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RESEARCH

National Evaluation of the Primary Leadership Programme

Pauline Wade, Tami McCrone and Peter Rudd
NFER Trading Ltd

department for
education and skills
creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

Research Report RR820

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No 820

National Evaluation of the Primary Leadership Programme

Pauline Wade, Tami McCrone and Peter Rudd

NFER Trading Ltd

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education and Skills.

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Executive summary

INTRODUCTION

This research brief presents the key findings from a national evaluation of the Primary Leadership Programme (PLP) carried out by a team at the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) between 2004 and 2006. The evaluation was commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and included the use of case-study interviews with key personnel, surveys of school leaders and analysis of pupil examination results.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Pupil achievement** – With regard to pupil attainment in Key Stage 2, statistical analysis showed that in both 2004 and 2005 PLP schools demonstrated greater progress in both English and mathematics than the comparison group of all primary schools not in the PLP.
- **Teaching and learning** – Case-study respondents were able to describe numerous changes and improvements in teaching and learning processes. These included improvements in data analysis, changes to teaching styles and the adoption of identified good practice.
- **Distributed leadership** – There was a widening of responsibility for leadership within PLP schools, especially to subject coordinators. The reported average size of leadership teams in the survey schools increased from around 3.5 to four.
- **Improved leadership** – Staff in PLP schools identified a number of positive impacts on leadership. These included: the development of a clearer and more widely-shared vision for the school, improved leadership skills for the school's senior managers and increased sharing of responsibility with middle management.
- **Team work, collaboration and networking** – Many survey and interview respondents noted a stronger sense of team work within the school management team, as well as increased opportunities for collaborating with other schools. Collaborative leadership, to a large extent, has become embedded in PLP schools.
- **The role of the PSCL** – The inputs of Primary Strategy Consultant Leaders (PSCLs) were viewed very positively. For example, 82 per cent of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the PSCL had a positive relationship with members of the school leadership team
- **Monitoring and evaluation** – Between 2005 and 2006 many schools had sharpened their monitoring and evaluation processes.
- **Sustainability –** It was evident that schools were doing their best to embed good practice and to ensure that improvements arising from PLP were sustainable, though schools did encounter some difficulties in doing this.

ABOUT THE STUDY

Background and objectives

The Primary Leadership Programme formed part of the five-year Primary National Strategy which was launched in 2003 with the publication of the *Excellence and Enjoyment* document. The aim of the National Strategy is to establish high standards across a *broad*, *creative* and *distinctive* curriculum in every primary school. Within the PLP, the subjects of English and mathematics have been identified as having central importance, re-emphasising the focus on literacy and numeracy that had been in place since the late 1990s.

The PLP was developed collaboratively by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), Primary Strategy and the DfES, as a key element of the National Primary Strategy. The PLP, along with the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP), has been the main National Strategy for improving standards in primary schools.

The development of the Primary Strategy Manager (PSM) and Primary Strategy Consultant Leader (PSCL) roles has been central to the implementation of the PLP. Since May 2003 around 1,900 PSCLs have been trained and deployed to work with nearly 10,000 primary schools across England.

The central objective of the research study was to evaluate the extent to which the Primary Leadership Programme had met its stated aims. These aims were as follows:

- to strengthen collaborative leadership and responsibility for teaching and learning in primary schools
- to equip leadership teams with a greater understanding of expectations in English and mathematics and the expertise needed both to identify where improvements should be made and to take appropriate steps towards bringing about these improvements
- to develop and extend the use of management tools to inform effective leadership and to contribute towards improvements in the teaching and learning of English and mathematics
- for participating schools to make significant improvements in Key Stage 2 results in English and mathematics over the period 2004 to 2006.

Methodology

The evaluation made use of a number of research methods, partly in order to ensure validity through cross referencing and the triangulation of data, but also to obtain findings from situations whereby the PLP should, potentially at least, have influence in a school (and across schools) at a number of different levels. The data sources included the following:

- Interview findings from two rounds of fieldwork visits to ten case-study schools and five local authorities. In general, each school case study consisted of detailed interviews with the Primary Strategy Manager (at the local authority), the PSCL, the headteacher, one or two other senior staff, one or two classroom teachers and, in some instances, a group of pupils.
- A large-scale questionnaire survey sent to 1000 randomly-selected school leaders involved in the programme, completed in two sweeps in autumn 2004 and spring 2006. Good response rates were achieved, with 560 questionnaires returned in sweep 1 and 458 in sweep 2.
- Statistical evidence derived from three rounds of multilevel analyses of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 results. The aim of these analyses was to examine how pupil performance in PLP schools compared with pupil performance in all other primary schools, controlling for known background characteristics at local authority, school and pupil level.
- Local authority- and school-level monitoring and evaluation information.

The research was completed between May 2004 and September 2006.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

- **Pupil achievement** – The main finding was that the key aims of the PLP had been achieved. With regard to pupil attainment in Key Stage 2, multilevel modelling showed that in both 2004 and 2005 PLP schools demonstrated greater progress in both English and mathematics than the comparison group of all primary schools not in the PLP. This effect was small, but significant, especially given the difficulties PLP schools had experienced in improving attainment in the previous three years. The qualitative data supported this finding: many of the interviewees reported a perception that standards of attainment were improving, and some gave specific examples in terms of pupil outcome data.
- **Teaching and learning** – Case-study respondents were able to describe numerous changes and improvements in teaching and learning processes. These impacts had occurred across a number of different levels, including:
  - school-level processes, for example data analysis
  - classroom-level changes, for example using the outcomes of data analysis and monitoring, improved approaches to speaking and listening
  - subject-level changes, for example specific changes to teaching styles and adopting identified good practice.
- **Distributed leadership** – there was a widening of responsibility for leadership within PLP schools, especially to subject coordinators. The reported average size of school leadership teams in the survey schools increased from 3.6 to 4.2 in the period 2004 to 2005, but stabilised at around four by 2006.
- **Improved leadership** – Responses to a survey question on the perceived benefits of the PLP included a number of points about positive impacts on leadership. These benefits included:

  - A clearer and more widely-shared vision for the school (70 per cent)
  - Increased contribution of the literacy and mathematics coordinators towards strategic planning (68 per cent)
  - Improved leadership skills for the school's senior managers (69 per cent).
  - Increased sharing of responsibility with middle management/class teachers (64 per cent).
- **Team work, collaboration and networking** – many survey and interview respondents noted a stronger sense of team work within the school management team, as well as increased opportunities for collaborating and networking with other schools. It seems that collaborative leadership, to a large extent, has become embedded in PLP schools.
- **The role of the PSCL** – the inputs of PSCLs were viewed very positively, especially by survey respondents in PLP schools. For example:
  - 82 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the PSCL had a positive relationship with members of the school leadership team
  - 80 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the PSCL helped the leadership team to maintain a focus on what mattered most for the school
  - 75 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the PSCL helped to foster teamwork and shared leadership in the school.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** – Between 2005 and 2006 many schools had sharpened their monitoring and evaluation processes. Inputs from the PSCL and from training sessions had led in particular to increased use of lesson observations and pupil tracking by school managers and other teachers. Some respondents also reported the use of pupil voice as an element of self-evaluation.
- **Sustainability –** It was evident that schools were doing their best to embed good practice and to ensure that improvements arising from PLP were sustainable, but there were some difficulties in doing this. These difficulties included time constraints, staff turnover, changing priorities and the importance of funding, especially to enable meetings between the relevant staff to take place. The 2006 survey evidence also indicated that, on the whole, exit strategies had not been widely thought out. Only one in five schools had an exit plan and fewer had a written plan with strategies outlining methods to sustain the developments resulting from the PLP.
- **Issues arising from participation in the programme -** The main issues raised by interviewees after the PLP had been in existence for just over a year came under the following five headings:
  - selection of schools
  - difficulties in the early stages of involvement
  - training
  - encouraging collaboration
  - embedding practice.

With the possible exception of school selection, none of these issues were raised in any significant way in the second year of the evaluation. This suggests that many of the first-year issues had been addressed and the concerns of the schools had been taken seriously.

- **Policy implications -**In the second wave of case-study interviews school and local authority staff were asked to draw upon their experiences of the Primary Leadership Programme in order to make recommendations regarding the future implementation of this or similar programmes. Careful analysis of the responses to this question revealed that two broad types of recommendation were made and that both of these have a relevance and an applicability that goes beyond the PLP to leadership and management more generally.
  - The first recommendation was to do with **sustainability** and keeping certain PLP mechanisms in place. These could include some form of ongoing communication channel with the PSCL or someone in a similar role, or the school networking arrangements that had been developed in some areas. The PLP had brought numerous benefits to participating schools and these benefits (and the structures that made them possible) needed to be maintained. Perhaps what schools need is some continued impetus from the local authority to further support and encourage this process? It may be that a School Improvement Partner or some other LA officer could provide this encouragement.
  - The second major recommendation made by respondents was that, whatever the form of future leadership initiatives, there is a need to keep a focus on the notion of **distributed leadership.** The sharing of responsibilities and a common vision across a number of staff was something that worked well in the great majority of PLP schools, and respondents wished these developments to continue.

CONCLUSIONS

The evidence from the surveys and from the case-study interviews suggests that there were many benefits arising from involvement in the programme. Some of these were specific and relatively short-term, but others were more general and longer term, and were to do with changing the culture of leadership in schools.

The identification of the latter types of benefit, along with confirmation that there had been improvements in pupil attainment at Key Stage 2, indicate that the PLP was largely meeting the key aim of improving the capacity of school leaders to lead school improvement beyond the timetable of the programme. The enhanced and sharpened focus on monitoring and evaluation, the use of the PSCL as a independent but supportive colleague, and the advantages of distributing responsibility across a larger number of school staff, were all highlighted as being important benefits that need to be maintained and developed in any future programmes addressing the needs of primary school leadership teams.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report presents the findings from a national evaluation of the Primary Leadership Programme (PLP) carried out by a team at the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). The evaluation was commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and was carried out over the period May 2004 to September 2006.

The report draws on a number of sources of evidence in order to provide a detailed picture of practitioner perspectives on the programme as it has been implemented in phases 1 (2003-4 cohort), 2 (2004-5 cohort) and 3 (2005-6 cohort). The data sources include the following:

- interview findings from two rounds of fieldwork visits to case-study schools and local authorities
- a large-scale questionnaire survey of school leaders involved in the programme, completed in two sweeps in autumn 2004 and spring 2006
- statistical evidence derived from two rounds of multilevel analyses of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 results for the school years 2003-4 and 2004-5.

The Primary Leadership Programme forms part of the five-year Primary National Strategy which was launched in 2003 with the publication of the *Excellence and Enjoyment* document (DfES, 2003). The aim of the National Strategy is to establish high standards across a *broad*, *creative* and *distinctive* curriculum in every primary school. Within this broader curriculum, and within the context of the PLP, the subjects of English and mathematics have been identified as having central importance, re-emphasising the focus on literacy and numeracy that had been in place since the late 1990s.

The PLP has been developed collaboratively by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), Primary Strategy and the DfES, as a key element of the National Primary Strategy. The PLP, along with the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP), has been the main National Strategy for improving standards in primary schools (DfES, 2005).

The development of the Primary Strategy Manager (PSM) and Primary Strategy Consultant Leader (PSCL) roles has been central to the implementation of the PLP. Since May 2003 around 1,900 PSCLs have been trained and deployed to work with nearly 11,000 primary schools across England. Training for the PSCLs has been provided by the NCSL and Primary

Strategy in the context of a proposition that school leadership should be *'a function that is distributed throughout the school community'* (NCSL, 2006b). This proposition was supported by a move towards 'systemic leadership': *'i.e. substantial numbers of school leaders who care deeply about the success of other schools as well as their own and have the skills to lead the wider system'* (NCSL, 2006a, p.4). The aims for the Primary Leadership Programme are thus consistent with some of the aims for other leadership programmes, such a 'Leading from the Middle' (LftM), the 'New Visions' programme for new headteachers and the pilot 'Future Leaders' programme.

Individuals who were recruited to the role of Primary Strategy Consultant Leader had to meet a number of requirements. PSCLs had to demonstrate:

- at least three years of successful experience as a primary head
- a proven track record in improving standards
- the achievement of a good or better grading for leadership and management in their last or most recent inspection
- a very good understanding of the primary literacy and numeracy strategies and a good track record of leading their implementation and development.

The PSCL training programme concentrated on facilitation skills and client-centred change. In the first two years of the programme, PSCLs had four days initial training in the summer, a day in the autumn, and a national conference in February. From January 2005, training for PSCLs was based around national initial training for new PSCLs supported by localised training provided by local authorities, and personalised extended consultancy skills modules facilitated by NCSL and Primary Strategy. In response to evaluations by Ofsted and the first interim report from NFER, the extended skills modules were adapted to include 'challenge' and 'using and analysing data'.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The central objective of this research study has been to evaluate the extent to which the Primary Leadership Programme has met its stated aims. The aims of the programme have been updated and modified as the implementation has progressed (see below), but the initial aims still broadly hold good for the purposes of this evaluation. These original aims were as follows:

- to strengthen collaborative leadership and responsibility for teaching and learning in primary schools
- to equip leadership teams with a greater understanding of expectations in English and mathematics and the expertise needed both to identify where improvements should be made and to take appropriate steps towards bringing about these improvements

- to develop and extend the use of management tools to inform effective leadership and to contribute towards improvements in the teaching and learning of English and mathematics
- for participating schools to make significant improvements in Key Stage 2 results in English and mathematics over the period 2004 to 2006.

As stated in the background section above, the role of the Primary Strategy Consultant Leader, and the identification of good practice within this role, have been central to the implementation of this programme, so two further important objectives for the evaluators were to:

- assess the roles and remits of the PSCLs, to examine their effectiveness in terms of training school senior managers, raising school standards and supporting schools in bringing about improvements
- identify, via case-study visits and the collection of documentary evidence, examples of good practice across the programme.

In addition, the NFER team has attempted to ensure that the methodology is sustainable, so that it can be used for future evaluations of this or other leadership programmes.

Information provided on the NCSL website (NCSL, 2006b), indicated that the updated aims for the third year of the programme (2005-06) were to:

- provide time for the leadership team of a school, with the support of a local experienced headteacher, to review its curriculum, its staffing and the individual needs of its children
- prioritise where improvements should be made and what steps should be taken to bring these about; and to evaluate the impact of this work
- bring together the expert support and guidance which is available locally to help address the particular issues identified within a school
- help schools realise the benefits of remodelling and primary learning networks to improve learning and teaching, and raise standards
- make further improvements in Foundation Stage outcomes and Key Stage 1 and 2 results in English and mathematics over the period 2006-08.

The third year of the programme also included a significant new element entitled the 'Sustaining Success' programme. 'Sustaining success' involved 500 successful schools and 50 early years settings. The aims of the programme for these schools and settings are to develop strategies for long-term sustainability of success, including improvements 'at organisational and system level', and further improvement in the quality of education and standards of attainment, including a focus on underachieving groups.

1.3 Methodology

This evaluation has made use of a number of research methods, partly in order to ensure validity through cross referencing and the triangulation of data, but also to obtain findings from situations whereby the Primary Leadership Programme should, potentially at least, have influence in a school (and across schools) at a number of different levels. The use of a wide range of methods and data sources has helped to ensure that a full picture of the implementation and impact of the programme has been developed. The methodological approaches used included the following:

- school and local authority case-study visits
- survey questionnaire for primary school leaders
- the analysis of statistical data
- the use of existing evaluation information.

School and local authority case studies

Two waves of in-depth case-study visits with two schools in each of five different local authorities were carried out in autumn 2004 and autumn 2005. The schools in the case-study sample were selected in 2004 on the basis of the following criteria:

- phase of PLP to which they belonged (phase 1 and/or 2)
- type of school (infants, junior, combined)
- experience of the headteacher, in terms of years as a headteacher
- school size, based on number of pupils on roll
- percentage of pupils with entitlement to free school meals (FSM).

The local authorities featured provided a broadly representative sample of LAs, both geographically, and in terms of local authority types: unitary, metropolitan, shire county, and so on.

In general, each school case study consisted of detailed interviews with the Primary Strategy Manager (at the local authority), the PSCL, the headteacher, one or two other senior staff, one or two classroom teachers and, in some instances, a group of pupils. Findings from these visits and interviews are included in all subsequent chapters of this report. The visits had four main purposes:

- for the first round of case-study visits: to identify some of the issues and questions that might usefully be included in the school leaders' questionnaire survey (exploratory phase)

- for the second round of visits: to provide illuminative insights into the findings emerging from the first survey of school leaders (illuminatory phase)
- to obtain further information about how the programme was being implemented by headteachers and their staff
- as far as possible, to make an assessment of any impact on teaching and learning at school and classroom levels.

Survey questionnaire for primary school leaders

In order to collect detailed quantitative information about the implementation of the PLP a school leaders' questionnaire was distributed in February 2005. This was sent to a sample of **1,000 primary schools** selected at random from all schools involved in the Primary Leadership Programme. The sample was checked for representativeness in terms of a number of criteria, including local authority type, school size, percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) and geographical region.

