# Education and the Working Class: Primary Teachers' Perspectives on Education in a Former Mining Community

**Katherine Elizabeth Simpson**

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# Copyright Statement

# Dedications and Acknowledgments

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For the working class and those who teach you, this is for you.

# Abstract

This thesis examines the role of education for working-class pupils at 'Lillydown Primary', a state school for 3-11 year olds, in a former mining community in South Yorkshire. Through examining teachers' perceptions and practice, this critical ethnography engages with the complex ways in which pupils' experiences of education are not only shaped by wider structures and relations in capitalist society, but also by historical class-based performances and codes. The thesis enhances our understanding of how historical transmissions materialise and affect pupils' experiences of schooling and illustrates how particular values, relations, and performances, specific to the locale, are transmitted and retraditionalised across various spaces within the school, in often subtle and multiple ways.

The research draws on neo-Marxist analyses of education and society, and uses Avery Gordon's notion of 'social haunting' to understand the socio-historical context in which schooling takes place. This, it is argued, provides a powerful way of conceptualising the educational experiences of children at Lillydown Primary, and those of working-class communities more broadly. Whilst the notion of social haunting provides the backdrop to the thesis, I argue that we must move beyond conceptualisations of social haunting as always registering the harm, the loss, and social injustice if we are to fully understand the interplay of class, education, and social change, and potentially transform experiences of schooling for the working class. A haunting, this thesis suggests, must also register the 'goodness' of our ghosts. We must reckon with and harness the potentiality of all facets of the ghosts of those we study – the loss, the social violence, and the goodness – to reimagine and transform the nature of schooling in contemporary capitalist society.

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# List of Abbreviations

A-level .............................................................................................Advanced Level Qualification

B/SM ............................................................................................ Base/ Superstructure Metaphor

BTEC ........................................................................ Business and Technology Education Council

CAQDAS ........................................................ Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software

Corp ...............................................................................................................Cooperative Store

DfE ....................................................................................................... Department for Education

EMA ....................................................................................... Educational Maintenance Allowance

EYFS ............................................................................................... Early Years Foundation Stage

FE ....................................................................................................................... Further Education

GCSE .......................................................................... General Certificate of Secondary Education

HLTA ...................................................................................... Higher Level Teaching Assistant

ISAs ............................................................................................. Ideological State Apparatuses

KATA ..............................................................................................Key Attachment Teaching Assistants

KPI .................................................................................................Key Performance Indicator

LRE ................................................................................ Lillydown Regeneration Executive Board

NCB ...............................................................................................................National Coal Board

NUM ...........................................................................................National Union of Mineworkers

Ofsted ..............................................Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills

PE ................................................................................................................... Physical Education

RSAs .............................................................................................Repressive State Apparatuses

SATs ............................................................................................... Standard Attainment Tests

SPaG .....................................................................................Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

STA ..................................................................................................... Standards and Testing Agency

Stute ...............................................................................................................The Miners' Institute

# An Introduction

Haunting is… about reliving events in all their vividness, originality, and violence so as to overcome their pulsating and lingering effects. Haunting is an encounter in which you touch the ghost or the ghostly matter of things: the ambiguities, the complexities of power and personhood, the violence and the hope, the looming and receding actualities, the shadows of ourselves and our society. When you touch the ghost or the ghostly matter (or when it touches you), a force that combines the injurious and the Utopian, you get something different than you might have expected (Gordon, 2008, pp.134-135).

*The Beginnings*

The purpose of this section is to outline the motivation behind my doctoral thesis. It begins by discussing my own experiences of education and employment which provide the backdrop to the research. Theoretical frameworks that helped to focus the research, and the context of the research in its historic and current location, are then discussed. The section concludes by describing the overall structure of the thesis. First though, I return to the words of Avery Gordon to explain how my own experiences of growing up working class in a former mining community and how experiences of education and 'employment' have shaped my own reality and, in turn, this research. To become attuned to a knowledge of 'the things behind the things' we must, Gordon writes, practice a new way of knowing, 'more of listening than a

seeing', to become familiar with and understand the 'ghostly matters' – of what has become lost, but remains to haunt (Gordon, 2008).

In many ways, this research, as the reader will see, is a reckoning with the ghosts I have been affected by. It is these ghosts that continue to haunt pupils at Lillydown Primary[1]. But, if we listen to and reckon with our ghosts they can be encouraging. As Gordon reminds us, "being haunted draws us affectively, sometimes against our will and always a bit magically, into the structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as a transformative recognition" (p.8).

In 2007, I chose to 'stay on' at school to study a *Level Three BTEC National Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development*. I chose a BTEC as I perceived it to be 'practical' rather than 'academic'. I attended mainly for the £30 Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) but my educational experiences were also affected by wider social structures within the community – relationships, networks, and traditional practices. I had little knowledge of other educational routes. Many friends had previously continued their studies at the local college; some had studied childcare so I thought this was a safe route. Access to the school bus service which, unlike other bus services in the village, conveniently had a stop outside my house, was another factor that influenced my decision. My choices were, on reflection, shaped in part by previous generations' experiences and values, and constrained, to some degree, by my socioeconomic and material background.

I intended to finish school then start earning money, through any form of available employment. I had little intention of continuing in education as my personal experiences had, so far, worked to limit the value I placed on my academic potential and on the value of

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[1] Lillydown Primary is a pseudonym for the school where the research took place.

education more broadly. Despite generally being in the 'top sets' throughout primary and secondary school, I found myself, every so often, placed in 'behaviour groups' or in curriculum bases educating myself. I had always struggled with education, not necessarily with the content of the curriculum – although I often found it dull and irrelevant – but with educational processes, structures, and relations. In particular, I found myself coming into conflict with overly-authoritative teachers. Growing up in a former mining community, there was always an almost 'unknown code' that authority was, generally, something to be questioned and challenged, though I did not necessarily know why. This was particularly evident with, and continues to affect, relations between community members and the police. In education, this affected *some* teacher-pupil relations. Even where teacher-pupil dynamics were relatively encouraging, conflicts still arose over school rules and educational processes, as my form tutor throughout secondary school illustrates:

> You have always had a word to say about anything even though you knew you were wrong. You are strong minded and I hope you find a future which this will be of use. I wish you all the best for the future and don't forget: 'TAKE THOSE RINGS OFF!' (Form Tutor, Leaver's Book).

Uniform and following particular school rules were the cause of most conflicts. I will return to these themes in some detail later in the thesis when examining the hidden curriculum, and teacher-pupil relations (see Chapter Four and Five, Research Question One and Two).

Although I had no original intention to go to university, a chance conversation with a teacher from my BTEC course persuaded me to give university 'a go'. Nevertheless, my experiences of education continued to be complex. My application was rejected from one university purely because I had a BTEC qualification rather than Advanced Level Qualifications. Even

where I was provisionally accepted, a level of doubt was placed over my 'academic' potential. Pending results, and doubtful of academic progression, I 'signed on' the dole for the first time in summer 2010.

I started my undergraduate teacher training at Huddersfield University in 2010. Huddersfield was relatively easy to travel to and it felt somewhat like home. Had my fees and living costs not been covered by Student Finance England, I would probably not have participated though. Money became scarce during the summer of 2011 so I took a temporary job at one of the local factories described in this research. Although conditions and relations at the factory are much more precarious (see Chapter One) today, I still had to reach unrealistic Key Performance Indicators (KPI), was subjected to randomised searches by 'security' at our desks and when accessing the toilets, alongside other questionable practices. On the team I worked on, however, we could, at the time, find space to 'have a laugh' and work collectively. In many ways, what we were able to reproduce, on reflection, were traditional working-class notions of camaraderie and solidarity.

Back at university, I thrived on placement doing 'practical' work but in certain lectures, particular relations and processes, at times, caused conflicts and I began, once more, to resist education. Despite these conflicts, I graduated with a first-class honours degree and was awarded The Chancellor's Prize for 'outstanding achievement by an undergraduate student'. These four themes; the role of education, pedagogy and the curriculum (formal and hidden), teacher-pupil relations, and teacher expectations and groupings had become a constant in my experiences of education, what was missing was why. It was not until my first teaching post as a Year 1 primary school teacher in a socially deprived, former mining community – explored in detail in Chapter Three – that I began to question how and why these practices

affect other working-class pupils. I spent a year and a half at the school before I resigned in disillusionment in 2014, and signed on for the second time.

My second experience 'on the dole' was very different to the first. The job centre was 'policed' by G4S, I had to attend courses on how to write a CV, how to dress and present myself at an interview, and I had to spend 37 hours a week searching and applying for jobs regardless of their nature, my qualifications, location, and pay. I promptly signed off and applied for a PhD. Fortunately, I was able to utilise the Chancellor's Award Scholarship allowing my PhD fees to be waived.

I began to think critically about how social class affects experiences and achievement in education. My undergraduate degree focused largely on curriculum content, behaviour management techniques, and assessment processes; more critical, theoretical and sociological concepts were highly limited. As a postgraduate, with limited knowledge of theory, I was introduced to the work of Karl Marx, Louis Althusser, Jean Anyon, and Bowles and Gintis, for example. Exploring relations between education and social class, from a Marxist perspective, I developed an understanding of how, within capitalist society, particular socioeconomic structures and relations "'determine' state policy, with the capitalist state 'inevitably' reproducing the capitalist system within and through education" (Hill, 2018, p.202). Education, Marxist theory advances, *is* an aspect of the class relation; it is involved in developing labour-power – 'a necessary condition for the social existence of the class relation in contemporary capitalism' (Rikowski, 2001). It is through class-based structures, relations and pedagogies, which vary according to pupils' social class, that particular divisions of labour are reproduced. The hidden curriculum reproduces and instils specific workforces with expected and acceptable attitudes, desired behavioural norms, and personality characteristics; and the formal curriculum inculcates particular forms of skill and knowledge. This, however,

differs significantly according to the class background of students attending different institutions or separated into different factions by processes of setting and streaming. Educational processes – grouping dimensions and social relations, for example – reinforce and reproduce hierarchical divisions of labour and class-based inequalities in capitalist society. Education then plays a major role in reproducing inequality in capitalist societies. It is:

> [A] key process in the generation of the capital relation; this is the skeleton in capitalist education's dank basement. This is just one of the many reasons why, in contemporary capitalist society, education assumes a grotesque and perverted form. It links the chains that bind our souls to capital. It is one of the ropes comprising the ring for combat between labour and capital, a clash that powers contemporary history: the *class struggle* (Rikowski, 2001).

However, education also has "the potential to provide a spark that can ignite the desire for revolutionary democratic social transformation throughout the world" (Allman, 2001, p.10). It is this potential, alongside my own experiences of education and teaching that focused this research to examine teachers' perceptions of the role of education for the working class in former mining communities.

Classed experiences of education are "deeply embodied, affectively lived and performed within specific practices" (Walkerdine, 2011, p.258):

> 'Class' could be something in the blood, in the very fibre of a man or woman: a way of growing, feeling, judging, taken out of the resources of generations gone before. Not something to be shuffled off with new possessions, new prospects, new surroundings; to be overlaid perhaps, or felt in new ways (Jackson and Marsden 1966, p.192).

Although some working-class people have, over time, benefitted socially, culturally and economically from various forms of education and training, historical class-based inequality and stratification in education has shown that education typically fails them and so, little value and trust is placed in education, and a level of doubt on their academic potential. Traditional working-class ways of being and doing are especially inharmonious with dominant neoliberal discourses which emphasise:

- competitive individualism rather than collaboration or solidarity;
- a capacity and preparedness to place matters of abstraction above practicality;
- an acceptance of delayed or deferred gratification that effort invested now, will bring future rewards;
- rule-following and compliances involving a deference to authority;
- a deferral of immediacy in favour of an orientation to the future.

(Simmons and Smyth, 2018, p.4)

Too often, such discordance is thought of as a 'lack of aspiration', and working-class pupils are labelled as uneducable or 'troublesome' (Simmons and Smyth, 2018, p.5). In contrast, I argue that we need to understand how historical transmissions continue to affect pupils' experiences of education, employment, and life more broadly.

Geoff Bright draws on Avery Gordon's concept of social haunting to examine historical dynamics of social class in former mining villages in Derbyshire (see Bright, 2011a, b, 2012, 2018, for example). Bright develops the argument that working-class communities' experiences of education continue to be negatively affected by the past. He argues that events such as the 1984-1985 miners' strike, the closure of the mining industry and its aftermath have an 'active 'half-life' that persists in complex ways' (Bright, 2018, p.107). Like in Bright's research, social haunting was evident throughout my fieldwork. Data registered how 'ghostly matters' were transmitted and experienced by both staff and pupils at Lillydown Primary through particular relations, structures and processes of education. But, unlike my own experiences, and those documented in Bright's research, staff at Lillydown Primary, through their shared histories are, at least to some degree, able to reckon with and, perhaps unwittingly, harness their ghost's 'utopian grace' (Gordon, 2008). A haunting, this research argues, represents not only historical violence and loss but the ghosts that have always existed, often unconsciously, and that remain embodied in the relations, structures, values, and performances enacted at Lillydown Primary, and in community life more broadly. Informed by neo-Marxist understanding of  the role of education, and complicating Gordon's notion of social haunting, this research makes the case that, in order to understand any particular society, community, or culture, we must not only register and reckon with what has been lost – to provide 'a hospitable memory for the ghosts' (Gordon, 2008) – but we must

reckon with what has always been present to harness the 'goodness' of the ghosts – the 'goodness' of working-class culture – in all their glory.

*Social Class and Education*

> The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles… Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie… has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other – Bourgeoisie and Proletariat (Marx [1848] 2014, pp.322-323).

In this section the relationship between social class, society, and education is explored through a Marxist perspective. First, I discuss how class is understood in this thesis. Here, I argue that it is facile to argue that social class is a straightforward classification of two groups of people into 'pre-ordained' categories or 'boxes' based on their occupation or income. I believe that a Marxist analysis of class offers a perspective that reflects more effectively life in contemporary capitalist society (see Rikowski, 2006). I then examine how education and training are, at all levels, implicated in the social reproduction of labour-power (Rikowski, 2001; Hill, 2018). Neo-Marxist educational theory (see, for example, Althusser, 2006; Anyon, 2011; Bowles and Gintis, 2011) has emphasised the ways in which particular structures, relations and processes in education: pedagogy; curriculum (formal and hidden); organisation of students; and the ownership, control, and management of schools and colleges and universities – 'the four aspects of teaching and learning' (Hill, 2017) – play a role in reproducing capitalist society.

Using Hill's (2017) three forms of Marxist analysis, I explain how education *is* an aspect of the class relation and highlight how education can be "the foundation of a politics of human resistance… playing a key role in the development of forms of labour *not* tied to the value-form" (Rikowski, 2001). The section concludes by arguing that a Marxist analysis of education, combined with Gordon's notion of social haunting, enables an understanding of the 'history of the present' that stretches "beyond the limits of what is already understandable" (Gordon, 2008, p.195). Imagining beyond the limits of what is already known, through harnessing the ghost's potential, is "our best hope for retaining what ideology critique traditionally offers while transforming its limitations into what, in an older Marxist language, was called Utopian possibility" (Gordon, 2008, p.195).

Education, social class and inequality remain important in contemporary post-industrial societies (Thompson, 2019). Social class is recognised as both reflecting and causing social, economic, and cultural differences in wealth, status, education and lifestyle, (see, for example, Hill, 2018). Within education, social class "lies at the heart of persistent inequality"; continuing to structure "resources, experiences and subjectivities" (Thompson, 2019, p.2). Social class remains, as Reay (2006) writes, 'to haunt English education' despite, or even because of, government policies and initiatives which claim to aim at reducing educational inequality.

The Registrar-General's classification of social class was the most commonly used system of classifying people by occupation between 1911 and 1998.[2] One the main criticisms of such a

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[2] From 2001, RGSC has been replaced by the new National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS SEC) in all official statistics. NS SEC also replaces Socio-Economic Group (SEG) which has also been used in official statistics (ONS, 2002).

classification, is that it 'glosses over and hides' the "fundamentally *antagonistic* relationship between the two main classes in society, the working class and the capitalist class" and, "serve[s], in various ways, to inhibit the development of a common (class) consciousness against the exploiting capitalist class" (Hill and Cole, 2001, pp.30-31). When such classifications are used to group social classes, Rikowski (2001) argues that we become 'box people'. To get a "real grip on social class and education" that adequately reflects the complexities and social dynamics of life in contemporary capitalist society, we need to "jump out of the mainstream [and] get our feet muddy on the banks of Marxist theory" (Rikowski, 2001).

> Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated by law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, by the dimensions of the share of the social wealth of which they dispose and their mode of acquiring it (Lenin, 1965, p.421).

Marxism defines a person's social class by their position in relation to the means of production. Marx recognised a dialectic relationship between the mode of production and class formation – the capital-labour relation. He saw society as split into two mutually antagonistic classes: the bourgeoisie – the capitalist class who buy workers' labour and labour power; and the proletariat – the working class whose only means of production is the sale of their labour power to the bourgeoisie. Under capitalism, Hill (2018) argues that class relations for both the working class and the capitalist class are constantly:

> [D]ecomposed and reconstituted due to changes in the forces of production, technological changes in the type of work. New occupations, such as telesales and

computing have come into existence; others, such as coal mining, manufacturing and other manual working-class occupations, decline (pp.186-187).

Marx recognised other classes, the 'middle and intermediate strata' (Marx, 1865, p.885). In current capitalist society, different levels within classes remain and appear more complicated than in the past. Marxists assert, however, that regardless of their 'layer', there is a 'common identity of interest' – their relationship to the means of production (Hill, 2018, p.187). Social class in capitalist society *is* complex and seldom presents in 'pure form' (Marx, 1865, p.885). Teachers, for example, hold complex class positions. For many Marxists, teachers would be positioned as wage labourers and, therefore, as part of the working class. However, generally they do not have 'surplus value directly extracted from their own labour' but nor do they own the means of production, or  buy workers' labour and labour power and take profit from the surplus value extracted from labour (Hill, 2018). Therefore, they do not belong in the capitalist class. For some, teachers should be grouped by which 'class's interest they predominantly serve' (Harris, 1982, p.39). Such matters are explored in Chapter Two: A Review of Literature.

Class is not simply an external relation experienced through the capital-labour relation. It is also internal, "the labour-capital relation runs through us" (Rikowski, 2006, p.3). It is on this account – that class runs through our personhood and a "battle plays out within our lives, our souls" (Rikowski, 2007, p.20) – that class, when referring to teachers' social class, will be recognised by the extent to which an individual identifies with their capital and labour aspects of their selves. Where pupils' social class is referenced, this is based on their social and economic positions as identified in official discourse but, more importantly, through their community's historical class relations, and their current class positions as perceived by their teachers. Generally, all involved in my research identify, in some form,

as 'being working class' and refer to pupils, and the wider community of Lillydown[3], as broadly 'working class'.


**Education, Capital and a New Way of Knowing**

> As the class struggle is built into us, is part of our social existence in capitalist society, so are attempts to transcend and go beyond capitalist education, as we kick against the ways in which we are scrambled by capital (Rikowski, 2006, p.10).

Education and training play an important role in validating and reproducing classed divisions and relations of capitalist society, particularly the social production of labour-power. Current managerial discourses, focused on controlling the labour process in education, increasingly displace professional judgment and autonomy. Taylorite techniques of management and control – prescribed curriculum content; weakening of trade unions; performance-related pay; and increased performativity and surveillance – work to ensure schooling is "subordinate to the personality, ideological and economic requirements of Capital, to make sure schools produce compliant, ideologically indoctrinated, pro-capitalists, effective workers" (Hill, 2003, p.13). For Hill (2017), there are (at least) four aspects of teaching and learning in which Marxist and critical educators, amongst others, can critique, challenge, and make proposals about educational structures, relations and experiences. These are: Pedagogy, Curriculum, Organisation of Students, and Ownership, Control and Management of Schools and Colleges and Universities (see Hill, 2017). For Hill, the following three forms of analysis, when

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[3] Lillydown is a pseudonym for the village where the research took place.

applied to the four aspects of teaching and learning, formulate a Marxist analysis of education:

1. Class Analysis: the Capital-Labour Relation.

2. Capitalism must be replaced by Socialism and that change is Revolutionary.

3. Revolutionary Transformation of Economy and Society need to be preceded by and accompanied by a Class Programme, Organisation, and Activism

(Hill, 2017, p.8)

*1. Class Analysis: The Capital-Labour Relation*

In order to transform society, it is necessary to have an understanding of how particular economic and material conditions in historical and current capitalist systems are formed (Maisuria and Beach, 2016). Following Marx, the dialectical paradox at the heart of capitalism is the relationship between capital and labour – the capital-labour relation (Hill, 2017). That is, the systematic exploitation by the capitalist class, who own the means of production, of the surplus value created by the labour of the working classes. The relationship between capitalism and schooling, within Marxist educational theory, is premised upon Marx' value theory of labour (see Rikowski, 1999, 2006, for example). Education and training, it is argued, play a role in the social production of the commodity that "makes the class relation possible, and hence makes capitalism possible: labour-power" (Rikowski, 2001). For Rikowski, there are two aspects to the social production of labour-power:

> First, there is the development of labour power *potential*, the capacity to labour effectively within the labour process. Secondly, there is the development of the

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*willingness* of workers to utilise their labouring power, to expend themselves within

the labour process as value-creating force (Rikowski, 1999, p.77).

Capitalism is reliant upon the effective reproduction of an already differentiated and obedient

workforce. In this sense, labour-power has to be "coaxed, cajoled, manipulated

or *forced* (sometimes accompanied by the threat or use of violence - symbolic or physical)

into existence" (Rikowski, 2001). The reproduction of labour power – the skills, knowledge,

behavioural traits and personal characteristics –  necessary for each division of labour – are

largely instilled 'outside the sphere of production' (Althusser, 2006). Today, these are

typically reproduced largely through education and training. It is here, particularly through

the four aspects of teaching and learning, which are increasingly controlled by the state,

where labour-power is shaped and developed (Rikowski, 2001).

## 2. Capitalism Must Be Replaced By Socialism and That Change Is Revolutionary

Much as education and training produce labour-power, it can also challenge and resist it. The

link between workers' consciousness and socialist revolution, Hill (2017) argues, is to teach

against it, to subvert processes and effects of capitalist schooling. Teachers' implication in

the social production of labour-power gives them a "special sort of social power" as they

"work at the chalkface of capital's weakest link, labour-power" (Allman et al., 2005, p.13).

They have the potential to disrupt and call into question capitalist processes of schooling

particularly through Hill's (2017) four aspects of teaching and learning. Teachers can

re/construct spaces where working-class culture can be utilised – personalising and

localising teaching and learning according to pupils' historical, current, and future realities.

This will not only expose the working class to how their use-value of their labour-power is

being exploited by capital (McLaren, 2005) but also produce knowledge and experiences which have immediate value within their realities, rather than only potential value for exchange within capitalist relations (see Chapter Five: Discussion and Analysis).

*3. Revolutionary Transformation of Economy and Society need to be Preceded by and Accompanied by a Class Programme, Organisation, and Activism*

The final form of Marxist analysis for Hill (2017) is that in order to replace capitalism, Marxists have to work to organize a movement for action. He argues that the duty of a Marxist is, "*activist praxis*, within the limits of one's ability and competing demands, [to] move beyond proposal into activism and praxis" (p.10). Within education, teachers firstly need to gain the skills and knowledge to effectively challenge and critique capitalist processes of teaching and learning. Secondly, they need to effect a commitment to critical pedagogy, to provide pupils with the ability, skills and knowledge to think dialectically, and develop a critical consciousness aimed at social transformation (Hill, 2003). Finally, educators must broaden their commitments to work within the wider community, and, alongside broader, national and global movements, parties, and organisations in pursuit for economic justice and social change (Hill, 2016).

*A New Way of Knowing: Avery Gordon*

Marxist theory attends well to how education plays a role in the social production of labour-power, and how educators can question and transform aspects of teaching and learning in pursuit of social change. However, to fully understand the interplay of class and education, and to effect change, I argue that we require another layer, another way of seeing and knowing, which examines how particular historical transmissions impact on working-class experiences of education, and their lived experiences more broadly. As Avery Gordon writes, "to study social life one must confront the ghostly aspects of it… [this] requires (or produces) a fundamental change in the way we know and make knowledge, in our mode of production" (Gordon, 2008, p.7). It is the ability to understand and reckon with these historical transmissions – the ghosts of our past – that has further potential to challenge capitalist relations.

> Specters are still haunting, not only in Europe and not only of communism. Our contemporary society is still a "society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange... like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells" (Marx and Engels [1888] 1973: 72). The task then remains to follow the ghosts and spells of power in order to tame this sorcerer and conjure otherwise (Gordon, 2008, p.28).

Gordon stresses a method of knowledge production – a concept, a way of knowing and seeing – that not only recognises the hauntings of the organized forces and systemic structures in our everyday life, but also 'the affective, the cultural, and the experiential' ghostly matters that haunt our every turn (p. xii). Inspired by psychoanalysis and Marxism, which already provide particular paradigms for seeing the unknown, Gordon's notion of social haunting provides a way of knowing and seeing the 'things behind the things' (Gordon, 2008).

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If we are to truly understand the complexities of social life in all its fullness, and inevitably transform it, we must, Gordon argues, "confront the ghostly aspects of it" (p.7). To reckon with our ghosts is not to romanticise about or call for a return to the past. A haunting is about reckoning with what we have lost, or that which is concealed but is nonetheless "very much alive and present" (p. xvi). Throughout her book, Gordon signifies the ghosts' potential – "it is pregnant with unfulfilled possibility, with the something to be done that the wavering present is demanding" (p.183). Although, for Gordon, a haunting always registers the harm and the loss from unresolved, historical social violence, it also registers the need for change:

> The ghost registers and it incites, and that is why we have to talk to it graciously, why we have to learn how it speaks, why we have to grasp the fullness of its life world, its desires and its standpoint. When a ghost appears, it is making contact with you; all its forceful if perplexing enunciations are for you. Offer it a hospitable reception we must, but the victorious reckoning with the ghost always requires a partiality to the living. Because ultimately haunting is about how to transform a shadow of a life into an undiminished life whose shadows touch softly in the spirit of a peaceful reconciliation. In this necessarily collective undertaking, the end, which is not an ending at all, belongs to everyone (Gordon, 2008, pp.207-208).

**The Research: An Overview**

This thesis examines the role of education for working-class pupils in a former mining community in the north of England. Using a critical ethnographic approach, I examine how changes in the labour market and wider socioeconomic structures penetrate and influence educational processes and pupils' experiences of schooling at Lillydown Primary. Through examining teachers' perceptions and practice, I engage with the complex ways in which historical performances are transmitted and reproduced through various structures, relations, and performances at Lillydown Primary. Avery Gordon's notion of social haunting is central to understanding how historical transmissions materialise, and are experienced. Combined with Marxist and neo-Marxist theories on the reproductive nature of schooling, this framework has important implications for analysing and understanding the interplay and enactment of social class and education.

This research complicates the notion of social haunting by arguing that ghosts not only transmit historical injustices and state violence, but also historical 'goodness'– class-based traditions, values, structures and relations, for example. If we are to truly understand and transform the nature of schooling in contemporary capitalist society, it is these ghosts, I argue, that must be reckoned with and harnessed. This research illustrates how staff and pupils' shared experiences of growing up working class, in many ways, provides particular knowledge and means to reckon with and begin to utilise the ghosts' potentialities to positively shape pupils' experiences of schooling. Harnessing the ghosts' full potential is, however, complicated by a range of factors – most evidently, wider structures and relations in current capitalist society, and dominant discourses in education. Within the classroom, however, age and experience of current teachers, despite their shared class backgrounds, also complicates a haunting. Understanding and experience of class and culture, after all, requires

some historicity. I argue that these limitations play a role in maintaining and reproducing classed divisions and relations of capitalist society. This research offers suggestions to harness the ghosts' potentiality and engage in critical forms of teaching and learning that begins the process of creating an education which is not only meaningful but equips pupils with the necessary skills and knowledge to challenge education, their futures, and capitalist society.

The aims of the research were:

1) To conduct a critical ethnographic study of teachers' expectations of working-class children in a primary school in a former mining community.
2) To consider the extent to which the historical and socio-economic culture of the community affects the education of working-class children.
3) To contribute to debates about theorizations of working-class children's experiences of education in a post-industrial context.

