community College	30
Warwick	42
St Peter's	28
Brunel	46

Source: LEA data (2002)

FSM entitlement in Forest Villas schools	
School	% of pupils entitled to FSM
Southfield	38
Coleridge	35
Alderman Bailey	56
Bitterne	16
Pakeland	23

Source: LEA data (2002)

In addition, the strategy unit for the sub-region in which Forest Villas is located produces 'advantage scores' for its schools based on a mix of Census and other indicators and therefore somewhat more sensitive than the FSM indicator. We have scores for 2,400 pupils out of our sample of 2,412 pupils (99.5%). By analysing the scores in terms of pentiles we created the following range:

'disadvantaged' = bottom 20%
'below average' = 20-40%
'average' = 40-60%
'above average' = 60-80%
'advantaged' = 80%+

We have then calculated scores based on those pupils living in Forest Villas and attending the case study schools or other schools in the LEA (n = 182 primary, 106 secondary).

Advantage category of primary pupils who live in Forest Villas			
	'Disadvantaged'	'Below average'	'Above average'
School	Number (and %) of pupils	Number (and %) of pupils	Number (and %) of pupils
Alderman Bailey Primary	72 (70)	31 (30)	0
Bitterne Primary	26 (84)	5 (16)	0
Pakeland Primary	7 (54)	6 (46)	0
Other schools	25 (74)	9 (26)	1
Total	130 (70.5)	51 (29.5)	1

Source: Researchers' calculations and LEA data

Advantage category of secondary pupils who live in Forest Villas		
	'Disadvantaged'	'Below average'
School	Number (and %) of pupils	Number (and %) of pupils
Coleridge Comprehensive	28 (80)	7 (20)
Southfield Comprehensive	26 (50)	26 (50)
Other schools	15 (79)	4 (21)
Total	69 (65)	37 (35)

Source: Researchers' calculations and LEA data

F Appendix F: Community-oriented activities in the schools (as described by schools)

<p>Patton Community College, Senlake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult education (CLAIT classes) • Community access to facilities (particularly sporting facilities) • Links with employers (employee mentoring, student placements) and after-school clubs • Breakfast club • Sexual health clinic (weekly) • Health action days (school was part of HAZ) • Crime awareness programme • The council has just given the school a house in a nearby community which will be used as an outreach centre • Cooperation with some community initiatives • Fostering an entrepreneurial culture through the establishment of school shops through which students sell to local people and businesses • Litter Picks – in cooperation with the Police and Environmental Services <p>Other activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational curriculum and alternative curriculum • Student Support Centre • Mentoring • ICT focus in teaching and learning <p>Planned activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through its involvement in the DfES extended schools project, the school will engage in a range of extended activities 	<p>Coleridge Comprehensive School, Forest Villas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent classes – ‘Helping in schools’ and also cookery and Internet use • After-school clubs • Mentors work in the community • Personal, Social and Health Education afternoons (x5 a year) focusing on health and careers advice • Delivery of the TAPSI course (teaching assistants’ course) • Other activities • Vocational curriculum • Alternative curriculum, Student Support Centre (SSC) • Master and booster classes • Trips to local universities and colleges with the aim of raising aspirations • ICT focus in teaching and learning 	<p>Southfield Community College School, Forest Villas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generational programme (pupils teach IT skills to senior citizens from the local community) • ICT classes • Links with HAZ community use of school facilities (and community) newspaper • Links with community wardens • PTA • Drop-in and arranged sessions for community members on drug awareness, careers advice etc • Homework club • Youth club (x2 weekly) • Strong PTA • Other activities • Pupil Support Centre • Pathfinder status for post-16 initiative • Base for Write to Read initiative • ICT focus in teaching and learning