The questionnaire was drafted in consultation with the DfES policy team and other members of the steering group. Respondents were given the option of completing either a paper-based questionnaire or an electronic version, sent by email. The survey questionnaire included sections on:

- the characteristics of the respondent and the school
- views on the extent of local authority support
- views on the relationship with the Primary Strategy Consultant Leader
- arranging supply cover
- leadership in the school
- networking with other schools
- implementing and embedding change
- monitoring and evaluation
- impact and outcomes.

A total of 560 schools provided a response to the first questionnaire survey in February 2005, giving a response rate of 56 per cent. The survey process was repeated in February 2006 using the same sample of schools. The 2006 questionnaire included most of the questions that were used in 2005, so that comparisons could be made over time. There were also a small number of new questions, such as one asking about the existence of 'exit strategies'. A total of 458 schools provided a response to the second sweep of the survey. The response rate of 46 per cent is not as high as that for 2005, but is still more than satisfactory for a survey of this type. (It should be noted that, by the time of the second survey, a fair proportion of the schools would have ceased participation in the PLP, and the questionnaire may have seemed less relevant

to them at this stage). The achieved school sample was found to be broadly representative of PLP schools in general.

The analysis of statistical data

In order to make an assessment of whether or not pupil attainment targets were met (and to minimise the burden of data collection on schools), with the support of the DfES's Analytical Services Division, the evaluation made use of pupil attainment databases, such as PLASC (the Annual Schools Census) and the National Pupil Database (NPD). This has involved the use of multilevel modelling, which enabled the analysts to take account of pupil and school factors (such as gender, prior attainment and percentage eligible for free school meals) in order to attempt to assess the impact of the PLP.

Three rounds of multilevel modelling were built into the evaluation. In the first round, the research team provided a baseline analysis of Key Stage 2 performance in the participating schools compared with all other primary schools, controlling for known background characteristics at local authority, school and pupil level. In the second round of modelling, using data from 2003-04, the analysis made an assessment of whether there was any significant change in the performance of pupils in the participating schools, once background characteristics had been taken into account. The final round of modelling repeated this process using the latest available pupil attainment data, from 2004-05. Findings relating to the impact of the PLP on pupil attainment are presented in Chapter 8, and Section 8.3 covers the multilevel modelling process in detail.

The use of existing evaluation information

The evaluation team also made use of a number of other data sources where they were appropriate and relevant to the aims of the study. In particular, the team has made selective use of the following information sources:

- **locally collected data:** local authority- and school-level monitoring and evaluation information, including contextual data relating to the featured case-study schools
- **centrally collected data:** from visits to schools and all local authorities (by NCSL and the Primary Strategy Regional Directors) and Ofsted visits.

Secondary information provided by local authorities, including all the case-study authorities, was used to inform Chapter 4 on monitoring and evaluation, and is summarised in Section 4.2. The research team also examined centrally-collected data such as Ofsted reports on the PLP (Ofsted 2004; Ofsted, 2005).

1.4 Report structure

The remaining nine chapters of this report are organised on the following basis. **Chapter 2** summarises the nature of schools' involvement in the PLP over the three years of the programme, and sets out details of any changes of emphasis that occurred. **Chapter 3** examines the roles of the Primary Strategy Consultant Leaders within the PLP, and **Chapter 4** focuses on monitoring and evaluation. **Chapter 5** brings together findings relating to the local authority perspective on the PLP and includes findings on the role of the Primary Strategy Manager and on the training provided relating to the programme.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 focus on the impact of the PLP, dealing with perceptions of the impact on leadership, on teaching and learning, and on pupil achievement, respectively**. Chapter 9** provides coverage of issues relating to the embedding of PLP practice, networking, sustainability, and the use of 'exit strategies' at the end of a school's involvement in the programme. Finally, **Chapter 10** concludes the report by looking at issues and benefits arising from the programme, and by identifying examples of good practice.

2. Schools' involvement

This chapter looks at how schools became involved in the PLP and the main areas on which improvement was targeted. It is based on responses to the 2006 survey of schools involved in the Primary Leadership Programme and from Wave 2 interviews carried out with Primary Strategy Managers (PSMs) and staff in case study schools in Autumn 2005. School case study interviews included headteachers, deputy headteachers and Primary Strategy Consultant Leaders (PSCLs) and in some cases, other members of the school leadership team and class teachers.

2.1 Schools' involvement in the Primary Leadership Programme

The majority of respondents to the 2006 survey (802 per cent) stated that their schools had joined the PLP during Phase 2 and just under a third (310 per cent) were still fully involved in the programme. Over half (513 per cent) said that their schools were last fully involved in the programme in 2004-2005, with a few (2 per cent) last involved in 2003-2004 and 14 per cent who stated that they were still involved, but only with a small amount of support or involvement.

According to the survey responses, half the schools (510 per cent) said that the main reason for originally becoming involved in the PLP was because they were selected by the Local Authority (LA), while 45 per cent were involved at the request of the headteacher

Of the schools that had been selected by the LA, most (821 per cent) thought that their inclusion in the Programme had been clearly explained, but there were 41 school respondents (18 per cent) who disagreed with this view. For these schools there was an apparent lack of information about why they had been involved in the programme.

The responses from the 2006 survey questions on how schools became involved in the PLP accorded quite closely with information obtained in 2005 from interviews with PSMs and in case-study schools. PSMs reported that the recruitment of schools was originally based mainly on targeting those with low levels of attainment, or the assessment that the leadership would benefit from the Programme. This strategy was diversified for recruitment to Phase 2, when the emphasis was on inviting schools to participate, informing them of the benefits of involvement and actively encouraging participation, regardless of levels of attainment. This approach was regarded by the PSMs interviewed

in Autumn 2005 as far more successful, because it removed the feeling of apprehension, or even refusal to cooperate, on the part of schools that felt they had been targeted and it encouraged a more positive view of the programme. As one PSM commented, the different approach meant that; '*all the schools were willing partners, unlike the first year'*.

In some areas, a regional approach had been adopted, for example, linking the PLP with local Primary Learning Networks and so '*dovetailing their work'*. This not only *'extended the reach of the PLP'*, but also enabled all the primary schools in an area to have the same focus. One PSM explained that the danger that the less targeted approach might result in schools '*that looked as if they might benefit'* not participating, was avoided by sending them a letter '*that made it difficult for them to refuse'*. The responses to the 2006 survey suggested that the broader approach to recruitment had continued and most schools were fully informed about why they were involved.

2.2 Areas for improvement

The timescale of the evaluation enabled the research team to track the areas for improvement which PLP schools tended to focus on. It was evident that, in addition to widening the leadership team, the initial focus of the PLP for most schools had been on methods of assessment, the use and analysis of tracking data and the consequent targeting of underachievement. By autumn 2005, it was found that, for the majority of schools, this continued to be the main area for improvement, as it required some time for new approaches, and especially computerised systems, to become fully effective.

In some case-study schools the leadership team felt that, although their schools were clearly benefiting from a tracking system and they were using it to good effect, it was an area in which other staff were not yet skilled and sometimes lacked interest. As one deputy headteacher commented:

> *We need to move on and upskill teachers to use data and analyse it themselves, as I still do it all at present.*

In this school, this situation was being tackled by whole staff sessions on the tracker system, the identification of pupils not meeting targets and then follow-up meetings with class teachers to decide on appropriate action. According to the school's PSCL, although the new system was not yet fully effective, it had replaced one in which '*assessment was woolly, practice inconsistent and they were not sure where pupils were'*. Now targets could be set across the whole school, so '*Year 5 and 6 teachers were not playing catch-up to raise standards'*. The school had needed guidance on goals and measuring success and this was now being implemented. Similarly, the deputy headteacher in a different school said that their assessment tracker system was

now well-embedded and providing teachers with data, but they were not always '*happy about analysing it'*. It was however, providing targeted support for pupils and had helped the self-evaluation process.

The other main areas of focus and continuing need for improvement, not surprisingly, were specifically to do with raising standards in mathematics and English. Four of the ten case-study schools had identified this area (in either mathematics or English) as one needing attention and in all of them, staff felt that progress had been made, but work was ongoing.

- In one school, the leadership team had set action plans for English and mathematics, with lesson observations, book scrutinies and booster classes. The PSCL thought that standards had improved, but this was '*a huge area'* and the focus needed to continue.
- In a second school, the leadership team had started out by undertaking a 'work scrutiny' for English, so enabling them to tell staff what the general picture was and which areas they needed to concentrate on. This was continuing, but with particular emphasis on the development of the school library and with a broadening of action plans for all subject areas.
- Mathematics had been the first priority area in a third school and the leadership team had received training in lesson observation and this had helped in identifying the quality of teaching and learning. A review at the end of the first year of the PLP had '*shown great improvements*', but there was still the need to persevere, as well as making English the new priority. One advantage of the PLP focus had been to help in the induction of eight new staff, who through INSET training, would know '*what should be expected of them in maths and English lessons'*.
- Another school had started with a general aim of raising standards in English, but had narrowed down the focus to the assessment of comprehension skills in reading, with a particular emphasis on improving boys' results. The headteacher explained that initially their ideas were '*far too broad'*, but dedicated time had been used by the leadership team to discuss the situation with the PSCL. She had helped them to '*define it more'*, so that clear criteria had been produced for monitoring and evaluation. Now, the headteacher reported that, as a result of '*consistent assessment and marking'*, boys had become '*more engaged in reading'* and continuing progress meant the intensive focus could now move to '*looking at standards of writing'*. It is worth noting that the pupils interviewed in this school were well aware of the focus on reading and appeared enthusiastic about their progress, with all six pupils claiming they were now better at reading.

The broad agenda of assessment, self-evaluation, data tracking and raising standards in literacy and numeracy was therefore being continued in all the schools, with general agreement that there was still room for improvement. However, respondents that they were also now considering other areas for attention and these varied quite widely. In some schools, for example, other

areas of the curriculum, such as Science, ICT and PE were already, or about to be, put under the same scrutiny as mathematics and English. One school wanted to look more closely at its Special Educational Needs provision and another at its Foundation Stage work. Other areas for improvement were more practical – a concern for the '*wider school environment'*, or more specifically, the state of the playground. Finally, while most schools saw the PLP as linking in automatically with their School Improvement Plan, the PSCL at one school said that she had identified as the main focus, an '*unwieldy School Improvement Plan , which had to be slimmed down. The school needed a plan that could be discussed and explored. This required explicit targets, not targets that were plucked out of the ether'*. She was able to negotiate a starting point which dealt with evaluation and target-setting and tracking pupil progress, so that tackling these specific issues also made the plan more manageable.

2.3 Summary

Findings from the 2005 and 2006 surveys indicated that schools had usually initially become involved in the PLP either because they were selected by their local authority, or at the request of the headteacher. A broader approach was adopted by PSMs in the second year of the programme, when there was a move away from targeting schools to inviting them and persuading them of the benefits of participation.

Interviews from the case-study schools carried out in autumn 2005 established that the focus of improvements under the PLP tended to be on:

- widening the school leadership team
- methods of assessment, especially the use and analysis of tracking data
- targeting underachievement, particularly in the subject areas of maths and English.

In addition, some schools were considering other areas of the curriculum for attention, e.g. Science, ICT and PE, or a particular focus on an area such as Special Educational Needs provision, the Foundation Stage or the school environment. In some cases the focus shifted as one area became strengthened or the change became embedded.

3. Roles of the PSCL

This chapter first concentrates on how PSCLs worked with their leadership teams in PLP schools and summarises the benefits that resulted from their contribution. It then looks at the challenges which PSCLs faced in their consultancy role, at the impact which being part of the PLP had on them and their schools and at how their role might develop in the future. The data is drawn from the 2005 and 2006 surveys of school leaders and the second wave of case-study interviews with key stakeholders.

3.1 Contact of schools with the PSCL

As had been the case with the 2005 school survey, the 2006 survey indicated that PSCLs had met with headteachers in PLP schools more frequently than other senior staff (see Table 3.1), although deputy headteachers and literacy and mathematics coordinators had also often been involved in meetings. The findings from both surveys also showed that meetings took place with a range of other staff, particularly the SENCO, science and ICT coordinators and Key Stage and phase coordinators.

Table 3.1 Frequency of meetings with PSCL

Primary Strategy Consultant Leader met with…	0 times	1-2 times	3-6 times	7-10 times	11-14 times	15 or more times	No response
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Headteacher	5	25	61	5	1	0	4
Deputy headteacher	10	27	33	2	<1	<1	28
Literacy coordinator	11	29	31	2	<1	0	27
Mathematics coordinator	12	27	31	2	<1	0	29
N = 458							

A series of single response items
Due to rounding, percentages may not always sum to 100
A total of 444 respondents answered at least one item in this question
Source: Evaluation of The Primary Leadership Programme: School Leader Questionnaire 2006

Despite the fact that PLP funding enables leadership teams to attend PLP activities during school time, a quarter of the survey respondents in both 2005 and 2006 indicated that releasing staff was a reason why some members of the leadership team met the PSCL less frequently than other staff (24 per cent in both surveys). There was a similar level of agreement from respondents to both surveys on the other main reasons for fewer meetings with the leadership team (see Table 3.2 below).

Table 3.2 Reasons for some members of the leadership team meeting with PSCL less often than others

Changes or additions to support	%
Difficulty releasing some of the staff	24
Restricted availability of the Primary Strategy Consultant Leader	10
Particular focus of the area identified for improvement	27
Making an efficient use of leadership team's time	22
Staff illness	9
Other	9
No response to this question	37
N = 458	

Multiple response item
More than one answer could be put forward so percentages do not sum to 100
A total of 290 respondents gave at least one response to this question.
Source: Evaluation of The Primary Leadership Programme: School Leader Questionnaire 2006

The case-study data also indicated that, although PSCLs tended to work with the whole leadership team of their PLP schools, on occasion they also met with only the headteacher. Meetings tended to be at the PLP schools and on a regular basis of at least once per term. Besides meetings at schools, some PSCLs also attended the PLP training events in which the schools participated. In addition, one PSCL had organised two visits of the PLP school's leadership team to his/her school for them to observe practice (including lesson observation).

3.2 The role of the PSCL

Overall, responses from both the 2005 and 2006 school surveys indicated a very positive attitude on the part of school leaders towards working with their PSCL and a perception that they were benefiting from the partnership. The responses in the table below are from the 2006 survey, but the results from the previous year were very similar.

Table 3.3 Views about the Primary Strategy Consultant Leader

Our Primary Strategy Consultant Leader…	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither/ agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No response
	%	%	%	%	%	%
helps us clarify the vision for our school	18	49	21	6	3	4
helps us to maintain focus on what matters most for our school	22	55	14	4	2	3
has difficulty understanding the issues that are relevant to our school	2	5	13	47	28	4
is unclear as to which good practice examples we should follow	1	4	13	46	31	5
has a positive relationship with members of the leadership team	35	47	10	4	2	4
has difficulty maintaining optimism	2	2	9	44	38	5
fosters team work and shared leadership	24	51	17	3	1	4
often fails to listen in and advise us appropriately	1	2	11	40	42	5
makes all leadership team members feel they make a contribution	26	47	18	3	1	4
fails to show empathy towards the leadership team	2	4	8	40	42	5
works in partnership with us	29	52	10	3	1	4
makes us feel comfortable discussing our problems with him/her	32	48	12	2	2	5
poses challenging questions	19	51	19	6	1	4
helps us create clear action plans	17	47	21	9	1	4
is skilled in the analysis of performance data	16	38	37	3	1	5
is not available on an *ad hoc* basis, if needed	4	18	29	32	13	4
helps maintain/sustain change	11	48	29	6	2	5

N = 458

A series of single response items
Due to rounding, percentages may not always sum to 100
A total of 445 respondents answered at least one item in this question
Source: Evaluation of The Primary Leadership Programme: School Leader Questionnaire 2006

The generally positive assessment made by survey respondents of the competencies of their PSCLs is consistent with the data obtained from interviews with PSCLs, school leaders and PSMs. They all described the role of the PSCL as being that of a facilitator, an outside questioning voice, someone who helps the leadership team find and maintain focus, and/or someone who contributes their own ideas and expertise to the discussions taking place within the school's leadership team. The relationships between PSCLs and the schools' leadership teams were positive and supportive. This headteacher's description of the contribution of the PSCL to his/her leadership team's work was representative of other interviewees:

> [when we said we wanted to see an improvement in teaching, the PSCL said:] *What exactly do you mean by that? What improvements do you want to see?* [and] *Try to quantify them... She was very helpful in us drawing up a teaching and learning policy which sets out explicitly what we think good teaching looks like, good learning looks like, how we use teaching and special support assistants, how we use parents, what is required of pupils…*

The fact that a special relationship can be generated between the PSCL and leadership teams was stressed by one PSCL who had moved on to being a local authority link adviser. This ex-PSCL mentioned that, from the notes held at the local authority about the schools to which he/she had been a PSCL, it was evident that headteachers 'open up' a little more to a PSCL, seen as a peer, than to a local authority link adviser. It is also worth noting that the positive relationship formed between the PSCLs and the headteachers lasted beyond the participation of schools in PLP (for instance, in the form of regular e-mail exchanges) in three of the case-study schools, including one where the PSCL had retired.