This was done through asking the following research questions:

a) What are teachers' perceptions of the role of education for working-class children?
b) How do teachers establish and build relationships with working-class children?
c) What are teachers' expectations of working-class children?
d) To what extent do teachers' practices differentiate between pupils?

*Structure of Thesis*

*Chapter One: Lillydown a Biography*

The first chapter of the thesis locates the research within its historic and current context. It describes the place – Lillydown – and the school – Lillydown Primary. It details how Lillydown's population and social structures developed throughout the twentieth century around its colliery. Consequential social and economic effects of the 1984-985 miners' strike and the closure of Lillydown's colliery in 1993 – poverty, unemployment, low-levels of educational attainment, and increased levels of crime – are discussed. Various regeneration projects since the early-2000s are examined and statistical data is drawn on to examine these changes. Ethnographic data is used to add depth to the descriptions. Chapter One also highlights how particular performances and ways of being and doing continue to be transmitted and reproduced. Walkerdine and Jimenez's (2012) view of class as a continuing affective experience deeply embedded within generations, highlights how particular structures and performances – for example, leisure activities and gendered practices – continue to affect the present, and for Ward (2015) are being retraditionalised through various spaces in education and community life more broadly. Chapter One closes by examining the history of education in Lillydown from the 1960s to present. It examines how education in Lillydown has been haunted by a history of instability, uncertainty and 'failure'.

*Chapter Two: A Review of Literature*

Chapter Two begins by discussing the class position of teachers in contemporary capitalist society, and considering the implications current neoliberal discourses have on teacher agency and labour relations. Drawing on neo-Marxist analyses, I argue that class position is identified by the extent to which an individual identifies with a class, and the class they predominantly serve. Throughout, this section locates various policy developments within the wider context of neoliberalism and considers their effects on pupils' experiences of schooling. This chapter then examines a range of Marxist and neo-Marxist perspectives on the role education plays in maintaining and reproducing social relations of production and class divisions both across and through education. I argue that although these theories *are* in many ways useful, they sometimes underestimate the potential of human agency, historical and current class relations, and the reproductive nature of particular structures and relations inside the classroom. Central to understanding how culture and class are enacted and experienced at the level of the classroom, are more recent theories relating to the transmission of affect. Paying particular attention to Avery Gordon's (2008) notion of a school haunting – alongside the work of Bright (2011a, b, 2012), Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012), and Ward (2015) – this section examines how working-class communities continue to be affected by their histories in often covert and complex ways. Literature discussed in this section provides justification for the research. Above all, it rationalises the development of Gordon's notion of social haunting to further examine how Lillydown's ghosts continue to affect young people's experiences of education from within the classroom, at primary school level. It is this exploration of their ghosts – this reckoning – I later argue is essential in effecting and realising the ghosts' potentiality to establish and sustain relationships, and further educational possibilities.

*Chapter Three: Methodology and Data Collection*

Chapter Three begins by examining the history and background of ethnography from its nineteenth century origins, to more recent developments in the later twentieth century. It argues that traditional ethnography fails to expose oppressive structures and forces in society and bring about change through transformation. Here, I justify why a critical Marxist approach to ethnography has been chosen, arguing that embedding ethnographic research within theory, alongside its historical and current political and socioeconomic context, is essential if society and, more specifically, pupils' experiences of education, are to be truly understood and ultimately transformed. Understanding how economic and material conditions in historical and contemporary capitalist society are formed is necessary; various ontological and epistemological assumptions are therefore considered before defending why a Marxist, materialist-realist ontology and subjectivist epistemology underpins this research. Moving on, this chapter outlines each research question. It closes by justifying and explaining how data was collected and analysed. A rationale for the location of the research, choice of participants, and methods used is provided, alongside a time frame of the ethnography and a biographical overview of participants. Within this, catalytic validity is discussed and consideration is given to ethics, particularly focusing on consent and an 'ethics of care'.

*Chapter Four: Ethnographic Findings*

Chapter Four presents data collected in the ethnography. It offers a description and initial analysis of the role of education for working-class pupils in a former mining community, from the point of view of those teaching them. A range of fieldwork data are presented in an attempt to begin addressing each of the research questions. Throughout each research question, particular attention is paid to Gordon's notion of social haunting.

*Research Question One, What are teachers' perceptions of the role of education for working-class children?*

Data presented in this section suggests that generations after the miners' strike and pit closures, Lillydown's history continues to affect pupils' educational and lived experiences. In community life more broadly, their ghosts present tensions and conflicts but within the school, through staff and pupils shared experiences of growing up working class, ghosts are reckoned with and harnessed in a number of positive ways. For pupils at Lillydown Primary, data presented in this section indicates a belief that the role of education is to educate the whole child, and give them appropriate skills and knowledge, behaviours and attitudes to 'get by' academically, socially and emotionally. Despite high expectations of all pupils, and recognition that education is becoming increasingly important to the future wellbeing of all young people, data indicates that educational progression and employment opportunities are shaped to a significant degree by pupils' socioeconomic and backgrounds, the immediate labour market and, more specifically, historical transmissions of knowledge.

Data concerning the hidden curriculum reveals traditional performances of authority, working-class codes and ethics – favouring trust, equality, and respect – were reproduced

through staff's and pupils' shared histories. Particular approaches to enacting the hidden curriculum, based on their shared class identities and backgrounds – the use of humour, for example – worked to actively engage pupils. Where more authoritarian regimes are enforced, education is often resisted. Data presented in this section suggests that teacher-pupil relationships are key to engaging pupils and opening up further educational exchanges. Data also suggests the National Curriculum is problematic for staff and pupils. A dislocation between the forms of knowledge imposed through the National Curriculum and those needed for pupils to 'get by' in life which are perceived to be more 'vocational' and 'practical'. The section closes by discussing data relating to teacher and pupil agency.

*Research Question Two: How do teachers establish and build relationships with working-class children?*

Data presented here suggest that staff's experiences of growing-up working class helps form and maintain relationships. Shared identities provide a powerful connection with pupils, giving shared knowledge and experiences of particular socioeconomic and material conditions. Within this section, data suggests shared language – accent, humour, codes and values – continue to work as measures of inclusivity and exclusivity, as they have done so historically within broader community life. Although these specific codes of working-class life can be difficult for someone from elsewhere to understand and effect, findings suggest space for 'outsiders' to learn the 'language'. Data presented within this section suggest that pupils generally engage with education to please staff, through their established relations, but also engage through the specific environment which creates a sense of being and a sense of

ontological security. In many ways, this reflects and reproduces traditional relations of continuity, collectivity, and security once embedded in their community.

*Research Question Three: What are teachers' expectations of working-class children?*

Findings presented in this section suggest that staff, in the main, have high academic expectations of pupils largely to counteract some pupils' socioeconomic and material disadvantages. Frustrations amongst staff that dominant neoliberal discourses generally overlook these factors are evident in data. Increasing government demands often result in pupils failing to reach their academic potential, data offered here shows that pupils are acutely aware of this 'failure'. At times, a low-aspirational discourse of pupils' academic abilities is evident among a minority of staff. Behavioural expectations were also high and influenced by pupils' backgrounds. Data suggests that shared histories and staff's knowledge of pupils' backgrounds provides space to mediate and resolve any complexities. Again, inconsistencies between perceived expectations and those implemented in practice are evident. This section closes by dealing with staff's wider expectations of pupils which, beyond secondary school, is generally limited. Data suggests particular discourses, relations, and structures at secondary school are likely to ultimately fail pupils and work to exclude them.

*Research Question Four: To what extent do teachers' practices differentiate between pupils?*

Here, specific grouping dimensions show that, although staff recognise pupil diversity and individuality, categorisation of pupils by their socioeconomic needs and background is evident. In practice, pupils are grouped into three groups based on perceived ability. As pupils progress through school, data indicates here that they become increasingly aware of, and affected by, particular grouping processes and dimensions. Although fluid movement within groupings is the ideal, in practice, data presented here examines how wider pressures and structural constraints, alongside individual and collective pupil agency, complicate these processes.

*Chapter Five: Discussion and Analysis*

The discussion and analysis chapter attempts to more closely interrogate data and answer the research questions. It tries to develop more nuanced conceptualisations of the relationship between working-class young people, and the role of education by examining how historical transmissions continue to affect their experiences of schooling. The argument is developed that, while particular performances and values relating to education and employment in Lillydown have been challenged by current neoliberal discourse in education and society, Lillydown's past continues to affect the present. This chapter argues that the key to engaging pupils and transforming their experiences of education, employment, and lived experiences more broadly is by understanding and reckoning with Lillydown's past, and harnessing their ghosts' potentialities.

*Research Question One: What are teachers' perceptions of the role of education for working-class children?*

This section complicates Gordon's notion of social haunting by illustrating how particular modes of being and doing – the 'goodness' of pupils' histories – are transmitted and reproduced at the level of the school. It shows how the school serves as an alternative space – a microcosm of what once was – where cultural norms and performances are ghosted into the present through particular relations, structures, and performances. These, in the main, encouragingly affect pupils' experiences of schooling. Despite changes in the labour market and society, when considering education more broadly, traditional legacies and performances of education and employment remain. Here, I draw on neo-Marxist analyses of education to explore how these experiences and perceptions play a role in maintaining and reproducing classed divisions and relations of capitalist society. This illustrates the complex ways in which the echoes and murmurs of Lillydown's past encouragingly shape pupils' experiences of schooling whilst, paradoxically, maintaining and reproducing wider inequalities. Processes of reproduction are complex and influenced by a number of factors – the family, the school, the socioeconomic and political, and the individual – intertwined with historical transmissions of affect.

Similarly, this section shows how the dissemination of particular knowledge and pedagogy at Lillydown Primary challenges teaching and learning typically associated with working-class schools whilst, simultaneously, playing a role in validating and reproducing class-based inequalities. Analysis suggests that staff and pupils' shared backgrounds provides the means – relations, knowledge, and experience – to construct forms of teaching and learning that draws on their histories to create potentially more relevant, localised, and critical forms education. Additionally, this section notes how staff and pupils' shared histories work to

create conditions and relations which, in various ways, challenge the reproductive nature of the hidden curriculum. Understanding and harnessing these historical performances are complicated by staff's age and experience. When these ghosts are misinterpreted, pupils' resistant histories haunt the present, creating tensions and conflicts within their experiences of schooling.

*Research Question Two: How do teachers establish and build relationships with working-class children?*

Here, analysis shows staff were able to call upon their working-class histories to build and maintain teacher-pupil relationships. To misquote Willis (1997), most staff at Lillydown Primary 'do know the way of the world'. Staff collectively and individually, though often unwittingly, contest neoliberal discourses by transmitting and reproducing historical ways of being and doing into the present which, consequently, engages pupils in education. Pupil engagement is, analysis suggests, essentially performed through a class-based, rather than a neoliberal-educational, paradigm. It is, largely, a product of the specific relations and conditions created at Lillydown Primary. In various ways, this reflects historical conditions and relations miners faced and those within community more broadly. It was not the work or hardships within community life that were necessarily enjoyed, but the camaraderie, sense of being, and sense of security and collectivity. Staff's ability to reckon with and harness the ghosts' potentiality, creating particular relations and conditions, that transmit and reproduce traditional ways of being and doing which are key to pupil engagement and the opening up of further possibilities within education for the working class.

*Research Question Three: What are teachers' expectations of working-class children?*

*And,*

*Research Question Four: To what extent do teachers' practices differentiate between pupils?*

This final section combines the analysis of research questions Three and Four. It demonstrates how, despite most staff professing to hold high expectations for all pupils, processes of stratification are constructed at the level of the classroom. Expectations are influenced by staff's experiences of growing up working class, and an awareness of how pupils' historical and current realities *can* affect experiences of schooling. Shared histories provide a way of mediating, at least to some degree, oppressive discourses and categorisations of pupils, which working-class children often experience (Sharp and Green, 1975; Willis, 1997). At times, however, analysis reveals subtle paradoxes within some staff's claimed expectations and their classroom practice which, in effect, contributes to the validation and reproduction of wider class-based inequalities.

Despite grouping processes and dimensions operating in a fairly fluid and covert fashion, this section shows how particular processes reinforce the division, and reification of pupils' identities, by perceived ability. Analysis suggests that such effects, at times, are a result of increasing performative pressures. More notably, however, these are also considerably shaped by historically-validated ways of being and doing – notions of collectivity, co-operation, and solidarity. This is a significant finding and has implications for future practice. Staff must, analysis suggests, reckon with and harness these ghosts to create conditions where

pupils feel safe enough to challenge and move beyond neoliberal processes and discourses which limit their potentials, to open up further educational possibilities.


*Chapter Six: Conclusion*

This final chapter draws together the central arguments of this research. I suggest that to truly understand working-class pupils' experiences of schooling, education must be located within the historical and cultural context of its locale which critically frames, and affects pupils' lives. In other words, schooling must be understood through the notion of social haunting. I argue that understanding the full complexity of a haunting – the social violence and loss, *the goodness*, and the utopian – is key to creating encouraging relations and experiences of education. I revisit and build on Dave Hill's (2017) four aspects of teaching and learning to highlight a number of ways the 'goodness' of Lillydown's ghosts are being reckoned with and propose ways in which these might be developed further to fully harness the ghosts' potentiality, and to open up and transform the role of so it is more meaningful and socially just. I conclude this research by suggesting various areas for further study. I reflect, more broadly, on the research and research participants before reiterating the call to reckon with and harness the ghosts of those we seek to understand.

We are nothing without coal.

# Chapter One: Lillydown – A Working-Class Biography

## Lillydown: A Biography

Until the late nineteenth century Lillydown was a small settlement with a village green, a few

cottages, a farmhouse, a well and a corn mill. Its combined population with the neighbouring

village stood at 484 people. In the early twentieth century, after the pit was sunk, Lillydown's

population (now separated from its neighbouring village) was over 1,600. By 1972, the

population had grown to 5, 559 (RGS, 2012). Initially, Mathews Main Colliery Company (1901-1946), and later the National Coal Board (NCB) (1947-1987), built up the main residential areas of Lillydown – The Village and White City – to provide housing for the influx of miners and their families who moved to South Yorkshire, mainly from Scotland and County Durham, for work in its mines. From 1947 onwards, Lillydown's local authority – Oakshire[4] – built more housing, which became known locally as Red City. Lillydown is still a large village today but its population has declined since the demise of the coal industry and now stands at 4,672. The ward within which Lillydown falls has a population of 13,189; 98.4 percent of its population is white British. 97 percent of residents in Lillydown's ward were born in the UK and 1.5 percent of its population were born in other parts of the European Union (OMBC, 2019). Basically, Lillydown is overwhelmingly white British and has had little inward migration.

37.2 percent of Lillydown's residents have no educational qualifications (5 percent higher than in Oakshire and 15 percent higher than in England and Wales). 42 percent of all adults living in the United Kingdom are educated to degree level whereas for Lillydown this figure is just 14 percent (ONS, 2017; OMBC, 2019). Figure 1.1 contains comparable unemployment statistics for Oakshire, Yorkshire and the Humber, and Great Britain.

Figure 1.2 shows comparable employment statistics for Oakshire, Yorkshire and the Humber, and national employment statistics. In Lillydown, slightly fewer than 65 percent of adults are recorded as economically active. 2.1 percent are long-term unemployed which is in line with the borough average but slighter higher than the national average of 1.7 percent (OMBC, 2019). Wholesale and retail trades are the largest sector of employment in the area at 18.8

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[4] Oakshire is a pseudonym for the town and local authority where the research took place.

percent, human health and social work account for the second largest at 14.6 percent.

Nationally 8 percent work in higher professional occupations, compared to 4.3 percent in

Oakshire, and 2.9 percent in Lillydown (OMBC, 2019).

**Unemployment Statistics**
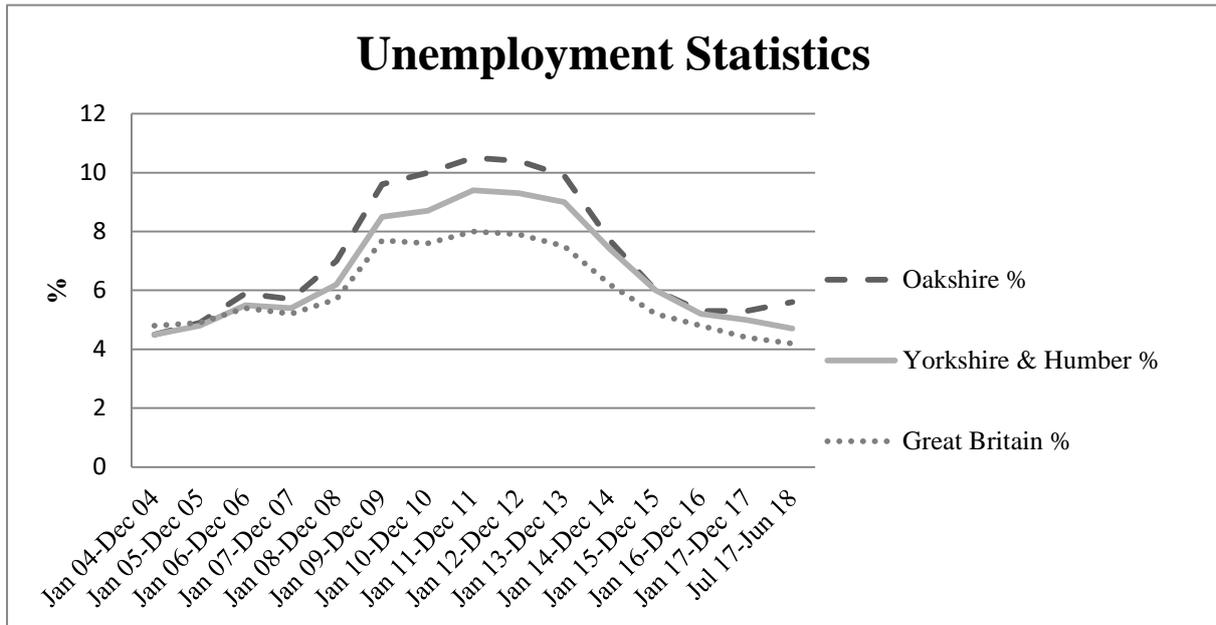


**Figure 1.1: All People - Unemployed January 2004 - June 2018**

Source: Adapted data from Office for National Statistics: Official Labour Market Statistics (ONS, 2019a)

**Employment Statistics**

Figure legend:
- – – Oakshire %
- —— Yorkshire & Humber %
- ······ Great Britain %
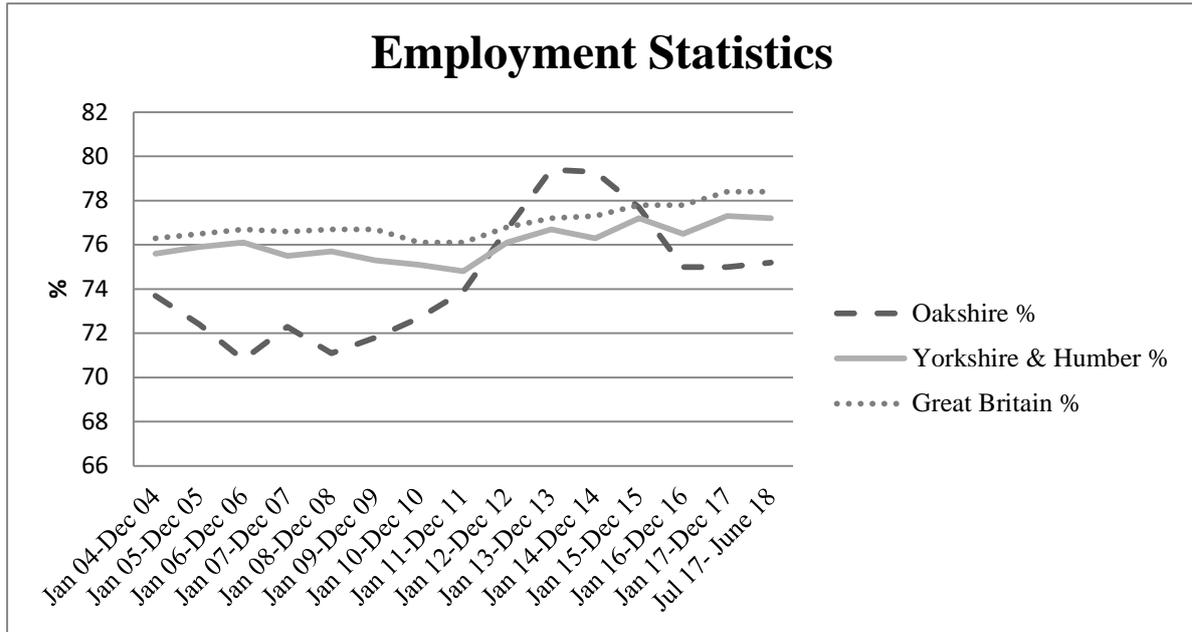
**Figure 1.2: All People – Economically Active January 2004 – June 2018**

Source: Adapted data from Office for National Statistics: Official Labour Market Statistics (ONS, 2019b)

Oakshire is the 39th most deprived local authority in England (OMBC, 2015). It is ranked within the top 20 percent of local authorities in England with the highest levels of child poverty.[5] The extent of child poverty and the socio-economic deprivation across Oakshire, and in Lillydown, is illustrated in Table 1.1 below which indicates that Lillydown has a higher than average national, and regional, percentage of children living in poverty.

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[5] Child poverty, now termed 'Children in low-income families', is measured by the "proportion of children living in families either in receipt of out-of-work benefits or in receipt of tax credits with a reported income which is less than 60% of national median income" (HMRC, 2014).

|  | Percentage of Children in Low-Income Families | |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Under 16'S | All children |
| England | 20.6% | 20.1% |
| Yorkshire and Humber | 21.7% | 21.1% |
| Oakshire | 24.4% | 23.6% |
| Lillydown (Ward) | 25% | 24.5% |

**Table 1.1: Percentage of Children in Low-Income Families**

Source: Adapted data from Oakshire's Anti-Poverty Strategy 2013-2016 (OMBC, 2016a)

Lillydown has spatial divisions and hierarchies; it is divided into three distinguishable parts – 'The Village', 'White City', and 'Red City'. The Village is at the centre of Lillydown, and running through its middle is the High Street – Lillydown's shopping centre (RGS, 2012, p.42). For Frank, who worked at the pit for 44 years from the age of 15 and still lives in Lillydown, the high street was traditionally a big part of everyday life tailored to the community's needs:

> Ther' wo seven butcher's shops… people shopped when the' needed it. The biggest organisation wo Corp (Cooperative Store). Corp had a big meat and food department but it also had got a meat butchers and a drapery that selt curtains and clothing, and everything. That wo a big organisation that. Everything the community needed was contained within one street (Frank, 06.06.2016).

The Corp and the seven butcher's shops have gone. Now there is a small supermarket, several takeaway outlets, a hairdressers' and beauty training salon, fitness equipment shops, a café, a

bakery, a florist, a post office, a newsagents, a dental practice, and a doctor's surgery. Local shops often support their residents by 'laying on' products until their next pay cheque arrives. The supermarket, although small, is the only shop that provides a range of everyday foods and essentials in one place. It could be argued that the supermarket has, to some degree, replaced and provided an updated version of what the Corp once provided. Most of the neighbouring villages' high streets have, over recent years, been updated with a range of discount supermarkets, small high street retailers, coffee shops, and independent stores. This has given these residents better access to a broad range of shops and products. Further afield in neighbouring towns and cities, which are home to large indoor or outdoor shopping complexes, you will find hundreds of designer stores, high street brands, cafes, restaurants, bars, and cinemas. Lillydown's high street has a different look and feel to these places. What exists in Lillydown is a high proportion of takeaways and shops that "cater only for those without money" (Turner, 2000, p.18). It is difficult for residents to shop outside Lillydown as many do not own a vehicle, and public transport links are poor.

The houses within The Village are mainly terraced homes – originally 'pit houses'. At the bottom of the High Street, there is a notable change in the size and appearance of the houses on one side. These homes are significantly larger and more impressive in appearance – these were the houses built for the Deputies; known locally as 'Deputies Row'. The addition of a new housing estate, opposite the Church, is part of a housing regeneration programme. This new housing estate replaced some of the most run-down houses in Lillydown but there are still a number of dilapidated homes; most of the doors and windows are boarded up and gardens enshrouded with litter. These houses are back-to-back old pit houses, better known to locals as 'Costa del Mat'. For Jess, a young adult who lived in The Village until recently moving to Red City, it is this area that is "rough" and "run-down":

It can be quite rowdy through ' day or night [and] loud music is always playing.

Summer time is when the music is mainly played and the' put their sofas out int' '

garden and drink. Sometimes it's just inappropriate… not inappropriate…

intimidating t' be walking up there with young children with all the shouting and

swearing (Jess, 24.05.2016).

White City houses, which were also pit houses, were built in the 1930s. They are mostly semi-detached with a white pebbledash cladding on the top-half. Red City houses, on the other hand, were built with red bricks from the local brickworks, which is still operating today, by the local authority. 63.8 percent of homes in Lillydown are now privately owned which is broadly in line with the national average – 64 percent (ONS, 2012). 20.9 percent of households live in social rented accommodation, which is 3.2 percent higher than the national average. 13.6 percent of households rent from private landlords, compared to a national average of 16.8 percent (OMBC, 2019). House prices in Lillydown are significantly lower than national averages in England and slightly lower than Oakshire's average (see Table 1.2).

| Average House Prices | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Lillydown** | **Oakshire** | **England** |
| **Detached** | £162,788 | £230,426 | £378,473 |
| **Semi-Detached** | £92,980 | £125,087 | £230,284 |
| **Terraced** | £88,579 | £98,208 | £200,889 |
| **Flats** | £66,529 | £113,612 | £230,611 |

**Table 1.2: Average House Price in Lillydown, Lillydown's Borough, and England**

Source: Adapted data from house comparison statistics (for Oakshire and Lillydown) (Zoopla, 2018), and HM Land Registry Statistics July 2018 (for England) (HM Land Registry, 2018)

One of the most notable studies on mining communities is *Coal is our Life* by Dennis et al. (1956) based in 'Ashton', a small mining community in West Yorkshire. Dennis et al. believed *Coal is our Life* to be paradigmatic for understanding life in mining communities. Through a structural-functionalist lens, they examined the constituent parts of this paradigm: the mines, the work, the unions, family life, community, pubs and other 'leisure' activities. Similarly, pubs and working men's clubs were an important part of the social life in Lillydown. Frank told me that:

> Pubs used t' organise tug o' wars… aye… n darts, n dominoes. N of course on a Tuesdi you used t' have a free n easy where you used t' dance. We used t' have good artists, the' did! Oh aye the' used t' have good entertainment… At clubs ther' wo a lot. Ther' wo one, two, three, four, five, six clubs at one time at its height in Lillydown (Frank, 06.06.2016).

And that,

> Before ' strike and before they shut ' pit it wo a good place t' live, everybody knew everybody. The' used t' tek trips from ' club, 43 buses from ' old club… 43 buses guin t' South Sea and Bridlington and Scarborough! But ' highlight o' day wo bullet, ex-service men's club, ther' wo a train load t' Blackpool. So you imagine a train load. We got a pair o' pumps and 5 shillings free. N when we got t' Blackpool we used t' gu in Woolworths n dinner wo ready fo' us when we got in Woolworths. So we really… everybody wo together (Frank, 06.06.2016).

The White City's pub, the Red City's sports and social club, and The Village's working men's club are still popular amongst residents. However, the Red City's pub struggled to survive the economic decline, being demolished in 2007 and the land later re-developed into

a new housing estate (RGS, 2012). The Lillydown Hotel, on the High Street, was demolished in 2003. The Miners' Institute (Stute), which was situated near the working men's club in The Village, was one of the main hubs of the community, running leisure activities and clubs, trips, yearly galas and much more, was demolished in 2010. The site where the former Stute once stood is now derelict (see Picture 1.1). For Frank, the demolition of the Stute has been a devastating blow for the community:

> Well, up until recently, Stute wo knocked darn n that wo an absolute tragedy. You'd got cricket, you'd got football, you'd got boxing, you'd got majorettes, you'd got band, you'd got first aid, you'd all them guin off at ' Stute. N nar you've no cricket, you've no majorettes, you've got first aid, there's no boxing, no karate that's gone, n that's gone recently. Nar when that wo all guin off it wo a good atmosphere. It's a shame! (Frank, 06.06.2016).