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<p>St Peter's, Senlake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents' room • Breakfast club • Coffee mornings for parents and parishioners • After-school clubs and homework club • Some use of school building by local groups • Health drop-in sessions for parents • PTA and parent volunteers in school • PACT (family learning initiative) in addition to school delivery of family learning • Parent classroom assistant course • Community representation on the board of governors • Open door policy • School Curriculum Award (recognising community work) <p>Planned activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of ICT for parents 	<p>Warwick Primary, Senlake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral of parents to do classroom assistants' courses and work placements for parents • HAZ links • Nursery provision (until 6pm) • Open door policy – community members come into the school to discuss community issues • Community garden • The school has hosted the PACT (family learning initiative) and IT bus (from the local FE college) • Community use of school facilities <p>Planned activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-establishing adult education 	<p>Brunel Primary, Senlake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult education • Nursery provision • Pupil council • Breakfast club • Open door policy • Some community use of school premises • The school is proactive in dealings with social services • Health drop-in sessions for parents (x1 monthly) <p>Other activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance monitoring using BROMCOM. The Education Welfare Officer also works to increase attendance and punctuality <p>Planned activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening up the IT suite for parental use
<p>Pakeland Primary, Forest Villas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult education – Keeping Up with the Children (LEA provision) • Family learning scheme (using the EAZ laptops) • PTA • Parent helpers in school • Links with some local businesses • Strong governing body with community representation • Links with residential homes for older people <p>Other activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAZ activities aimed at raising aspirations and motivation 	<p>Alderman Bailey Primary, Forest Villas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health, sex and drug education form discrete elements of the PSHE programme • Adult education classes – Keeping Up with the Children (council provision) • Breakfast club • Premises are used by the local community for meetings • Nursery provision, homework clubs • Various after-school hours activities • Establishment of a community learning room and library • Schools council <p>Other activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAZ activities aimed at raising aspirations and motivation 	<p>Bitterne Primary, Forest Villas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various after-school clubs • PSE • Kindergarten • PTA • ICT courses for parents • Work with parents on an ad hoc basis and looking to establish the Parenting Plus course • Parent helpers in school classroom assistant course • Dads and Lads class <p>Other activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional pupil support for lower ability pupils in years 1 and 2 • EAZ activities aimed at raising aspirations and motivation