In both surveys, the only areas of doubt regarding the PSCL's work were to do with data analysis skills and the level of availability of the PSCL. In the 2006 survey, although 54 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the PSCL 'is skilled in the analysis of performance data', 37 per cent of respondents gave the neutral 'neither agree nor disagree' answer and four per cent disagreed. In the 2005 survey the neutral response had been even higher at 48 per cent. It may also be worth noting that phase 2 respondents were less likely to agree that their PSCL was skilled in the analysis of performance data than phase 1 respondents (45 and 59 per cent of respondents respectively). It is possible that differential selection and/or training procedures may have been at the root of this discrepancy. NCSL and National Strategies had raised the profile of using data and 'Using and analysing data' was offered as an extended consultancy skill for PSCLs in some areas from autumn 2005: these may be the reasons why the neutral response was lower and the positive response higher in the 2006 survey than in the previous year.

In relation to the PSCL's availability, nearly half (45 per cent) of respondents (strongly) disagreed that the PSCL 'is not available on an *ad hoc* basis' (50 per cent in 2005), but many (29 per cent in 2006 and 31 per cent in 2005) neither agreed nor disagreed and 223 per cent did (strongly) agree with the statement. The percentage agreeing with the statement had risen from 15 per cent in 2005. As they are usually still serving headteachers, it is probably not surprising that PSCLs are not always available on an *ad hoc* basis. It may also have been that, as the number of PLP schools had increased, but the number of PSCLs had not, some PSCLs had a greater work load.

As had been the case in 2005, the majority of 2006 survey respondents (60 per cent) indicated that they did not think that there were ways in which the work of the PSCL could be improved (64 per cent in 2005). However, about a third (30 per cent of the sample and 32 per cent in 2005) felt that there could be improvements. The responses given to possible improvements were as follows:

Table 3.4 Changes to improve school relationship with PSCL

Changes welcomed	**%**
Having a PSCL whose school's circumstances are more similar to mine	48
Spending time with the PSCL	42
Having a PSCL with whom I can have easier contact	18
Having a PSCL with greater professional credibility locally	13
Having a PSCL working with the leadership team on specific issues	30
Having a PSCL who understands our specific circumstances	32
Having a PSCL who shares our vision	19
Other	21
No response to this question	1
N = 139	

Multiple response item
More than one answer could be put forward so percentages do not sum to 100
A total of 137 respondents gave at least one response to this question.
Source: Evaluation of The Primary Leadership Programme: School Leader Questionnaire 2006

Amongst the other changes which were suggested in the 2006 survey were:

- Working on more specific issues (14 per cent)
- PSCL should provide more challenge (14 per cent)
- Fewer changes of PSCL (10 per cent)
- Having a partner to work with (10 per cent).

3.3 Impact on the PSCL

The case-study data provided insights into the challenges and issues faced by PSCLs as part of their work on PLP. Some of the issues mentioned related to *time constraints*. One PSCL had found him/herself acting as a consultant to three schools, due to unforeseen circumstances affecting the number of PSCLs in the local authority, and felt that this had been too large a number. Another PSCL felt that the number of PLP days allocated per school, and resulting in one visit per term, was too small to enable him/her to really get to know a school's circumstances and help it to move forward. In one local authority the PSM mentioned that the number of schools for which PSCLs had responsibility had been reduced where these consultants were struggling to fulfil their role due to working with schools where the headteacher had left or was ill.

Other issues faced by PSCLs related to the *readiness* for and *receptivity* to PLP. One PSCL had felt that the headteacher of a case-study school had initially been defensive (which was then overcome). Two PSCLs reported that headteachers were not necessarily always willing to fully embrace the concept and practice of 'distributed leadership'. On the other hand, in relation to two case-study schools, the PSCLs reported that the headteachers needed to be more forceful (e.g. they had failed to recognise the need to make a final decision following dialogue with the leadership team or had not always shown willingness to make difficult decisions about staff who were not performing well enough). One PSCL felt that working with one school had been challenging because of the absence of a culture of self-evaluation, and another had felt that his/her work had been difficult where it had only been possible to work with the headteacher (and not with other staff).

Despite PSCLs having faced some challenges, the impact of PLP on PSCLs and their schools tended to be positive, as described by the PSCLs themselves and by the PSMs. Both kinds of interviewees felt that the PLP had stimulated PSCLs to reflect about the circumstances of their own school and helped them focus, particularly on priorities likely to lead to improvements in achievement. The PSCLs had often learned about new strategies and tools as a result of interchanges with the headteachers of PLP schools and local authority advisers, and through training, which they then transferred to their own schools. One PSCL reported that:

> [PLP] *has enhanced my own leadership and the operational management of my school… It has made me evaluate my own school staff and processes… We now run the distributed leadership model… I'm trying now to negotiate and clarify my vision and include others. This is the big change.*

It is also worth noting that in three local authorities, monitoring and evaluation processes revealed that the schools of PSCLs had seen their results rise either in relation to national averages or vis-à-vis other schools in that authority (in PLP and not in PLP). One PSM commented that the likely reason why PSCLs' schools benefit from their headteachers being a consultant is that PSCLs find in PLP an opportunity to reflect on strategies and, having been selected for their leadership skills, are then able to adapt them to make them work in their own schools. (See also Section 8.2).

3.4 The future development of the PSCL role

The experience and training of PSCLs would seem to place them in a good position to perform a variety of roles. Two of the PSCLs interviewed in the first round of case studies had moved to local authority adviser roles. Moreover, PSMs reported that PSCLs' skills were used beyond PLP: in one local authority, some PSCLs provide consultancy on leadership to schools in serious weaknesses or on 'notice to improve' and, in another, some are mentors to new headteachers.

When asked how they saw their role as consultant leader developing in the future, three mentioned that they would like to continue working as PSCLs. However, one PSCL reflected that without further training, the role would be about repeating what he/she is doing already and expressed some uncertainty as to whether there would be scope to progress and avoid stagnation by developing into a School Improvement Partner (SIP). Another PSCL reflected that consultant leaders could become SIPs but that it may be difficult for a headteacher to find the time to be a SIP at the same time as running his/her school. [The interviewers did not ask a specific question about the SIP role and there were varying levels of awareness of this role amongst the respondents, usually depending upon whether the New Relationship with Schools policy was being introduced in the PSCL's local authority].

3.5 Summary

The two key findings from this chapter can be summarised as follows:

Firstly, PSCLs tended to meet most frequently with the headteachers of their PLP schools, but also with other leadership team members. Time constraints affecting PLP schools sometimes impaired PSCLs' ability to meet leadership team members other than the headteacher.

Secondly, the role of the PSCL tended to be viewed very positively, especially by survey respondents in PLP schools. For example:

- 82 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the PSCL had a positive relationship with members of the leadership team
- 80 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the PSCL helped the leadership team to maintain a focus on what mattered most for the school
- 75 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the PSCL helped to foster teamwork and shared leadership in the school.

The only potential areas for improvement identified, for some PSCLs, were data analysis skills and level of PSCL availability.

4. Monitoring and evaluation

This chapter provides an overview of the ways in which the Primary Leadership Programme has been monitored and evaluated at school, local authority and national levels. The first section sets out details of the range of forms of monitoring and evaluation used by schools and local authorities, and Section 4.2 presents details of a selection of local authority-managed evaluations.

4.1 Forms of monitoring and evaluation

The February 2005 questionnaire survey indicated that 25 per cent of PLP schools had *not yet* implemented a strategy for monitoring the success of the changes that were part of the Primary Leadership Programme. This could largely be explained by the fact that, at the time of that survey, most schools had joined the programme fairly recently, but this finding also indicated that this was a potential area for development. By the time of the 2006 survey, however, the percentage of respondents that did not have a strategy for monitoring and evaluating changes had fallen to 20 per cent, with 74 per cent stating that they did have such a strategy. This suggested that schools had focused on this area in the intervening year.

According to the 2006 survey, those schools that were implementing monitoring and evaluation strategies were using a wide range of approaches, as indicated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Forms of monitoring and evaluation

Involves	**2006 %**	**2005 %**
Monitoring end of Key Stage 1 and/or Key Stage 2 results	88	76
Lesson observation and feedback	89	83
Monitoring lesson planning	69	65
Monitoring pupil's work	85	79
Monitoring marking	60	55
Scrutiny of assessment data	87	81
Other	10	0
No response to this question	<1	0
N = 339	**339**	**408**

Multiple response item
More than one answer could be put forward so percentages do not sum to 100
A total of 339 respondents gave at least one response to this question in 2006.
Source: Evaluation of Primary Leadership Programme: School Leader Questionnaires 2005 and 2006

It can be seen from Table 4.1 that the use of all forms of monitoring had increased by 2006. In the 2005 survey, a relatively small number of survey schools (four per cent of total respondents) also mentioned that they used pupil views as part of their monitoring and evaluation processes and by the time of the 2006 survey, more than a quarter of those reporting the use of other types of monitoring, said that they used pupil voice as part of their procedures. One interesting example of using the pupil voice was provided by a case-study headteacher interviewee: *'Children have a voice in this school. Year 6 lead this. There is an adult in the group, but he or she acts as a referee. They can bring their voice to any aspect of school life'.*

The case-study interviews with headteachers and other school staff also revealed that there was a good deal of variation in levels of monitoring and evaluation and in the strategies that were used. Broadly in line with the findings from both surveys, and consistent with the findings from the first wave of case-study interviews, the two most frequently-mentioned forms of monitoring and evaluation were *lesson observation* and *pupil tracking*. One headteacher respondent, for example, explained how lesson observations had been sharpened up:

> *Previously we tended to be more descriptive and wrote down what was happening in the lesson…* [now] *we're looking at a lesson and we're actually judging it… therefore, at the end of the lesson, we can say to colleagues, this is what I thought were the strengths, these are the areas for development… the whole observation process is much more worthwhile.*

There were no reports of resistance or unease about lesson observation (there had been a few of these in the first round of case-study visits) and, with reference to one PLP school, a PSCL described how lesson observations had benefited staff at a variety of levels within the school:

> *The leadership team and I did some lesson observations alongside the link adviser and the head to see how the assessment systems in maths were actually being used by the teachers… We did lesson observations and book scrutinies… to see if all of the thinking had been joined up. The crucial part of assessment is that the teachers make use of it for their teaching, and that is the case at* [this school]*… The subject leaders learnt how to observe a lesson and come to a judgement, but in an objective manner… Staff and coordinators became used to being observed…*

Three headteachers gave details of pupil tracking systems that had been put in place directly as a result of PLP activities. One of these, for example, said that taking up the use of 'Target Tracker' occurred as a result of the PLP: *'We now have a new system. This has had quite an impact. We weren't doing enough tracking. Who were we going to track and why?'* The PLP schools that were

also involved in the Intensifying Support Programme were particularly likely to have benefited from the use of pupil tracking systems. Towards the end of Year 1 and the beginning of Year 2 of the PLP, local authorities and PSCLs were encouraged to draw on ISP core instruments and tools to support their work in participating PLP schools, in particular in relation to tracking children's progress.

In some of the schools it was clear that monitoring and evaluation processes had been expanded and sharpened as a result of the PLP. There were several ways in which such a sharpening could occur. One approach was to maintain a clear focus on one sub-group of pupils at a time, and another was to focus on a particular area within a subject, such as literacy within English. Another strategy was to reduce or simplify the number of targets that a school was working towards, or to tighten up the management of evaluation processes. One headteacher respondent said: *'We now have a set monitoring cycle and everyone knows that…We are now more systematic in what we do',* and a mathematics coordinator made a similar point: *'We look at PANDA and at assessment data. Before PLP this use of data was not as well planned. Now we have a timetable in place which makes self-evaluation more manageable'*.

The 2006 survey reported that 89 per cent of school leadership teams were conducting on-going self-evaluations and the response to the question, *to what extent has the PLP contributed to the school's ability to self evaluate,* indicated that the great majority of those thought that the Programme had impacted on this area, at least to some extent (see Table 4.2 below).

Table 4.2 Extent to which the Primary Leadership Programme has contributed to the school's ability to self-evaluate

	%
A lot	30
Somewhat	58
Not at all	11
No response	1
N = 406	

A single response item
Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100
402 respondents answered this question
Source: Evaluation of Primary Leadership Programme: School Leader Questionnaire 2006

For most of the schools, monitoring and evaluation had become an item for discussion at management or more general staff meetings. This was confirmed in the interviews with PSCLs, some of whom reported that monitoring and evaluation were discussed in all team meetings: *'Assessment and performance data is the core theme for the meetings of the team and the whole staff*'.

4.2 Evaluation by local authorities

Interviews with the Primary Strategy Managers revealed that in four out of the five case-study local authorities, an external evaluation of the implementation of the PLP had been commissioned. This usually involved a consultant or an external body carrying out an examination of Key Stage 1 and 2 data and case-study visits to participating schools. Where such external evaluations had been carried out, the PSMs had found them useful: *'We had an external evaluation in Year 1 and that helped us to focus our procedures and practices'*.

The research team also made requests to the five case-study local authorities (and to a wider range of local authorities, via a letter accompanying the school leaders' questionnaire) for copies of any reports or evaluation data that they might have relating to the implementation of the PLP. Examination of the documentation received from 14 local authorities revealed that these used a range of strategies for monitoring and evaluating the implementation and success of PLP. The main strategies involved the use of:

- *performance data* consisting chiefly of end of Key Stage results from PLP schools
- *views of key stakeholders*, such as PSCLs, PLP schools' leadership teams, local authority advisers and consultants, and PSMs – collected via interviews or questionnaires
- *documentation* from a variety of sources, including PLP school self-evaluation reports and self-review forms, and records of visits to schools.

4.3 Summary

As far as monitoring and evaluation is concerned, the findings from this chapter suggest that:

- Between 2005 and 2006 many schools had sharpened their monitoring and evaluation processes. Inputs from the PSCL and from training sessions had led in particular to increased use of lesson observations and pupil tracking by school managers and other teachers. Some respondents also reported the use of pupil voice as an element of self-evaluation.
- By the time of the 2006 survey, three quarters of respondents said that they had implemented a monitoring and evaluation strategy aimed at assessing the impact of the PLP. In most schools the leadership team was conducting on-going self-evaluations and the majority of those involved (88 per cent), thought that the PLP had contributed, at least to some extent, to the school's ability to self-evaluate.
- Local authorities have been carrying out their own monitoring and evaluation exercises, which have sometimes been conducted by external evaluators. Local authority evaluations tend to draw on a range of data, including performance data, views of key stakeholders in schools and local authorities and the analysis of documents such as PLP school self-review forms.

5. Primary strategy managers and the local authority

This chapter focuses on the how local authorities and PSMs have implemented PLP. Drawing on data from the surveys of school leaders and the case-study interviews, it provides an overview of how PLP provision was enhanced over time, the challenges faced by local authorities (Section 5.1), how local authorities supported PLP schools and worked with PSCLs (section 5.2), and how the training which they provided was received (Section 5.3).

5.1 Implementation

As was reported in section 2.1, local authorities initially targeted schools for **participation in PLP** mostly based on pupil results (low attainment) and on the assessment that the leadership in the school would benefit from the programme. Other criteria had included targeting schools with serious weaknesses and inviting any schools which were interested in participating. The second round of interviews with PSMs indicated that, for the year 2005-6, at least one other group of schools had also been targeted: in one local authority, schools whose headteachers had been or were PSCLs had been invited. The rationale for targeting these schools alongside schools which were underachieving or 'coasting' was that support provided to schools in connection with the numeracy and literacy Strategies had mainly been given to underachieving schools. It was hoped that the involvement of PSCLs' schools in PLP would help to raise achievement across the authority.

PSMs reported a number of mechanisms which had been put in place in their local authorities in order to **enhance the implementation and success** of PLP. In two local authorities it was thought desirable for schools to be part of the programme for two years because of the amount of work involved and because schools were not always able to identify progress after one year. In one of these authorities, schools undertook, during their second PLP year, a small project and the funding that they put in for this purpose was matched by the authority. Other developments in the implementation of PLP in individual local authorities worth highlighting included:

- the establishment of a quality assurance system to monitor the work of PSCLs
- linking the activities of the PLP to those of Primary Learning Networks
- taking into account, in the selection of schools for PLP, local knowledge of the fact that the programme can be overwhelming where a headteacher is

in his/her first headship or where schools are already involved in many initiatives.

Looking back over the implementation of the PLP, there were a number of **challenges** which PSMs identified. The large size of the authority was perceived to have affected the implementation of the programme in three local authorities, for reasons such as the fact that it was difficult to ensure that everyone involved in the PLP was informed of any developments and it was impractical to get everyone together in one place. In one authority, dealing with this challenge was made easier by the fact that, as a result of the authority's evaluation of PLP's phase 1, it was decided to introduce a regional structure. This consisted of smaller geographical areas within the authority, each with a senior primary adviser, regionally-based teams of local authority consultants and PSCLs, and regionally-provided training.

Other challenges besides local authority size, mentioned by individual interviewees, were:

- time constraints and the amount of work to be undertaken at local authority level leading to, in one area, no monitoring and evaluation taking place when planned
- resistance from some schools to entering the programme: this, however, lessened over PLP phases, as, in phase 2, schools were usually 'invited' to take part.