The Village's working men's club, 'The Old Club', is still an important part of the social life in Lillydown and is emblematic of many working men's clubs in mining communities, and traditional twentieth century life in working-class industrial communities, with bingo nights, discos, and regular 'turns' on each week. The club board members keep up the tradition of manning the door, granting entrance to members only, or those who can be vouched for by a respected regular. Lillydown's renowned colliery band, which is still prospering today, continues to represent an important link to Lillydown's past. Arguably, these are important working-class customs that continue to be transmitted and reproduced into the present in Lillydown.

**Picture 1.1: Former Site of the Stute**

Source: Personal Archive

*Mining*

Lillydown Colliery opened in 1896, working an area of coal after its expansion of roughly 12 square miles (Hill, 2001a). The colliery, which started as a private enterprise, was nationalised in 1947 and was one of the largest pits in the area (Wain, 2014). Virtually all miners at the Colliery lived in Lillydown, or nearby. After nationalisation, a £7.5 million scheme saw Lillydown Colliery merged with a neighbouring pit to increase coal production outputs (Hill, 2001a). Business continued to grow as a new £5 million power station was built in 1958, a £28 million coal preparation plant, which was the most advanced plant in Europe at the time, was completed in 1961; in 1966 a Coalite plant was built (Hill, 2001a; Wain, 2014). In a bid to produce coal that burnt efficiently and cleanly, Lillydown Colliery was also chosen as the base for a research test facility. This internationally-funded facility was built in the early 1980s, costing around £20 million (Wain, 2014). In 1984, a £173 million scheme was completed to link the neighbouring pits underground so that all coal could be brought up to the surface at Lillydown and taken to the coal preparation plant (British Coal, 1991). Over time, the NCB spent approximately £350 million on the complex. It was one of the most productive and technologically advanced collieries in the country: in 1980-81, the colliery turned out a record breaking 1,225,486 metric tons. Even after the 1984-85 miners' strike, Lillydown Colliery continued breaking records and in 1986 10.3 miles of coal was cut in one week (Wain, 2014). 1988 saw Lillydown's colliery achieve another record, hitting the production of 34,346 tonnes of coal in one week, and in 1989 the colliery produced in excess of 1 million tons for the first time since the miners' strike (Tuffrey, 2013; Wain, 2014). Although the pit survived the 1980s pit closures, in October 1992 British Coal announced thirty-one immediate pit closures, including Lillydown. Despite having made a profit of "£700,000 in the year ending 31st March 1992", the colliery received no bids from the private

sector and it closed in 1993 (Hill, 2001a, p.161). The research test facility closed in 1993 and was demolished the following year.



The closing of the pit will take the heart out of the community

(Steve McLaren, 1991b)

*Post-Industrial Landscape*

Since the 1984-5 miners' strike, the United Kingdom has seen all its deep-coal mines closed. The effects of this have been well documented (see Bennett et al., 2000; Turner, 2000) and the post-industrial landscape is now blighted by poverty, unemployment, crime, drugs, and various other social ills. Lillydown is emblematic of a working-class, former mining community (see Dennis et al., 1956; Turner, 2000). The economic landscape and way of life in mining communities has drastically changed since the 1980s, although, the socio-economic and political history of the mining industry is an inescapable part of Lillydown; it is embedded within its historical context – it remains haunted by its ghosts (Gordon, 2008). Lillydown has, like many former mining villages, "reached a phase of enforced post-industrialism" (Turner, 2000, p.19).

Royce Turner's *Coal Was Our Life* (2000) also explores life in a former coal mining community. Turner's account is paradoxical to *Coal is our Life* where the unions were an icon of power and solidarity, the working men's clubs were central to social life, and a sense of identity and pride was at the heart of mining communities. Turner describes how the village in his study has become riddled with unemployment, drugs and crime, and a loss of identity. Mining communities were always dominated by the pits; their communities "owed their existence to coal and the coalmining occupations" (Bennett et al., 2000, p.2). Turner suggests that the post-industrial phase the coalfields were, and arguably are still in, is precarious (Turner, 2000). The pits had shut and there was, until regeneration projects in the late 1990s, little investment coming into these towns and villages (Turner, 2000). It is also crucial to note that the job losses the coalfields faced since the 1980s added to pre-existing unemployment (Beatty et al., 2007; Foden et al., 2014). But coalfields were not homogenous.

Foden et al. (2014) argues that the more dependent villages were on coal, the more concentrated the socio-economic problems:

> [A]s a general rule, it would be a reasonable assumption that the more acute historic dependence on mining in pit villages probably means they have a greater concentration of the socio-economic problems that today characterise the coalfields as a whole (Foden et al., 2014, p.12).

Lillydown was a village largely built around, and dependent upon, the coal industry, which had been a "dominant source of employment for men, so the consequences for local labour markets were always going to be serious" (Beatty et al., 2007, p.1654). In total, alongside the colliery jobs and its surrounding coal based businesses, Lillydown suffered a loss of roughly 6,000 jobs (HoC, 2000). In 1991, the last recorded figures of employment at Lillydown Colliery show that nearly half of the jobs available in the early 1980s had been lost (see Table 1.3).

| Employment Figures Lillydown Colliery | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **Underground** | **Surface** | **Total** |
| **1972** | 1,497 | 617 | 2,114 |
| **1980** | 1,541 | 658 | 2,199 |
| **1983** | 1,483 | 578 | 2,061 |
| **1986** | 1,351 | 288 | 1,639 |
| **1991** | 934 | 178 | 1,112 |

**Table 1.3: Employment Figures Lillydown Colliery**

Source: 1972, 1980, 1983, 1986, 1991 Guide to the Coalfields published by the Colliery Guardian (Courtesy of the National Coal Mining Museum's Library Collection and Archives)

The Coalfield Community Campaigns (CCC) published a report on what happened to 164 miners since Lillydown pit stopped production in 1992 (Guy, 1994). The CCC reported that a year after the closure, 44 percent of men were out of work and 81 percent of these men had been out of work continuously since the pit's closure. Roughly 40 percent were in paid employment, and six percent had set up their own business. For those who had set up their own business, Turner and Gregory (1995) argue that their decision may have been influenced by the Conservative government's meritocratic rhetoric and 'enterprise culture' (Turner and Gregory, 1995). Murray et al. (2005) on the other hand argue that these miners may have previously been trained, or employed by the NCB, as electricians or tradesmen providing transferable skills suited to self-employment. However, for the majority, the skills they used in the pit where often highly specialised and non-transferable. An earlier study by the CCC found that many redundant miners had gone back into mining with private contractors (Witt, 1990). At Lillydown Colliery however, a minority of men – 27 percent – in employment had found work in the mining industry, mainly salvaging work with private firms (Guy, 1994). The remaining miners found employment in factories and warehouses, and in security. Jobs were also found in the service sector; however, a lot of these were part-time (Guy, 1994). Although figures show that overall most men were in employment, the report found that 85 percent were financially worse off. They were also now in jobs with less security and workplace solidarity. Only two percent were in employment with better pay. 8.7 percent were in education or training at the time of the survey. Although it is difficult to calculate, the average estimate for a miner's weekly earnings at Lillydown Colliery stood at £217 (Guy, 1994). Before the pit closed, nobody took home less than £100 (see Figure 1.3).
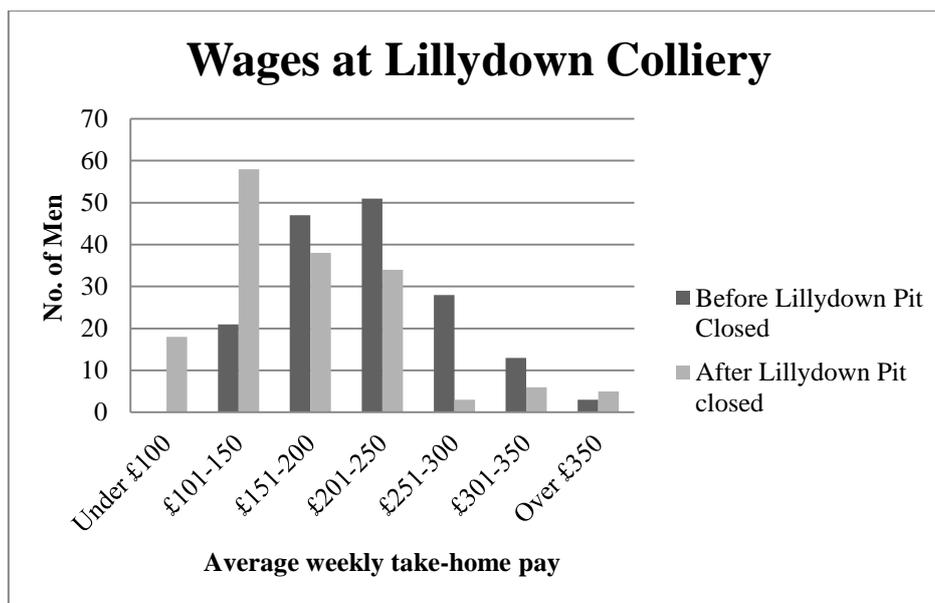
**Figure 1.3: Average Weekly Wages at Lillydown Colliery**

Source: Adapted data from Redundant Miners Survey (Guy 1994)

This had an immediate effect on the local economy with a loss of spending power (Guy, 1994). The report commented that Lillydown's economy would continue to feel the effects of the closure of the pit for some time to come:

> [T]he loss of spending power in so many mining families means financial hardship for more than those directly affected by redundancy. There will be 'knock-on' effects throughout the mining community, as local shops and services experience lower turnover… A downward spiral of local economic decline will set in unless there is a dramatic improvement in employment prospects in the area (Guy, 1994, p.15).

The CCC report found that 32 percent of men who were without work were claiming sickness benefits (Guy, 1994). Effectively, these men had left the labour market through long-term sickness. This creates a form of 'hidden unemployment' and differs from orthodox forms of

benefit as once on 'the sick' many quickly give up looking for work (Beatty et al., 2007, p.1671). Arguably, for many long-term sickness benefits appeared preferable to re-entering the labour market or going into further education or training (Turner and Gregory, 1995). Murray et al's. (2005) study into the socio-economic decline of the South Yorkshire coalfield argue that age was also a significant factor when considering employment and re-training opportunities. The authors of the study conclude that retraining and further education for older redundant miners would "prove inconsequential as the will of employers to take on men, some still 25 or 30 years from retirement, was simply not present when competition for jobs in coalfield areas is so strong" (p.354). A more recent study, examining the current state of the coalfields, shows that ill-health is still widespread and there are high numbers of residents claiming welfare benefits (Foden et al., 2014). The report shows that in Yorkshire, 13.6 percent of the population are claiming out-of-work benefits, 2.7 percent higher than the percentage for Great Britain. 7.8 percent are in receipt of Incapacity Benefits/ Severe Disability Allowances/ Employment and Support Allowances compared to 6.2 percent of the population in Great Britain. 3.9 percent are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance which is 0.9 percent higher than the percentage for Great Britain (Foden et al., 2014).

The onset of the recession in 2008, coupled with coalition/Conservative welfare cuts thereafter, added to pre-existing problems in the coalfields (Foden et al., 2014). Job density in the coalfields is below the national average; there are, on average, 50 jobs for every 100 adults of working age compared to the national average of 67 (Beatty et al., 2007). Since the CCC study, there have been numerous regeneration initiatives aiming to increase economic growth and create more jobs. However, the extent to which this has provided adequate employment is questionable:

[The] majority of the men worked at the pit t' provide for their family – it was the main job round 'ere. The pit was everything t' the community – it was all they had. Once the pit closed it brought a lot of distraught t' the locals and many more, as this was their main source of income. They were left... families were left shattered, jobless, some losing their 'omes. They couldn't provide being unemployed and there wasn't many job opportunities round 'ere apart from the pit. It really broke the community. Whereas now new factories 'ave been built in Lillydown and there is more opportunity for both sexes to find work. My partner once worked at a window company down at the factories, he enjoyed it cos he worked with his mates, and those that he didn't know well… they all became mates quickly. I don't know if enjoyed it is right; it is what it is… factory work! But the income was steady and it provided enough for us and my daughter as I was unemployed at this time. Now he's at another factory a bit further down the road, it's still the same though but it's a job (Jess, 24.05.2016).

Jess goes on to discuss that the problem with factory work is the lack of job security, and the work conditions, "[they] grind ye down, and then the next thing ye know 100 of ye are out and the fresh meat is in" (Jess, 24.05.2016). The scenario described is, arguably, an illustration of the Marxist concept of the reserve army of labour in action. In some ways, it mirrors working life in Shildrick et al's. (2012) study which examines how deindustrialisation has affected employment in Middlesbrough, a former industrial town in Teesside, and the relationships between poverty and the labour market. Other than the factories, there are two local care homes which employ local residents. But for Frank, the regeneration of Lillydown – the factories and warehouses – has had little impact on job prospects and opportunities for local residents:

[The] people who are employed in ' factory aren't Lillydown people, well majority

are not. Well that [branded clothing] factory that's worst o' em all. It's all cheap

labour. So really, industry rand here hasn't been allocated jobs which the' ought t'

have been for ' locals. I mean, I run ' local St Johns and I can see kids that I don't

know what the' gunner do, I don't know what the' gunner do… when we left school it

wo straight int' ' pits! (Frank, 06.06.2016).

The coal industry has effectively been,

Replaced by a smaller number of poorly paid, unskilled and often part-time jobs (for

example, in call centres)… Despite strong claims about the creation of new jobs, such

places are experiencing high levels of economic inactivity (at least in the formal

sector) and the increasing feminisation of their workforces (Bennett et al., 2000, p.5).

Employment opportunities, working conditions and relations also differ significantly to those

in the coal industry. It is important not to romanticise the past but essential to acknowledge

that camaraderie is one of the most prominent factors associated with miners. They knew

their identities and they knew the job they had to do. Murray et al's. (2005) study revealed

that relatively good pay, teamwork, short travel distance, and consistent working hours were

commonly positive aspects of the job for miners. Another positive factor was the education

and training provided through the NCB. Frank recalls how Lillydown pit used to be known as

'The University of Life':

It used t' be named university o' life, cos people who come in t' work at Lillydown

always finished up guin higher up. We'd got managers becoming area engineers, area

operation mining engineers… you know the' all moved t' higher places… one went from

deputy manager  t' manager at Kellingley. Then we'd others who went t' Selby n they'd

all been at Lillydown in a low position, n they'd all been promoted higher up. [I]t's cos Lillydown wo a good pit t' work at. It wo a hard pit, it wo really hard, cos conditions worn't like Selby wo – that wo marvellous you could cut coal n keep cutting. But at Lillydown you'd got t' keep supporting roof as you went. So yeah, it wo a hard pit t' work, but it wo a good atmosphere (Frank, 06.06.2016).

The main factor which deterred redundant miners from seeking work such as office jobs, stacking shelves, or work involving "insufficient graft" was that the miners didn't consider these to be 'proper jobs' (Murray et al., 2005, p.357). Murray et al. (2005) argue that unless employment can offer former miners, and local residents, a job that they can "both identify with and feel proud of at some level, the situation will not improve" (p.357). Beatty et al. (2007) report that, "the economy of the coalfields is perhaps a little over half way towards full recovery… the coalfields have come a long way, but still have a long way to go" (p.1671). For now, unemployment, low-pay, low-skilled, and precarious work shape the post-industrial landscape in Lillydown.

*Gender*

The changing nature of employment has resulted in some shift in traditional gendered practices and norms in mining communities. Gendered divisions were key to upholding traditional values, structures, and identities of miners and their families, and were needed to sustain the mining economy and notions of community (Spence and Stephenson, 2009). The Mines Act of 1842 effectively hyper-masculinised the industry as women and children under the age of ten were excluded from working underground. Such masculinities, it is often argued, were needed to meet the physical demands of mining and, for Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012), served as a coping strategy for the arduous and dangerous work the miners faced. More generally, Ward (2015) argues that these masculinities enabled most young men to establish a "positive male image through a certain sense of worth and accomplishment about their labour" (p.28). Particular demands of labour and embodied masculinities did, however, create gendered divisions. Such cultures are depicted in Dennis et al's. (1956) *Coal is our Life* which documented the centrality of gendered relations and roles in Ashton. Female agency in such accounts was often observed as functional and mechanistic; women were largely portrayed as unpaid domestic labourers for their men, the industry, and the home (Spence and Stephenson, 2009). However, post-war mine closures required some women to pursue employment to support their families; though it was often part-time, low-paid, and lacked career advancement (Spence and Stephenson, 2009). More recent studies such as Walkerdine and Jimenez's (2012) study of gender, work, and community in a post-industrial Steeltown in South Wales, offer a more complex understanding of how embodied performances of gender, for both women and men, were key to the structures, rhythms, and identity of the community. For Walkerdine and Jimenez, domestic chores – cooking, cleaning, looking after children, and managing finances – created a 'sub-community' of

women where femininity could be performed within contained social spaces, and where community values and practices were maintained (p.59).

Traditionally, gendered values and practices shaped the character and traditions of mining communities, and women were largely excluded from political, economic, and often social, domains of community life. The 1984-1985 miners' strike, however, disrupted gendered dichotomies, at least to some extent (Spence and Stephenson, 2009). Popular accounts of women's roles throughout the strike observe them leaving the domestic sphere to stand in solidarity with their men and community, on picket lines, and serve in soup kitchens. The strike, however, offered women more than this simple linear narrative. As it progressed, women challenged male-dominated political spaces participating in marches, conferences (both local and international), and mass rallies. With support from political groups, such as Women Against Pit closures (WAPC), women transformed their position and role within the strike from domestic miner's wife to political activist – "bridging new dimensions to female social capital" (Spence and Stephenson, 2009, p.79). We should not, however, romanticise the transformation of women, and gendered roles, during the strike. In the main, such transformations were more an accommodation rather than a radical overhaul of gendered structures and relations (Spence and Stephenson, 2009).

Work in the coal mining industry has now been partially replaced by employment in factories, warehouses, and/or the service sector where employees, both male and female, often face precarious, low-paid, and unskilled work. This requires workers to be flexible, individualised, and arguably more 'feminine' (Ward, 2015). Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012) argue that, whilst dangerous work is not missed, a historical embodied sense of being has become lost and this loss is being passed down throughout generations. The loss of being, and to some degree the feminisation of labour markets – call-centre work, stacking shelves,

factories, and cleaning, for example – has, Walkerdine and Jimenez argue, resulted in a circulation of 'shame' (p.63). Workers, particularly young men, no longer have an industry to be proud of, or an embodied sense of being. Old traditions and certainties around employment have largely become fragmented (Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012). Traditionally, fathers and grandfathers found the next generation of miners work and most young men left school as soon as possible. Formal education was seen as largely irrelevant; the pit provided security, a sense of being, a job, and particular forms of learning – specific education and training, for example mine engineering, and, more broadly, an informal education where cultural norms, behaviours, and dispositions of their working life, community practices, and social relations were passed from one generation of miners to the next. Now, pathways into employment and education are more individualised and uncertain (Ward, 2015). Service sector work and even manual employment now requires certain levels of education, but, in the main, fail to offer the broader social benefits once offered by the coal industry.

Ward's (2015) study, *From Labouring to Learning: Working-Class Masculinities, Education and De-Industrialization*, observed how, although gendered performances and embodied senses of being have, to some extent, been displaced, traditional performances of masculinity continue to penetrate and influence the lives of the young men. He argues that performances of masculinity are re-traditionalised through various acts across different educational – BTEC and vocational educational pathways for example, car mechanics and sports science – and leisure spaces – such as pubs and clubs, driving cars, and engaging in leisure activities such as rugby and football. These re-traditionalised performances, Ward argues, serve as an alternative way of 'doing boy' and enabled 'The Boiz' to resist a full displacement of traditional gendered norms (p.71). Ward's study focused on masculine performances of young men and, although he notes that this does have implications for women, further

research could examine whether re-traditionalisation of gendered roles and relations have re-surfaced for women in similar communities. And, more generally, to what extent traditional gendered performances and divisions have been preserved, rather than re-traditionalised, for both men and women.

*Crime*

Frank describes how, since the closure of the colliery, there has been an increase in crime in Lillydown. He associates this with the lack of jobs:

> Crime definitely got up. I mean things are happening nowadays that I never imagined 20 years ago. I mean you read [the] Oakshire Chronicle n it's one crime after another. It's all unnecessary. Mainly, I think, it's youths setting fire to cars n burglaries (Frank, 06.06.2016).

Frank, without hesitation, linked this to the socio-economic deprivation in Lillydown:

> The' haven't got jobs and the' haven't got money. But saying that, in my opinion, some o' 'em don't want it. They're quite happy living on other funds. Having said that, there's no jobs rand eya fo' 'em. I mean the' need references n if the' han't had a job the' can't get a reference. The' gu for a job n the' need experience n the' haven't got experience. N the' gu for one job n there's twenty, or thirty people who gu for it. It's just knocking 'em back. I'm glad I'm not in it, I've had ' best o' life me (Frank, 06.06.2016).

Figure 1.4 provides a breakdown of crime in Lillydown from December 2017 to November 2018. Turner (2000) argues that most of the crimes that increased after the closure of the pits

were "Economic crimes – burglary, car theft, theft from vehicles" (p.215). Shoplifting, theft, and burglary remain some of the highest recorded crimes in Lillydown. This is similar to both the recorded crimes in Oakshire and nationally. Overall, the greatest proportion of recorded crime in Lillydown is anti-social behaviour, and the second highest recorded crime in Oakshire (see Figure 1.5). Nationally, anti-social behaviour is one of the largest recorded crimes, thought it does not carry as greater proportional significance as it does in Lillydown (see Figure 1.6).
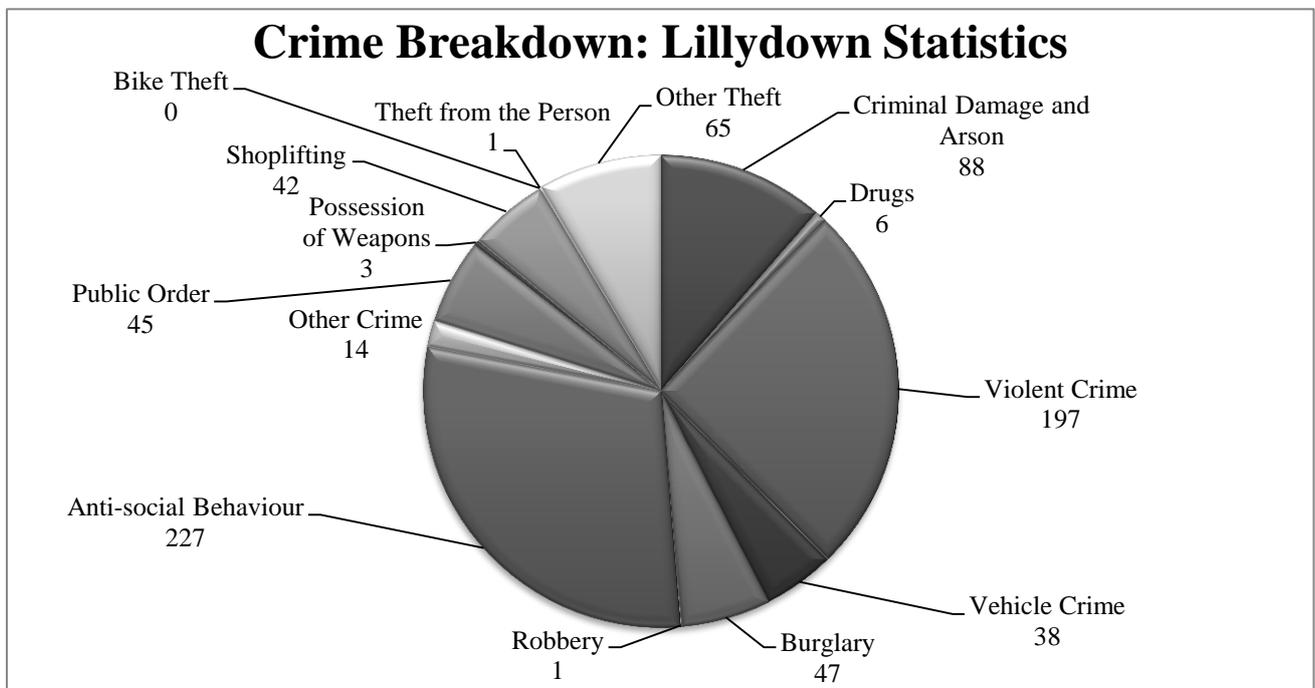


**Figure 1.4: Lillydown Crime Breakdown – December 2017 – November 2018**

Source: Adapted data from UK crime Statistics (UKCrimeStats, 2011a)

# Crime Breakdown: Oakshire Statistics

Public Order
1,941

Shoplifting
1,594

Bike Theft
122

Other Theft
2,215

Theft from the Person
176

Possesion of Weapons
160

Criminal Damage and
Arson
2,933

Other Crime
645

Drugs
408

Anti-Social Behaviour
6,002

Violent Crime
7,705

Robbery
150

Burglary
1,823

Vehicle Crime
1,459
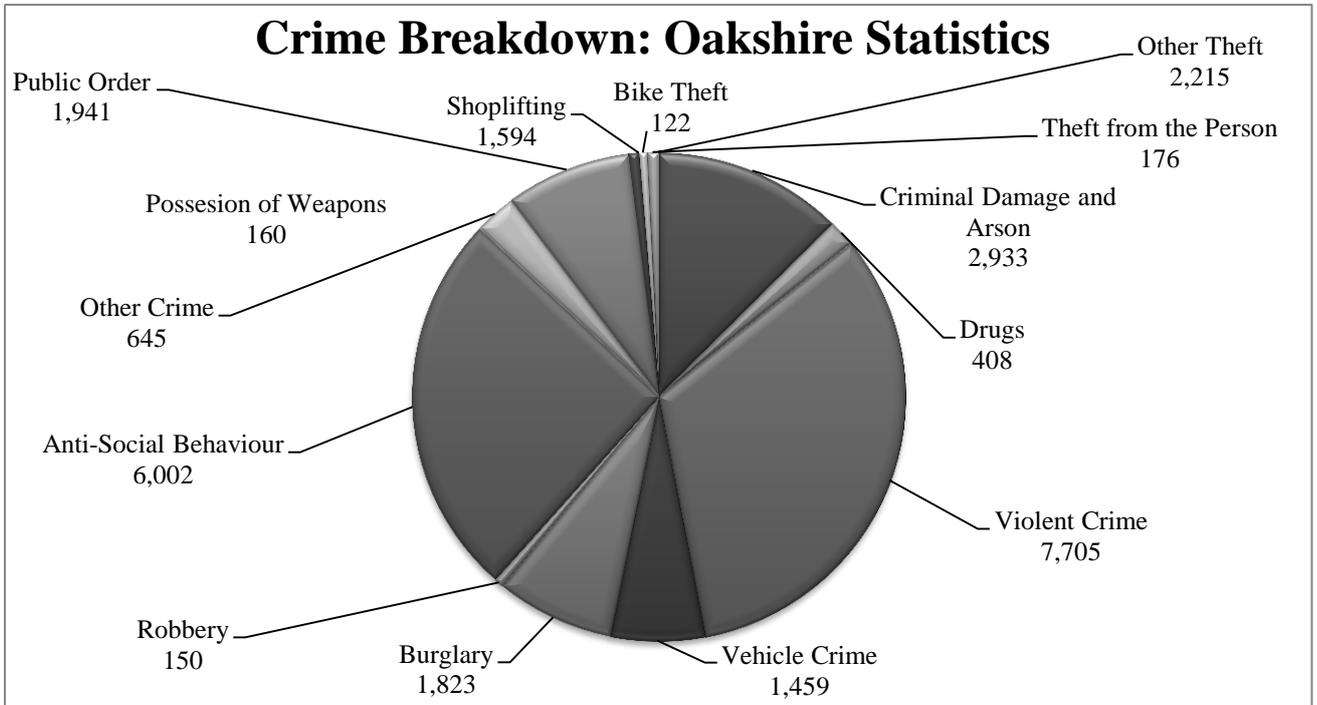
**Figure 1.5: Oakshire Crime Breakdown – December 2017 – November 2018**

Source: Adapted data from UK crime Statistics (UKCrimeStats, 2011b)

# Crime Breakdown: National Statistics

Bike Theft
83,867

Theft from the Person
84,967

Other Theft
486,711

Criminal Damage and
Arson
516,442

Shoplifting
342,231

Drugs
126,885

Possession
of Weapons
40,297

Public Order
391,056

Other Crime
92,016

Violent Crime
1,583,719

Anti-social Behaviour
1,263,904

Vehicle Crime
1,583,719

Robbery
74,033

Burglary
384,334
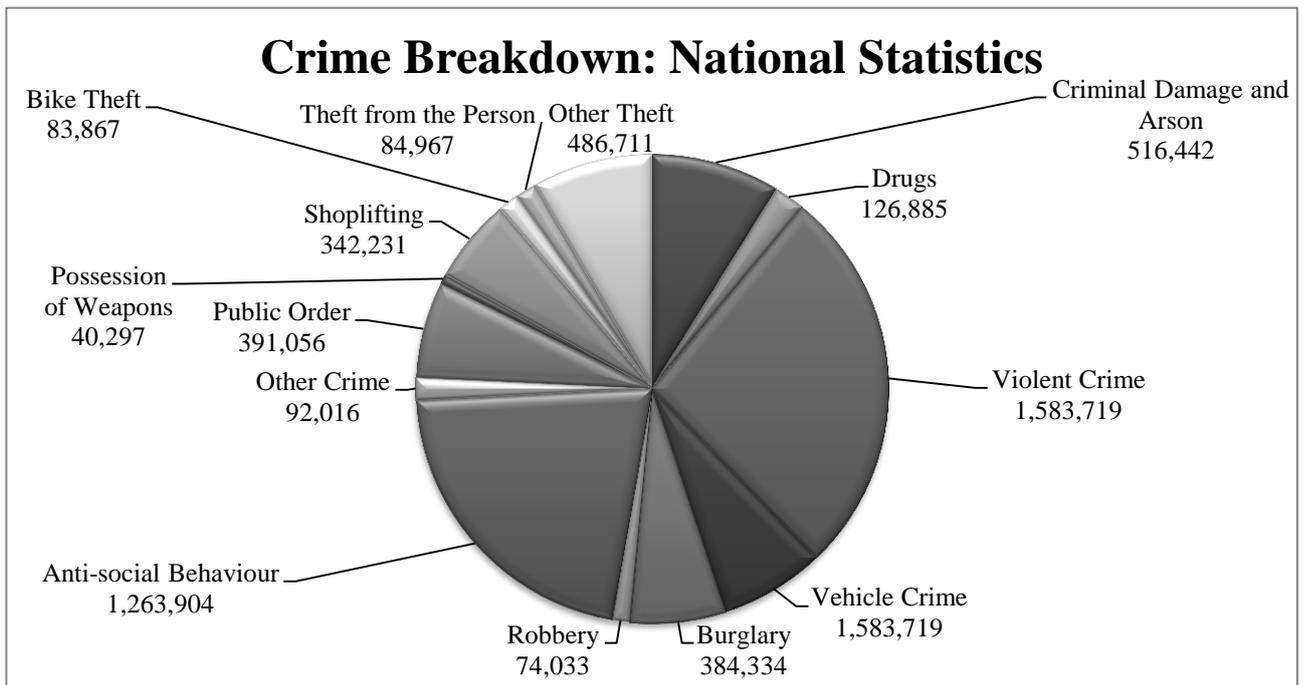
**Figure 1.6: National Crime Breakdown – December 2017 – November 2018**

Source: Adapted data from UK crime Statistics (UKCrimeStats, 2011c)

Turner (2000) argues that:

> Self-destruction is pride turned in on itself. There is nothing left to be proud about. There is no great industry, no great dreams, and no great vision. There is no aspiration towards socialism, or prosperity, there is no aspiration towards anything. There is simply a social void. And, within that void, there is the individualisation of catastrophe, a self-blame, perhaps even a self-hatred (Turner, 2000, p.205).