G

Appendix G: Comparative data on school performance

Figure A1 below displays graphically the scores for the case study schools on these two measures. Scores on the national comparison (the vertical axis) are set against scores on the 'like' schools comparison (the horizontal axis).

Ofsted has developed a system for grading the performance of pupils in a school in relation to the performance of pupils both in schools nationally and in schools in similar 'contexts' (that is, with similar levels of free school meals entitlement). We report in Chapter 4 how the case study schools fare on these measures.

Ofsted uses a seven-point scale of letter grades, awarded at each key stage in relation to performance on national assessments. Our analysis is based on performance in key stage 2 national assessments and national examinations at the end of key stage 4. By allocating each of these grades a numerical value and summing across all the grades allocated to a school, it is possible to arrive at a global score for overall school performance. This necessarily represents a rather crude assessment which is indicative for our limited purposes, but should not be regarded as a robust measure of school performance. In particular, it disguises variations between performance at different key stages and in different subjects and glosses over the fact that the different grades are awarded to different proportions of schools. These comparisons, moreover, relate to the performance of the schools' whole population and not just to that of pupils from the case study areas.

However, in broad terms, it is safe to make the following interpretations of the scores:

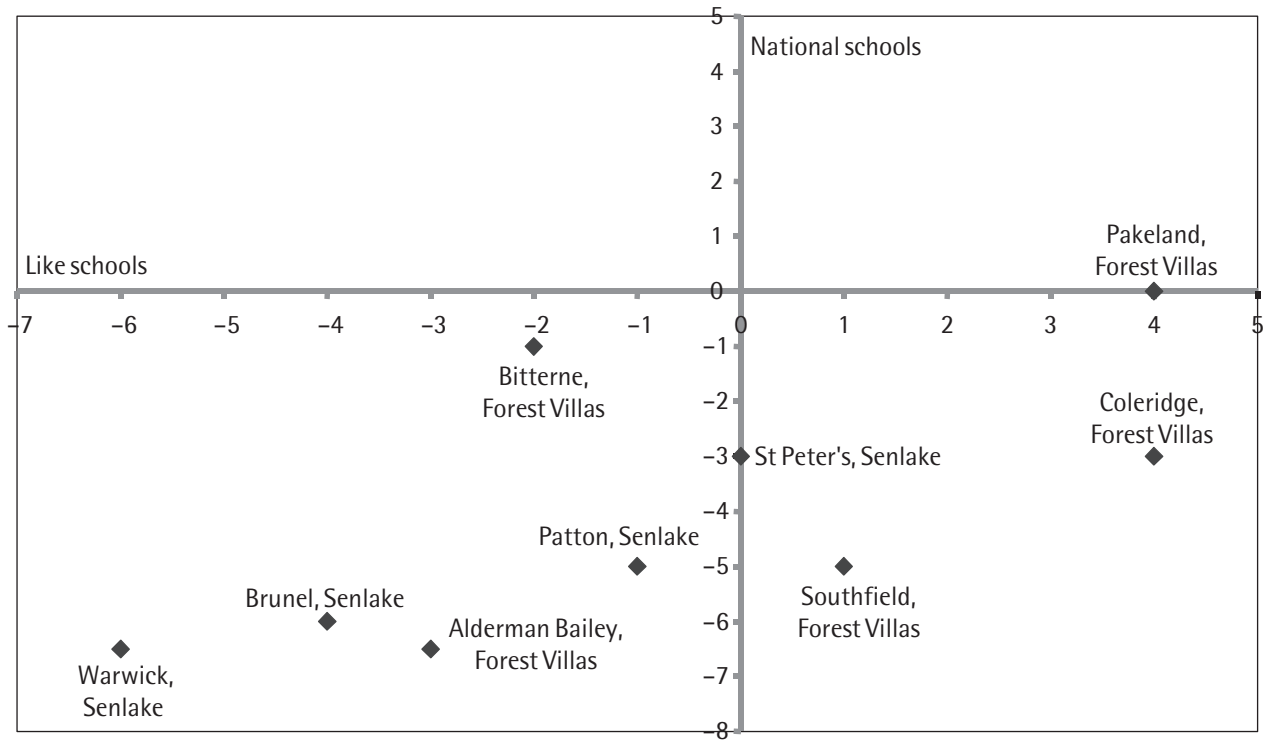
- above plus 4 (plus 7.5 is the maximum attainable): schools performing well above average in all or most of their work;
- plus 2 to plus 4: schools performing above average in all or most of their work;
- plus 2 to minus 2: schools performing at around the average, perhaps with some areas of particular strength or weakness;
- minus 2 to minus 4: schools performing below average in all or most of their work;
- below minus 4 (minus 7.5 is the minimum attainable): schools performing well below average in all or most of their work.

As Chapter 4 indicates, the schools overall do poorly in terms of the national comparison, but much better on the comparison with 'like' schools. As an indication, Warwick, Brunel and Alderman Bailey, with scores of minus 6 or less on the national comparison, are performing in line with the lowest performing 5% of schools. Coleridge and Pakeland, with scores of plus 4 on the like schools comparison, are performing above the average for these schools, within the top 40% in some aspects of their work and within the top 25% in others.

Interestingly, the two sub-samples are somewhat different, with the Senlake schools doing less well on the 'like' schools comparison than the Forest Villas schools. This *may* reflect a greater (or more exclusive) emphasis on the standards agenda and *might* indicate what could be achieved if all the schools were similarly focused. However, it may also reflect the turbulence in Senlake schools caused by reorganisation. Moreover, it is worth remembering that the positive performances in Forest Villas do not result in any transformative impact on outcomes for pupils. Even if Senlake schools performed to similar levels, therefore, there would be no need to revise our conclusions significantly.

Further analysis can be found on the project website (www.man.ac.uk/include/regen.htm).

Figure A1: Case study schools' performance on measures of pupil achievement in relation to schools nationally and in similar circumstances



Source: Researchers' calculations and Ofsted data