5.2 Local authority support and working with PSCLs

As part of the PLP, local authorities provided support to schools in a number of ways, in particular through the provision of subject consultant time, and support from PSCLs. Questionnaire survey respondents tended to be pleased with the support received. After nearly three years of the PLP the majority of respondents felt that they had received at least the number of days support from the local authority to which they were entitled (83 per cent) and that the support had been sufficient (77 per cent).

Only a minority of respondents felt that they had received less than their entitlement (nine per cent) or that they had not received sufficient support (18 per cent). The 18 per cent of respondents (a rise of three percentage points from the first survey) who indicated that they had not received sufficient support suggested a range of possible forms of additional assistance that would have been useful. The main changes suggested were as follows:

- support more geared to specific needs and circumstances of the school (48 respondents)
- clearer information regarding the support available (31 respondents)

- more consultant time/meetings (21 respondents)
- more adviser time/meetings (20 respondents).

Although the general thrust of these additional support suggestions was for more time and for more customised support, it should be stressed that only two respondents (from 458) indicated that they had felt that their PSCL was not effective.

PSMs reported that they were in **regular contact** with PSCLs, including through meetings (on a termly basis or more often). However, some resource issues surfaced regarding contact between PSCLs and PSMs. In one local authority, the PSM said that he/she did not have as much time as would be desirable. For this reason, the PSM felt that, despite e-mail and telephone contact and training events aimed at PSCLs, the latter often had to work hard on their own. In another authority, the PSM mentioned that the termly, full-day sessions where PSCLs met as a team with the PSM and literacy and numeracy advisers, required more resources than the funding available allowed for. It was nevertheless felt to be important to organise such sessions.

PSMs tended to report that they **received feedback** on the progress of PLP from PSCLs and some mentioned that they worked with the PSCLs on strategies for working with schools. In one authority, this process followed a specific protocol aimed at encouraging open dialogue between the PSCLs and their PLP schools. PSCLs were not asked by the PSM to make judgements about the schools, but simply to provide information about how they worked with schools and what activities had been carried out.

5.3 Training

One of the most important ways in which local authorities provided support to PLP schools was through the organisation and delivery of training. The 2006 survey responses confirmed the 2005 survey findings, which indicated that local authority training events were most frequently attended by PLP schools' headteachers. However, the frequency of attendance at local authority training events by senior staff fell substantially between 2005 and 2006. In 2005 almost two-thirds of respondents (64 per cent) indicated that the headteacher had attended all of the training events, whereas in 2006 40 per cent of headteachers attended all events, although more headteachers attended 'most events' in 2006 (35 per cent) than in 2005 (27 per cent). This decline may be explained in part, by the fact that many schools had finished their involvement in the programme by the time of the 2006 survey. In addition, from autumn 2005, primary school leaders were having to find the time to deal with a considerable number of new initiatives.

In 2005 the deputy headteachers and the mathematics and numeracy and literacy coordinators also tended to be present at most or all training events (70, 72 and 73 per cent respectively). In 2006 attendance at training events had fallen, with just over half (56 per cent) of deputy headteachers reported to have attended training events, and 61 per cent of literacy coordinators and 60 per cent of mathematics coordinators having attended all or most events. A more detailed summary is provided in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Frequency of attendance at local authority training events by senior staff

Staff category	All events %	Most events %	About half %	Few events %	No events %	No response %
Headteacher	40	35	7	8	5	4
Deputy headteacher	27	29	8	8	5	23
Literacy coordinator	34	27	8	11	5	16
Mathematics coordinator	32	28	7	10	5	18
N = 458						

A series of single response items.
Due to rounding responses may not add up to 100 per cent.
Source: Evaluation of the PLP: School Leader questionnaire 2006.

One quarter (28 per cent) of the PLP survey respondents reported that all the members of the leadership team always attended training events at the same time. A further 30 per cent said that all the leadership team attended most times, another quarter (27 per cent) felt that all members were present sometimes and one in ten (12 per cent) never sent all members to training events.

Overall there was a more positive attitude to training in the third year of the PLP. A majority of respondents (84 per cent) found that the training was either 'relevant' or 'very relevant' to the school's needs (six percentage points more than in 2005), and only 11 per cent felt that it was not relevant. This suggests that training provision had been adapted successfully, or extended to meet the needs of the schools. Nevertheless, there was a prevailing view that there was still some room for improvement in training provision. Although training was viewed more positively in 2006 than in 2005, (there was a drop of nine percentage points in the survey respondents who felt that sessions needed to be improved), over half of all respondents (58 per cent) in 2006 still believed that training could be enhanced. The main change that these respondents were seeking was to do with making the training sessions more tailored to the needs of their school (64 per cent). Table 5.2 provides details of other improvements.

Table 5.2 The nature of improvements that could be made to the training sessions

Type of improvement	Percentage indicating that this improvement could be made
More tailored to the needs of individual schools	64
Greater opportunity for discussion with my own school's team	47
Greater opportunity for discussion with teams from other schools	33
More focused tasks	26
More relevant training materials	31
More frequent sessions	18
Smaller training groups	25
More subject-specific sessions	23
More practical tasks	17
Longer sessions	4
N = 265	

A multiple-response item.
More than one answer could be given to this question.
Source: Evaluation of the PLP: School Leader Questionnaire 2006.

Case-study data collected in autumn 2005, supported the 2006 survey finding that views on PLP training had become more positive. The change in perceptions regarding the training events may be due to local authorities having adapted the training provided to all PLP schools over time. During their interviews, PSMs demonstrated an awareness of the issues arising from the training events designed for PLP schools and reported that local authorities have sought to address these, based, at least in some cases, on the feedback received.

The changes to the training provided in preparation for the third year of the PLP (2005-2006) were mainly of two kinds:

- *Changes to the timing and length of the training* – One local authority had intensified the training provided to all schools at the beginning of the school year by having two sessions in the autumn. This was to stimulate a quicker and more focused re-start of PLP in schools. Another authority was delivering training as full-day (rather than half-day) sessions, so the afternoon could be used by the leadership teams to reflect on the issues raised during the morning and support from the local authority staff could be brokered depending on the priorities identified for the schools.
- *Giving the training a specific focus or updating it* – All local authorities had somewhat adapted the training provided to PLP schools. For instance, one PSM reported that the authority had tried to relate the training designed for PLP schools to issues that were topical: '*Rather than the*

training being very specific to a school's needs, we've tried to incorporate the latest national drive, [for instance, looking at problem solving in mathematics, which all schools need to look at]'.

5.4 Summary

Local authorities have played a key role in supporting the PLP. Most of the schools involved in the programme were positive about the support provided by local authorities. Other key findings from this chapter include the following:

- Local authorities have involved a range of schools in the PLP, including underachieving, 'coasting' and PSCLs' own schools. They have also developed the implementation of PLP in a number of individual ways, including, for instance, introducing quality assurance procedures regarding the work of PSCLs and putting in place structures to improve communication in large local authorities.
- As noted above, PLP schools tended to be satisfied with the support received from the local authority, but in some cases there were issues regarding the amount of support available from PSCLs and other local authority staff, such as literacy and numeracy advisers.
- There was a substantial drop-off in involvement in training, particularly from headteachers. However, overall, views about the training seem to have become more positive over time, and this may be as a result of the fact that local authorities have locally adapted the content and delivery format of the training sessions.

6. Impact on leadership

A key aim of this evaluation has been to examine the impact of the primary Leadership Programme at a variety of levels. This chapter examines the impact of the PLP on leadership in schools, as reported by leadership team members, Primary Strategy Managers (PSMs), Primary Strategy Consultant Leaders (PSCLs) and class teachers in the course of two rounds of case-study interviews. The chapter also incorporates relevant findings from the school leaders' questionnaire surveys undertaken in 2005 and 2006.

6.1 Headteacher perceptions of school leadership

Case-study respondents reported a number of perceived benefits from the implementation of the PLP. There were indications, for example, that the programme's focus on widening responsibility for leadership within schools had indeed led to changes in the size and composition of the leadership teams in all of the case-study schools. Leadership teams were described as being more active as a result of the PLP. School leaders appreciated having the time to develop a focus and vision for the school, and to think about the most appropriate next steps in school improvement planning. There were also some early signs that interviewees enjoyed working in collaboration with other school leaders and that, in their view, there was much potential for such work to be developed further.

Responses to the school leaders' questionnaire surveys in 2005 and 2006 enabled the research team to collect views concerning the delegation of responsibilities in schools. Table 6.1 below shows school leaders' views on the extent to which responsibility was delegated from headteachers and deputy headteachers to other staff within their schools.

Table 6.1 Level of delegated responsibility in schools

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher delegate responsibility to…	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neither Agree/ Disagree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	No response %
subject coordinators	33	58	3	1	<1	5
teaching staff in general	22	66	5	2	0	5
support staff	14	60	14	4	<1	7
N = 458						

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.
A set of single response items
A total of 441 respondents answered at least one item in this question..
Source: NFER Primary Leadership Programme School Leader Questionnaire 2006

The responses show that respondents viewed that responsibility was distributed more frequently to subject coordinators than to other teaching staff and support staff. The first round of the survey indicated slightly more delegation to support staff (18 per cent) than subsequently in the second round (14 per cent). Other than that, there was little change reported in the way in which headteachers and deputy headteachers delegated responsibility between 2005 and 2006.

It is perhaps also worth emphasising here that the PLP is not the only initiative that has had an impact on the distribution of responsibilities around a school's staff: for example, workforce reform (three interviewees) and the introduction of PPA (Planning, Preparation and Assessment) time (two interviewees) were mentioned, unprompted, by case-study school respondents. References to PPA indicated a view that, theoretically at least, more staff now had more time to contribute to school planning processes. The references to workforce reform consisted of positive comments about the role and input of teaching assistants: *'We have now included all of the TAs in our professional development sessions… They are half of the workforce and that has made a difference'* (headteacher); *'The support staff have an hour before each school day to prepare for their lessons. There can be three teaching assistants in a reading lesson'* (class teacher).

Linked with this, school leaders were also asked for their views on the nature and extent of collaborative working within their leadership teams. Responses to this question are summarised in Table 6.2 below.

Table 6.2 Extent of collaborative working within leadership teams

In my school the leadership team works collaboratively…	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree/ Disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No response
	%	%	%	%	%	%
to develop the school's vision	48	46	2	2	0	3
to challenge underperformance	34	55	5	3	0	4
to identify areas where improvements are required	44	50	2	<1	0	4
to plan for action	44	51	1	<1	<1	3
to implement action plans	39	54	2	1	0	4
to monitor, evaluate and review action plans	37	55	4	<1	0	4

N = 458

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.
A set of single response items.
Source: NFER Primary Leadership Programme School Leader Questionnaire 2006.

The general finding here was that there was a great deal of collaboration within leadership teams. The responses show, based on the percentages 'strongly agreeing', that, echoing 2005 survey results, developing the school's vision and identifying areas for improvement and planning for action were the areas where collaborative working was reported to be at its strongest within leadership teams. In 2006 more respondents strongly agreed that collaboration helps to develop the school's vision (up from 45 per cent in 2005 to 48 per cent in 2006) and to monitor, evaluate and review action plans (up from 33 per cent in 2005 to 37 per cent in 2006).

Responses to a survey question on the perceived benefits of the PLP included a number of points about positive impacts on leadership. In 2006 a slightly higher proportion of respondents generally agreed with the following perceived benefits of the PLP than in 2005. These benefits included:

- A clearer and more widely-shared vision for the school (70 per cent)
- Increased contribution of the literacy and mathematics coordinators towards strategic planning (68 per cent)
- Improved leadership skills for the school's senior managers (69 per cent).
- Increased sharing of responsibility with middle management/class teachers (64 per cent).

However there were two small, but notable exceptions to this as follows:

1. a more collaborative style of working within the leadership team (down from 75 per cent in 2005 to 72 per cent in 2006).
2. improved leadership skills for the school's middle managers (down from 63 per cent in 2005 to 60 per cent in 2006).

Case-study interviews found that headteachers generally felt positive about the impact of having distributed leadership across a wider range of colleagues, so that leadership was not *'all down to the head and the deputy.*' In many cases, the size and composition of leadership teams had increased to include not only headteacher and deputy headteachers but also subject coordinators. Headteachers believed that these teams had developed in terms of the strength of leadership and effectiveness over the course of the 2004-2005 academic year.

This positive view of headteachers was found to have been influenced by a number of factors. These included a perception that headteachers had become more aware of the skills and talents of other leaders and of the enthusiasm that these new team members brought to the leadership team. Headteachers felt that they had benefited from a more developed understanding of the requirements of effective leadership which included a greater willingness to

delegate to others and effectively monitoring and measuring the performance of other staff.

The greater number of people involved was felt to have impacted on leadership because there was now an increased body of school leaders who had developed and were committed to achieving this shared vision of the school. One headteacher interviewed reported that, as a result of the Primary Leadership Programme in their school:

> *There are more people who can have a greater say in the decision-making process and everyone now feels that they can voice their opinions and the increased staffing will really help. People enjoy being part of that professional dialogue*

This team dynamic/ethos was identified as crucial by schools to implementing the action plans and changing school processes. Leadership teams were described as having remained focused on key areas for improvement. In both phase 1 and 2 schools there was reported to be a commitment to maintain Primary Leadership Programme structures after funding ended. Headteachers reported the importance of subject coordinators and the leadership team working in partnership and also stressed the importance of monitoring the work of coordinators to ensure that the goals set were achieved.

The survey findings support the qualitative evidence that leadership teams had increased in size. On average, leadership teams were largest at the time of the 2005 survey (4.2 members) and smallest before the schools joined the Primary Leadership Programme (3.6 members). In 2006 leadership teams had stabilised at four members. At the time of the surveys, more schools had literacy and numeracy coordinators in their leadership team than was the case before the schools joined the programme: literacy coordinators and numeracy coordinators were part of the leadership team in about four in five schools at the time of the 2005 survey, and in seven out of ten schools in 2006 and in about three in five schools before joining the Primary Leadership Programme.

Some headteacher interviewees considered that as a result of the PLP there was now a greater shared responsibility for improving standards across the school. Two of the case-study schools were inspected during the evaluation and in both schools the feedback on standards of leadership and management had been positive. One of the headteachers and a deputy headteacher had both been in post for one year when an inspection found in the autumn term of 2005 that:

> *The headteacher gives excellent leadership to the school, very ably supported by his deputy. Their clarity of vision is communicated very well to, and is shared by, the whole staff team. The school is very well managed and is particularly good at self-evaluation and analysing performance data.*

One headteacher summarised the overall impact of the PLP on the school as having provided: '*Clarity of purpose, clarity of role and clarity of actions to be taken,'* whilst another considered that the programme had allowed: '*managing, leading the school to become much more explicit*'. A further headteacher commented that the programme had '*enabled the school to move forward and raise standards… and made me a more effective manager'.*

6.2 Perceptions of other school staff

New members of the wider leadership teams who were re-interviewed in the second round of case-study visits continued to welcome the opportunity to be part of these teams in schools and considered that their involvement had allowed them to make a more positive contribution to their school's development. In one school a member of the leadership team commented that: '*in terms of job satisfaction I am getting far more now. It is a burden in terms of time. If you do not feel ownership then it can be far more stressful. There is less stress when you have a role to play'.* Another interviewee recognised how the Primary Leadership Programme had '*made more people responsible other than* [head] *and* [deputy] *and we are all saying the same…. What has made it really powerful is that there are so many of us leading it.'*

For many of these staff, particularly literacy and numeracy coordinators, the PLP had represented their first opportunity to be involved with leadership and management across the whole school. Members of leadership teams discussed how they felt able to effect change across schools with the support of a leadership team which was committed to improving teaching and learning and, ultimately, standards.