Although Turner is discussing the rise of drugs and in particular heroin in former mining communities, the idea that pride 'turned in on itself' as a way of filling a social void *could* also be a reason for anti-social behaviour in Lillydown. There is no longer a 'great industry' to be proud of; they no longer have a strong, collective identity, or economic and social stability. Though mining communities were never rich, they were stable. Those who 'stepped out of line' were often dealt with by the local policeman who lived in, and was regarded as part of, the community. Frank however recalls how the relationships between the community and the police have changed since the 1984-85 strike and since the closure of the pit:

> They're not community police like the' used t' be… The' used t' be great, the' used t' gi you a good hiding like n gu n tell your parents. But the' never took you t' court or owt like that. But you knew who the' wo, n weya the' lived. N 'e wo in ' community for 30 odd year n everybody knew him. But I can't remember crime like it is nar (Frank, 06.06.2016).

The community also played a large part in governing and dealing with miscreants. Turner (2000) describes a 'moral code' that once existed in mining communities. This was a separate code from other legalities known to insiders as a means to govern behaviour, to keep the "strict moral working-class code of ethics" in order, and to keep the social norms of the

community in place (Turner, 2000, p.198). Those who broke the code they were often dealt with through subtle forms of punishment – a stern word of warning, a clip round the ear 'ole, or for the youngsters a visit to their parents. In extreme cases the moral code could be cruel. Turner writes, "Ostracism, too, would play its part... anyone who broke the trust of the community norms might find that the community did not want to know" (p.221). Aside from the odd family dispute, drunken conflict or fight, crime had never been a serious problem in mining communities before the strike and before the closure of the pits (Turner, 2000). Jess said a lot of crime is now committed by 'outsiders' and the negative perceptions people may have about Lillydown have been created by the media:

> Well I won't deny that there isn't any crime in Lillydown as there is! Like most places, everywhere has crime. But as far as I am aware it's not as bad as it has been in the past. Usually, crime that happens in this village is from people that live in other areas… everybody knows each other well 'ere, you wouldn't shit on each other's door step! So, like I se [say], somebody from another village might have a vendetta against somebody who might live in Lillydown so they would come to their house and cause trouble whether it's smashing a window or just shouting at each other. There is good and bad in most places and even though I wasn't born 'ere I've known it to be really friendly and a warm environment to live in. It's different 'ere. It still has that spirit… that community spirit has lived on from the pits. We all stick together through thick and thin. We are a family and that's the bottom line. I wouldn't change it… people who don't know Lillydown – outsiders – all seem to 'ave a negative spin on it. They believe what they 'ave seen in all the papers and stuff like that for it being… you know… rough and full of drugs, crime, and unemployment, but since living 'ere this couldn't be further from the truth (Jess, 24.05.2016).

Although crime statistics show that anti-social behaviour and economic crime are a problem in Lillydown, Jess describes a community that still 'sticks together' – a 'family'. She describes a village where behaviours and social norms are *still* governed by their moral code.

*Regeneration*

Over recent years, Lillydown has been subject to a number of regeneration programmes. The Lillydown Regeneration Executive Board (LRE) was established in 1997; the EU also supported investment in the coalfield regeneration programmes and in 1989 began its Objective 2 programmes, supporting the majority of UK coalfields. The Objective 2 programmes provided, mainly, finance for infrastructure investment and business support (Beatty et al., 2007). Objective 1 programmes, which ran from 2000-2008, targeted the large South Wales and South Yorkshire coalfields and entitled these coalfields to "more generous assistance" (Beatty et al., 2007, p.4). The Lillydown Regeneration Board set out three options for the village:

- look for a quick fix, which would have needed vast sums of money;
- close the community and make Lillydown a greenfield site; or
- encourage steady growth and develop new training initiatives with the support of the New Deal in order to meet the workforce needs of new businesses investing in the area.

(HoC, 2000)

The decision was to try to encourage steady growth and development. The primary aims for the LRE were to: develop the private and public housing sector in Lillydown; develop transport links; rejuvenate the land and physical environment; and improve employment and training opportunities (HoC, 2000). Figures show that just over one quarter of the residents in the ward in which Lillydown is situated do not have access to a car or van, and there is no railway station (OMBC, 2019). However, the development of a new link road has helped. Previously, there used to be one road into Lillydown and one road out but the new link road gives Lillydown easier access to surrounding towns and motorways, encouraging companies to set up businesses in the area, although this has provided work that is often low paid and precarious. Lillydown is still relatively isolated though. It stands six miles away from immediate rail access and roughly ten miles from the nearest motorway. This may partly be why it has maintained a strong element of traditional working-class culture.

Since 1995, around £150 million has been invested into developing the physical and economic landscape of Lillydown (RGS, 2012). Several large factories and warehouses have opened up on the business park adjacent to the link road. The LRE aimed to create more jobs and whilst the factories and warehouses provided these to some extent, an educational development programme focusing on developing job skills needed to be set up (HoC, 2000). In The Village, a business park containing small office units was set up as a community-based centre to help develop the residents' skills and qualifications (RGS, 2012).

Many houses in Lillydown that were once home to the miners and their families became run-down after the pit closed and became a priority for the regeneration project. Most of these have now been knocked down and new homes have been built. From the late 1990s onwards, 365 homes were built by Keepmoat Housing, a private company (OMBC, 2016b). Chevin Housing Association provided additional new homes for rent and shared ownership and,

more recently, private housing by Strata Homes created 100 new homes (OMBC, 2016b). There are plans for more housing on the site of the old high school.

Alongside the housing development schemes Lillydown's physical landscape has undergone several transformations. The spoil heap, now lowered and re-shaped, has had trees, plants, and wildflowers added in a bid to improve its appearance (RGS, 2012). The site where the power station once stood has been turned into a brownfield site, and Lillydown's wood, known to the locals as 'The Dell', has been re-landscaped. The woods have had more plantings and the ponds have been rejuvenated and re-stocked with fish for local anglers (RGS, 2012). This has created a 'context for regeneration' but one that has been limited (Bennett et al., 2000). New jobs are often precarious, part-time, and insecure. Road links have been developed, but inadequate infrastructure continues to make access to wider employment opportunities difficult for those on low-income, and/or with no vehicle particularly as public transport provision remains 'poor, infrequent and/or unreliable and/or expensive' (Bennett et al., 2000). Social dislocation, unemployment, poverty and other economic and social problems remain.

In the 1950s and early 1960s those who passed the eleven-plus exam went to local grammar schools. Those who failed attended Lillydown's Secondary Modern School (RGS, 2012).
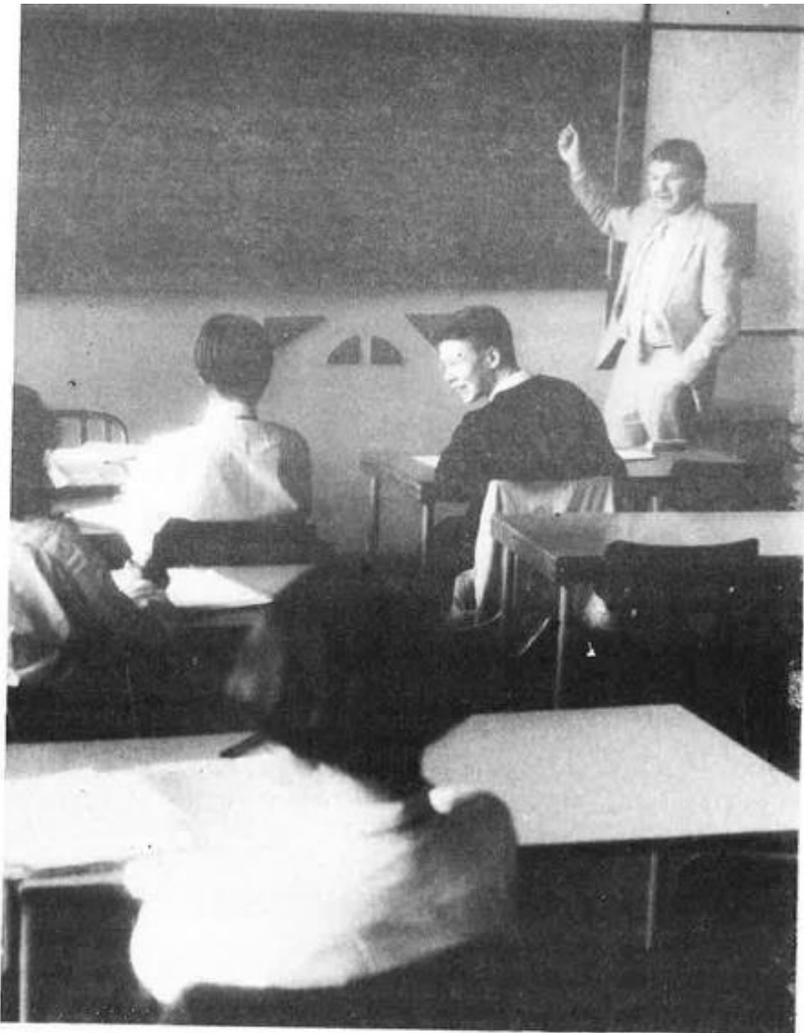


There's a lot of kids who are scared of the future

(Steve McLaren, 1991c)

In the late 1960s the secondary modern became an 11-16 comprehensive and it continued in this form until 2011 when it merged with another local high school to create a so-called 'super school' (RGS, 2012). In 2015, it converted into an Academy. Lillydown's first junior school was built in the early 1900s as the village started to expand (RGS, 2012). Two more

junior schools were built in the 1960s. However, in the 1980s the three schools were set on fire. The two schools that were replaced are the current primary schools in Lillydown. One of them is situated at the bottom end of the High Street in The Village, and the other, Lillydown Primary School, is in White City.

The legacy of the community's mining past stands at the front of Lillydown Primary. Old pit carts filled with flowers stand at the front gates alongside a miniature pit wheel. Before you see the school, you see Lillydown's past. The history of the coal industry is inescapably part of Lillydown Primary School's identity. However, government departments have gradually disconnected Lillydown Primary from its past. In 2002, an Ofsted report notes:

> In the past the area was socially and economically disadvantaged after the closure of local mines. The legacy remains. A national survey clearly shows that the level of multiple deprivations is very high when compared with other parts of the country and overall families' socio-economic circumstances are well below average. There are high levels of unemployment and changing social characteristics (Ofsted, 2002, p.7).

The phrase 'the legacy remains' acknowledges the effect that the closure of the colliery had on the community and the school, though it was not used in subsequent Ofsted reports. In the 2009 Ofsted report, there was a brief entry which states that the school, "serves a former mining community" (Ofsted, 2009, p.3). The latest full Ofsted report in 2013 omits any recognition of Lillydown's historical and current socio-economic position adopting a de-contextualised discourse of deficit:

> The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion of pupils

supported through school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress (Ofsted, 2013, p.3).

What matters now is its accountability, value for money, performance and 'outputs'. The description is now ahistorical – avoiding the structural economic forces that affect the school. However, Lillydown Primary has not forgotten its past.

The school is an average sized one-form entry primary school; with 47 staff and 249 pupils on roll (school capacity is 210). The vast majority of pupils are White British. It is separated into two blocks: the top block houses Early Years and Key Stage 1, and the main school block houses the reception, headteacher's office, staff room, hall, and Key Stage 2 classrooms. The two blocks are joined by a covered walkway. The top and main block is secured by a security key-pad system, and all gates are locked during school hours. Entrance to the car park is via a barrier. The school's grounds have various areas for the children to explore, with grassed and concrete playgrounds, a trim-trail, a tyre park, shaded seating areas, a multi-use games arena, a forest area, and a separate play area for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) unit, which is fenced off from the rest of the school's outdoor area.

Lillydown Primary is currently classified as 'good' and graded as outstanding for the behaviour and safety of pupils (Ofsted, 2013). The school hasn't always had such a good reputation. Four years after Lillydown's colliery closed the school faced its own period of uncertainty. In 1997 the school was deemed to be failing. It was judged to be making unsatisfactory progress and as failing to respond to the issues raised in the previous Ofsted inspection. In 2002, Ofsted reported that the school was 'improving'. The school had been

taken over by an interim headteacher but still faced a period of uncertainty. It had been, and still was, experiencing high staff turnover and a 'lack of stable and effective leadership' (Ofsted, 2002, p.12). This period of uncertainty and lack of continuity was claimed to be the main reason for the low levels of pupil attainment and progress, alongside the "multiple deprivation of the area" (Ofsted, 2002, p.7). Teaching and behaviour of the pupils was overall deemed to be good, though a high number of exclusions were recorded (Ofsted, 2002).

The current headteacher was appointed in 2003 and appears to have brought some stability. The school, up until 2003, had five acting headteachers over four years. Ofsted graded the school satisfactory in 2007. Attainment and progress was, broadly, still below average, but there was some progress in certain years and subjects. Teaching remained good and overall standards were rising (Ofsted, 2007). The school continued to be seen as improving and in 2009 was graded as a good and improving school providing "outstanding care for all its pupils, especially the most vulnerable, so that everyone is well prepared to make the best of the next stage in their education" (Ofsted, 2009, p.4). Ofsted purported that standards had risen through good quality teaching, the "rich and exciting curriculum", and a strong leadership team with "enthusiastic" staff (Ofsted, 2009, p.4). Pupils now, even though children came into nursery at exceptionally low starting points, made good progress in EYFS (Ofsted, 2009). All pupils were deemed to be making good progress, and to have good behaviour and positive attitudes towards learning. They were now leaving Year 6 with average standards (Ofsted, 2009). In 2013, Ofsted graded the school good across the board, with the behaviour and safety of pupils graded as outstanding. For Ofsted, leadership continued to be strong with staff 'united' behind the leadership team and aims of the school (Ofsted, 2013). Teaching was broadly good or outstanding. According to Ofsted, this positively affected pupil progress and attainment as standards improved to largely above

average with an increasing proportion of pupils making more than expected progress (Ofsted, 2013, p. 1). Pupils were observed to have very positive attitudes to learning. Ofsted's short inspection in 2018 continued to judge the school as 'good'. They reported that leadership maintained a 'good quality of education', and the school continued to create a "happy place, where pupils feel safe and cared for" (Ofsted, 2018, p.1). They found most pupils are making good progress with current data showing that the proportion of pupils working at the higher levels of attainment is improving, particularly in reading and mathematics.

The Academies Act of 2010 enabled all maintained schools to apply for Academy status. The Act saw the rise of both voluntary and 'forced' academies (Leo et al., 2010). Lillydown Primary School is however, at the time of writing, a local authority school and part of a collaboration with five neighbouring primary schools. This, for the Headteacher, allows Lillydown to "keep our own identity, our own school ethos, and provisions. We are independent schools but we work together". And that:

> It's almost, if you like, like we have a mini, little authority but we all keep our autonomy. We all have an equal standing, so each of the schools and each of the heads has an equal standing within the group… Ultimately when you become an academy, if one out of the five of us ended up sitting at the top they'd take control and it'd be their needs and ideas imposed. That takes away some of the needs of the direct community. I actually think that Academies will be… *are* really bad for communities like Lillydown where they actually need someone who cares and who really, really, understands the community. They need to understand where it has come from, the journey it has been on, and why it is like it is. Not in a critical way but understands it and looks at how they can make it better for the children. Unless you have actually

been part of it and been in it you don't totally understand that (Headteacher, 09.06.2016).

The Headteacher describes how working in collaboration allows all the heads, leaders, and staff to work and train together, share expertise and resources, and moderate each other. It also allows Lillydown to procure the best financial deals through buying in services as a group; services such as educational psychologists and other specialised staff – for example, an IT technician and a French teacher. Alongside meeting common needs, the Headteacher argues that the collaboration gives Lillydown the financial flexibility to set up an atypical staffing situation in the school. In each class there is a teacher, a teaching assistant (TA) and a higher level teaching assistant (HLTA). According to the Headteacher, this arrangement was created to meet the needs of the children, to give them stability and consistency:

> [It] started because the children can't cope with change. So, if I have a teacher that goes on a two day course and I buy a supply teacher in, the supply teacher struggles, the behaviour of the children is all over the place, and it's purely because they don't know how to cope with that change. So I started training staff, who had been with me as TAs for quite a long time, up into HLTAs in an attempt to improve the security for the children. So when the teacher is out... it will be a HLTA who will cover in their classroom. It's a known adult for the children. It keeps consistency. It's someone who can follow the same behaviour policy and they know where everything is and know how everything works… The Department for Education (DfE) says that spending pupil premium money on extra adults does not get better results. I would argue that it does (Headteacher, 09.06.2016).

For the Headteacher this has been a success, giving children the stability and consistency they need. Whilst the ethnography took place, the Headteacher developed the use of TAs in class, training them to be 'key attachment teaching assistants' (KATAs). The Headteacher aims for their role to 'almost be a surrogate mum to some of these vulnerable children'; to support children socially and emotionally as well as academically. In September 2016, the KATAs programme began. Each class was allocated a KATA to follow them through school until they leave in Year 6.

# Chapter Two: A Review of Literature

**Social Class and Teaching: Working Class or Middle Class?**

To begin to explore the complexity of the class position of teachers, some insight into the role and status of teaching in the current educational system is necessary. Teaching, in Britain, is now largely a graduate occupation. Consequently, it is often argued that even a teacher from a working-class background, through higher education, has become middle class (Maguire, 2005b). This assumes an individual can only occupy one class position, restricting space for fluidity between classes, and/or the ability for an individual to hold multiple class positions. Wright (1979) argues that teachers occupy complex class positions; they are situated between opposing classes – the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Sarup claims that the majority of primary teachers are predominantly married, middle-class women who "support bourgeois hegemony" (Sarup, 1983, p.121). Indeed, teaching, particularly in primary schools, is an overwhelmingly female occupation and there is growing literature which suggests that working-class female teachers are increasingly present in today's primary classrooms (see Maguire, 2005a, b). To some degree, this feminisation has, at least in part, led to teaching being viewed as a semi-professional occupation (as arguably it was in the nineteenth and for much of the twentieth century) rather than a 'true' profession (Maguire, 2005b). More recently, educational reforms have resulted in loss of autonomy, de-skilling, heavy workloads, and an increase in stress; all of which have, arguably, contributed to the proletarianisation of teaching (Harris, 1994). Teachers' class position, Sarup claims, will not be fully understood until the complexity of their 'role in the class struggle' has been thoroughly explored (Sarup, 1983, p.117).

Marx saw society as split into two opposing camps: the bourgeoisie – the capitalist class who own the means of production; and the proletariat – a class of wage labourers whose only means of production is the sale of their labour power to the bourgeoisie (Marx, 1967). An orthodox Marxist analysis would position teachers as waged labourers and, therefore, as part of the working class (Sarup, 1983). Most contemporary neo-Marxists, however, would argue that this fails to acknowledge how structural factors in education affect a teacher's position and relationship to the means of production (Sarup, 1983). Harris endorses the idea that teachers should be grouped by which 'class's interest they predominantly serve' (Harris, 1982, p.39). Such a position draws on Gramsci (1971) who argued that teachers, as intellectuals, could be distinguished by two broad categories:

> [T]he "traditional" professional intellectuals, literary, scientific, and so on, whose position in the interstices of society has a certain inter-class aura about it but derives ultimately from past and present class relations and conceals an attachment to various historical class formations. Secondly, there are the "organic" intellectuals, the thinking and organising element of a particular fundamental social class. These organic intellectuals are distinguished less by their profession, which may be any job characteristic of their class, than by their function in directing the ideas and aspiration of the class to which they organically belong (Gramsci, 1971, p.1).

Teachers are arguably agents of capitalism inasmuch as they are crucial to the dissemination and reproduction of capitalist ideologies through the structures, values, and experiences of the education system, but particularly through the hidden and formal curriculum (Maguire, 2005b). Through such mechanisms, teachers exercise control and surveillance over pupils and assist, consciously or otherwise, in the reproduction of bourgeois ideology. This service to the bourgeoisie would, therefore, place teachers as servants of the capitalist class (Harris,

1982). However, this fails to acknowledge any power that teachers have to influence and control dominant ideology, curricula content, polices and/or practices. Teachers are, at the same time, controlled and oppressed by the interests of capital, and therefore occupy a complex class position (Maguire, 2005b). Teachers' position is further complicated by their status within the school. A member of the senior leadership team will arguably hold a position closer to the bourgeoisie than a newly-qualified teacher; they have more control over the workforce and delivery of teaching and learning in their schools (Ball, 2006). What all teachers regardless of their position have in common is control over pupils, and their role in the dissemination and reproduction of capitalist ideology. Teachers are then, paradoxically, the controllers and the controlled. However, against a backdrop of neoliberal education reforms, this conceptualisation fails to acknowledge how space for teachers to exercise agency is being restricted and is, therefore, contributing to the proletarianisation of teachers.

The forces of neoliberalism have driven the erosion of teacher autonomy and contributed to their de-professionalization. The introduction of a prescriptive National Curriculum, national testing, standardised assessments, league tables, and the discipline of Ofsted have contributed to de-skilling and a decrease in teacher autonomy. Consequently teachers have, it is argued, been subjected to a degree of proletarianisation (Harris, 1994; Hill, 2005). This can be seen in increased external control of the curriculum; larger class sizes; increased workloads; the weakening of trade unions; performance-related pay; and increased performativity (Hill and Cole, 2001, Hill et al., 2016). Teachers have reduced control over curriculum content, which is increasingly directed by the state to ensure that schools are:

> [F]it for business – to make schooling… subordinate to the personality, ideological and economic requirements of capital, to make sure schools produce compliant, ideologically indoctrinated, pro-capitalists, effective workers (Hill, 2003, p.13).

In a period where market forces are infiltrating and controlling education, teachers are experiencing a greater loss of autonomy and de-skilling through 'quick-fix' and 'creative' curriculum packages for example: Cornerstones Education; Dimensions Creative Curriculum; International Primary Curriculum; Chris Quigley Education; or more subject specific packages such as, Big Maths and Big Writing, and Read Write Inc. Another often used literacy package in primary schools is Pie Corbett's Talk4Writing, which is an online open resource and is not run for profit, unlike the previous examples.

Either way, the ability of teachers to create lesson plans tailored to the needs of pupils is constrained as the market creates pre-packaged curriculums, assessments, and tests (Ball, 2007; Hill, 2003, 2007). Teachers still have a degree of agency to tailor schemes and packages to suit the needs of the children. It is only when such schemes and packages are used with no flexibility that they are then, arguably, de-skilling teachers. Increases in performativity have led to an intensification of surveillance, monitoring, and 'efficiency' regimes – teachers are expected to produce results faster and better than before. The teacher begins to resemble a factory worker more than an autonomous, creative, professional educator (Harris, 1982). Arguably, the proletarianisation of teachers can be understood through Braverman's labour process theory (Braverman, 1998). For Braverman, degradation, deskilling, and work intensification are inescapable results of the conditions of labour under capitalist relations of production. More recent studies (see Mather et al., 2007, Mather and Seifert, 2011, 2014) have applied Braverman's labour process theory to further education (FE). The arguments put forward are, however, arguably applicable to all sectors of education. They note how teachers' work is increasingly controlled by 'managers, markets and measurement' (Butterfield et al., 2005; Mather et al., 2007). Braverman argues that:

Tradition, sentiment, and pride in workmanship play an ever weaker and more erratic role, and are regarded on both sides as manifestations of a better nature which it would be folly to accommodate. Like a rider who uses reins, bridle, spurs, carrot, whip, and training from birth to impose his will, the capitalist strives, through management, to *control* (Braverman, 1998, p.47).

Mather and Seifert (2014) observe how the control, surveillance, and measurement of teachers are used to ensure staff maximise their own performance and their outputs through, for example, traffic light systems to measure performance, and electronic registers to check staff timetables and hours worked. Increases in performative regimes, work intensification, and surveillance are rooted in classic Taylorite techniques of management and control. Professional judgement and autonomy are displaced as managerial control over the labour process increases. The effect of the managerial discourse and work intensification produces alienated, demoralised, and deskilled teachers. Teachers are currently being put under pressure to perform, working harder and working longer hours, all under worsening conditions which are emblematic of the degradation of the labour process in capitalist society (Mather and Seifert, 2014).

Braverman's work was criticised for failing to recognise agency and resistance. This, however, is addressed by Mather and Seifert. For them, resistance exists in different forms, from collective resistance through union presence and organised industrial action, to individual attempts such as, 'gossip[ing]', 'moaning', 'absenteeism' and 'dull compliance on the job' (Mather et al., 2007; Mather and Seifert, 2011). It was also noted that resistance to the intensification of workloads took the form of teachers taking "short cuts in lesson preparation and … guard[ing] their non-work time more closely (Mather et al., 2007, p.120). There is significant evidence to suggest that teachers are losing control over education, over

their pedagogy, and their space to exercise agency. Yet, there is arguably some space for teachers' to practice creative and critical pedagogy; resisting "becoming mere managers of day-to-day activities imposed from beyond the school, and to redefine their role within counter-hegemonic practice" (Hill, 2007, p.215). Although such space *is* limited and constrained by wider structural and economic forces "whatever space does exist should be exploited" (Hill, 2003, p.23). Despite the proletarianisation of teachers they are still engaged in the dissemination, and reproduction, of capitalist ideology. As Harris writes:

> [T]he whole situation of teachers under contemporary capitalism is paradoxical and tenuous. While there certainly are immediate advantages to be had and maintained by supporting capital, that very support will itself contribute to the long-term worsening of conditions. By supporting capital, teachers are engaging in the process of their own proletarianization (Harris, 1982, p.138).

Their class position remains trapped in a paradoxical space between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

**Reproduction Theory in Education**

Louis Althusser's (1971) essay *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* builds on Marx's concept of society – the base/superstructure metaphor (B/SM) (Benton, 1984). Althusser claims that the ruling class secure and reproduce the relations of production and labour power, through *Ideological State Apparatuses* (ISAs), and *Repressive State Apparatuses* (RSAs) (Hill and Cole, 2001). The RSAs consist of the government, administration, army, courts, and prisons. The ISAs include religion, education, family, law, the political system, trade unions, communication (for example, press and television), and broader cultural apparatuses such as, literature, the arts, and sports (Althusser, 2006, p.96). For Althusser, the distinction between RSAs and ISAs is whether they function largely by *ideology* or *violence* (Althusser, 2006). Whereas the RSAs operate mainly through violence and systems of control, the ISAs work mainly through ideology (Benton, 1984). However, an element of violence and ideology supports the function of both apparatuses (Cole, 2008, p.30). The school, Althusser argues, primarily operates through ideology, but also via repression using "suitable methods of punishment, expulsion, selection etc., to 'discipline' not only their shepherds, but also their flocks" (Althusser, 2006, p.98). The reproduction of labour power – the skills and attitudes necessary for each division of labour – are then instilled largely 'outside the sphere of production'. That, in an advanced capitalist society, is predominantly through the educational ideological apparatus (Benton, 1984; Althusser, 2006). Children are legally required to attend school for five days a week, until:

> [A] huge mass of children is ejected 'into production': these are the workers or small peasants. Another portion of scholastically adapted youth carries on... until it falls by the wayside and fills the posts of small and middle technicians, white-collar workers, small and middle executives, petty bourgeois of all kinds. A last portion reaches the

summit, either to fall into intellectual semi-employment, or to provide, as well as the 'intellectuals of the collective labourer', the agents of exploitation (capitalists, managers), the agents of repression... and the professional ideologists... Each mass ejected *en route* is practically provided with the ideology which suits the role it has to fulfil in class society… (Althusser, 2006, p.105).

For Althusser, what children learn in school is 'know-how' – learning to read and write, together with learning other skills and subject areas. But, alongside this, they also learn:

[T]he 'rules of good behaviour, i.e. the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he is 'destined' for… rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labour and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination (Althusser, 2006, p.89).

Official discourse suggests that schools are neutral environments that challenge inequality and oppression (Benton, 1984). Althusser, however, demonstrates that the school *is* an apparatus of the State whose role is to validate and reproduce capitalist structures, power, and ideology. Althusser exposes the role of schools, 'ejecting' pupils into their relevant places in the divisions of labour. Inevitably, certain aspects of his work have been critiqued. Althusser's work on ISAs focuses heavily on social reproduction, and the relationship between these and the economic structure, at the expense of a discussion on class struggle (Sarup, 1983). Althusser, to some degree, does advance the idea that the ruling class cannot 'lay down the law in the ISAs as easily as it can in the (repressive) State apparatuses' for the 'resistance of the exploited classes' often stands in its way (Althusser, 2006, p.99). However, he fails to discuss in detail class resistance and, within the educational apparatus, resistant teachers and pupils. Althusser notes that there is little teachers can do to resist or change the

ideology, the system, and the practices they are trapped in. He goes on to argue that the system:

> (Which is bigger than they are and crushes them) forces them to do, or worse, put all their heart and ingenuity into performing it with the most advanced awareness… so little do they suspect it that their own devotion as contributors to the maintenance and nourishment of this ideological representation of the school, which makes the school today as 'natural', indispensable-useful and even beneficial for out contemporaries as the church was 'natural', indispensable and generous for our ancestors a few centuries ago (Althusser, 2006, p.106).

Teachers are, arguably, placed in the school to validate and reproduce the ideology of the capitalist class and initiate pupils into the relations of production (Sarup, 1983). Hill and Cole (2001) argue that those who resist and challenge existing structures are likely to be punished; for example, pupils could be removed from the system and teachers excluded from promotion and/or subjected to intense surveillance. It is, nevertheless, important to recognise that:

> We, as teachers, as educators, are working class, too, we sell our labor power to capitalists and to the apparatuses of the capitalist state, such as schools and universities. We have to consistently and courageously challenge the dominant ideology, the hegemony of the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, the capitalist class… We have to contest the currently hegemonic control of ideas by the capitalist state, schools, media, and their allies in the religions (Hill, 2016, p.168).

Within education, critical educators question and challenge the curriculum; pedagogy; relations and the organisation of pupils; the ownership and management of schools, colleges,

and universities; and consider how particular processes and structures of education reflect and reproduce wider inequalities (Hill, 2016). For McLaren (2005), critical pedagogy is:

> [A]n approach to curriculum production, educational policymaking, and teaching practices that challenges the received 'hard sciences' conception of knowledge as 'neutral' or 'objective' and that is directed towards understanding the political nature of education in all of its manifestations in everyday life as these are played out in the agonistic terrain of conflicting and competing discourses, oppositional and hegemonic cultural formations, and social relations linked to the larger capitalist social totality. Critical pedagogy locates its central importance in the formidable task of understanding the mechanisms of oppression imposed by the established order. But such an understanding is approached from below, that is, from the perspective of the dispossessed and oppressed themselves. It is an encounter with the process of knowledge production from within the dynamics of a concrete historical movement that transcends individuality, dogmatism, and certainty. Only within the framework of a challenge to the prevailing social order *en toto* is it possible to transform the conditions that make and remake human history (McLaren, 2005, pp.6-7).

Although Althusser acknowledges the position teachers are placed in, his work lacks a full exploration of teacher resistance (Benton, 1984). Althusser's work is, therefore, criticised for its over-determinism. Taking into consideration some of the critiques outlined above, Althusser's theory now needs to be taken forward to analyse the current education system. Neoliberal discourses in education have, at least in part, led to increasingly limited space to critically and creatively engage in alternative modes of teaching and learning. Although spaces to exercise agency have, to some degree, been suppressed, certain possibilities remain

for teachers to begin to challenge and transform processes and experiences of schooling. This can be seen in fieldwork presented in Chapter Four.

Critical pedagogy draws on various disciplines and theoretical ideas – Marxism and feminism, for example – but its origins can be traced back to critical theory and the Frankfurt School. It is, however, often associated with Paulo Freire and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970). Although advocates of critical pedagogy have since developed Freire's original ideas, the core commitments remain. It is concerned with understanding and questioning how economic and material conditions and modes of knowledge and authority in oppressive systems are formed and reproduced. Its main commitment is to enable pupils to become critically-engaged citizens, to provide them with the knowledge and skills to question and challenge structures of inequality and effectively transform these in pursuit of economic justice and social change. For Freire, the educational process either functions as:

> An instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes "the practice of freedom," the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world (Foreword, Freire, 1993, p.16).

Freire (1993) rejected traditional 'banking' modes and relations of teaching and learning, and instead advocated 'problem-posing' education as a practice of freedom, critical thought, and social responsibility. Problem-posing ultimately aims to develop a critical consciousness amongst educators and pupils. It focuses on understanding social inequality – how institutions, modes of knowledge, authority, and social relations are constructed and reproduced within contemporary capitalist society – and offers a way not simply to

understand these in their present realities, but to critically reflect on and move their thinking and actions beyond it (Giroux, 2011). Developing a critical consciousness is the first step to what Freire calls 'praxis' – "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (p.33). Central to this is creating an environment where knowledge and authority is actively formed through mutual-open dialogue between pupil and teacher, rather than knowledge being deposited and controlled by traditional teacher-pupil relations. For Freire, critical pedagogy is not a prescriptive set of practices; it has to be meaningful in order for pupils to develop a critical consciousness. Fundamentally, this requires personal histories, experiences, and narratives to become valued resources and constructive modes of knowledge which can help pupils "locate themselves in the concrete conditions of their daily lives while furthering their understanding of the limits often imposed by such conditions" (Giroux, 2011, p.157). Unless class analysis and class struggle plays a central role in critical pedagogy, McLaren (2005) argues that it is impeded from effecting 'praxiological changes' (p.18). He adds;

> Historical materialism provides critical pedagogy with a theory of the material basis of social life rooted in historical social relations and assumes paramount importance in uncovering the structure of class conflict as well as unravelling the effects produced by the social division of labour (McLaren, 2005, p.16).

Neoliberal discourses have intensified the need for an understanding of and commitment to critical pedagogy; a commitment which could, arguably, provide pupils with the ability to think dialectically and develop a critical consciousness aimed at social transformation (Hill, 2003). As education and society stands in a particular moment in history; and as neoliberal forces continue to penetrate education, critical education needs to engage, "all of social life and not simply life inside school classrooms" (McLaren et al., 2004, p.139). It needs to be premised upon a commitment to work within the school, the wider community and, alongside

broader, national and global movements, parties, and organisations in pursuit for economic justice and social change (Hill, 2016).

Bowles and Gintis', *Schooling in Capitalist America* (2011) examines the role schools play in the reproduction of capitalism and how the experience of schooling is about gaining skills, behaviours, and characteristics that reflect the students' future occupational status and economic position in society. The key concept here is '*the correspondence principle'* which explores how schools, through a structural correspondence, validate and reproduce the social relations of work (Cole, 2008). Bowles and Gintis illustrate how the social relations of the employment are reflected and reproduced through: "hierarchical divisions" between teachers and students; alienation that is reflected in the oppressed position of students (their inability to influence and control their education); and "fragmentation" which is reflected and reproduced through competition in education, such as: grouping/ setting of pupils, testing, and assessments (Bowles and Gintis, 1988, p.3).

Bowles and Gintis also note how the behaviours and characteristics of different workforce divisions are reproduced in schools based on their social-class locations. According to this view, working-class schools expose students to an education based on "control and rule-following", whilst middle-class schools allow students more autonomy and active participation in their learning (Bowles and Gintis, 1988, p.3). This is supported by findings in Anyon's (2011) study which explored how the reproduction of knowledge in US elementary schools differs according to class locations. Gathering data from five different schools – two working-class schools, a middle-class school, an affluent professional school, and one executive elite school – Anyon's study revealed that, although there were observed similarities in the curriculum, there were considerable differences in the expected behaviours, control of pupils, and pedagogical practices. In the working-class school there was an

observed emphasis on factual, rote learning of the curriculum and on 'mechanical behaviours'. The working-class school stressed control and subordination, whereas in the affluent professional school, good behaviour was an expected internalised behavioural trait. The school advocated autonomy and creativity in learning; emphasising the use of student's own concepts and ideas to develop learning. Anyon draws the conclusion that the dissemination of knowledge and social conditioning processes students go through, even in elementary schools, reflect and reproduce wider social and economic inequalities (Anyon, 2011).

For Bowles and Gintis (2011), the education system is, however, "relatively powerless to correct economic inequality" (p.85). They argue that it is through the correspondence of the processes and social relations of schooling, and those of the economy, that education reflects, validates, and reproduces, wider economic inequality. Bowles and Gintis' view of education was, however, criticised for a number of reasons. Primarily, the difficulties with *Schooling in Capitalist America* centred on the determinism of the correspondence principle (Cole, 1988). Their use of the correspondence principle to assess the role and function of capitalist schooling systems worked within the B/SM which left them open to critique (see Rikowski, 1997; Sarup, 1978). Rikowski describes how the determinism of correspondence theory and, therefore, their application of the B/SM is a "debilitating force within Marxist theory as it engenders fatalism and is open to easy critique" (Rikowski, 1997, p.556). This determinism limits the opportunity for the individual to exercise agency within capitalist structures. In other words, Bowles and Gintis, like Althusser, fail to provide adequate space for resistance. They also fail to acknowledge how teachers are oppressed by wider structural and economic forces controlling schooling processes. These issues may have been addressed if Bowles and Gintis spent more time in schools, observing day-to-day classroom practices rather than

focusing on the influence of structural process in wider society. This would have allowed Bowles and Gintis to, firstly, observe the role that the formal curriculum plays in the reproduction process as well as the hidden curriculum and, secondly, to observe how the application of different teaching methods affects the overall reproductive process of schooling (Apple, 1988). Although Bowles and Gintis did acknowledge Paulo Freire's 'banking' concept of education there was little additional exploration of the role of pedagogical practices.

Paul Willis' (1997) model of cultural reproduction shifts away from the determinism of reproduction theories through acknowledging the potential for individual and collective 'agency' to be exercised within the reproductive structures of schooling. For the working-class 'lads' in Willis' study, schooling was largely irrelevant. They saw the reality of *their* world and *their* future prospects. This counter-school culture was strengthened through the anti-school shop-floor culture. What was important for the lads was their ability to 'graft' and they knew that "an ounce of keenness [was] worth a whole library of certificates" (p.56). The lads consciously rejected the process and experience of schooling, school authority, culture, and knowledge, and created a culture of resistance against them. Willis presents the idea that establishing positive teacher-pupil relationships are essential foundations of teaching and learning. This is what he calls the basic teaching paradigm. It is here the battle for successful formations of relationships must "be won and maintained on moral not coercive grounds. There must be consent from the taught" (p.64). However, the lads, influenced by wider structural forces and the shop floor culture, actively reject the teacher-pupil relationship and the basic teaching paradigm which causes complications, particularly for inexperienced teachers. Willis notes how the 'experienced' teachers in working-class schools know when there is a potential weakness in the establishment of the basic teaching paradigm, particularly

with less able, uninterested and disaffected pupils (p.68). The experienced teacher, it is argued, has the skills and abilities to begin to repair the weaknesses and approach the establishment of the basic teacher paradigm from a different angle. This is done, he notes, through basing the exchange, not on knowledge and qualifications, but on obedience and politeness. Willis argues that this shift in the basic teaching paradigm then becomes concerned with pupils approaching school with the right attitude which, in theory, should set them up for future employment without educational success and qualifications (p.69). It appears then that what the right attitude presupposes is, to some degree, conformism to the school and its authority.

For teachers who successfully establish the basic teaching paradigm, those who are given 'permission' by the lads to exert control over them, they enter into the dominant educational paradigm (Willis, 1997, p.64). Willis discusses how the educational paradigm is set within an axis that helps hold the exchange relationship in place. The axis is supported:

> [B]y the school on the material basis of its buildings, organisation, timetable and hierarchy. It is sanctioned (in normal times) by dominant cultural and social values and backed up in the last analysis by larger state apparatus (Willis, 1997, p.65).

Willis associates this control within the school with a totalitarian regime. It is worth quoting Willis at length to expand upon and situate this comparison:

> In a simple physical sense school students, and their possible views of the pedagogic situation, are subordinated by the constricted and inferior space they occupy. Sitting in tight ranked desks in front of the larger teacher's desk; deprived of private space themselves but outside nervously knocking the forbidden staff room door or the headmaster's door with its foreign rolling country beyond; surrounded by locked up

or out of bounds rooms, gyms and equipment cupboards; cleared out of school at

break with no quarter given even in the unprivate toilets; told to walk at least two feet

away from staff cars in the drive- all of these things help to determine a certain

orientation to the physical environment and behind that to a certain kind of social

organisation. They speak to the whole *position* of the student. The social organisation

of the school reinforces this relationship. The careful bell rung timetable; the

elaborate rituals of patience and respect outside the staff room door and in the

classroom where even cheeky comments are prefaced with 'sir'; compulsory

attendance and visible staff hierarchies… (Willis, 1997, pp.67-68).

Although Willis was writing in the 1970s, the underlying principles remain. You may not

find pupils sitting in 'tight ranked desks', or being told to walk 'at least two feet away from

staff cars' – mainly because schools have staff car parks which are securely fenced off from

the pupils. However, what will still be observed are the prescriptive structures in education

which expose pupils to constant processes of assessment and stratification. Largely, these

prescriptive measures of assessment can traced back to the 1988 Education Reform Act

which paved the way for a competitive, performance-based discourse in schools through the

establishment of accountable measurements of assessment, for example, the National

Curriculum, SATs, and published league tables (Hill, 2001b). New Labour's discourse of

raising standards continued an intensification of neoliberal policies through more rigorous

assessments and monitoring of pupils, compulsory testing, setting by perceived ability as the

norm, and an increase in published results and inspections (Hill, 2001b). Thereafter, the

Coalition continued to increase assessments in schools despite the DfE's claim of improving

current assessments to ensure quality assessments "without excessive drilling" (DfE, 2010,

p.40). It introduced: Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG) tests in Key Stage 1 and 2;

phonics screening checks for Year one pupils; and, more recently, the current Conservative government's introduction of new baseline assessments for the Early Years Foundation Stage. These tests have been introduced on top of current formative and summative assessments. Naturally, each assessment exposes pupils to the chance of being re-grouped making them "visible and calculable, but power is rendered invisible, and the learner sees only the tasks and tests which they must undertake and their 'result', position, [and] ranking" (Ball, 2015, p.299). It is easy to see how the prescriptive structures in education that expose pupils to constant grouping and assessment, seen in the education system of the 1970s are, arguably, more present in schools today.

Also evident in today's classroom are the 'controllers' of the day-to-day running of the school – the teachers. As Willis' lads reject the exchange relationship, the axis becomes weak and the teachers' control is lost. It is then left to be implemented and fought for on coercive, not moral, grounds. Teachers' authority and control in the classroom "becomes increasingly the random one of the prison guard, not the necessary one of the pedagogue" (Willis, 1997, p.72). Ultimately, Willis is arguing that the basic teaching paradigm comes down to winning the consent of the pupils within the structural constraints of a tightly-controlled axis (p.83).

The comparison Willis makes between teachers' and 'prison guards' is echoed by Harris who also describes teachers as 'agents of police' and of the capitalist (Harris, 1982). Ultimately, their job, it is argued, is to transmit the culture, values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge of the capitalist class into the minds of their pupils (Harris, 1982). Harris begins to probe beneath the surface of *how* and *why* the role of the teacher resembles a police officer and argues that teachers are firstly 'placed by the state in loco parentis' which assigns certain legal powers over pupils. Teachers then exert 'institutional *de facto power*' whereby they enforce the rules of the school and their own classroom regulations, rewards, and sanctions; and control, to

some degree, over curricula and pedagogical decisions. It could, however, be argued that this is a deterministic view of teaching. Rather, what *should* be seen to be happening in classrooms is a community being created through shared discussions and agreements about rules, rewards, and sanctions (Castle and Rogers, 1993; Maguire et al., 2015). Harris suggests that there is space for teachers to "promote empowerment, autonomy, and democracy" in the classroom (Harris, 1994, p.115). Perhaps, the solidarity once evident in mining communities *could* be developed within classrooms through this unified approach to teaching and learning.

Harris describes in-class policing to be:

> [O]rder and administering punishments for varied misdemeanours; and activities like stopping pupils talking, finding out who threw the rulers, calling for attention, removing privileges and putting pupils on detention (p.95).

He describes the out-of-class police-type activities to be:

> [P]layground duty… assembly supervision (the teacher striding slowly, hands behind back, down the aisles watching for errant behaviour), canteen duty, and marching children to sport, excursions (p.95).

Harris emphasises that such forms of control and surveillance are largely expected and accepted by pupils. He provides no room for pupils to resist the policing and control and so Harris is, arguably, overly deterministic. But Willis (1997) suggests there is evidence that at least some pupils are able to exercise agency and reject the processes of schooling. Harris concludes that until broader economic and political structures change, and schooling is no longer an institution of cultural reproduction controlled by the capitalist class, the teacher will always mirror the role of the police officer – dominating, controlling, and surveilling their

pupils. It is a role that Harris claims is 'enslaved within the structures of teaching under capitalism' (Harris, 1982, p.97).

**Relations and Experiences of Schooling: A Social Haunting?**

Geoff Bright (2011a, b, 2012) proposes a more complex understanding of the rejection of schooling and the educational disaffection of working-class children. The educational failure of working-class children in former mining communities, he argues, is deeply embedded in the historical, political, and economic biographies of these locations. Bright describes this historicity as:

> A space of denigration… It is a space of anecdotal fascination and reputation, an abandoned front line where time slips backwards and forwards, where nothing changes and everything has changed. It is a space, perhaps most significantly, steeped in the present absence of its own truncated history. And, arguably, that is having an impact on the way that young people envisage the possibilities of their lives- their aspirations (Bright, 2011a, p.65).

Bright uses the concept of 'resistant aspirations' to explain how resistant histories *still* influence the lives of children in former mining communities. Here the central idea is 'intergenerational affective transmission' where conflicted aspects of the community's histories are rarely spoken but still affect generations after the miners' strike and mine closures in often unknown and complex ways. Bright uses Avery Gordon's (2008) notion of 'social haunting' to examine how the past remains present in the UK coalfields. According to Gordon, social haunting is a reminder and legacy of past social violence – it is, she writes, to be "tied to historical and social effects" (p.190):

What's distinctive about haunting is that it is an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known, sometimes very directly, sometimes more obliquely. I used the term haunting to describe those singular yet repetitive instances when home becomes unfamiliar, when your bearings on the world lose direction, when the over-and-done-with comes alive, when what's been in your blind spot comes into view. Haunting raises specters, and it alters the experience of being in time, the way we separate the past, the present, and the future. These specters or ghosts appear when the trouble they represent and symptomize is no longer being contained or repressed or blocked from view (Gordon, 2008, p. xvi).

Gordon uses the notion of social haunting to understand how historical racial injustices and state violence in North and South America continue to be ghosted into the present. She argues that, if we are to truly understand the complexities of social life and transform it, we must seek a new way of knowing. She calls for a practice of being acquainted with 'ghostly matters' – "the echoes and murmurs of that which has been lost but which is still present among us in the form of intimations, hints, suggestions, and portents" (p. x). A haunting, Gordon reasons, is a "process that links an institution and an individual, a social structure and a subject, and history and a biography" (p.19). To recognise a haunting – and to reckon with our ghosts – we must understand how the past continues to affect the present. To thoroughly understand Lillydown Primary, the community's ghosts must be known.

*Lillydown's Ghosts: The Mining Industry*

In 1947, coal mining became a nationalised industry managed by the NCB. Across Britain, by 1984, 174 state-owned coal mines employed 187,000 miners (NCM, 2018). On 6th March, the government announced twenty mines were to close, with an expected loss of 20,000 jobs (Oldham, 2016). The government claimed these pits were no longer economically viable. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), however, insisted that more than 70 pits were on a 'hit list' (OTJC, 2018) driven by another agenda – the destruction of the NUM (Trounce, 2015). In 1983, the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher appointed Scottish-American businessman, Ian MacGregor –who had previously overseen 96,000 job cuts in the British Steel industry – as chairman of the NCB. MacGregor's appointment, Oldham (2016) writes, alongside Thatcher's commitment to significantly weaken and limit the power of trade unions, the Ridley Plan of 1977, and the "two million manufacturing job losses under her premiership already, effectively signalled that the government planned to cut jobs, close pits", and defeat the NUM and the miners (p.8). The Ridley Plan, written by Conservative right-winger, Nicholas Ridley, detailed how the next government could challenge and defeat a major strike in a nationalised industry (Oldham, 2016). It proposed government should, if possible, choose the field of battle; train and equip a large, mobile squad of police ready to employ 'riot' tactics to defeat pickets; stockpile coal at power stations; recruit non-union lorry drivers from haulage companies; draw up contracts with non-union foreign ports to import coal, build dual coal-oil fuel generators; and, 'cut off the money supply to the strikers and make the union finance them' (Economist, 1978).

On 6th March 1984, 165,000 coal miners went on strike against the planned pit closures (NCM, 2018). Unlike previous strikes, the 1984-1985 dispute was not primarily about pay and conditions, but the survival of an industry and a particular way of life – it was about

protecting and fighting for the future. Initially, local police were employed to control pickets and assist non-striking miners across picket lines. As the strike progressed, however, police methods and tactics became progressively pre-organised and violent as police forces from across Britain, including the Metropolitan Police, were deployed against the miners (see, for example, Trounce, 2015; Oldham, 2016). The most infamous confrontation took place at Orgreave Coking Plant in South Yorkshire on 18th June 1984. The NUM organised a mass picket with the objective of preventing lorry loads of coke from being transported to the steelworks. The police however, were tasked with making sure the lorries left the plant; they were instructed to 'get tough on pickets' (Oldham, 2016, p.131). 6,000 pickets travelled to Orgreave. The police and government pre-organised counter-measures against the pickets. The number of police officers was unprecedented (NCM, 2018) (see Picture 2.1); deploying an all-male police force of 8,000 officers with new riot training, supported by 58 police dogs, and 50 mounted police officers (Oldham, 2016).
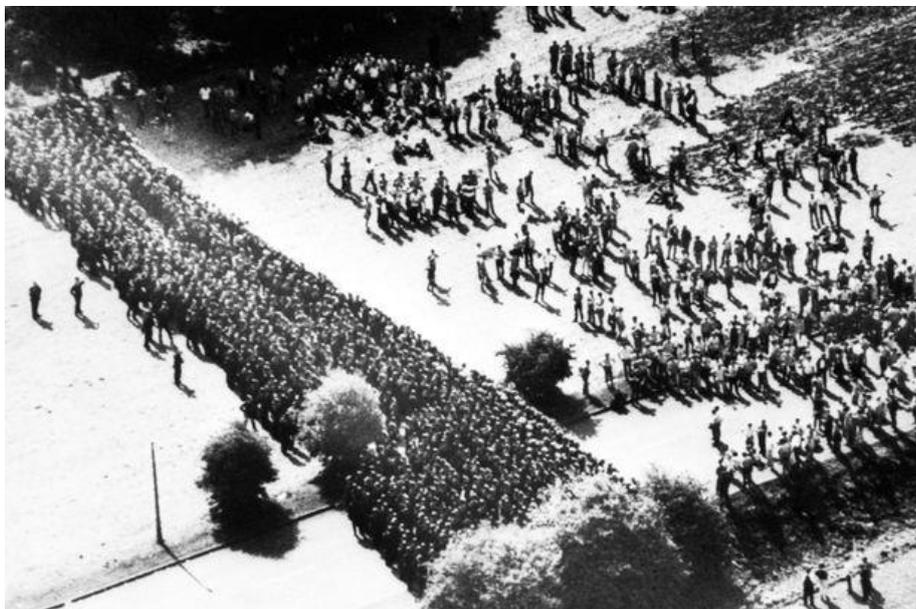


**Picture 2.1: 'The Battle of Orgreave'**

This image illustrates the orchestrated and 'mass militarised precision' the government and police enforced at Orgreave

(Oldham, 2016)

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The events that transpired have since been referred to as 'The Battle of Orgreave'. It marked a turning point in policing tactics and the first use of what became known as 'kettling', and "excessive [police] brutality and state-sponsored" violence (Oldham, 2016, p.132).

95 miners were arrested at Orgreave and charged with 'riot' – an offence which, at the time, carried a potential life sentence – unlawful assembly, and/or similar offences (Oldham, 2016). A number of miners were put on trial in May 1987, but the trials collapsed and all charges were dropped. Several lawsuits were brought against the police for assault, unlawful arrest, and malicious prosecution although no police officer, to date, has been charged or disciplined for misconduct (Oldham, 2016).