In one school there was reported to have been some initial reticence about new members of the leadership team taking on greater responsibility and being held accountable for changes in the school's processes. However, this reticence had been overcome and members of this team reported that they had experienced an increase in confidence as a result of involvement in the PLP and making in progress towards the goals set as part of that. A member of this leadership team commented that

> *Everyone felt privileged to be part of it and everyone has benefited from it, but for the other staff who are not part of the team, at first I think some of them felt that they were being spied on in some way with the lesson observations and book trawls. There was a little mistrust, but that has been overcome and PPA time has improved the planning and staff are also implementing the new marking policy really well.*

The PLP was also felt to have offered members of school leadership teams additional professional development opportunities. These were required to

assist leadership teams in meeting the goals of the Programme. One assistant headteacher, in a phase 2 school, expressed the following view:

> *I don't think that we've ever in the past actually received any training in doing what we do. You know, you tend to be head and deputy if you're a good teacher and want to take more responsibility, but that doesn't necessarily make you a good manager. We've had some management training…* [But] *we've never had anything of this level and at this depth.*

6.3 Perceptions of PSCLs and PSMs

Primary Strategy Managers reported a range of impacts from the implementation of the Primary Leadership Programme in schools and local authorities. A key aspect of the impact on leadership was considered to be the increased focus on standards across all year groups and ensuring that processes to track pupils' progress were developed and implemented in schools. These were considered to be key aspects of the PLP. A PSCL in a phase 2 school, for example, reported that, as a result of new and regular assessment procedures and analysis of the data obtained from the assessment:

> *They* [the leadership team] *know the standards in the school and the progress that children are making and that has been taken on board by the teachers who realise that the standards in Year 6 and 2 are the responsibility of everyone*

Primary Strategy Managers considered there to be far greater numbers of staff in leadership teams, whereas previously:

> *The leadership team in primary schools tended not to include the English and/or the numeracy coordinator. However, we insisted that this happens as part of the Primary Leadership Programme and these coordinators have indeed gained a more strategic role within their schools and have been able to develop in that direction.*

PSMs reported that there were more highly-developed levels of distributed leadership in the case-study schools as a result of the implementation of the programme. It was considered important by PSMs that leadership teams did not just include more staff, but also that those staff were able to effect change in the school. Leadership teams were felt to support the role of headteachers within schools, to lessen their feeling of isolation. The impact of greater levels of distributed leadership in schools was described by one Primary Strategy Manager as:

> *Powerful, but the impact of that is difficult to quantify but I feel that it has helped to establish clarity of role of senior people and has widened*

> *the leadership team. I cannot see how it could fail to move them on as they have the chance to self-evaluate together, but it is not reflected dramatically in any kind of data.*

The programme was identified as an opportunity to develop leadership capacity within both schools and local authorities by producing school '*leaders for the future,*' individuals who might be considered to be 'systemic leaders'. This was considered important for schools and local authorities so that when senior staff, headteachers and deputy headteachers, change, there is an ongoing commitment to the processes and structures of the programme to effect change in the schools. This opportunity was not felt to have been fully embraced by one of the case-study schools, as the PSCL reported:

> *The Primary Leadership Programme has impacted on* [the headteacher's] *leadership of the school and it reinvigorated and refocused him and the school benefited as he looked at trends and results, but I am not sure that if he left whether there would be a structure that would continue in the school.*

The introduction of the new Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLRs) was impacting on the programme in some of the case-study schools. Some local authorities welcomed the programme as a positive opportunity for subject coordinators to develop the skills and competencies required by TLRs, with a focus on standards across schools rather than just within a subject. In one local authority leadership teams now included leaders for Key Stages 1 and 2 rather than subject leaders. A further Primary Strategy Manager reported:

> *You have to remember that with the new TLRs coming in and the fact that there will not be TLRs for literacy and numeracy that we will need to have TLRs for standards at a phase or year group. I have advised some heads that they need to identify the most suitable candidates to come onto PLP to be prepared for TLRs so that you know who can drive standards in mathematics and English.*

The PLP was reported to have helped to further develop the relationship between local authorities and schools through the training sessions and the regular visits to the schools undertaken by the PSCLs (see Chapter 5).

Primary Strategy Managers were concerned, however, about how schools that had exited the Primary Leadership Programme would sustain the improvements in leadership and retain the distributed leadership models within schools. This key aspect of the long-term impact of the PLP was an area that PSMs were keen to monitor in future, to: *'see if the consolidation in leadership will continue to improve standards'*. One strategy manager stated that they stressed to schools that the PLP was '*the start of a process and not a time-limited programme.'*

Primary Strategy Managers believed that the programme had strengthened leadership in the Primary Strategy Consultant Leaders' own schools because of the self-development that had been facilitated. Each of the case-study local authorities found that standards were maintained or improved in PSCLs' schools, which one Primary Strategy Manager attributed to the PSCLs':

> *understanding about the importance of distributed leadership and focusing their efforts on the priorities that will make the biggest difference. They are questioning their own practice in their own schools as a result of the work in the other schools and it has been a good professional development opportunity.*

Primary Strategy Managers also reported that PSCLs felt more valued by being asked to share their expertise with colleagues in other schools. The programme had provided an opportunity to develop local authorities' capacity to tackle key school improvement issues, through the development of highly-skilled PSCLs who could support and challenge leadership in schools. Primary Strategy Managers also viewed the relationships formed between PSCLs and their schools as being unique, and they were viewed in many cases as very beneficial as there was a two-way flow of good practice. One PSM stated that: '*Heads have valued the support of the consultant leaders, especially those schools with new heads. It has been invaluable to them'*. One interviewee reported that the work of the PSCL had enabled a school that had been identified as 'failing' to be successful in its reinspection. The Primary Strategy Manager in this local authority attributed the successful reinspection to the work of the consultant PSCL which had helped to strengthen the headteacher's leadership in the school.

Primary Strategy Consultant Leaders concurred with these views and some had introduced concepts and strategies from the PLP into their own schools in order to develop distributed leadership and the role of subject coordinators (see also Section 3.3).

PSCLs did not consider there to have been resistance to working in wider leadership teams in the case-study schools and many of the case-study leadership team were viewed as being highly enthusiastic by the PSCLs. In some cases, this enthusiasm meant that leadership teams were keen to tackle a large range of issues and so PSCLs were required to advise that leadership teams retained a focus on a small number of aims. However, a small minority of headteachers were identified who were reluctant to fully utilise the skills of other members of staff. Where this occurred PSCLs reported that it had been challenging to gain the necessary knowledge about the school's processes in order to further develop these.

6.4 Summary

With respect to school leadership, case-study and survey respondents reported a number of perceived benefits and impacts from the implementation of the PLP. The four main impacts can be summarised as follows:

- There was a widening of responsibility for leadership within schools especially to subject coordinators. The average size of school leadership teams in the survey schools increased from 3.6 to 4.2 in the period 2004 to 2005, but stabilised at around four by 2006.
- There was also ample evidence of collaboration between school leaders, and this work had led to an increased level of shared knowledge of how to move the schools forward. It seems that collaborative leadership, to a large extent, has become embedded in PLP schools.
- There was evidence from the school leaders' survey that the PLP was perceived to have made positive impacts on various dimensions of leadership. Benefits mentioned here included a clearer and more widely shared vision for the school (70 per cent of respondents) and improved leadership skills for the school's senior managers (also identified by 70 per cent of respondents).
- The PSCLs expressed some concern about the time spent away from their own schools, but also took a view that their consultancy work had many benefits. They found that being a PSCL provided them with very good professional development opportunities and helped them to take a broad view of school improvement.

7. Impact on teaching and learning

This chapter reports the impact on teaching and learning in schools as identified by Primary Strategy Managers, Primary Strategy Consultant Leaders and school staff in the course of two rounds of case-study interviews. The chapter also incorporates the relevant findings of the surveys of school leaders undertaken in early 2005 and 2006. Impact on pupil achievements or outcomes (as opposed to teaching and learning processes) are discussed in chapter 8.

7.1 Impact on mathematics and English

The findings from the 2005 survey of school leaders indicated that two-thirds of respondents (65 per cent) felt that the PLP had led to improved teaching and learning in literacy and mathematics. The 2006 survey indicated an even stronger perception of impact in these areas, with 772 per cent agreeing that the PLP had led to improvements. For most of the case study schools, there had been a strong focus on raising achievement in mathematics and English and during the second round of case study visits, staff had reported signs of progress, but they were often cautious about the length of time it would take for new strategies to have an effect. By the time of the 2006 survey, it would appear that there was greater confidence in PLP schools that the concentration on literacy and mathematics was having an impact.

Interviewees in case-study schools were asked for their opinions concerning the extent to which the Primary Leadership Programme had impacted on both teaching and learning. When asked in 2006 whether the PLP had helped to raise pupil achievement in 2005, six of the seven headteachers interviewed answered with a definite 'yes'. Of these, five were able to provide details of better results in 2005, as follows: *'yes, in science'; 'in science and maths, definitely'; 'this year we have had the best results we have ever had'; 'we have moved from the bottom five per cent of schools* [in the county] *to the top five per cent'*. The one headteacher who was not able to provide a definite answer to the question about improved pupil achievement took the view that: *'It is too early to say. It will take another year to see the impact'*.

The case-study interviews revealed that these impacts on teaching and learning in schools had occurred across a number of different levels, including:

- school-level processes, for example data analysis, greater monitoring and awareness of how to improve teaching and learning using criteria from Ofsted and other bodies

- classroom-level changes, for example using the outcomes of the data analysis and monitoring
- subject-level changes, for example specific changes to teaching styles and adopting identified good practice.

The Primary Leadership Programme was felt to have impacted particularly on standards in literacy and mathematics in a number of ways:

- by providing coordinators with high quality, up-to-date in-service training
- by providing coordinators with high quality support from local authority subject consultants in school and focusing on the issues relevant to the school
- by providing coordinators with the time and opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in their subjects in classrooms, and identifying areas for further development.

PLP training sessions in each of the case-study local authorities had focused on improving standards in the core subjects and the processes by which improvement could be achieved. One Primary Strategy Manager attributed the improvements identified in standards to the PLP: '*because of the improvements in teaching and learning in the classroom. Local authority subject consultants I meet with can see how teachers are improving when working in the classroom.'*

In one local authority, training for the PLP schools had been adapted according to the needs of each cohort of schools. In another, the Primary Strategy Manager described how the focus of the training for schools had changed over the course of the programme:

> *All of the PLP schools had access to the Three Plus Two maths course that develops subject knowledge and in 2004-2005 all of the schools had access to the Speaking and Listening course and it was tailor made. This year (2005-2006) we are adopting a needs driven approach based on the consultants' knowledge of the schools.*

Through both training sessions and the work of PSCLs and subject consultants, school leadership teams had developed their experience and expertise in analysing data and monitoring pupil work through book scrutinies and assessing planning. Subject coordinators had also conducted observations of subject teaching in collaboration with subject consultants and had developed their expertise in providing constructive feedback to colleagues. Each of these facets of the work of subject coordinators was felt to have positively impacted on the teaching and learning of the subject in schools:

> *They* [subject coordinators] *may not have been as aware as to how literacy and numeracy were being taught across the school, but*

through the Primary Leadership Programme they have been able to go into classrooms and observe and work with the consultants to move the subject forward and take the expertise forward.

The work of the Primary Strategy consultants for mathematics and English within the PLP was valued by case-study schools because this support had been provided *in school* and was considered to be more relevant and to have had a greater level of impact because of this. The changes to teaching and learning were felt to have been facilitated through a combination of the PSCLs and subject consultants working closely with teaching staff in schools. The work of subject consultants was also valued by all schools as this had enabled them to focus on specific issues relevant to their school and circumstances.

One headteacher commented that their staff: *'have had a lot of very good training which has been specific to this school, whereas if you send them on an INSET course it may be irrelevant to the school'*. Subject consultants worked closely alongside subject coordinators to develop their ability to critically evaluate the teaching of the subject within the school. One Primary Strategy Manager reported that the development of this skill in subject coordinators meant that: '*teaching and learning continues to improve as leaders' skills in observing lessons improve and giving feedback improves and that is part of the self-evaluation training we did last year*'.

In two local authorities the impact of the work of subject consultants was being affected by a reduction in the number of subject consultants and so a model had been developed that involved the drawing together of networks of teachers and Advanced Skills Teachers so as to enable the continued sharing of good practice and expertise. Many of these networks included PLP schools and these were seen as a way of helping to maintain the development of subject coordinators and their impact on the teaching and learning of these subjects.

The existence of larger leadership teams meant that coordinators did not feel unsupported when making or recommending changes to teaching and learning strategies. Furthermore, a key aspect of the changes in teaching and learning was the establishment of regular marking and assessment cycles and the effective use of the data gathered within those assessment cycles. These data were shared by subject coordinators and the leadership teams, although in most of the case-study schools, the next stage was to develop their use by class teachers.

7.2 Wider impacts on teaching and learning

Impacts were also reported on subjects other than English and mathematics. Indeed the need to impact on teaching and learning across all subjects was

often highlighted by school staff. They also thought it was important to ensure that standards were driven across all year groups and were not just perceived to be the responsibility of for example, the Year 2 or Year 6 teachers.

The Primary Leadership Programme was found to have impacted on teaching and learning strategies, to some extent, across all subjects in all the case-study schools. This impact was considered to have been brought about through adopting the changes to processes from English and mathematics and adapting these to other subjects. One headteacher noted how the programme challenged schools to: '*Identify the areas for improvement in standards in numeracy and literacy, but once you have the system in place for that it can be transferred to other subjects through the same mechanisms'*.

A number of key strategies that had been developed in the core subjects in case-study schools were identified as transferable to other subjects. These included book scrutinies/trawls, data analysis, adopting and implementing Assessment for Learning practices and improving planning.

In one phase 2 school, at the start of the PLP, the high level of mobility of pupils in and out of the school meant that staff perceived that a system to track pupils' progress would be of considerable benefit. At this school information provided during the second round of interviews indicated that the leadership team at the school had introduced an assessment cycle in mathematics and English in 2004-05. The data collected as a result of the assessments was analysed by the leadership team and had allowed them to identify areas where pupil progress had been less than anticipated. The school leadership was about to start to work with class teachers on the use of this data to inform teaching and learning. They had used the information gathered from some year groups in the school in a positive manner according to the Primary Strategy Consultant Leader:

> *The team were concerned about the transition from Reception to Year 1 and so they did some work in that area. They have changed the manner in which the Year 1 teachers teach and there has been a change to the end of reception assessment, so that the Year 1 teachers know more clearly what the pupils are achieving and so that closer link has meant that the achievement is improving in Year 1. The leadership are sure that this has led to more progress in Year 1.*

Similar pupil tracking systems had been implemented in all of the phase 1 schools and one teacher commented that through the use of the tracking system: '*you know how the pupils are doing, and therefore those who are doing better than expected and those who need a push'*. The English coordinator at this school stated that the tracking system had enabled teachers: *'to identify pupils' progress much more quickly than previously, and therefore… get something in place much more easily than before*'.

Staff in four of the case-study schools reported that they had made amendments to their planning to try to assist in the improvement of standards. This focus on ensuring consistency of practice across all staff was felt to have improved the knowledge base of leadership teams about the content of lessons. A PSCL reported that prior to the Primary Leadership Programme:

> *There may have been inconsistencies between Key Stages, because in primary schools you tend to focus more at the end of Key Stage 2. However, the Primary Leadership Programme has made the school look at consistency from Foundation Stage up.*

Lesson content and pupil progress was also monitored through classroom observations and book scrutinies. These strategies had impacted on classroom practice in schools by highlighting pupils and classes who were not making the anticipated levels of progress. Subject coordinators had developed in confidence when monitoring lessons through Primary Leadership Programme training and through working alongside subject consultants to conduct observations.

Staff in two of the schools identified that the implementation of Assessment for Learning strategies had impacted on teaching and learning across all subjects. For example, a member of a leadership team commented that: *'The Assessment for Learning stuff is embedded and learning objectives are shared and the book trawls have impacted on practice and I can see a lot more going on now as compared to last year.'* Three PSMs also mentioned Assessment for Learning. They did not elaborate on the forms of AfL used by schools, but emphasised that it was useful to deliver the AfL training as part of, or alongside, PLP training.

Respondents in one school which had focused strongly upon the development of speaking and listening, commented that there had been a change in the nature of the dialogue taking place in the classroom: '*We are more prepared to let pupils talk and solve problems… often we think that pupils know more than they actually do and that by letting them talk we can see what they have missed and focus on their misconceptions*'. This was felt to be beneficial for both teachers and pupils because: '*no longer is it just the teacher standing up and teaching… Pupils are maybe the best teachers as they will know how to explain it in child-friendly language to each other'*. The headteacher reported that this change in teaching methodology was found to have impacted on the wider curriculum and on the pupils because: '*the pupils are more confident and are better listeners'*. The PSCL for the school acknowledged that, through the focus provided by the PLP, '*the quality of teaching and learning is much better now'*. The deputy head at the school believed that, as a result of the changes in teaching and learning styles, *'the application of the children is a lot better and their participation in the lessons is better and they will come up and ask you questions more readily about work'*.

In another school where there had been a major focus upon assessment and a change in the marking policy, a class teacher reported that now: '*targets are set for pupils and we have a cloud and brick system. The cloud says how well they have done in the focus of that lesson and the brick is their individual target… That is applied across the school consistently'*. Additionally, there had also been attempts to make teaching styles more interactive. These changes were felt to have impacted upon teaching across the whole curriculum because: '*we addressed changes in teaching styles through staff meetings… and we also had an INSET day with a consultant who came in to work with the whole staff*'. There was reported to have been an impact upon pupils' learning because: '*more learning styles are accommodated and so pupils can be more involved than just sitting and listening'*.

In a local authority with many small schools the PLP was recognised as a tool that could help such schools to manage the curriculum and collaboration was viewed not only as a process that could take place within schools, but also across schools. The PSM reported that: '*We have groups of small schools working collaboratively together to share practice and work scrutinies together and they are learning alongside each other'*. A headteacher at one of the schools reported that the process had: *'made us feel a lot less isolated. You do feel that, but now with the cluster you do not feel as alone'*.

Finally, responses to the 2006 survey indicated that, although there was not the same perception of impact across the curriculum that there was in relation to mathematics and English, there was a view that attainment generally was improving. While nearly half of respondents (441 per cent) still neither agreed nor disagreed that the PLP had improved attainment across the curriculum, slightly more (463 per cent) agreed that it had done so. Perhaps, most importantly, there was a perception from those interviewed that changed procedures and new strategies would have an impact on teaching and learning in the future, even if they were unquantifiable at present.