**Picture 2.2: 'Harris-Boulton Image'**

This image captures the violent tactics used by police at Orgreave. Mounted on horseback, a policeman raises his baton on female photographer Lesley Boulton as she turns to get medical assistance for an injured man (Oldham, 2018, p.133)

(John Harris, 1984)

The organized violence and control deployed by the government and police throughout the 1984-1985 miners' strike, and the events which followed, in many ways echo the militaristic state violence in North and South America that Gordon (2008) describes. Although slavery, like the miners' strike and coal industry, has ended, it continues to haunt the living, 'forcing generations to co-exist with their ghosts' –"[passing] on to us today our haunting inheritance" (Gordon, 2008, p.200).

The effects of the 1984-1985 miners' strike continue to haunt many of Britain's former mining communities. For many, Orgreave represents, "one of the most serious miscarriages of justice in this country's history" (OTJC, 2018). In particular, it marked a breakdown in the relationship between the police and state systems, and mining communities – a distrust which continues to be ghosted into the present (Bright, 2012; Oldham, 2016). Despite continued periods of hardship and uncertainty, particular social structures, practices and relations built around the coal industry continue to be transmitted into the present, providing for many, a sense of stability and continuity – that everything is 'as it should be' (Giddens, 1991). Lillydown's past continues to affect the present in complex ways. These ghosts, as Gordon argues, must be identified and reckoned with to understand the complexities of social life and inevitably transform them out of a concern for justice. After all, she writes, "if you let it, the ghost can lead you toward what has been missing, which is sometimes everything" (p.58).

Bright (2012) argues that past conflicts in former mining communities are *ghosted* into the present and affect educational experiences of the young, particularly resurfacing in conflicts between teachers and their practices, and pupils (Bright, 2012). Viewed as a 'regime of coppers' the teachers come into direct conflict with the youths in Bright's research (p.228). Faced with this conflict, pupils reject the experience of schooling as a whole, the teachers, the curriculum (formal and hidden), and the values of the school. Willis' ideas permeate Bright's

work, particularly the dissociation between the lads and the school, and the purpose of the school being only to have 'a laff' (Willis, 1997) or to gain access to 'yer mates' (Bright, 2011a). Similarly, the young people in Bright's study also see through the system, its hidden curriculum, and agendas. This rejection takes the form of 'stickin' up for yersen [yourself]', 'not takin' no shit' or 'being a little fucker' (Bright, 2011b, p.507). They exercise individual and collective agency; rejecting the experience of schooling, excluding themselves before the school excludes them.

Bright acknowledges that one of the difficulties with the notion of 'resistant aspiration' is that young people are not *directly* connected to their past. He asserts that they are, paradoxically, 'cut off' from yet unescapably trapped and 'ghosted' by it (Bright, 2011b, p.507). Consequently, whilst some young people have a clear insight into, and knowledge of, their community's past, others have little, if any, knowledge. To the 'outsider', situating working-class disaffection within the historical experiences of mining communities may seem like blaming current disaffection and failure on the past. But, for anyone living in or aware of the history of the coalfield communities, the link is palpable. Bright's theory of 'resistant aspirations' provides a platform for further research. My research offers a new angle on Bright's theory inasmuch as it explicitly focuses on primary schooling, and is situated in the immediate school environment observing and researching how processes, relations and experiences of schooling relate to this theory.

Although Bright's theory of 'resistant aspirations' foregrounds the history of former mining communities, he fails to examine how class and cultural differences between teachers and pupils contribute to the resistance and rejection of the education experience. The youths in Bright's research reveal that there is an ongoing struggle with the outsider teachers who come from 'elsewhere' in both a geographical and social sense (Bright, 2011a, p.72). Here the

notion of teachers as a 'regime of coppers' needs further interrogation. Arguably, similarities *could* be drawn between the contrasting culture and identities of the miners and the Metropolitan Police during the Strike, and outsider teachers and pupils in the present. On the other hand, insider teachers, like the 'local coppers' at the beginning of the Strike, share similar culture and identities and so, in most cases, are tolerated by and get along with their pupils (Benson, 2014). Whilst both these relationships sit within the notion of teachers as an authoritarian regime, it would seem that, one, based on shared culture and identity, provides a potential space for relationships to be built and education to take place; whereas the other risks resistant relationships as a result of the opposing cultures and identities.

Maguire explores the perceptions and experiences of working-class teachers, in both primary and secondary schools, and how their social class affects their classroom pedagogies, identities, and relationships with pupils. Maguire asserts that one of the most 'powerful factors' of sharing the same class is the ability to 'speak the same language'. This, she contends, emits to the pupils a sense of 'social cohesion' and the feeling that their teacher is an 'insider' (Maguire, 2005a, p.433). Speaking the same language is more than just having the same accent, although accent is a powerful tool. It also means sharing the same humour, and social experiences (Maguire, 2005a, p.430). This strength that sharing the same language can have upon teaching is echoed in an earlier study by Maguire (2001) where several teachers, who also shared the same class as their pupils, recognized a similar bond. When applied to Bright's notion of teachers as a 'regime of coppers', and Gordon's notion of social haunting, we can see how powerful speaking the same language can be. Benson (2014) provides an insight into the divide between the miners and the Metropolitan Police and how their opposing 'languages' *could* be mirrored in relationships between outsider teachers and pupils:

They have southern accents and their uniforms are unusual, with white shirts rather than the familiar blue. The miners will soon come to recognise the uniform as that of the Metropolitan police. One of them, a tall, healthy-looking auburn-whiskered man in his late twenties, walks up to the pickets. He is chewing gum and sticking out his chest like the cocky villain in a Western. 'So this is it, is it?' He scans the lines of men, inspecting them. 'Here they are. *The fucking Yorkshire miners*.'

The pickets look at one another. The young policeman says, 'What's it going to be then, lads? We gonna have a ruck or what?

'What you on about?' Says one of the pickets.

'What-yooo-on-abaht,'mimics the policeman

There follows more bad-tempered, foul-mouthed banter.

(Benson, 2014, p.388)

The Metropolitan Police officer goes on to compare an area where he comes from as a "fucking paradise" compared to this (Yorkshire coalfield) "fucking shithole" (Benson, 2014, p.389). This account shows the direct conflict between the Met and the miners. Distinctions are made between clothes, accents, places of residence, and a clear hierarchy established by the Met. In contrast, the working-class teacher who speaks the same language as the pupils resembles the local police force – there will never be a grand relationship but their shared identities and culture allows 'good' relations to be built. On the other hand, the teacher who is an outsider, who doesn't speak the same language as the pupils, could be likened to the Metropolitan Police officer, particularly when relationships fail to be established, or break

down, and outsider teachers resort to coercive, authoritarian measures to regain control. This resonates with Willis who asserts that when the basic teaching paradigm is not established, teachers resort to 'oppressive' and 'belittling' tactics to simply 'get the job done'. This is what Willis (1997) calls the 'class insult' (p.77). The abusive language used by the Met bears a resemblance to the accounts given by Maguire of the teachers who fail to speak the same language as their pupils through their oppressive attitudes towards the poverty of the pupils and their families (Maguire, 2005b). Further oppressive practices were also observed through middle-class teachers' low expectations of working-class pupils in primary schools (Maguire, 2001, p.324). Maguire's notion of speaking the same language, combined with the work of Willis and Bright offers a powerful tool for exploring teaching and learning in working-class schools.

Maguire purports that sharing the same 'classed biographies' allowed the teachers in her study to understand the difficulties that their pupils faced and ensured that they had high expectations of their pupils (Maguire, 2001, p.329). All the teachers reported that their class 'identities' and 'subjectivities' influenced their values, perceptions, and pedagogy. One notable characteristic that helped create this bond was the teacher's space to exercise agency and creatively innovate their pedagogy, and create a classroom environment *with* and *for* the pupils. Arguably, such pedagogies are harder to practise under the constraints of neoliberal policies and ideology. As the political and economic landscape changed, the state discourse of education shifted from child-centred progressivism to a marketised and competitive one. The 1980s saw the creation of a segregated Britain dominated by 'the market' (Hill and Cole, 2001). Thatcherism, a fusion of neoliberal and neoconservative ideology, paved the way for the restructuring of education. Such forces curtailed the autonomy of teachers and left schools with no choice but to operate on, and serve, the needs of the economy (Ball, 2006). This led

to teaching and learning focusing on 'outputs', curricula coverage, and traditional methods of teaching rather than on creativity, exploration, and an active engagement, from both teachers and pupils, in curricula and pedagogical decision making (Jeffrey, 2002; Ball, 2006).

*Neoliberalism and Primary Education*

The neoliberal ideology instigated in the 1980s by the Conservative government, and thereafter continued by New Labour, the Coalition, and intensified by the current Conservative regime saw the introduction of the National Curriculum, SATs and league tables (Hill and Cole, 2001). The National Curriculum aimed to control what is taught in schools. Arguably, this restricted teachers' freedom over curricula content, and discouraged creativity and critical thought (Hill, 2001b). Teaching and learning increasingly focused on 'traditional' methods of teaching – the re-call of facts, whole class teaching, individualism and 'back to basics' curriculum – reinforced by the National Curriculum reforms in 2014. The lack of space for teachers to exercise agency and tailor and control curriculum content is clear in the new curriculum. With arguably unrealistic objectives and content, the prescriptive curriculum stifles creativity and autonomy for both pupils and teachers, and reproduces inequality (Hill and Cole, 2001). The reforms have seen curricula objectives become much tougher to meet. Year 1 pupils are now expected to be able to, for example, represent and use number bonds within 20 (previously within 10), and count, read, and write numbers to 100 (previously to 20). Since 2013, Key Stage 2 pupils have also taken a statutory SPaG test. In 2016, Key Stage 1 SPaG tests were introduced, though this remains non-statutory (NUT, 2017). The 2018 Key Stage 1 and 2 assessment exemplification materials have added to already excessive teacher workloads and pupil assessments. The latest assessment update,

released by the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) in December 2018, published materials for Key Stage 1 English reading, mathematics and science, and Key Stage 2 science. In particular, suggested literature, and standard of assessment, in the reading exemplification for pupils working at 'greater depth' in Year 2 has been critiqued. In the example, pupil H is reading *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* and is assessed as working at greater depth because she is a 'confident and fluent' reader, able to read words such as 'international magical cooperation' accurately, without hesitation (STA, 2018, p.12). In relation to pupil H's comprehension skills, she makes links with other books she has read: "[the pupil] compares the book to what happened on Easter Sunday because 'Jesus rose from the dead without turning into a zombie and Voldemort rose from the dead without turning into a zombie'" (STA, 2018, p.13). The guidance also makes note of pupil H's 'quick and accurate' inference skills that allow her to work out the meaning of unknown words': ''Vacation. Isn't that a holiday? Well, would it (the meaning of 'vacated') be the seat that she left, because it's like going on holiday because you leave something to go on holiday?'' (STA, 2018, p.14).

In general, popular discourse questions the suitability of the chosen literature to bench mark Year 2 pupils working at greater depth, and the standard of assessment which appears to be unrepresentative of the 26 percent of pupils who were, in 2018, assessed to be working at greater depth (Ward, 2018). The curriculum and assessment changes have raised expected standards to more challenging levels meaning, for too many children, the expectations are beyond their reach. Consequently, working-class pupils face, "the paradox of our contemporary assessment [and curriculum] regime" and "while the stated aim is to raise the achievement of all children, it often seems to operate as yet another mechanism for fixing failure in the working class" (Reay, 2001, p.342).

Between 2015 and 2020, nine out of ten primary and secondary schools across England and Wales are expected to be affected by school funding cuts (NUT, 2018). Class sizes in primary schools are increasing. More schools already operate with class sizes exceeding 30 pupils (DfE, 2015). In Oakshire, 81 out of 87 schools have been affected by cuts to per pupil funding between 2015 and 2019 (SchoolCuts, 2019). Over this period of time, Lillydown Primary lost out on £173,000 of funding[6], a loss of £420 per pupil[7] (SchoolCuts, 2019). Teaching and learning opportunities in broader curricula subjects – drama, art and music, for example – are being reduced as focus is placed largely on 'core subjects' – English, SPaG, and Maths. Teachers are under pressure to produce results. Creative subjects do not, in a narrow sense, produce measurable results. For the working classes, cuts to areas which are generally already compromised and under-resourced work to further reduce opportunities, knowledge, and skills available to them in education.

The purpose of education then becomes an increasingly economic one; the main aims become about standards and 'outputs', and less about professional judgement, autonomy, and pupil needs (Ball, 2006). The underlying ideologies behind curricula and assessment reforms have been to control and re-shape teachers' work, and control the educational process as a whole. The market discourse in education has placed greater onus on teaching and leadership to raise educational standards (Ofsted, 2015). With the establishment of Ofsted in 1992, national inspections were a way of assessing teachers, and schools against national expectations, and against each other (Jeffrey, 2002). Alongside this, teachers face tougher performative measures, a decrease in autonomy, and an increase in surveillance, control, and school

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[6] The difference between funding and the amount needed to protect per pupil funding in real terms (SchoolCuts, 2019).

[7] Amount lost for every pupil as a result of the reduced budget (SchoolCuts, 2019).

competition (Hill et al., 2016). Primary school teachers are subjected to an intensification of observations, appraisals, drop-ins, planning scrutinies, book scrutinies, learning-walks, and so on. This means intrinsically changing what it means to be a teacher. As Ball (2003) points out, the market changes, and performative culture, 'de-professionalises' teachers. The space for teachers to exercise agency, and challenge the existing structures and values of the education system is now markedly smaller, though spaces for 'resistance' remain (Hill, 2017).

Maguire's (2001, 2005a, b) research highlighted a space for teachers to exercise agency and contest 'normalising discourses' of teaching and learning. It is questionable though whether teachers are *still* able to do this, as the continuing neoliberalisation of education increasingly re-shapes teachers' beliefs, identities, and pedagogies (Ball, 2006). One of the difficulties with Maguire's work is that teachers' perceptions, values, and practices are taken at face value. Maguire's research lacks further observation and analysis into whether teachers' classroom practices reflect their values. The question of teachers' values differing from the practices they *actually* mobilise in their classrooms are discussed by Sharp and Green (1975).

Sharp and Green (1975) explore how wider structural forces affect primary school teachers' pedagogical practices. Their aim was to examine how these forces led to differing practices between progressive classroom pedagogy which teachers claimed to exist and the contrasting practices observed. During the 1970s, progressivism was arguably the dominant approach to teaching and learning (Hill and Cole, 2001) and replaced the rigid practices of traditional subject-based teaching in favour of exploratory, child-centred learning that saw pupils as 'unique subjects' (Sharp and Green, 1975, p.40). It advocated an approach centred on individual needs and the interests of each pupil. Sharp and Green's work illustrates how the headmaster of the school where the study took place advocated a child-centred approach to

education; however, the effect of wider structural pressures meant that teaching literacy and numeracy *still* had to be endorsed. The headmaster also noted that pupils should not be left to explore and engage in free play of their choice for substantial periods of time before a teacher steps in to "divert him to the more serious business of learning" (p.64). On the one hand, the headmaster stresses progressive child-centred philosophies and practices, yet, at the same time, he is influenced and pressured to 'allow' some traditional, structured teaching and learning to take place (Sharp and Green, 1975).

In each case, Sharp and Green observed a contradiction between the teachers' progressive ideology and practice and their actual pedagogy. Even though they all claimed to adhere to a child-centred ethos, all teachers were observed, unwittingly perhaps, to be endowing more time to certain pupils. The pupils who replicated the behaviours of the idyllic child were rewarded with more 1-1 time with their teacher, whilst those who presented problematic and uncharacteristic behaviours received minimal contact time. The teachers were also observed grouping and labelling pupils, causing a social stratification within the classroom, with some pupils having labels – 'thick' and peculiar'- attached to their identities (p.115). Those identified as the 'problem child' held low status with restricted upward mobility, and spent limited time with teachers. Whereas, the 'normal' and 'elite' pupils spent distinctly more time with their teachers and held high-status positions in the classroom (pp.123-4).

Sharp and Green conclude that stratification in the classroom and labelling of pupils is illustrative of how "material life chances of the children [are] being produced within the social structure of the classroom" (p.124). In some ways, such contradictions are understandable. Teachers' practice is continuously pressured and accountable to wider structural forces on a day-to-day basis. Sharp and Green note how time constraints; material and physical constraints, such as the under-allocation of teaching assistants, the availability of

resources, and classroom layouts; and rising class sizes, affect teacher pedagogy. They also note how pedagogical expectations were placed on the teacher by other professionals in the school, and outside influences (for example, parents) to practice and maintain good professional standards in the classroom. Sharp and Green finally highlight how pupils have space to exercise individual and collective agency within the classroom (p.116). These factors will all contribute to, and influence, teacher pedagogy.

Sharp and Green's study raises important questions about teachers' perceptions of their practice, values, and ideology, and their classroom practice. It illustrates how teachers, in theory, had a high regard for progressive ideals and every pupils' individual interests and needs. There was, nevertheless, a "subtle process of sponsorship developing where opportunity is being offered to some and closed off to others" through the social stratification and inequality of differentiation in the classroom (p.218). Sharp and Green argue that the stratification occurring in classrooms reflects and reproduces wider social structures impinging on education. Their findings reveal that even where progressivism is at the heart of a school, wider political and socio-economic structural forces *still* penetrate and influence practice. Teachers' pedagogical decision making and practice is, arguably, more affected by performative and marketised discourses in education leaving them struggling to engage in their beliefs, values, and practices that differ from current discourse (see Ball, 2006). Since Sharp and Green's study, the political and economic landscape has, as has been discussed, drastically changed. More research in today's marketised education system, if indeed system is the right term, is required if we are to understand how wider structural forces affect teachers' values and beliefs, and the pedagogical decisions and practices they mobilise.

# Chapter Three: Methodology and Data Collection

## The Background and History of Ethnography

Historically, the term ethnography was associated with nineteenth century Western anthropology. Initially, ethnographies were produced to understand so-called primitive cultures, and accounts were often produced by travellers and missionaries. Over time, anthropologists began to do their own fieldwork; Bronislaw Malinowski (1922) is often credited for this movement when he visited the Trobiand Islands in 1915-1916 (Walford, 2008). From the 1920s to the 1950s, sociologists from the Chicago School used a similar approach to study different patterns of human behaviour, culture, and the social life of those living in Chicago (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.2). From the 1960s onwards, an anthropological and sociological interest in education grew, mainly the desire to look inside the 'black box' of schooling – to investigate relationships between the structural forces and micro-cultures inside schools (Walford, 2008). By the late twentieth century, ethnography had spread into other disciplines and had been influenced by a range of theoretical ideas – Marxism, structuralism, feminism, and so on. This in turn led to traditional forms of ethnography being challenged and "re-contextualised in various ways in order to deal with particular circumstances" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.2). The term ethnography became influenced by and associated with a variety of different theoretical, "methodological, ontological, epistemological, ethical, and political ideas" (Hammersley, 2016, p.9). Postmodernism also saw the notion of representation being called into question. Within this movement, postmodernists introduced new literary and artistic forms of ethnographic enquiry. For some, these new forms of representation provided a broader, more fluid, and

open-ended line of representation allowing multiple interpretations and conclusions to be drawn (Hammersley, 2008). However, Walford argues that:

> [I]t is not simply a case of blurring the boundaries between social science and literature, but of trying to re-shape the nature of the research and reporting process...[for postmodernists] the emotional response is as important, if not more important, as the analytical findings of the research. Indeed, research methods are played down and new forms of representation valorised (Walford, 2009, p.275).

To some degree, there is potential for different theoretical and methodological influences to enhance traditional forms of ethnography. For some, however, such processes are one of the reasons why ethnography has become difficult to define (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Walford, 2008). Ethnography has been and continues to be influenced by different fields, theories, methods, technologies, movements, and literary and artistic forms:

> Autoethnography, duoethnography, citizen ethnography, cognitive ethnography, critical ethnography, digital ethnography, educational ethnography, ethnomethodoligcal ethnography, feminist ethnography, functionalist ethnography, global ethnography, hypermedia ethnography, insider ethnography, institutional ethnography, interactionist ethnography, interpretive ethnography, linguistic ethnography, longitudinal ethnography, Marxist ethnography, micro-ethnography, multi-sited ethnography, narrative ethnography, performance ethnography, postmodern ethnography, public ethnography, race ethnography, rural ethnography, team ethnography, urban ethnography, virtual ethnography, visual ethnography.
>
> (Hammersley, 2016, p.7)

Concerns continue to grow over what ethnography is, what it should look like, and the threats to its survival. Hammersley (2016) proposes two contrasting approaches to resolve the definitional issue of 'what is ethnography? – the 'thick' or the 'thin' approach. The thick approach requires a fixed set of "appropriate theoretical and value commitments for ethnographic work, and specifically to rule out others" (p.9). Commitments which could, for example, "insist that ethnography is a secular, scientific enterprise, not a theological one; and that it is concerned with understanding people's behaviour for its own sake, rather than in order to serve some practical goal" (p.9). Hammersley's point is clear; adopting a thick approach would be controversial. It would restrict what is worthy of the title of ethnography. The approaches that survive would, moreover, depend on who decides what is worthy and what their methodological and theoretical tendencies are. The second 'thin' approach would:

> [T]reat ethnography simply as a research strategy that can be employed by researchers adopting a wide variety of potentially conflicting commitments: theological or commercial, 'critical' or interpretive, interactionist or ethnomethodoligcal, and so on.

(Hammersley, 2016, p.10)

A 'thin' approach would provide clear agreement on ethnographic commitments which could then be enhanced and adapted through different theories, methods, arts or technologies. Although it embraces different theoretical lenses, this approach for some may still be disconnected from their commitment to traditional forms of ethnography. Though ethnography *is* contested territory, there nevertheless seems to be broad agreement on some of its characteristics. In *The Handbook of Ethnography*, Atkinson et al. (2001) define ethnography as follows:

[It is] grounded in a commitment to the first-hand experience and exploration of a particular social or cultural setting on the basis of (though not exclusively by) participant observation. Observation and participation (according to circumstance and the analytic purpose at hand) remain the characteristic features of the ethnographic approach. In many cases, of course, fieldwork entails the use of other research methods too (Atkinson et al., 2001, pp.4-5).

Similarly, Flick (2014) writes:

Ethnography is driven by the interest of *being there* and observing events and processes while they occur. The basic method is participant observation – the researchers become part of the field for some time and observe what is going on. In most cases, data collection will include talking to members in the field or collecting and analysing documents. Participation means that the research goes on for some time, during which researchers move through the field and join activities and take notes about what they see and hear (Flick, 2014, p.42).

Hammersley and Atkinson list five key features often ascribed to ethnography:

1. People's actions and accounts are studied in everyday contexts, rather than under conditions created by the researcher. In other words research takes place 'in the field'.

2. Data are gathered from a range of sources, including documentary evidence of various kinds, but participant observations and/or relatively informal conversations are usually the main ones.

3. Data collection is, for the most part, relatively 'unstructured' in two senses. First, it does not involve following a fixed and detailed research design specified at the start. Second, the categories that are used for interpreting what people say or do are not

built into the data collection process through the use of observation schedules or questionnaires. Instead, they are generated out of the process of data analysis.

4. The focus is usually on a few cases, generally fairly small-scale, perhaps a single setting or group of people. This is to facilitate in-depth study.

5. The analysis of data involves interpretation of the meanings, functions, and consequences of human actions and institutional practices, and how these are implicated in local, and perhaps also wider, contexts. What are produced, for the most part, are verbal descriptions, explanations, and theories; quantification and statistical analysis play a subordinate role at most.

(Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.3)

These definitions illustrate several notable characteristics of ethnography. Ethnographies allow the researcher to become part of people's everyday lives, studying their behaviours, their actions, and their way of life in their natural environment (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Walford, 2008). Ethnographers spend extended periods of time in the field, either overtly or covertly, collecting data. The art of ethnography lies within its ability to collect rich, in-depth data using various qualitative methods; participant observation, formal and informal interviews, field notes, documents, photographs, artefacts, and so on (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Whilst ethnography is usually associated with qualitative methods, ethnographers often "generate quantitative data as well as qualitative notes and descriptions" (Walford, 2009, p.272). Although ethnographers are unlikely to use sophisticated statistical analysis and experiments, quantitative data is often generated to augment the main body of qualitative data. As Walford (2008) notes, "cultures are complex and multi-faceted; to reach even a rudimentary understanding of them requires an openness to looking in many different

ways" (p.8). Ethnographers frequently make quantitative claims during observations – recording when things happen, how often they happen, and how long they take (Walford, 2008). For example, an ethnographer in a school may record what percentage of time is allocated to teaching and learning; how frequently pupil-premium children are supported in class; how many times boys answer questions; what percentage of the timetable is devoted to specific subjects, and so on. Ethnographers may also record patterns and correlations and analyse different variables across different dimensions – social class, gender, and ethnicity. Qualitative research is often "saturated with causal claims about how x affects, influences or shapes y, about the consequences of various institutional practices and so on" (Hammersley, 2008, p.36).

Before entering the field, and during fieldwork, ethnographers often use secondary data sets to gather background information on the field under study. Educational ethnographies may draw on Ofsted reports, league tables, school data sets, policy documents, and school timetables to gather background information. Official statistics – labour market profiles, Census data, and government reports – may also be used to gather background information on the wider context of the locale. Arguably, the increasing use of statistical and contextual information is the result of a rise of critical ethnographies which emphasise the importance of locating research in its historical and current contexts at both local and often global levels (Hammersley, 2008). The quantitative data ethnographers draw on, arguably, provides another layer of description and detail which adds to the 'thick descriptions' ethnographies aim to produce.

**Critical Marxist Ethnography**

Traditional ethnography has frequently been critiqued for its lack of development in, and contribution to, theory. For Maisuria and Beach, it has failed to build a "critical consciousness and an in-depth understanding of the world that enables the perception and exposure of social and political contradictions or is able to support action against oppressive elements" (Maisuria and Beach, 2016, p.1). Critical ethnography is concerned with exposing oppressive forces in society and bringing about change through transformative practice, moving beyond traditional descriptive accounts (Hammersley, 1992). Using the tools of ethnography it critically explores institutions, people, and social relations within contemporary capitalist society. It aims to demystify and uncover oppressive structures and practices as these materialise in everyday life, and to ultimately change this (Beach, 2015). For Maisuria and Beach, as society stands in a particular temporal and social moment in history where neoliberal forces infiltrate, control, and reproduce capitalist society, it is essential to open up new critical ethnographic spaces and re-appropriate critical ethnography and Marxism:

> Without an ontological appreciation of neoliberalism present ethnography would only divulge data that would be grossly unclear about how power relations are constituted by the mode of production in the organisation of society… If counter tendencies were not conceptualised as such, then the history would be locked in neoliberalism and no hope of change would exist (Maisuria and Beach, 2016, p.10).

Without embedding ethnographic research within wider historical, political, and socioeconomic contexts, the "ethnographic gaze will amount to no more than a glance" (Jordan and Yeomans, 1995, p.396). Critical Marxist ethnographers argue that to simply

describe, analyse and produce 'descriptive knowledge', fails to acknowledge historical and current structural forces and mechanisms that control society and, therefore, play a part in reproducing the status quo. For others, the aim of research remains simply for 'the production of knowledge' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Walford, 2008). But, in order to demystify and transform society, it is necessary to have an understanding of where and how economic and material conditions in historical and current capitalist systems are formed. As Carr and Kemmis (1986) argue:

> Social reality is not simply structured and shaped by concepts and ideas. It is also structured and shaped by such things as historical forces and economic and material conditions. Moreover, these things also structure and affect the perceptions and ideas of individuals so that 'reality' may be misperceived as a consequence of the operation of various ideological processes. Uncovering these processes and explaining how they can condition and constrain interpretations of reality are vital requirements that are largely neglected by the 'interpretive' approach (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.104).

My own research is located within critical neo-Marxist ethnography. My own personal biography, the research, and its locale are all shaped by historical and current political and socioeconomic forces. To isolate the research from this would have denied a whole community of their history and identity and, more so, played its part in controlling and reproducing capitalism.

*Ontology and Epistemology*

All research is based on certain ontological assumptions about the nature and construction of the social world and epistemological assumptions about how the reality that is assumed to exist can be known (Waring, 2012). These assumptions give rise to specific methodological strategies and methods that reflect the "best means for gaining knowledge about the social world" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p.91). Waring (2012) positions ontological assumptions along a continuum with realism at one end and constructivism at the other; he states that "the corresponding epistemological positions to realism and constructivism would be positivism and interpretivism respectively" (p.16). For those adopting a realist ontology and positivist epistemology, there is a singular objective reality 'out there' which exists externally to the individual. Objective knowledge can then be gained through testing hypotheses, direct observation, and measurement of the social world to establish "scientific laws of society" (Henn et al., 2009, p.27).

On the other hand, for those working within a constructivist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology, the world is socially constructed and people make their own meaning of the world; "it is the accounts and observations of the worlds that provide indirect indications of phenomena, and thus knowledge is developed through a process of interpretation (Waring, 2012, p.16). However, these are purist positions and most recognise that they are not quite as sharply delineated as this, they are often relatively blurred and researchers use elements of both. Effectively, this gives rise to the position of my own research as although a particular focus was to critically examine teachers' perceptions and pedagogy, the research also focused on how wider structural mechanisms penetrate and influence education. A constructivist ontology for example, would have failed to acknowledge that individuals are "born into and are socially constituted by a world already made" where underlying social structures "pre-

exist the individual and generate specific forms of social consciousness, generate linguistic and hence cognitive possibilities, and socially structure available life chances, technical means, and facilities" (Sharp, 1982, pp.49-50). Reality would be reduced to individuals' direct experiences and interactions, and reject the idea that historical, political, and economic factors determine the social structure (Beach, 2015).

A Marxist, materialist-realist ontology and a subjectivist epistemology underpin my own research. This recognises the material reality of individuals' lives and sees reality as shaped, to a significant extent, by underlying social structures and economic forces which, in turn, influence and shape individual consciousness, knowledge, and practice (Beach, 2015). This is not a case of 'economic reductionism' as my position acknowledges that reality is, at least to some extent, negotiated and mediated by certain subjectivities. Individuals can, to some degree, construct their own realities through consciousness, understanding, and experience, but these do not simply emerge from the mind; they are situated and shaped by wider historical, economic, and social structures. For Beach (2015), individual realities are "situated, concrete, real, and produced in the material conditions of production, [they are] also significantly limited by the effects of these material conditions, the experiences they provide, and the tools that are available for dealing with and understanding these experiences" (Beach, 2015, p. 54). He adds that:

> [H]umans, at the same time as they live their lives reflexively in an informed way also live, think, act, and work from within cultural and institutional (social, practical, and socioeconomic) constraints that have a material existence but that might not always be fully known in advance. Indeed given their exploitative and parasitic nature, it is important for the current social order that they are not known and, in addition, bourgeois social science has historically gone to great lengths to make sure of this.

Things have to have some hidden dimensions. They are produced in ideologically saturated circumstances (Beach, 2015, p.55).

This acknowledges that teachers' consciousness, experience and knowledge, along with the education system as a whole, emerge from and are shaped to a significant degree by the economic base and wider structural forces (Edwards, 2016). However, individuals can, to some extent, exercise personal and/or collective agency through engaging in critical pedagogy, and forming and effecting professional judgements within teaching and learning. Having said this, the scope for teachers to exercise agency is increasingly limited by various forms of performativity imposed upon them by the state. Nevertheless, teachers can exercise a degree of agency within certain parameters.

A particular focus was to critically investigate what it is like to be a teacher in a working-class school with today's educational agenda, policies, and performative pressures. It focused on how wider structural mechanisms penetrate and influence education, how dominant ideology and class relations are reproduced, and the effect these have on teachers' values and beliefs, relationships, identities, and pedagogy. The research took place in a specific time and space where education is increasingly shaped by neoliberalism. Although teachers' perspectives and practices are critically examined within wider structural forces of society, and against a backdrop of neoliberal ideology and policies, critical neo-Marxist ethnography acknowledges that teachers are not totally controlled and determined by these forces. Accordingly, this research recognises that, although teacher's space to exercise individual and collective agency is arguably limited, some spaces are still available and it critically examined how these were utilised. Through a critical neo-Marxist approach, the school was situated and examined in its historical and current political and socioeconomic context. Through combining traditional ethnographic tools for data collection and neo-Marxist ideas,

the research established a "dialectical relationship between data production and theory"
(Maisuria and Beach, 2016, p.11).

*Research Questions*

The first research question – *What are teachers' perceptions of the role of education for working class children?* examined:

a) Whether the historical role of education in Lillydown affects current pupils and their education,

b) What the role of education is for pupils in a  post-industrial climate, and

c) The relevance and role of the hidden and formal curriculum.

For generations of pupils in Lillydown, the miners' strike and closure of the pit has been a defining historical moment. Class, Marx argues, is deeply rooted in social relations of production and is historically created. It refers to lived experiences and their relations to material forces of production; it is a "cultural, historical and material category, not an imaginary social relation or particular status" (Maisuria and Beach, 2016, p.6). In other words, there is a dialectic relationship between the mode of production and class formation:

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living (Marx, 1852, p.5).

Lillydown was once an industrialised mining village built around, and mainly dependent on, coal. For many, formal education was seen as largely irrelevant. Most left school at the

earliest age possible; what was important was their labour power – their ability to 'graft'. For many, the pit provided security, a job, and arguably a particular form of education. The colliery was known throughout Lillydown as 'The University of Life', as men were educated and trained in specific vocational areas, and some would eventually end up in positions such as a deputy, area manager or a mine engineer. Frank talks about his schooling and education through the pit:

> When I left school I had no education. None, nil, *chuckles* none whatsoever. Due t' fact that the' did a day release, when you had done your training the' picked so many out t' 'ave day release. N I wo one. From then on I went doin' maths, English, science, mine engineering, mechanical engineering, and I finished up getting a mine engineer certificate (Frank, 06.06.2016).

Such processes were often seen as more valuable than formal education in schools (Dennis et al., 1956). Older generations of miners would also provide younger lads with an informal education, passing on particular values, dispositions, and cultural knowledge. Such processes played an important role in perpetuating the cultural norms, values, and behaviours which each generation of miners could identify with, practice, and maintain in order to be socialised into working life and the community more broadly. Dennis et al. (1956) argue that this means that, "as a rule a good workman is accepted by the rest of the team, but if he does not also fit in socially it is doubtful if he will stay long in the team; he must be a good miner, and his workmates must feel they can trust him" (p.45). They go on to argue that:

> The effect of a common set of persisting social relations, shared over a life-time by men working in the same industry and in the same collieries, is a very powerful one. In the main, this factor is responsible for the reinforcement and reaffirmation of those

social bonds which have been shown to be characteristic of present-day mine

working. Solidarity, despite the division into interest groups among the miners in a

given pit, is a very strongly developed characteristic of social relations in mining; it is

a characteristic engendered by the nature and organization of coalmining... A miner's

first loyalty is to his 'mates'. To break this code can have serious consequences in any

industry, but for a miner his whole life, not only his work, can be affected by the

actions and words of his fellows (Dennis et al., 1956, p.79).

Bennett et al. (2000) argue that in the former coalfields "older generations are concerned

about, and sometimes fearful of, young people and behaviour that they see as socially

unacceptable and threatening to their notions of community" (p.20). After the pit closure,

Lillydown moved into a state of forced post-industrialism. Thereafter, as has been discussed

in a previous chapter (Lillydown – A Working-Class Biography), employment has, in the

main, failed to offer the continuity, security, and broader social benefits once offered by the

coal industry – "when you started at the pit, you could expect to retire at the pit" (Turner,

2000, p.134). In some ways, this reflects processes described by Antony Giddens as

'ontological security'. For Giddens (1991), this refers to a sense of trust and confidence that

things are 'as they should be'; that there is a sense of continuity, stability, and order within

day-to-day life. Traditionally, the pit provided material security – steady wages and pensions

– but it also provided a sense of psychological and emotional security. Broader social

structures – social institutions, people and culture, social networks, and the unions – gave the

community, and individual members, an identity and purpose.

In a post-industrial state, however, traditional notions of ontological security are increasingly

replaced by instability and fragmentation. The local employment opportunities that are now

available are mainly low-skilled, low-pay, and precarious, and lack the forms of collective

identity and security traditionally associated with coal mining (Turner, 2000; Murry et al., 2005; Beatty et al., 2007; DCLG, 2010). As the stated purpose of education becomes increasingly economic, and as curriculum changes and assessments have raised educational expectations to higher, more challenging levels, the role of education for working-class children needs to be critically examined. This research question critically examined whether the role of education is to validate and reproduce capitalist structures, power and ideology, and relations of production (Althusser, 2006). And, to what extent the curriculum and hidden curriculum – the knowledge, skills, behaviours, and characteristics – reflects and reproduces pupils' future occupational status and economic position in capitalist society (Bowles and Gintis, 2011). Alongside this, teacher and pupil resistance was considered to examine the degree to which spaces are still available to engage in critical and transformative pedagogy.

The first concern with the second research question – *How do teachers' establish and build relationships with working-class children?* – was:

a)  Whether the class position of teachers affected relationships with pupils.

And then,

b)  Whether wider historical and current political and socioeconomic forces affected teacher-pupil relations.

This question critically examined whether common class identities simply led to a shared understanding of historical and/or current economic difficulties faced by pupils or whether it went deeper than this (Maguire, 2005a). It examined whether the teachers' class positions are complicated by wider structural forces that control education such as the hidden and formal curriculum. Bright's (2012) notion of resistant aspirations – how pupils in former mining

communities are ghosted by their resistant histories – is critically examined within this to observe whether pupils come into direct conflict with teachers, the curriculum (formal and hidden), and the values of the school; or whether shared class identities help negotiate a degree of agreement and stability. When looking at how teachers established and built relationships it was important to assess the extent to which current discourses have restricted the space for teachers and pupils to exercise agency.

The third research question, *What are teachers' expectations of working-class children?,* critically examined teachers' academic, behavioural and wider expectations of pupils, whether these were influenced by the historical and current climate in Lillydown, and whether expectations had changed over time. Alongside this, it critically examined the extent to which wider structural forces and pressures influence and control teacher expectations. As governments continue an intensification of neoliberal policies through tougher floor standards and more rigorous assessment, teaching and learning becomes focused on 'outputs' and the individual value of pupils rather than professional judgement and equality. For teachers, this could mean a shift in their beliefs and expectations of pupils, particularly where standards and expectations are being raised, for most working-class children, beyond their reach. It raised the concern as to whether teacher expectations are controlled and influenced by market principles, and wider society, or whether they have equal expectations for all.

The second level at which teacher expectations were critically examined concerns the final research question, *To what extent do teachers' practices differentiate between pupils*? This question critically observed:

a)  How children are grouped and assessed and whether this creates social structuring within the classroom.

And,

b) Whether teachers' expectations and pedagogy differs amongst pupils.

To some degree, this research question builds on the work of Sharp and Green (1975) which revealed a marked contradiction between teachers' expectations, their progressive beliefs, and their actual pedagogy. They observed that teachers endowed more time to certain pupils which led to a social stratification within the classroom. They concluded that this was the result of wider pressures and structural forces. Similarly, it aimed to explore whether grouping and differentiation reflected and reproduced wider social divisions of labour in the classroom.

It is often argued that critical Marxist ethnography is too theory driven and overly politicised. It is also claimed that it fails to bring about the transformations it promises, although there are considerable differences of opinion about the degree of 'transformation' required to 'make an impact' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). For some, change at policy level is needed; for others, developing a critical consciousness is transformative and, therefore, has an impact. My research aimed to raise critical consciousness amongst teachers. Through being part of the research process, engaging in discussions, and developing a critical understanding of theory and society, such critical consciousness would hopefully lead to teachers engaging in alternative and transformative pedagogy. Beach (2015) argues that knowledge is valid when it is:

> Integrated with or instigates change that is sustainable and beneficial to ideologically disadvantaged and materially exploited groups, which it does either by exposing the contradictions located in time and space that either allow for or oppose the possibility

for organizational and ultimately social transformation or by engaging in processes of change directly (Beach, 2015, p.58).

Catalytic validity is "the degree to which the research process re-orients, focuses, and energizes participants in what Freire (1993) terms 'conscientization', knowing reality in order to better transform it" (Lather, 1986, p.67). Beach suggests that catalytic validity is determined on two levels. The first level is established within the field and concerns relationships between the researcher and the researched. Here, the aim is to "break down the researcher-researched distinctions that unduly privilege the former and to live out fundamental values of democracy and inclusion within the research process itself" (Beach, 2003, p.860). This requires the researcher to accord the researched with respect, equality, and fairness whilst getting:

> [C]lose enough to researched communities to become able to see and assess the world from the different perspectives within them. And it involves them engaging in dialogue about current community practices and aims with community members before conjointly extrapolating and evaluating new discourses to support courses of action that can take things in directions that may undermine the present class system (Beach, 2003, p.865).

The second level concerns the potential research has to contribute to democratic and transformative change within society. The aim here is to:

> [C]ontribute to democratic processes of change by developing research that synthesizes local beliefs and critical social theory as practical knowledge for the democratic transformation of the social institutions and situations that researchers otherwise only observe and theorize and write about (Beach, 2003, p.860).

Catalytic validity is complex. It is often difficult to reach as researchers and researched are often unknowingly influenced and controlled by dominant ideology, and wider structural forces. Researchers need to develop "complex forms of recognition" to identify how dominant forms of ideology and practices are formed and maintained. Only then can they begin to expose oppressive forces and practices within society and begin to bring about change (Beach, 2003, p.865). Researchers develop this understanding and realization through becoming part of the researched community (Beach, 2003). Although spending extended periods of time in the field is one of the main characteristics of ethnography, becoming part of the researched community can often be problematic. Jordan and Yeomans (1995) argue that critical research often fails to transform dominant ideology and practices as those who carry out research are largely from "the ivory towers of academia" and their "material location is often at odds with those whom they research" (p.400). To some extent, however, my material location is shared with the researched. Through my own background, identity, and profession I am somewhat grounded in the community rather than at odds with them.

*The Ethnographer*

It is widely recognised that social research cannot be carried out in an "autonomous realm that is insulated from the wider society and from the biography of the researcher, in such a way that its finding can be unaffected by social processes and personal characteristics" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.15). Researchers *are* shaped by their socio-historical locations and biographies, including the "values and interests that these locations confer upon them" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.15). Miller and Russell (2005) argue that there are three important and interrelated dimensions to consider when examining the researcher's self – the 'Personal', Professional', and 'Political'. The research itself, the 'foreshadowed problems', where and who is researched, the methods used, and how the findings are reported, are all continuously influenced by the three dimensions.

The researcher's own biography, identity, values, and personal dispositions are related to the Personal. These factors influence the research topic, relationships in the field, and how the researcher behaves and interacts. The personal characteristics of the researcher, such as age, race, gender, sexual orientations and religion are often characteristics the researcher cannot hide (Miller and Russell, 2005). Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) describe these as "ascribed characteristics" which are not open to 'management' (p.73). I am white, heterosexual and female, and at the time the research was carried out I was 23-24 years old. Teaching is a largely female-orientated occupation and so my gender did not appear to affect relationships with male staff. Neither my sexuality nor race was discussed. Before the fieldwork began, I felt that my age could be a potential barrier to gaining access to the field and forming relationships. However, once in the field it was clear that there was a varied mix of ages amongst staff. My combined ascribed characteristics allowed staff to see me as a human rather than an imposter or spy. Naturally, in any work environment, better

relationships are formed with some rather than others, although attempts were made to form positive relationships with all. Miller and Russell highlight that use of language is another personal characteristic that can influence relationships in the field (Miller and Russell, 2005). Speaking the 'same language', I believe, was one of the most influential personal factors when considering the formation of relations in the field. I spoke *their* language both in a literal and figurative sense – I shared a similar Yorkshire accent and I spoke the language of a teacher.

The Professional related to my ethnographic experience and/or professional experience. Professionally, I was a novice ethnographer but I was a novice ethnographer in my professional environment – a primary school. I began teaching in 2013. I had secured my first teaching post at a school in a socially deprived, former mining community, in West Yorkshire, which I initially enjoyed and was able to engage in creative thought and pedagogy. However, I quickly realised that my beliefs and ideology were not shared, and that authority and control were the main principles practised throughout the school. Outside the classroom, pupils were expected to walk in single file lines, walk in silence, and wear their uniform to the headteacher's prescribed standard. Inside the classroom, all pupils were expected to be, again, in correct uniform, sitting silently in perfect lines, all hands up, legs crossed, and eyes on the board. All lessons were to be taught in a set way – by PowerPoint, in the given time frame that had been planned. As I did not conform to these practices, I was subjected to constant performative regimes – observations, 'drop-ins', learning walks, and my planning would be frequently scrutinised online. My space to resist was becoming limited.

To a degree, this only affected me and not the pupils, and as long as I still had a reasonable amount of space to resist the ideology and practices of the school, I could still continue to engage in my practices. However, there came a point where the practices of the school did

affect my pupils and it became difficult for me to alter this. This was at its most obvious when the headteacher explained to me that one boy in my class would be better off going to another school as it would be 'better for our data' and 'better for the staff and pupils'. The boy been permanently excluded from his previous school, had joined my class mid-year and was working at nursery level in Year 1, displaying quite challenging behaviour. This sort of oppressive discourse continued as teachers regularly made comments such as, 'what do you expect from these sorts of children?' and 'they're only going to be working in a factory or at Asda'. I then began to see how the curriculum and how authority was used to control and oppress certain pupils. Just before I handed my notice in, staff were told they could not work with the 'lower ability' pupils anymore as they 'weren't going to produce results'. After one and a half years of teaching I could no longer work at the school unless I became an oppressor. Although I was not aware of what exactly was happening I knew it was wrong and I could not play a role in the oppression of the pupils. The 'foreshadowed problems' of my research were ignited by this experience of teaching (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

The final dimension is the Political which Miller and Russell argue has two related aspects. Firstly, it relates to the researcher's "personal political stance, beliefs, and ideology". Secondly, it relates to the "broader political environment and climate in which the research is conducted" (Miller and Russell, 2005, p.60). They note that "the political position of the researcher may influence what the ethnographer deems worthy of investigation and from whose perspective… the political climate, the time and place in which the research is carried out may mould the research" (p.60). Politically my sympathies lay broadly with the majority of teachers' political views and beliefs, and trade unionism at Lillydown Primary School. I had an understanding of what it is like being a primary school teacher in the current educational climate, particularly teaching in a socially deprived community where pupils

often start school below national expectations and pressures are intensified. I also understand how managerial discourses have the potential to intrinsically change what it means to be a teacher, your beliefs and values, and what pedagogical decisions and practices you engage in. It places teachers in a complex situation as they battle between sacrificing their own personal beliefs for the demands of the market. Party politics and current affairs were often part of daily conservations where, for those who engaged, opinions were shared in a friendly and open environment. I did not engage in most of these discussions. However, this was not always the case; the 2016 European Union Referendum, to some extent, divided the nation into 'leave' and 'remain' camps, and the referendum became a hot topic for discussion in school. Whether you were 'in' or 'out' was the controversial, potentially divisive question being asked. Therefore, the decision was made to be more reserved politically in debates – to listen rather than engage. Like Hammersley and Atkinson I agree that:

> In many everyday situations, a researcher often has to suppress or play down personal beliefs, commitments and political sympathies. This is not necessarily a matter of gross deception… For the researcher this may be a matter of self-conscious impression management, and may thus become an ever present aspect of social interaction in the field (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.72).

When asked, personal information, beliefs, and experiences were shared. In some cases, such as the EU debate or where, for example, my opinion or beliefs may have influenced others or their practice, I would approach the situation with caution.

Clearly, my Personal, Political, and Professional dimensions continuously influenced the research. These dimensions allowed staff to position me within their social landscape and helped build trust and form relationships. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) agree that

relationships can be facilitated through shared professionalism, expertise, skills, or knowledge but they also draw awareness to the idea that researching into a familiar setting, into your own culture or workplace, could hinder the researcher's ability to see what is going on. Essentially this relates to insider/outsider debates which are deeply problematic:

> In essence, outsider myths assert that only outsiders can conduct valid research on a given group; only outsiders, it is held, possess the needed objectivity and emotional distance. According to outsider myths, insiders invariably present their group in an unrealistically favourable light. Analogously, insider myths assert that only insiders are capable of doing valid research in a particular group and that all outsiders are inherently incapable of appreciating the true character of the group's life (Styles, 1979, p.148).

As a primary school teacher, brought up in, and still living in, a former mining community, I could be identified as an 'insider'. I am researching my own class, my own culture, and profession. Everhart (1977) argues that studying the familiar "does not provide the role legitimacy that being an outsider interested in something he knows little or nothing about does" (p.2). He argues that in this position the researcher knows too much, they fail to look, to learn, and to understand what is going on. They cannot make the familiar strange or look critically from outside. But, to some degree, I was also an outsider. Lillydown Primary School was in a different county to my previous school and I had no connections to the school or staff before the research started. Within the community I was also essentially an outsider. I was "intellectually poised between familiarity and strangeness" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.89). I had the fluidity to move between the two, to be one or the other, individually or take on both positionalities simultaneously. My insider status allowed me to gain access into the school, build trust, and relationships. It also gave me an understanding of

the historical and socio-economic background of Lillydown. Yet at the same time I was able to move to an outsider's perspective that allowed me to critically and clearly see what and why things were happening and make the 'known' unknown (Everhart, 1977).

*Research Design and Data Collection*

As ethnographies are often small-scale, focusing on one particular site, an air of doubt is often placed upon the representation of the findings (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Although generalisability in a statistical sense is not possible, ethnographies can achieve a degree of transferability. There is broad agreement that transferability can be reached within ethnography through rich, thick descriptions which allows the reader to draw their own conclusions (Walford, 2008). To create rich, 'believable' descriptions conversations, fieldnotes, observations, interviews, and theoretical analysis need to be woven together (Walford, 2008). For Geertz (1973), such descriptions must also reach out into wider aspects of fieldwork and data collection. He recognised the importance of researchers immersing themselves in the field, and deepening their understanding and descriptions through collecting and using background and contextual information about those under study (Hammersley, 2008). For example, although this research is situated within a community with a specific historical, political, and current socioeconomic context, similarities could, perhaps, be drawn with schools in other post-industrial communities such as those once built around the steel works, shipyards and docks. Each community would, however, differ depending on certain particularities such as the availability of other local employment; the locality and demographics of the community; the size of, and dependency on, the industry;

the speed and management of the closure of the industry; the implementation and impact of regeneration schemes, and so on.

Alongside this, background and contextual information about the school is significant when considering transferability. This information includes, for example, the political climate when the research took place, the type of school (public or private), its judgment by Ofsted, funding available, material resources, number of staff per class, the size of the school and the demographics of the intake, the percentage of pupils on free school meals and special educational needs, and so on. Without this contextual information and understanding, readers would not be able to assess the typicality of the school and area under study. In other words, transferability within small-case ethnographies is achievable but this requires, "reflection and clarity" about the field, the population, and for the research to be contextualised and situated within its historical and current context (Hammersley, 1992).

The school was purposely selected based on its historical and current socio-economic location. At the time of the research, Lillydown was still a local authority school with a higher than average percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals and the vast majority of pupils were from white British backgrounds. Decisions had to be made about who to observe and interview though, and where and when this would take place. A significant factor influencing who participated was based on those who agreed to participate. It has been well documented that gaining access to a research site and participants are continuous processes throughout the research that can often be challenging (Creswell, 2007; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Walford, 2008).

For this research, telephone contact was made with Lillydown Primary School in October 2015 and an initial meeting was scheduled for November 2015 during which the Headteacher granted access to the school. Before the research began, another meeting was held with the Headteacher in March 2016 to finalise research dates and details. Nevertheless, to accord each participant with respect, individual access was sought, and continuously verified by each teacher involved before any observations and 'formal' interviews took place (BERA, 2011; Brooks et al., 2014). Walford (2008) places access on an 'incremental continuum'- a "moment-by-moment process of negotiation and trust that can be rescinded at any time" (p.16). Although individual access was gained, the extent to which their choice to participate had been made 'freely' is questionable; particularly in an educational institution where power imbalances are in motion and staff may have felt an obligation to participate (Walford, 2008; Wiles, 2013; Brooks et al., 2014). Critical ethnographers are committed to giving voice to those who may otherwise be silenced – to do otherwise would be to behave unethically as criticalists (Beach, 2015). They are openly committed to exposing oppressive forces in society and ultimately bringing change through transformative practice. Their commitment to research aimed at fair representation, equality, and social justice resembles an 'ethics of caring' (Noddings, 1988; Beach and Eriksson, 2010). Alongside standard ethical commitments and practice, Beach (2015) therefore proposes:

- A concern not only for local culture and the ways researchers can affect it, but also for how research can affect broader social relations and conditions (of production).

- An intention to analyse and evaluate all recommendations and actions in light of answers to questions concerning the maintenance of communication and the growth of individuals, and the exploited communities they are part of and/or more broadly represent.

- Providing a challenge to the foundations of conventional modernist science as a critical tool for change, by developing a commitment to make this tool as available to everyone as possible, to both use and influence.

- A globalization of thinking and of affirmative action toward maximizing social and educational equality.

(Beach, 2015, pp.60-61)

Possibly, one of the most influential factors in reaching such ethical commitments is becoming part of the researched community, as Beach and Eriksson (2010) note:

> The 'closeness' of the research means that it is impossible to assume a neutral and distant stance protected by the objectivity of high-science when we make research ethical decisions and that we should instead seek a shared understanding for our shared world and be 'as present, attentive and engaged as possible towards others' in order to accomplish this. The point here is that ethnographic involvement 'begs' one to consider research from the perspective of what life is presently like for those who are being researched and what impacts on their life quality may grow forth from or because of our research and its representations (pp.138-139).

Critical ethnography places an emphasis on locating research within its historical and contemporary political and socioeconomic climate to gain an understanding of how economic and material conditions are formed and maintained. It allows the researcher to become part of the researched communities' everyday lives studying their behaviours, their actions, and their 'way of life' in their natural environment (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Walford, 2008).

The fieldwork mainly took place in classrooms, although this depended on the subjects being taught – for example, physical education (PE) was carried out in the hall or outside – or

whether any additional extra curricula activities were scheduled such as educational trips. Although Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) describe observation within the staffroom as providing a "rich source of teacher accounts", after discussion with staff members, most noted that they wanted to safeguard this space as a place where they could 'be their selves' (p.9). Accordingly, observation in the staffroom did not ensue. Although this could be seen as being problematic, on reflection, the conversations that did occur in the staff room, as documented previously in this chapter, essentially focused on personal and political dialogue. All observations were hand written to avoid disruption during lessons.

Spending extended periods of time in the field is a notable characteristic of ethnography, although ethnographers often disagree over how long is enough. Jeffrey and Troman (2004) draw attention to another aspect of time – the frequency of which the researcher enters the field. They identify three time modes, 'compressed', 'selective intermittent', and 'recurrent' modes (Jeffrey and Troman, 2004). The first phase of the research was an explorative phase which took place from April 2016 to June 2016. A total of 15 days – over 90 hours – were spent in the field during this phase. Ethnography entails a certain degree of time and dedication to the research, the setting, and the participants. As Walford (2008) writes, "the principle of engagement by the researcher contains two elements: human connection with participants, and an investment of time" (p.9). The first phase allowed for a human connection with participants to be formed, trust to be built, and the field to be investigated. This is particularly important within an educational institution where an unfamiliar presence can lead to the teachers displaying uncharacteristic behaviours or fabricating their practices (Ball, 2006). It also provided time to gain a contextual, historical, and current biographical understanding of Lillydown and the school.

To gain historical and current contextual information about Lillydown, two interviews were carried out with members of the local community. Frank, a former miner who has lived in Lillydown for over 80 years, and worked at the pit for 44 of those years, was interviewed. Another interview was carried out with Jess, a young adult who moved from a neighbouring village to Lillydown in 2011. To some degree, this was opportunistic but, it was also informed by a desire to gain different perspectives on Lillydown – those of an older man deeply embedded in the community and those of young woman who had moved into the community. In addition, a member of school staff, a TA who has lived in Lillydown for over 50 years, volunteered to show me around Lillydown to gain a feel for the place, what has changed, and what it is like now. An initial interview was also carried out with the Headteacher to gain some background information on the school. The second phase of fieldwork took place from June 2016 to December 2016. Two days out of each week were spent in the school. The time spent in the field, the phases of research, frequency of visits, and flexibility to select during the fieldwork the specific place and people to focus on are characteristic of a selective intermittent time mode.