7.3 Summary

The work of the Primary Strategy consultants for mathematics and English within the PLP was valued by staff in the case-study schools because this support had been provided *in school* and was considered to be more relevant because of this. The changes to teaching and learning were felt to have been facilitated through a combination of the PSCLs and subject consultants working closely with staff teaching these subjects in schools.

Case-study respondents were able to describe numerous changes and improvements in teaching and learning processes. These impacts on teaching and learning in schools had occurred across a number of different levels, including:

- school-level processes, for example data analysis
- classroom-level changes, for example using the outcomes of data analysis and monitoring, improved approaches to speaking and listening
- subject-level changes, for example specific changes to teaching styles and adopting identified good practice.

The positive impacts on teaching and learning were felt to have been due to such things as the introduction of more refined systems for monitoring teaching and learning in subjects, which heightened the role of the subject coordinators, more consistent application of whole school policies, for example marking and assessment, and greater use of assessment data at individual pupil and class levels. One headteacher summarised the impact as having made the school '*more systematic about making the most of children's learning opportunities, so we should be able to help each child achieve as much as they can'*.

8. Impact on pupil achievement

This chapter, which examines changes in pupil achievement levels over the period of implementation of the PLP, draws upon two sources of data about the impact of the PLP on pupil achievement:

- perceptions of pupil attainment as expressed in the case-study interviews
- findings from three waves of multilevel modelling.

8.1 Impact on pupil achievement: interviewees' views

Respondents in each of the local authorities reported that in raw terms many of the schools which had been involved in the Primary Leadership Programme had made improvements in end of Key Stage assessment results. In some local authorities, the improvements made by PLP schools were reported to have been greater than the improvements made by the remainder of schools.

A number of the local authority interviewees, however, stressed that improvements in end of Key Stage assessments could only be brought about through careful analysis of progression and pupil achievement across all year groups in primary schools. This was because:

> *Improvements in standards cannot just come at the end of a Key Stage and that is wrong to wait for the Year 6 teacher, and so you need your data analysis in place and you have target children and what strategies are in place to address the dips.*

Some PSMs were expecting standards to improve yet further with the later cohorts of schools engaged in the Primary Leadership Programme because of the lessons learnt by local authorities during the previous implementation of the programme and because it helps *'to put in place systems'*.

PSMs focused on ensuring that Primary Leadership Programme schools maintained their progress in improving standards made whilst on the programme. One manager had reviewed the progress of phase 1 schools and had been disappointed that these schools, whilst having maintained the levels achieved during the first phase of the PLP, had not progressed further.

Schools presented a mixed picture of the impact of the Primary Leadership Programme on pupil achievement, mainly because it was difficult to attribute any improvement in standards solely to the programme at a time when other developments within a school could also contribute to improved standards. A

number of the case-study schools reported that there had been considerable improvement in standards in their end of Key Stage 2 assessment results. In 2005, one headteacher, for example, made the following comments:

> *We had the best results the school has ever had. In maths 85 per cent of pupils achieved level 4 and above which was 63 per cent in 2004. In English 74 per cent of pupils achieved level 4 and above which was 67 per cent in 2004. In science 100 per cent of pupils achieved level 4 which was 90 per cent in 2004. The results are partly due to the way we are working now and the PLP has impacted on that without a doubt. There have also been improvements in the number of pupils achieving level 5, 33 per cent in maths compared to 22 per cent, 67 per cent in science compared to 49 per cent.*

Other school respondents also attributed the development of an improved structure across the school, improved subject leadership, an increased focus on standards by a wider team of school leaders, improved analysis of pupil data and more focused lesson observations as having contributed to an improvement in standards in the end of Key Stage assessment tests.

Staff in a small number of schools, however, felt that the systems and structures put in place as a result of the PLP would require a number of years to impact on pupil achievement. Other school staff stated that standards depended on the quality of the cohort of pupils, however PSMs and PSCLs stressed the importance of developing strategies so that 'dips' in performance could be identified at an earlier stage and strategies then developed to support those cohorts of pupils.

Some schools identified improvements in results in some subjects as being more easily achieved, for example science than in English. The headteacher at one school that had seen the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in science increase from 65 per cent to 83 per cent in one year, considered that: '*Science is a subject where you can make a difference very quickly as it is less language based (the school has high levels of English as an Additional Language) than mathematics and English, where we made no progress last year.'*

8.2 Findings from multilevel modelling

The aim of using the multilevel models was to establish whether the Primary Leadership Programme (PLP) had impacted on pupils' attainment at Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics. The modelling was carried out using data from the National Pupil Dataset (NPD). Pupil background information collected on PLASC (Pupil-level Annual School Census) 2003, 2004 and 2005 was matched to pupils' Key Stage 2 results 2003, 2004 and 2005 respectively, and to their Key Stage 1 results from 1999, 2000 and 2001. The pupil background data included, for instance, pupils' gender and Special Education

Needs (SEN) status. Full details of the variables used are provided in the appendix.

There were a number of advantages of using the National Pupil Dataset. It is readily accessible and does not involve collecting further data from schools. It also allows a comparison with schools that are not in the Primary Leadership Programme: data on these schools would otherwise have been difficult to obtain. However, the disadvantage is that, although the NPD is a comprehensive data collection, it only contains certain pieces of data: there are many other developments and interventions that occur in schools that are not accounted for within the NPD.

The modelling measured the progress made by schools that were involved in PLP. Phase 1, in the academic year 2003-04 involved 3173 schools. Phase 2, in the academic year 2004-05, involved 4233 schools, 997 of which remained from phase 1. By using three years worth of data it was possible to look at changes in attainment over time, and take into account data from the year prior to their involvement as a baseline.

The models also included data for the 1395 Primary Strategy Consultant Leader (PSCL) schools in order to assess the impact involvement in PLP had on their schools' results.

The outcomes of the modelling are detailed here, and also illustrated graphically in Figures 1 and 2 (in the appendix). The graphs not only give a representation of which variables were significantly related to Key Stage 2 attainment, but also the relative size of these relationships. It is important to bear these sizes in mind when interpreting the results.

As well as considering the relative size of these effects, it is important to remember that statistical modelling identifies relationships between two or more things. It can go no way towards identifying causality. We cannot say that a change in one thing or variable causes another. We can only say that these two things are associated.

The multilevel modelling shows the following relationships between PLP and attainment in English and mathematics:

- At the outset of their involvement in the programme, pupils in PLP schools are generally attaining less well than those in other schools. This is unsurprising since phase 1, and much of phase 2, was targeted at those schools which were low- or under-performing. This is considered to be largely an effect of the criteria for the selection of schools.
- After involvement in PLP for one year, schools are showing greater progress in both English and mathematics than schools not in the PLP.

Schools involved in PLP for a second year also show additional progress. These effects are relatively small, but significant.

- Schools with higher proportions of pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs show slightly more improvement in their pupils' Key Stage 2 results. Schools with higher proportions of pupils with any level of SEN, however, show less improvement in English.
- Schools with higher levels of free school meals (FSM) show less improvement in mathematics.
- In both English and mathematics, bigger schools with smaller class sizes show slightly more improvement.
- Being a consultant leader (PSCL) is not detrimental to the PSCL's school's performance in either English or mathematics in the first year. However, in the English model, there is a small but statistically significant negative affect associated with being a PSCL school for a second year.

The remaining outcomes from the present modelling, those not focusing on the PLP, are in line with our baseline models and also with models run for other evaluations (see appendix for details):

- by far the largest influencing factor on Key Stage 2 results appear to be Key Stage 1 results
- girls perform better than boys in English, but the reverse is true for mathematics
- pupils with SEN status or who are eligible for FSM perform less well
- there is variation in the performance of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, with Indian, Bangladeshi and Chinese pupils performing better than white pupils in both English and mathematics.
- pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) perform slightly better than their peers in mathematics and English.

8.3 Summary

The qualitative research showed that school and local authority respondents considered PLP to have contributed to improvements in standards at the end of Key Stage assessments. However, respondents also emphasised the importance of ensuring that standards are closely monitored across all year groups and all subjects. There was some discussion as to whether the improvements in standards could be attributed solely to the impact of the PLP, and additionally some school staff believed that the effect of the changes to teaching and learning would not be shown immediately, but in the medium-term (two to three years).

The multilevel modelling showed that there was a very small, but positive association between involvement in PLP and Key Stage 2 results, over and

above the other background factors that were accounted for in the model. Results for pupils in PLP schools improved more than those for pupils in schools that were not in the PLP. This also showed that, being a PSCL school did not have a detrimental affect on a school's performance in the first year, though there was some evidence of a small negative affect in English in their second year.

9. Embedding practice and networking

Embedding the concepts of the Primary Leadership Programme, and especially that of distributed leadership, across schools, has been a key element of the Programme. The aim has been to build and sustain the capacity of school leadership teams to lead school improvement beyond the timescale of the programme. This chapter deals with issues of implementing change, embedding practice, networking with other schools to share good practice, sustainability beyond the life of the PLP, and having a formal exit strategy when a school's involvement in the PLP ends.

9.1 Embedding practice

Two questions in the 2006 school leaders' survey asked about the extent to which the PLP changes made so far had been embedded into the school's practice. Table 9.1 below shows the extent to which respondents considered that changes in the identified areas for improvement had been embedded. Four in five schools reported that changes were embedded at least to some extent, and two in five believed they were embedded in **all** areas identified for improvement. Only six per cent still felt it was too early to comment on whether changes had been embedded.

Table 9.1 Extent to which changes were embedded

	Percentage of respondents **%**
Yes, in **all** areas identified for improvement	43
Yes, in **some** of the areas identified for improvement	40
No	3
Too early to say	6
No response	8
N = 458	

A single response item.
Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.
Source: NFER Primary Leadership Programme School Leader Questionnaire 2006.

It is also instructive to examine the perceived barriers to the implementation of PLP-related school improvement activities. Another question in the 2006 school leaders' survey asked respondents why some areas for improvement had not been implemented (see Table 9.2 below).

Table 9.2 Challenges to implementing changes

Reason given	Percentage of respondents %
Lack of time	45
Change in staff/staff absence	34
High cost	7
Lack of willingness to change	11
No longer relevant	8
Other more urgent priorities	35
Other	18
N = 196	

A multiple- response question.
Respondents were able to tick more than one answer so percentages do not sum to 100.
A filter question. Respondents are all those who said changes were embedded in some or no areas.
Source: NFER Primary Leadership Programme School Leader Questionnaire 2006.

As was the case in 2005 lack of time was considered to be a key barrier for implementing change within primary schools. In 2005 two-thirds of respondents reported time to be the main challenge to implementing change, a year later less than a half (45 per cent) indicated the factor, indicating that the extra year appears to have provided more time for implementing change. Approximately one-third of respondents reported that staff absence or a change in staff and other more urgent priorities impeded the implementation of change. This indicates that staff mobility may well be something that needs to be addressed in moves towards 'systemic' leadership.

Similar points were made by a number of interviewees. As was found in the first round of fieldwork, several interviewees made comments about the need for a sufficient time cycle to embed practice and there were sometimes related comments about the need for a degree of stability in terms of keeping a school management team together.

Table 9.2 shows that after nearly three years of the PLP in schools where it was reported that changes were embedded in some or no areas, some staff in one in ten schools were still perceived to be reluctant to implement change. Another question in the school leaders' 2006 survey asked respondents whether, in the last 12 months, any groups of people had shown resistance to being involved in the different aspects of the PLP. Only a small minority reported any resistance, for example six per cent of leadership team members were reported to be resistant to working with PSCLs, eight per cent of teaching staff were said to be reluctant to take part in monitoring and evaluation and seven per cent in implementing action plans.

School leaders were also asked, in the 2006 school survey, about the areas for improvement they had concentrated on in the last 12 months. Table 9.3 outlines their responses.

Table 9.3 Areas for improvement

	For all pupils %
Teaching and learning of mathematics	56
Teaching and learning of English	64
Use of assessment data	62
Monitoring quality of teaching and learning	59
Assessment	61
Teaching and learning of ICT	32
N = 458	

A multiple response item
Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so percentages do not sum to 100
Source: Evaluation of The Primary Leadership Programme: School Leader Questionnaire 2006

School leaders in three in five schools said they were concentrating on either the teaching and learning of mathematics or English, assessment or the use of assessment data, or monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. On the whole, areas for improvement were concentrated on all pupils and few variations by subgroups were reported, although six per cent of respondents said they were concentrating improved teaching and learning of English particularly on boys.

Fifty per cent of school leaders reported that, the areas identified for improvement in 2004-05 had not changed by 2006, as can be seen in Table 9.4.

Table 9.4 Changes in areas for improvement identified in 2004-05

Any change	%
Yes	40
No	50
Not applicable	3
No response	7
N = 458	

A single response item
Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100
428 respondents answered this question
Source: Evaluation of The Primary Leadership Programme: School Leader Questionnaire 2006

However, school leaders in two in five schools said the areas for improvement *had* changed, primarily because some of the improvements had already been achieved or analysis of the latest school performance data had indicated new priorities. Table 9.5 provides details of these and other reasons why areas for improvement had changed.

Table 9.5 Reasons for changes in areas of improvement

	%
The required improvements were achieved in (some) areas previously identified, so our focus for improvement changed	60
Too many areas had been identified, so we decided to concentrate on fewer	12
There was a new headteacher/leadership team who identified new areas for improvement	16
New areas were identified through a recent Ofsted inspection	11
New areas for improvement were identified through the work of local authority advisors	9
Analysis of school performance data indicated new priorities	46
Other reason	8
No response	2
N = 185	

More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100
A filter question. Respondents were those who reported a change in areas for improvement.
A total of 182 respondents answered at least one item in this question.
Source: Evaluation of The Primary Leadership Programme: School Leader Questionnaire 2006

Overall, in terms of embedding practice the 2006 survey evidence points to a majority of school leaders feeling that the PLP has been embedded to some extent. The main challenges faced were having the time to implement the change and the shifting areas for improvement due, in many cases, to analysis of school performance data.

9.2 Networking and sustainability

The development of collaborative leadership has been key to the success of the PLP and nearly all of the interview respondents had positive views on the importance of networking for improving practice. For example, commenting on new networks that had been established as a result of PLP, an English coordinator said: *'This has all grown out of PLP. It will go on, it will move into other areas. It's been really, really useful'*. Similarly, another interviewee expressed a view that: *'There is an increased willingness to work with other schools stimulated by PLP'*.

Responses to the school leader surveys, however, revealed that there was some variation in the actual levels of networking that were taking place. Table 9.6 below shows the reported levels of networking undertaken in the context of the Primary Leadership Programme.

Table 9.6 Networking activities as part of Primary Leadership Programme

Activity	Percentage of respondents %
Links with other local schools which are also on the Leadership Programme	32
Visits to the Primary Strategy Consultant Leader's school to view good practice	37
Visits to other schools in order to view good practice	42
None of these	28
N = 458	

A multiple-response question.
Respondents were able to tick more than one answer so percentages do not sum to 100.
Source: NFER Primary Leadership Programme School Leader Questionnaire 2006.

Responses demonstrated that networking within the PLP has developed over the course of the programme: two per cent more school leaders indicated that they had links with local schools on the Leadership Programme in 2006 than 2005, five per cent more reported visiting PSCL's schools in 2006 than 2005 and six per cent more indicated that they were visiting other schools in order to view good practice in 2006 than in 2005.

Although networking has increased over the duration of the PLP, relatively small numbers of school leaders indicated, in the 2006 survey, that they would definitely continue with the school links and visits established through the programme, with the possible exception of visits to other schools in order to view good practice (33 per cent). Table 9.7 provides more details.

Table 9.7 Extent to which network activities may continue after the Primary Leadership Programme has ended

	Will definitely continue %	May continue %	Will definitely not continue %	Not applicable %	No response %
Links with other local schools which are/have been in the Primary Leadership Programme	14	31	6	22	27
Visits to the Primary Strategy Consultant Leader's school to view good practice	6	30	12	25	28
Visits to other schools in order to view good practice	33	30	2	16	19
N = 458					

A single response item
Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100
408 respondents answered at least one part of this question
Source: Evaluation of The Primary Leadership Programme: School Leader Questionnaire 2006

Table 9.8 below shows ways in which the 2006 questionnaire respondents believed that networking could be improved. It can be seen that the provision of greater opportunities to work with other primary schools (not necessarily in the Primary Leadership Programme) was identified as a key potential improvement. The next most requested suggestion was the provision of greater opportunities to work with other local PLP schools.

Table 9.8 Suggested improvements for networking in the PLP

Activity	Percentage of respondents %
Greater opportunities to work with other local Leadership Programme schools	45
Greater opportunities to work with the PSCL's school	17
Greater opportunities to work with other primary schools	57
Other improvements	9
No improvements are required	12
None ticked	8
N = 458	

A multiple- response question.
Respondents were able to tick more than one answer so percentages do not sum to 100.
Source: NFER Primary Leadership Programme School Leader Questionnaire 2006.

The 2006 survey responses largely concurred with 2005 responses other than with regard to greater opportunities to work with PCSLs' schools. In 2005 approximately one quarter (28 per cent) of respondents suggested this improvement, whereas in 2006 only 17 per cent made this suggestion. This may largely reflect the fact that some respondents had, by the time of the 2006 survey, visited the PSCL's school, and one visit was deemed to be adequate for networking and/or observation purposes.

In 2006 survey respondents were asked, if their school was no longer involved in the programme, how often they kept in touch with their Primary Strategy Consultant Leader. Table 9.9 illustrates their level of involvement.

Table 9.9 Frequency with which schools no longer involved in the programme kept in touch with their PSCL

Kept in touch	%
No longer in touch	23
In touch rarely (less than once every term)	18
In touch about once every term	18
In touch more than once per term	6
No response	35
N = 458	

A single response item
Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100
297 respondents answered this question
Source: Evaluation of The Primary Leadership Programme: School Leader Questionnaire 2006

Nearly a quarter (23 per cent) of school leaders in 2006 were no longer in touch with their PSCL, nearly one in five were rarely in touch and another one in five were in touch about once every term. Six per cent were in touch more than once a term.

A small number of interviewees took the trouble to point out that networking in itself was not always beneficial, stressing that it was the nature of the shared activities that was important. Networking can lead to a school being involved in too many activities, and a school needs to understand itself before benefits can be shared with other schools. One PSM interviewee stressed the importance of:

> *Being careful of initiative overload. A school could be in so many different initiatives – less effective headteachers tend to get themselves in too many… In the last two years there have been more initiatives than there have ever been before. It's difficult to manage for schools and for the local authority. Schools are expected to learn from each other through learning networks. This is misguided, to some extent, because, unless a school has developed its own professional learning community (e.g. understanding how to take on school improvement activities that are evidence based) you cannot expect them to integrate into learning communities.*

The great majority of interview respondents expressed a view that the improvements or changes brought about through the PLP were indeed sustainable. In terms of sustainability of the changes or improvements brought about through the PLP, the important factors seemed to be: (1) the level of commitment of the school staff; and (2) the nature of the changes, or of the mechanisms, put in place as a result of the PLP.

Several respondents expressed a view that the commitment of the staff would help to sustain the PLP changes. One PSM, for example, said that: *'Schools*

have to take ownership and my experience is that they all want to continue what they have started'. Similarly, a mathematics coordinator explained that: *'I am sure even after PLP we may well start meetings at the end of the school day and carry them through. We are committed to it and we will make it happen as it has made us so proud of what we have achieved'*.

Another common view was that the activities undertaken, or the mechanisms put in place in schools as a result of the PLP, were, by their very nature, sustainable. Two examples given related to the ongoing benefits of improved reading and of a new tracking system:

- *'The improved knowledge of the teachers will remain. The use of target setting and tracking will lead us into other areas'*.
- *'The improvements in reading will translate into other things'*.

In some schools the existence of a wider leadership team was viewed as a mechanism for ensuring that practice was embedded and would continue in the school. *'The members of the team may change as the team members move on, but the way of working will not change…'* (PSCL). Another respondent, a headteacher, made this point more dramatically: *'I cannot see the structure of the PLP being lost; it is a snowball that will not stop!'*

There was one dissenting voice regarding the issue of sustainability, that of a Primary Strategy Manager who felt that the capacity of the PLP was probably approaching its limit in his local authority:

> *I am not sure how much mileage PLP has left, but there is a limit to how valuable it will continue to be because there are other programmes for leadership. In* [our local authority] *all schools that would benefit from PLP have been on it. Only schools with new heads would now benefit…*

It should be noted, also, that some interviewees raised doubts about whether the necessary structures could be maintained without the funding. *'I want to keep the momentum going, but this will be cost driven. There are funding issues'*. One PSCL, who was clearly looking for other sources of funding, noted that: '*although workforce reform is not part of this Programme, there will be money for leadership in there and I can see that you might be able to use it to keep the leadership meetings going*'.

9.3 Exit strategies

Slightly more than half of the 2006 survey school leaders either had no existing formal exit plans (47 per cent) or no future formal exit plans (nine per cent) for leaving the Primary Leadership Programme. Just over one third either

had plans (18 per cent) or claimed that they will have in the future (18 per cent).

In addition, school leaders in three in five schools (62 per cent) who had already formulated a plan had done so in writing. Most respondents who had an exit plan, felt that these plans had a sufficient degree of clarity about sustaining PLP developments (see Table 9.10).

Table 9.10 Clarity with which exit plans specify what is/will be required to sustain developments resulting from the PLP

	%
Very clearly	33
Quite clearly	49
Not very clearly	4
The exit plan does not specify this	9
No response	5
N = 81	

A single response item
Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100
A filter question. Respondents where those who reported that they had an exit plan.
77 respondents answered this question
Source: Evaluation of the Primary Leadership Programme: School Leader Questionnaire 2006

Overall the 2006 school leaders' survey has indicated that, at this stage in the PLP, planning exit strategies in detail has only been carried out by a minority of respondents.

According to case study interviewees, the main exit strategy was to ensure that schools leaving the PLP were able to have a place on at least one other network of primary schools. This was the case in all five case-study local authority areas.

- *PLP schools have moved into Primary Learning Networks and that is a key exit strategy for us.*
- *We have talked about networks. Local schools meet together as part of the Primary Strategy Network.*
- *Networks are more developed between the PSCLs than between the PLP schools… Nevertheless, PLP schools are now in Learning Networks.*
- *The networks involve some ISP schools and some PLP schools… The network has the support of the PSCL and a maths and English subject consultant.*
- *There are Primary Strategy Learning Networks on stream now.*

It was also important, for some respondents, that there should be an 'exit meeting' and a clear plan for activities in the period subsequent to a school's

departure from the PLP. Such strategies were already under consideration in early 2005. For example, a Primary Strategy Manager described how:

> *The exiting schools have all been asked to present, at a meeting, action plans to identify how they will sustain progress and improve results further. One of the aims of the meeting is to review these action plans, whether schools are on track, identify any further support that is needed and identify good practice from them. What we are looking at is how they will sustain their improvement.*

This approach was in use more frequently by the later part of 2005: *'We have an exit meeting where an exit plan with next steps is planned and the link adviser has a key role in monitoring these'.*

9.4 Summary

It was evident that schools were doing their best to embed good practice and to ensure that improvements arising from PLP were sustainable, but there were some difficulties in doing this. These difficulties included time constraints, staff turnover, changing priorities and the importance of funding, especially to enable meetings between the relevant staff to take place. The 2006 survey evidence also indicated that, on the whole, exit strategies had not been widely or well thought out. Only one in five schools had an exit plan and fewer had a written plan with strategies outlining methods to sustain the developments resulting from the PLP.

Networking has developed over the course of the programme, and the great majority of respondents were positive about the benefits arising from school networks, though there was still more scope for networking to take place. Having said this, it was evident that the local authorities and schools involved had been seriously thinking about the means of sustaining improvements and there were new networks for PLP schools to move into in all five case-study authorities. The majority of school leaders, in the 2006 survey, were involved in networking and a third wanted to continue links with other schools in order to view good practice. In addition, the majority wanted greater opportunities to work with other primary schools.

10. Overview and conclusions

This report has drawn on several sources of data in order to evaluate the implementation of the Primary Leadership Programme between May 2004 and September 2006. The data has included findings from two rounds of a questionnaire survey for school leaders, two sets of school and local authority case-study visits, which involved detailed qualitative interviews with the relevant personnel, and three rounds of multilevel modelling which have made use of Key Stage 1 and 2 pupil attainment data.

The main finding, arising from both the quantitative and the qualitative data, is that the key aims of the PLP have been achieved. With regard to pupil attainment in Key Stage 2, the multilevel modelling showed that in both 2004 and 2005 PLP schools demonstrated greater progress in both English and mathematics than the comparison group of all primary schools not in the PLP. **This effect was relatively small, but significant, especially given the difficulties PLP schools had experienced in improving attainment in the previous three years.** The qualitative data supported this finding: many of the interviewees reported a perception that standards of attainment were improving, and some gave specific examples in terms of pupil outcome data.

The remainder of this chapter summarises further findings from the three-year evaluation and, based largely upon comments made by respondents, offers a number of recommendations for consideration.

10.1 Issues arising from participation in the programme

The main issues raised by interviewees after the PLP had been in existence for just over a year came under the following five headings:

- selection of schools
- difficulties in the early stages of involvement
- training
- encouraging collaboration
- embedding practice.

With the possible exception of school selection, none of these issues were raised in any significant way in the second year of the evaluation. This suggests that many of the first-year issues had been addressed and the concerns of the schools had been taken seriously. For example, selection,

became less of an issue in the second year of the programme, mainly because by this time local authorities had built upon their experiences of selecting and approaching schools for participation.

For the second year, three main issues were identified, and even these were only mentioned by relatively small numbers of respondents. These were:

- difficulties with implementing the PLP in large local authorities
- resistance to the PLP from a small number of schools or headteachers
- problems caused by the school leadership team all being out at one time.

Difficulties with implementing the programme in large local authorities were mentioned by three respondents (all PSMs and all from different authorities). One of these, when asked what the main challenge had been in 2005, said: *'The size of* [local authority] *and the capacity of the individuals to undertake all of the roles and to ensure that everyone is informed of developments'*. Two other respondents echoed this, commenting that the main challenge was: *'The geography of the schools being spread out'* and; *'The size of the county… I cannot get everyone together so easily and that is challenging and means that I have to work harder to know what each school is tackling'*.

A useful next step for those responsible for implementing leadership programmes across large areas might be to consider further the best practical and geographical forms of organisation for delivering the programme: for example, one authority had dealt with this issue by implementing a regional structure and having regionally-based clusters of participating schools. A 'one size fits all' model may not always be appropriate and customisation of leadership programmes might be useful.

The issue of resistance to the PLP from schools or headteachers was mentioned by just two respondents, so it is clear that, by the second year of the programme, these were fairly isolated incidents: *'For the first two years there was some resistance from some schools, but we overcame that, and only one school resisted to the end'*; *'The only challenge was the initial defensive position of the headteacher…* [but] *that didn't last long. It rapidly developed into a positive relationship'*.

A total of three interview respondents expressed concerns about the whole school leadership team being out of school at any one time (for example, to attend PLP training sessions). One of these indicated that: *'The logistics of having so many people out of school… was a challenge to those who were left'*. A second, similarly, said that: *'All of the PLP team being out together can be a challenge for the other staff*', and a third expressed a view that; *'My one big concern with PLP is that I don't think its reasonable for five or six of the most senior teachers to be absent from school at the same time'*.

10.2 Benefits and examples of good practice

The main benefits from participation have mostly been covered in previous chapters and have included the following:

- school staff were very positive about the **inputs that their PSCLs** were making (see Chapter 3); 80 per cent of the 2006 survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the PSCL had helped the leadership team to maintain a focus on what mattered most for the school; and 75 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the PSCL helped to foster teamwork and shared leadership in the school.
- participation in the PLP had often led to schools having **more focused monitoring and evaluation systems**, including, in many cases, the use of lesson observations and/or new **pupil tracker systems**; there had also been a considerable increase in monitoring based on pupils' views (see Chapter 4); these in turn led to reported improvements in teaching and learning processes (Chapter 7)
- views about **local authority support** and the **training** provided were predominantly positive (see Chapter 5)
- in and across many schools, stronger senses of **teamwork and collaboration** had developed; indeed, collaboration with other schools continued to increase even as schools were exiting the PLP (see Chapter 9)
- as noted in the introduction to this chapter, school and local authority respondents considered PLP to have contributed to **improvements in standards** at the end of Key Stage assessments (six headteachers specifically identified such improvements), though they were not always sure whether the improvements could be attributed solely to the impact of the PLP; quantitative analysis of pupil outcomes in all PLP schools for both of the academic years (2003-04 and 2004-05) showed that there was a very small, but positive association between involvement in PLP and Key Stage 2 results, when other background factors were controlled for.

In addition to the identification of benefits from participation in the programme, numerous examples of good practice have also been provided at various points in this report, notably in the chapters that have examined monitoring and evaluation and the impact of the PLP. All respondents were also specifically asked if they were able to give examples of good practice that had been developed as a result of the PLP. In response to this question a considerable range of examples of communication, assessment, and teaching and learning strategies were mentioned. The types of examples mentioned included the following:

- the use of new assessment and tracking systems (four respondents)
- the provision of good quality training (two respondents)
- networking and sharing good practice (two respondents).

There can be no doubt that the programme has given an additional impetus to the use and development of monitoring and evaluation processes in schools, though it is difficult to gauge the extent of this contribution because other initiatives (including the introduction of the Self-Evaluation Form) were being implemented over this time period. The evaluation processes that were developed through PLP included pupil tracking, the use of lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. Several examples of reported good practice were based on the use of pupil tracking systems. One respondent commented, for example, on: *'the success of the school's development of a focused tracking system'*, and another emphasised the importance of a school's *'tracker and assessment cycle… the whole process was very effective'*.

Two further respondents indicated that the training that they had experienced in their local authorities were examples of good practice. One of these respondents indicated that: *'quality training has increased the staff's confidence levels'*, and the other said that a local strength was; *'The way we tailor the training and get a commitment from the schools to attend'*. Another two interviewees mentioned the importance of using a learning network as a means of sharing good practice: *'The learning networks in the south of the county…* [have] *high quality subject consultants'*; *'The PSCLs sharing practice…*[means that schools] *have really been helped by the PLP'*.

10.3 Conclusions

In the second wave of case-study interviews school and local authority staff were asked to draw upon their experiences of the Primary Leadership Programme in order to make recommendations regarding the future implementation of this or similar programmes. Careful analysis of the responses to this question revealed that two broad types of recommendation were made and that both of these have a relevance and an applicability that goes beyond the PLP to leadership and management more generally.

The first recommendation was to do with **sustainability** and keeping certain PLP mechanisms in place. These could include some form of ongoing communication channel with the PSCL or someone in a similar role, or the school networking arrangements that had been developed in some areas. The PLP had brought numerous benefits to participating schools (as noted in the previous section) and these benefits (and the structures that made them possible) needed to be maintained. Four of the PSMs and three of the headteacher interviewees mentioned sustainability. The following quotations provide examples of this kind of emphasis on future development:

- *It is imperative that the work of the PLP, including the training elements, should be sustained. Workforce remodelling, personalised learning… need*

to be kept at the forefront… What are the processes behind successful schools?

- *One issue is being able to sustain it… There's always got to be some programme which provides a window of opportunity* [for change/improvement]. *We will always need some kind of window of opportunity to excite schools, to suggest to schools new and different ways of working.*

Three respondents took this point one step further, emphasising that the PLP, or at least the ideas behind it, should be extended to all schools and all headteachers:

- *More of the same please! This kind of thing ought to be part of every headteacher's remit. Every headteacher ought to be able to have this experience… Having a senior colleague alongside you is a big help.*
- *It would be good for all schools to have access to it. I am sure even successful schools would benefit to think about their management and leadership. I would recommend it to everybody…*
- *I want it to be funded so that every school takes part in it. The leadership lessons about distributed leadership should be provided for all new headteachers.*

The last point, about the advantages of having distributed leadership, leads on to the second major recommendation made by respondents. Two respondents expressed a direct view that, whatever the form of future leadership initiatives, there is a need to keep a focus on the notion of **distributed leadership:**

- *PLP really develops leadership through the wider team… The PLP contributes to developing leadership capacity and disseminates good practice in a different way, and it is the first programme that has done that. PLP teams learn from each other at the training. If you only work with the head it would not have the same impact.*
- *I would say that it is vital to have a large number of people on the team, having five of us was really powerful. You needed maths, English and assessment as well as the head and the deputy.*

On the issue of sustainability, it seems that most schools are doing their best to keep the process of improvement moving along, and perhaps what schools need is some continued impetus from the local authority to further support and encourage this process. It may be that a School Improvement Partner or some other LA officer could provide this encouragement, or perhaps some kind of focused network of schools with clearly defined, shared purposes, could perform this function?

The relationship between leadership, broadly defined, and raising standards is the direct or indirect focus of many initiatives, including the PLP, the

Intensifying Support Programme, the New Relationship with Schools (including use of the Self-Evaluation Form), Assessment for Learning and workforce reform. It might be useful for all the organisations involved in delivering these programmes to take stock of what these programmes have achieved, what they should be doing next, and how they can continue to be delivered in a 'joined up' way.

It is clear from the quotations used in this chapter, and from comments set out earlier in this report, that respondents' over-arching views of participation in the PLP over the three years were positive. The short-term issues that were identified in the first year of the programme had largely been dealt with, indicating that the implementation of the programme had been adapted to the needs and preferences of the participating schools and local authorities.

The evidence from the surveys and from the case-study interviews suggests that there were many benefits arising from involvement in the programme. Some of these were specific and relatively short-term, but others were more general and longer term, and were to do with changing the culture of leadership in schools.

The identification of the latter types of benefit, along with confirmation that there had been improvements in pupil attainment at Key Stage 2, indicate that the PLP was largely meeting the key aim of improving the capacity of school leaders to lead school improvement beyond the timetable of the programme. The enhanced and sharpened focus on monitoring and evaluation, the use of the PSCL as a independent but supportive colleague, and the advantages of distributing responsibility across a larger number of school staff, were all highlighted as being important benefits that need to be maintained and developed in any future programmes addressing the needs of primary school leadership teams.

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Appendix

The aim of NFER's statistical modelling was to examine whether the Primary Leadership Programme (PLP) had impacted on pupils' attainment at Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics.

The modelling was carried out using the National Pupil Dataset (NPD) containing the summer 2003, 2004 and 2005 achievement and background data for all pupils. The modelling measured the progress made by schools that were involved in PLP during the period from 2003 to 2005.

In order to address the research question, two multilevel models were set up. Each of these included:

- *an outcome variable* (i.e. a variable which indicates how much each pupil has achieved in either English or Mathematics)
- *pupil background variables* which may have an impact on achievement
- *school-related contextual variables* which may influence pupil achievement.

To measure changes in Key Stage performance in both English and mathematics the models were run using Key Stage 2 English QCA point score and Key Stage 2 mathematics QCA point score as outcomes.

The modelling was carried out using datasets from the National Pupil Dataset (NPD). Pupil background information collected on PLASC (Pupil-level Annual School Census) 2003, 2004 and 2005 was matched to pupils' Key Stage 2 results 2003, 2004 and 2005, respectively, and to their Key Stage 1 results from 1999, 2000 and 2001. These pupil background data include, for instance, pupils' gender, SEN status. School-level information was also used in the modelling (e.g. school size).

Differences between local authorities, schools and over time were also accounted for because the models were multilevel.

Details of the variables used are provided in Table A1.
The outcomes of the modelling are presented in the Section 8.2 of the report and are also illustrated graphically below. One graph is presented for each of the two outcome variables:

- Figure 1 – KS2 English QCA point score
- Figure 2 – KS2 Mathematics QCA point score.

The graphs not only give a representation of which variables were significantly related to Key Stage 2 attainment, but also the relative size of these relationships. It is important to bear these sizes in mind when interpreting the results.

For each model the variables that were significantly associated with the outcome measure (i.e. performance in Key Stage 2 English or mathematics) are listed along the bottom of the plot. The order in which they are listed is arbitrary.

The horizontal line, labelled 0 (zero), across the middle of the plot represents no impact. Symbols above this zero line represent a positive association and the higher above the line the stronger the association. For example, a pupil's Key Stage 1 reading score is positively associated with their Key Stage 2 English score, as is their Key Stage 1 mathematics score, although the association is less strong for the latter. Similarly, symbols below the zero line represent a negative association. Predictably, eligibility for free school meals is negatively associated with Key Stage 2 English performance.

For categorical variables (ethnic categories, SEN status and sex) it should be remembered that each category is being compared to one other category, referred to as the *base case*. The base case for the ethnic categories is white British, so each symbol for the ethnic groups compares them to white British pupils. For example, Bangladeshi pupils perform better than white British pupils in Key Stage 2 English. The SEN categories are all compared to pupils without SEN, and the sex variable illustrates girls' performance compared to boys'.

Tables A2 to A5 present further detail from the multilevel models. Tables A2 and A3 present the regression coefficients, their standard errors and the level of significance for the English and mathematics models. Tables A4 and A5 show the random part of the models, detailing the variation at each of the levels.

Table A1. The variables (available or derived) used in the modelling process

Pupil-level variables – attainment outcomes
(*One model per variable*)
Key Stage 2 English QCA point score
Key Stage 2 mathematics QCA point score
Pupil-level variables – background factors
Sex
SEN status
Ethnicity
FSM eligibility
English as an Additional Language (EAL) indicator
Mobility (whether a pupil was in the school at the beginning of their Key Stage2)

Key Stage1 reading, writing, mathematics, science (TA) QCA point score
Average Key Stage1 QCA point score

School level variables
School size
Percentage of pupils in each school:

- with SEN status
- eligible for free school meals
- with EAL status

Urban/rural area measure
Indicators of whether school is in PLP phase 1 and/or PLP phase 2
Indicator of whether school's headteacher is a PSCL
Progress of PLP schools over time
Progress of PSCL schools
Relative progress of schools with different levels of SEN and FSM
Relative progress of schools in urban and rural areas

Figure A1. KS2 English point score

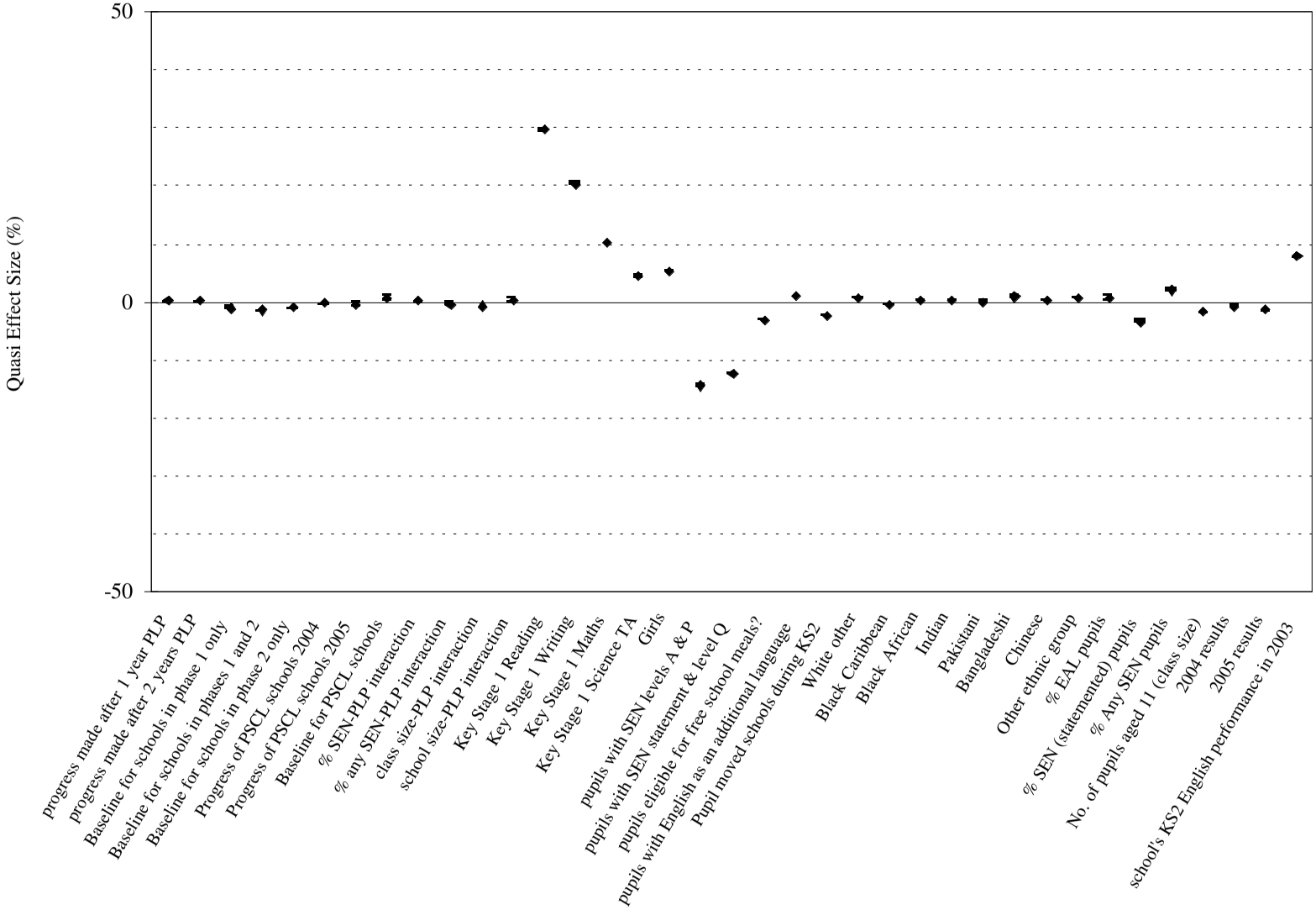

Figure A2. KS2 mathematics point score

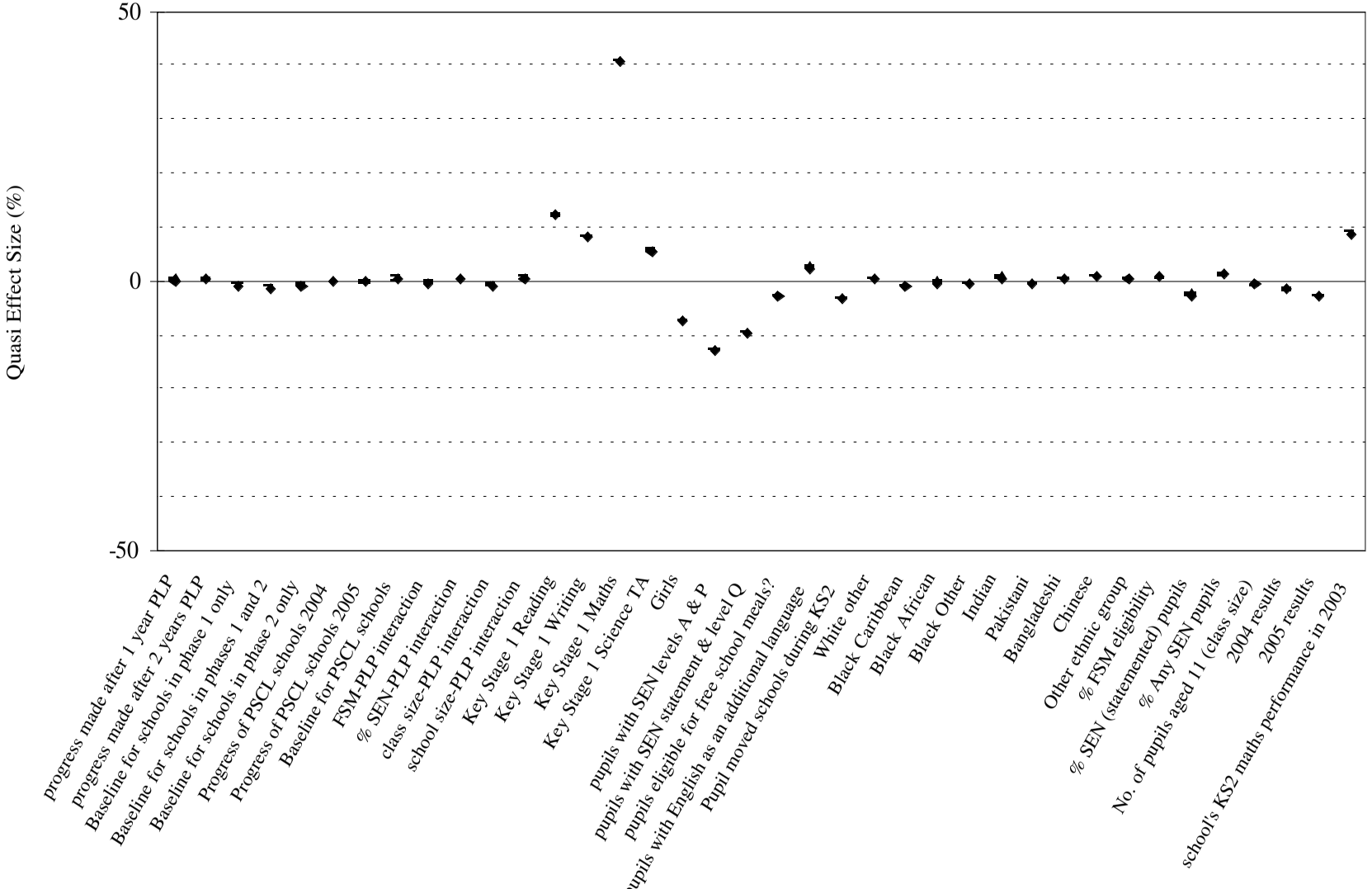

Table A2. Fixed effects in the Key Stage 2 English model

Fixed Effects	coefficient	s.e.	significance
constant	22.410	0.085	**
progress made after 1 year PLP	0.052	0.021	**
progress made after 2 years PLP	0.135	0.045	**
baseline for schools in phase 1 only	-0.130	0.021	**
baseline for schools in phases 1 and 2	-0.252	0.033	**
baseline for schools in phase 2 only	-0.114	0.019	**
progress of PSCL schools 2004	-0.024	0.044	
progress of PSCL schools 2005	-0.099	0.044	**
baseline for PSCL schools	0.138	0.035	**
% SEN-PLP interaction	0.009	0.004	**
% any SEN-PLP interaction	-0.003	0.001	**
class size-PLP interaction	-0.002	0.001	**
school size-PLP interaction	0.001	0.000	**
Key Stage 1 Reading	0.385	0.001	**
Key Stage 1 Writing	0.306	0.002	**
Key Stage 1 Maths	0.151	0.001	**
Key Stage 1 Science TA	0.072	0.001	**
girls	0.608	0.006	**
pupils with SEN levels A & P	-2.100	0.010	**
pupils with SEN statement & level Q	-4.187	0.027	**
pupils eligible for free school meals?	-0.450	0.009	**
pupils with English as an additional language	0.249	0.020	**
pupil moved schools during KS2	-0.259	0.009	**
white other	0.325	0.023	**
black Caribbean	-0.149	0.027	**
black African	0.186	0.030	**
Indian	0.182	0.027	**
Pakistani	0.063	0.029	**
Bangladeshi	0.604	0.041	**
Chinese	0.626	0.054	**
other ethnic group	0.259	0.016	**
% EAL pupils	0.002	0.000	**
% SEN (statemented) pupils	-0.026	0.001	**
% Any SEN pupils	0.009	0.001	**
No. of pupils aged 11 (class size)	-0.003	0.000	**
2004 results	-0.071	0.015	**
2005 results	-0.145	0.015	**
school's KS2 English performance in 2003	1.225	0.021	**

Significance level: * $p \leq 10$ ** $p \leq 5$ %

Table A3. Fixed effects in the Key Stage 2 mathematics model

Fixed Effects	coefficient	s.e.	Significance
constant	22.470	0.099	**
progress made after 1 year PLP	0.047	0.018	**
progress made after 2 years PLP	0.130	0.039	**
baseline for schools in phase 1 only	-0.113	0.022	**
baseline for schools in phases 1 and 2	-0.250	0.033	**
baseline for schools in phase 2 only	-0.099	0.020	**
progress of PSCL schools 2004	0.013	0.038	
progress of PSCL schools 2005	-0.025	0.038	
baseline for PSCL schools	0.102	0.033	**
FSM-PLP interaction	-0.002	0.001	**
% SEN-PLP interaction	0.015	0.003	**
class size-PLP interaction	-0.003	0.001	**
school size-PLP interaction	0.001	0.000	**
Key Stage 1 Reading	0.162	0.001	**
Key Stage 1 Writing	0.128	0.002	**
Key Stage 1 Maths	0.606	0.001	**
Key Stage 1 Science TA	0.093	0.001	**
girls	-0.861	0.006	**
pupils with SEN levels A & P	-1.926	0.011	**
pupils with SEN statement & level Q	-3.325	0.028	**
pupils eligible for free school meals?	-0.415	0.010	**
pupils with English as an additional language	0.538	0.021	**
pupil moved schools during KS2	-0.369	0.009	**
white other	0.273	0.025	**
black Caribbean	-0.468	0.029	**
black African	-0.081	0.033	**
black Other	-0.227	0.055	**
Indian	0.306	0.028	**
Pakistani	-0.111	0.031	**
Bangladeshi	0.340	0.044	**
Chinese	1.260	0.057	**
other ethnic group	0.200	0.017	**
% FSM eligibility	0.003	0.001	**
% SEN (statemented) pupils	-0.020	0.001	**
% Any SEN pupils	0.006	0.001	**
No. of pupils aged 11 (class size)	-0.001	0.000	**
2004 results	-0.180	0.013	**
2005 results	-0.343	0.014	**
school's KS2 maths performance in 2003	1.415	0.024	**

Significance level: * $p \leq 10$ ** $p \leq 5$ %

Table A4. Random effects in the Key Stage 2 English model

Base case	**estimate**	**s.e.**	**Significance**
Level			
LA variance	0.406	0.063	**
School variance	8.906	0.112	**
Time variance	0.729	0.015	**
Pupil variance	28.170	0.037	**
Final model (KS1 average random)			
Level			
LA variance	0.030	0.005	**
School variance	0.307	0.010	**
School/KS1 covariance	-0.054	0.002	**
KS1 variance	0.023	0.001	**
Time variance	0.800	0.010	**
Pupil variance	8.880	0.016	**
Pupil/KS1 covariance	-0.928	0.003	**
KS1 variance	0.304	0.002	**

Table A5. Random effects in the Key Stage 2 mathematics model

Base case	**estimate**	**s.e.**	**Significance**
Level			
LA variance	0.380	0.059	**
School variance	8.694	0.109	**
Time variance	0.419	0.012	**
Pupil variance	29.550	0.038	**
Final model (KS1 average random)			
Level			
LA variance	0.025	0.004	**
School variance	0.589	0.012	**
School/KS1 covariance	-0.083	0.002	**
KS1 variance	0.024	0.001	**
Time variance	0.488	0.008	**
Pupil variance	11.810	0.020	**
Pupil/KS1 covariance	-0.984	0.004	**
KS1 variance	0.145	0.002	**

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