During the second phase of the research 44 days were spent in the field and a total of 264 hours of participant observation carried out. I critically examined how pedagogical practices, relationships, curricula choices (both hidden and formal) were mobilised within the material and ideological forces that permeate the school. 18 semi-structured interviews with teachers, HLTAs and TAs, and members of the community were conducted and transcribed (see Table 3.1). On average interviews lasted for one hour and were conducted on a one-to-one basis. 17 interviews were recorded and transcribed and one interview, at the request of the participant, was unrecorded.

| Name | Sex | Status | Background | Age |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Jess** | Female | Resident in Lillydown | Moved from neighbouring village to Lillydown in 2011. Some family ties. | Young Adult |
| **Frank** | Male | Resident in Lillydown | Started working at Lillydown Colliery at the age of 15 in 1952. Over 40 years' experience working at the Colliery. Lived in Lillydown since birth. | Mature Adult |
| **Headteacher** | Female | Headteacher | Experienced | Middle-Aged |
| **Erica** | Female | Teacher | Experienced | Middle-Aged |
| **Frances** | Female | Teacher | Experienced | Middle-Aged |
| **Louise** | Female | Teacher | Experienced | Middle-Aged |
| **Joe** | Male | Teacher | Experienced | Middle-Aged |
| **Clara** | Female | Teacher | Early Career | Young Adult |
| **Mark** | Male | Teacher | Early Career | Young Adult |
| **Estelle** | Female | HLTA | Experienced | Middle-Aged |
| **Hazel** | Female | HLTA | Experienced | Middle-Aged |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Zoe** | Female | HLTA | Experienced | Middle-Aged |
| **Jane** | Female | HLTA | Experienced | Middle-Aged |
| **Wendy** | Female | HLTA | Experienced | Middle-Aged |
| **Jennifer** | Female | TA | Experienced | Middle-Aged |
| **Jackie** | Female | TA | Experienced | Middle-Aged |
| **Elaine** | Female | TA | Experienced | Middle-Aged |
| **June** | Female | TA | Experienced | Mature Adult |

**Table 3.1: Biography of Participants – An Overview**

Estimated Age Ranges: Young Adult: 20 – 30 years old, Middle-Aged: 30- 60 years old, Mature Adult: 60+ years

The ethnographic interview located teachers' biographies and experiences within the historical and current political and socio-economic climate in Lillydown. The questions allowed teachers' beliefs, values, and practices to be positioned within the material and structural forces that condition their society and profession. Informal interviews – 'friendly conversations' – were continuously part of the fieldwork alongside the formal (Spradley, 1979, p.58). Arguably, it is problematic to rely simply on interviews to reveal the 'truth' and provide an accurate account of what is going on (Hammersley, 2008):

At best, interviewees will only give what they are prepared to reveal about their subjective perceptions of events and opinions. These perceptions and opinions will change over time, and according to circumstance. They may be at some considerable distance from any 'reality' as others might see it (Walford, 2007, p.147).

Although apparently strong and trusting relationships were established, caution was continuously exercised over data produced during interviews. Field notes and secondary data sets were collected. Descriptive field notes captured emotionalities, contextual and social relations, recorded how time and space was utilised, and environmental features such as, noise levels, movements, and resources. Reflective field notes provided a critical platform to test out theories and for analytical categories to formed in situ (Jeffrey, 2016). Although descriptive and reflective field notes where mainly used, reflexive field notes were also recorded allowing personal feelings and emotions toward staff and the school to be documented.

*Data Analysis*

Qualitative data analysis entails organisation, classification, and interpretation of data. Essentially, it begins in the pre-fieldwork phase of ethnography and continues throughout the fieldwork and post-fieldwork phases, although "there is no formula or recipe for the analysis of ethnographic data. There are certainly no procedures that will guarantee success" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.158). However, there seems to be a general view that there are several stages involved in analysis. It often begins with an initial reading of data, then a rough analysis to generate initial codes, followed by a more detailed analysis – searching for themes, patterns, relationships, and so on – before moving on to the final stage

of analysis which involves the interpretation and conceptualisation of data (Brewer, 2000). To some extent, the overall effectiveness of data analysis relies on efficient data management (Gibbs, 2007). Data are often reorganised into different themes and categories and are recoded throughout. Ethnographers collect large amounts of data – field notes, interview transcripts, photographs, participant observations, and so on – and so, analysis is often challenging (Brewer, 2000). Efficient data management is, therefore, needed in order to thoroughly and successfully code and analyse data.

Before technological advances in data-analysis software, researchers analysed data using paper-based techniques. There are, however, potential difficulties associated with manual techniques such as the physical organising and manipulation of data which is time consuming and often quite complex. Recent developments in Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) have made the storage, organisation and manipulation, and coding processes more manageable. Two notable characteristics of CAQDAS are its capacity for physical storage and its speed and efficiency in managing and searching data sets (Flick, 2014). The software's code and retrieval process allows codes and themes to be renamed and new ones created, multiple codes to be attached to data, and for all similarly coded data and themes to be retrieved (Brewer, 2000, p.118). In ethnography, data are often densely coded with multiple codes attached to data:

> We code [the field notes] inclusively, that is to say if we have any reason to think that anything might go under the heading, we will put it in. We do not lose anything. We also code them in multiple categories, under anything that might be felt to be cogent. As a general rule, we want to get back anything that could conceivably bear on a given interest… It is a search procedure for getting all of the material that is pertinent (Becker, 1968, p. 245) (Quoted from Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.153).

Whilst there are several advantages to using CAQDAS, for some ethnographers, there is a concern that it prevents researchers from feeling 'close to the data' (Fielding and Lee, 1998; Gibbs, 2012). But recent developments in CAQDAS allow researchers to move around data sets, and code and retrieve data without decontextualisation (Gibbs, 2007). Concerns have also been raised over the danger of substituting the ethnographer's imagination for that of the computer (Okley, 1994). In its current form, CAQDAS software is, largely, no 'real threat' to the ethnographer's imagination (Fielding, 2001). It is not a fully automated process; computers act only as a tool to facilitate the storage and management of data. Ultimately, the researcher is in control of the computer. Although CAQDAS can make analysis more efficient, manageable, reliable, and transparent:

> [C]omputers cannot do the interpreting for you. In the end, it is your responsibility, the human researcher, to come up with interpretations, to develop analytical explanations and to underpin your overall analysis by appropriate theory. Doing this assiduously, comprehensively and exhaustively will help ensure that your analysis is not only of good quality, but ultimately that it is interesting, persuasive and significant (Gibbs, 2007, p.146).

For the purpose of this research, both paper-based and CAQDAS – Nvivo – were used to analyse data. Using the computer within the first stages of analysis allowed me to move quickly through and across data, generating initial codes and themes. Similarly coded and thematically-related sections were then retrieved and printed out to continue the analysis using paper-based methods. To some extent, using both analysis techniques reinforced the feeling of being close to my data allowing a deeper, more intensive, reading and exploration of data. As there are no set rules to analysing ethnographic data, a more general approach was

used to code and categorise data into themes relating to the four research questions. The following five stages were used to analyse data.

*Stage One: Initial Reading (Paper-Based and Nvivo)*

Repeated reading of interview transcripts, participant observations, and field notes to familiarise myself with data. Readings of data continued throughout the analysis to ensure I was immersed within it and to avoid "thin descriptions and unconvincing analysis" in later stages (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.162).

*Stage Two: Initial Codes and Themes (Nvivo)*

Generating initial codes and themes to begin to make sense of data. As the research is a critical ethnography, some codes and themes were shaped by existing theory, structural influences, and the research questions, but new codes and themes emerged from data. At this stage of the analysis the codes and themes were somewhat descriptive but were refined into more abstract codes during later stages of analysis.

*Stage Three: Intensive Reading (Paper-Based)*

Intensive reading of data. During these readings, I looked for initial differences and similarities, relationships, and patterns across codes and themes, between different participants, and within different situations and events (Gibbs, 2007). As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) comment, "the important thing to recognise is that, in order to produce an ethnographic study that is equally rich in data and concepts, it is not enough merely to manage and manipulate data. Data are materials to think with" (p.158).

*Stage Four: Definitive Coding (Nvivo)*

Initial codes and themes were developed into more definitive and abstract codes.

*Stage Five: Conceptualisation (Paper-Based)*

The interpretation and conceptualisation of data. Here, it was also necessary to examine any negative cases as, although these may be rare and unique, they often "strengthen the analysis by illustrating the complexity of the phenomenon and the researcher's reluctance to engage in an easy gloss over difficult evidence" (Brewer, 2000, p.117).

# Chapter Four: Findings

## De-Industrialisation: The Historical and Current Role of Education for the Working Class in Lillydown

*Research Question One: What are teachers' perceptions of the role of education for working-class children?*

> *a) Whether the historical role of education in Lillydown affects current pupils and their education.*
>
> *b) What the role of education is for pupils in a post-industrial climate.*
>
> *c) The relevance of the hidden and formal curriculum.*

**Schooling in Post-Industrial Lillydown**

If we are to truly understand the complexities of social life and inevitably transform it, Gordon (2008) argues that we must find a new way of knowing, a practice of understanding and reckoning with "the echoes and murmurs of that which has been lost but which is still present among us in the form of intimations, hints, suggestions, and portents" (p. x). It is the echoes and murmurs, Gordon reasons, that are the 'ghostly matters' which continue to haunt the present (p.190). A haunting is a "process that links an institution and an individual, a social structure and a subject, and history and a biography" (p.19). Recognising a haunting is to understand what has happened and what is currently happening; it is to establish how the past continues to affect the present in often unknown and complex ways. Generations after

the miners' strike and pit closures, staff believed their community's history continues to affect pupils' educational and lived experiences:

> The miners' strike was really tough and it left a lot of people damaged. It has left a lot of people without things like jobs and self-esteem and some have chosen the wrong paths because of that… I remember the Lillydown that I knew and there used to be the working men's clubs and the brass bands. The brass band does still play but I think what has gone is pride. People were proud to work in their local mines; it was a close knit community – everybody knew everybody… What it has done is left people without their pride and I think that is a tough thing to lose and once you have lost it – it's difficult to get back. Yes there are the factories there but that's not like a northern industry; there isn't the solidarity and comradery. They don't have the power and the control and there is very little movement to work up. I mean there used to be a real social side to working in the mines. I remember going on the day trips out by the miner's welfare club and there used to be a real social side to that. With the factories there isn't that, it is just a factory and you are just a number. Every village had its own mine and that's not the same as going to work in your mine (Frances, 10.11.2016).

Through their knowledge and understanding of the community's history, staff recognised how past conflicts – particularly the 1984-1985 miners' strike – the loss of the industry and the community's complex social traditions and structures are ghosted in to the present. Their own experiences and knowledge of the past allows them to recognise aspects of their haunting which ultimately allows them to understand their present reality (Gordon, 2008). Pride, collectivity, and traditional community practices have, as Frances suggests, been replaced by a sense of loss. In many ways, what was lost was not simply an industry but traditional structures, rhythms, and ways of being and doing. Losses which are, staff felt,

ghosted from one generation to the next. Staff raised concerns over the long-term effects of deindustrialisation. They outlined how historic and current economic conditions, alongside continued government welfare 'reforms', have created difficult conditions in Lillydown. Some staff felt these conditions have created an 'historic generational trend of unemployment' in Lillydown:

> What these children are seeing at home is actually that they don't have to work. It is difficult because we have a set of expectations and a feeling that these children can go far but then what is out there in the community is different. A lot of families out there have lived through the miners' strike and their fathers being out of work and that has passed down through generations… We have families that have been in that generational unemployment cycle that aren't getting out of it (Erica, 13.01.2017).

Although Erica alludes to inter-generational trends of unemployment, data actually showed that previous generations have worked and continue to work; however, changes to the labour market have made employment complex and insecure. Consequently, the working-class face prolonged periods of churning between low-paid, low-skilled and insecure jobs, and benefit dependency and unemployment (Shildrick et al., 2012). Most staff regarded unemployment, job insecurity, and increases in benefit dependency as a consequence of wider changes in the labour market and economic structures. They reflected on how historical and current structural forces and mechanisms work, and how these oppressive structures and practices shape and limit opportunities in Lillydown:

> It's been so long since the' have worked, and that's not necessarily their fault, but we're encouraged to blame those people. I do it, you get mad and you think, 'they're getting this and the' getting that and some of 'em are getting paid as much as me'. If

I'm being honest, I think they are kept there and it's functional fo' ' government to have 'em there to blame 'em. We can all blame 'em and get mad at 'em so we don't really get mad about what we should be getting mad about which is that the kids are actually stuck here and can't get out of it… There is nothing fo' people is the'? It's like a little island where there is nothing for people at all – there is nothing… I don't blame people for not doing those sorts of jobs, I wouldn't do 'em myself (Joe, 03.11.2016).

As Joe suggests, a lack of secure, well-paid, and rewarding employment that gives workers a purpose, an identity and sense of being, is gradually demotivating the workforce. Most staff recognised the complex and often multiple problems faced by some families in Lillydown. They recognised that pupils' lives are shaped, to a significant extent, by historical and current social structures and economic forces. A number of staff also felt traditional 'work ethics' had, for some families, become displaced:

I think in some cases that hard work ethic has filtered down but it is becoming more and more diluted. My dad went and worked down the pit so I am the next generation so I had it. It is becoming more and more diluted as the generations go on because the children here, for example their parents have not gone down the pit so they haven't got that work ethic so the children aren't seeing it… if they want to be an animator the' going to have to go to university and work hard at it but that's not something they are seeing any more in the community. That work ethic is not necessarily transferring to the way they see things and their future (Clara, 21.11.2016).

Faced with the realities of the immediate labour market in Lillydown, and with little prospect of change, workers are gradually becoming demotivated and long-standing industrial 'work

ethics' are arguably becoming lost. With employment now more individualised, precarious, and insecure, staff felt traditional notions of security, collectivity, and solidarity were difficult to reproduce. For Elaine however, unemployment and benefit dependency was, for some, a lifestyle choice:

> I have always thought that it has just become this massive collar around people's necks here. They are so bitter about what happened in the miners' strike that it has knocked a lot of people down and it's passed on in generations now. It is just this reluctance now to go out and find a job because it was taken off them… it is as if they are throwing the teddy out of the cot… It will take several generations for that to die out and for outsiders to come in, in order for this area to forget about it and move on. I mean it is diluted down but it was a sore point when it happened in the 80s and when people talk about it, it opens up this wound. People will talk about it and talk about it but they still feel this bitterness towards Maggie Thatcher and everyone else (Elaine, 17.11.2016).

Although assertions about 'the workless' and 'the poor' have been challenged (see Shildrick et al., 2012), the notion that values and practices discouraging employment are passed on between generations, creating a culture of worklessness, is a powerful discourse popular with UK governments and within certain sections of society. For Elaine, there was a belief that unemployment was a lifestyle choice transmitted between generations – an act of resistance almost – 'as their main job was taken off them'. It is, however, important not to romanticise the past:

> We aren't romanticising about it and my Grandad knew how tough it was… [but work] is impersonal now. I think they had an identity. They had something that they

could relate to and they saw their family members being proud of themselves doing a day's work and providing for their family (Frances, 10.11.2016).

The mining industry was, as Frances describes, 'tough' and the loss of the industry added to pre-existing socioeconomic difficulties. What the mining industry and its wider structures and networks did provide was a *sense* of security, continuity, and a sense of being within the community. There are, however, as Elaine alludes to, tensions and conflicts – ghostly matters – in the community's past which continue to haunt pupils' lived experiences. Staff reflected on how past conflict – particularly the 1984-1985 miners' strike – and the effects of de-industrialisation have, at times, constructed negative accounts of life in mining communities:

> We still live and discuss the mining community and that hasn't changed. We try to set them up to have higher expectations and to maybe push themselves a little bit more and maybe say that it is okay to be different, rather than be banded by a village… [They are banded by] a reputation of poverty, a lot of poverty… when people say to me where do you work and I say Lillydown people say, 'Jesus, I wouldn't work in there for love n money it's rough'. The' think the' is no respect, it's full o' burglaries, [and] loads of drugs… it has cleaned itself up and the people are quite friendly but it has lost some of that kind of … village mentality, that community spirit (Estelle, 29.11.2016).

'Banded by a village' captures how young people are still affected by their histories:

> They don't know how it used to be so they are living in that aftermath without knowing about it… with the first generation there was a lot of anger you know that pride had gone, that self-esteem had gone, that industry and your livelihood had gone but the first generation understood that anger. That anger then flips in the second

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generation into misuse, choosing wrong paths and that. The third generation don't

know their history, they just know they are living in this area and what they are living

in is 'okay'. They know the brass band comes out occasionally but they don't

understand the history of the brass band. Up at the high school, there is still the

miners' wheel but I don't know if they know why it is there… I think if you live in

this area and you don't know that it was a mining community that's sad. But, we are

not talking about the sons or daughters of miners any more are we (Frances,

10.11.2016).

For post-strike generations their history is often unknown yet their lived realities continue to

be shaped by historical and current economic and social structures. They are, as Frances

describes, living in an 'unknown aftermath' where they are haunted by their past in complex

and multiple ways.

*Reproduction of Cultural Norms*

Leisure, like much else in Lillydown, was traditionally built around the coal industry. Staff

reflected that there used to be "a real social side to working in the mines" (Frances,

10.11.2016). They recalled how the Miners' Welfare Club and Institute were at the heart of

the community's recreational activities. Built to promote a sense of community, the Stute in

particular provided a wide range of social and educational activities – cricket and football,

and first aid and brass brand training, for example –  and organised day trips where, as the

Headteacher recalls, 'literally the entire community went *en masse'* to the seaside

(Headteacher, 09.06.2016). But the Stute was demolished in 2010 and with it the community

suffered a loss of traditional performances of collectivism. There are no longer institutions in

Lillydown that provide the variety of social and cultural activities once found at the Welfare Club and the Stute.

Staff reflected on how the distinctive social structure of Lillydown not only provided a sense of continuity and stability but helped bring a range of educational and cultural experiences to the community. Invariably, staff saw a need for the continuation of such practices in school. They believed most pupils' socioeconomic and material backgrounds limited their opportunities to engage in wider social and cultural activities that were once accessible in their community:

> There was some widening of experiences but now they don't go very far our children. When I first came here… I had children that had no concept that the town Lillydown is in was our town because they thought Lillydown was it. They had no understanding or impression of where they sat within the country and even where they sat within the town never mind the wider world; it was almost beyond their knowledge and experience. I think there is a real lack of experience out there (Headteacher, 09.06.2016).

Most staff felt that Lillydown Primary was a place where they could, to some extent, provide a continuation of traditional social and cultural experiences. First aid training and competitions, trips to the seaside and zoo, bike ability, freestyle football, rounders, cricket, Taekwondo, proms and dances, and educational theatre experiences were just some of the activities observed. The school appeared to serve as an alternative space where traditional activities and performances are reproduced and transmitted into the present alongside pupils' experiences of schooling.

The pit, pubs, and other social institutions provided spaces where particular forms of cultural knowledge and values were passed on from one generation to the next. For most staff

however, as community social relations and networks became displaced after the closure of the pit, cultural transmissions of knowledge were lost:

> That education they got is missing now definitely. It definitely has because the older people that gave all the advice to the younger members of the community, when they went to the pits at 14 or 16, has gone. That was there to give them advice on how to keep them out of trouble or whatever. That's gone and now you just have your teachers and that's really it, there is no one there to look after them… They just don't have those people to give them advice, look after them, and put them on the right path because that's not there anymore (Mark, 08.12.2016).

Observation data showed how particular cultural knowledge – specific behaviour, dispositions, values and moral codes – were reproduced through established teacher-pupil relationships:

> Whilst working, the teacher initiates a conversation with a pupil working alongside them. They discuss one of the pupils' family members being in the school grounds last night:

> T: I saw your brother up the tree out here last night.

> The pupil explains to the teacher that they knew about it. The teacher then asks the pupil whether they were there and whether they got into trouble. The pupil said they were not there at the time. The teacher then gives the pupil some advice,

> T: Dun't be going in ' tree on a night, you'll end up getting into trouble. Make sure yha not in school on a night and just watch what yha get up to.

The pupil nods and appears to listen to the advice, they smile back and the teacher and reply, 'yeah I know thanks, I won't'.

Staff were often observed offering advice in relation to pupils' personal lives and behaviour outside of school. In all observed exchanges of guidance, pupils listened attentively and welcomed the advice. Staff believed the school was a space where pupils' lived experiences were 'completely different to their outside lives'. Words like 'safe hub' and 'a family' were used to describe the sense of being which was created throughout the school:

> It's a little cocoon, it's in its own little bubble, everything is brighter and everyone is happy. It is not their outside life and there was no reason I wouldn't want to be part of that (Louise, 05.07.2016).

Staff felt they formed 'a community', a microcosm of what once was, where fragments of traditional relationships and networks, and working-class codes and values are transmitted and reproduced. At times, staff engaged in practices, it appeared, to compensate for the loss of traditional ways of being and doing, and for the socioeconomic and material disadvantages some pupils faced:

> We almost are that foster person for those in some ways because we can provide that role. Just putting that in a very simple example, we have children who come in everyday in clean uniform, are cleanly bathed, and everything is hunky-dory. We have other children who might not have a clean uniform and would be worrying about coming in to school because they might have comments made to them about it and they then have a volcanic eruption but it is not their fault. Those children know they can come into school early and there will be school staff who can give them a clean

shirt and no-one else knows any different. We have very much got that situation going off and that prevents anything happening. That situation I gave you is a very real one which involved a previous pupil who was often without clean uniform. People would say things to her and it would upset her so coming in early and getting a clean t-shirt from us, and maybe a bit of deodorant, solved the issue (Erica, 13.01.2017).

Providing pupils with emotional support and care, clothing and other material needs, and supplying all pupils with breakfast, appeared to create a sense of security and continuity within the school. Observation data showed how pupils' economic and material backgrounds could, without the support of staff, affect their educational experiences:

> The HLTA stops the class to tidy away before home time. One pupil asks if they could practise the art techniques learnt today at home. Whilst the HLTA agrees that would be a good idea, another pupil explains they have not got any pencils at home. The HLTA responds:

> HLTA: Don't worry about that. If you want to practise at home, if you come and see me after school I will find you a piece of paper and a pencil if you haven't got those things at home.

And,

> The TA is explaining that this afternoon they are going to be telling pupils what outfits they will need for the Christmas play. One pupil asks whether they have to buy the outfits so 'they can start saving now'. The HLTA replies,

> TA: No don't be going home and worrying about anything like that, we have all the outfits sorted.

> (Observation Data: 03.11.2016, 08.11.2016)

Similarities can be drawn between traditional notions of collectivity and community support that many mining communities, and other working-class communities, depended on to cope in times of hardship, and the current ways in which staff support pupils. Current rhythms and patterns of schooling continue to offer pupils the networks, relationships and practices that emulate traditional ways of community life, at least to some degree. In many ways, what the school creates is a place, "where time slips backwards and forwards, where nothing changes and everything has changed" (Bright, 2011a, p.65).

*Community Attitudes to Education*

Although most staff acknowledged that parental involvement differed between families, they believed parents, in the main, do not value education. Most staff felt this is borne out of parents' own educational experiences and confidence:

> I think the parents of a lot of our kids are quite young and the' have had bad experiences of school themselves. They are not very well educated themselves so it's hard, int it. I have come across parents here who can't read and write… That's a big thing and I think that's a big barrier to education around here. A lot had bad experiences of school when it wo still the very old fashioned regimental tests… I think it is very much, if you have a bad experience and then it follows them (Estelle, 29.11.2016).

Alongside this, staff felt, parental attitudes were shaped by historical and current conditions of the labour market in Lillydown, and the limited value of education and qualifications:

It's not worked for the' parents so the' dun't see it working fo' anybody do the'? So like how many people do the' actually know who've worked really hard at school and gone on to a successful life and career and done really well for 'emselves? Probably very, very few… So why would you bother?… why would you work hard at secondary school and try and get your GCSEs and go on to do your A-levels at Oakshire college when it hasn't worked fo' anybody else?… What's point in 'em engaging in education? There is no reason to. And if they' do want a job like that [call centre] or like caring you don't need any qualifications for that anyway do you? (Joe, 03.11.2016).

Data showed parental attitudes were often shaped by certain attitudes towards education and employment:

When I wo at school my mam didn't care if… well she cared and I went to school every day but she didn't care if I didn't want to go to university and if I didn't want to go to college. Thing wo then that you used to leave school at 16 and get a job straight away but the' wo loads o' jobs. Everybody went in ' sewing factories and that if you didn't know. Not many of 'em round here went in to teaching or anything like that. Me Dad worked at ' pit and me brother worked at ' pit so yeah, it wo like that when I came to this school  (Hazel, 08.11.2016).

Traditionally miners and their families were largely sceptical of the value of 'book learning' and 'theory', progression to college and university was uncommon (see Dennis et al., 1956). Education and training provided through the NCB – mechanical and electrical engineering, and mine management, for example – were, however, valued modes of knowledge and a means of moving into higher or alternative job roles. Changes in the nature of employment

have, however, resulted in a shift of traditional roles for education and employment. The labour market in Lillydown has now, largely, been replaced by precarious, low-paid, and unskilled employment. Although some areas of employment require certain levels of education, as Joe notes these are often low and usually fail to offer the broader social benefits – further education and training – once offered by employment in the coal industry.

Some staff, however, described a shift in parental attitudes towards education over recent years:

> I have had parent meetings this summer-term and I have started discussing high schools with them and straight away they are concerned about their children's education now. Now, that is coming from a set of parents where education wouldn't have been there for them, it would have predominantly been about, for them, going out and getting a job. But now, quite a few parents are thinking about their children's education, and thinking which high schools are good for them because they want them to go to college. The kids are also saying that they want to go to college and they want to do this and that. A lot of the professions they want to go into now require some kind of college qualification. I have had children before in years back, when you ask them what they want to do when they leave school, say that they just want to go and sit on the sofa because that is what their dad does so why shouldn't they. To go from that which was maybe six or seven years ago to this what is going on now is a good change (Louise, 05.07.2016).

Staff believed that formal education is gradually becoming more important in the community. Frances describes how the social and economic changes are beginning to shape community attitudes towards formal education:

They once went to the pit and worked their way up but there isn't the pit anymore so education, in an institutional setting, has become very important… People did go to school but the outlook for most of them was that they did end up in the pit. Their dads and grandads mainly worked in the pit, and they also went down the mine and worked their way up. I think it is a different community now… I think parents see the importance because there isn't that industry on their doorstep anymore to go to. There isn't the industry and it isn't that dads, grandparents, and then you, can go in to a certain industry so I think they see that they have got to have other options. One of the options is to come to school, attend regularly, and try your best so you will have other options (Frances, 10.11.2016).

Traditional routes into employment – often facilitated via family relations – can no longer take place. Pathways and opportunities into further education and employment are now more individualised and precarious; women are also more obviously part of the labour market than before the decline of the industry (Warwick and LittleJohn, 1992). The labour market has also seen an increasing number of older workers continuing in full or part-time employment for longer. These changes have contributed to routes into employment, job supply and security becoming more complex. What was once an 'ordered world' where, "both men and women knew what was coming their way, in terms of a job, a marriage, a level of prosperity or lack of it, a position in society" (Turner, 2000, p.10) is now more complex and precarious for both men and women across employment sectors (Shildrick et al., 2012). Although staff described a shift in parental attitudes towards education and employment, for Erica this process of re-structuring is complex. She describes how traditional ways of being and doing continue to be embedded within the community:

Remove the pits and they have not got that continuous flow so actually education becomes more important. What has been extremely difficult and is taking decades to change is people's realisation that has to be so. Within the community, there is not really that realisation, understanding, and support for education from families because they never had to do it; it was always just a path that they went on and got a job at the end of it regardless of what they got at school. For them to actually sit down and think about it and realise, 'actually to get a job now, because we have not got something on our doorstep, we really need to be putting something into this education malarkey to get a better deal and to have a future'. That is something that is hard to change and we do see some families that do appreciate that but you see a lot that don't… It is amazing how easy it is to destroy a community but it is equally amazing how difficult it is to build it back up and get it back to where it should be (Erica, 13.01.2017).

Observation data, nevertheless, showed parental involvement at home and during in-school events was often low:

The teacher asks two reading groups whose parent/s have been invited in to school to participate in today's guided reading session whether they know if their parent/s are coming. One pupil puts their hand up out of a class of 30.

During the afternoon guided reading sessions, two pupils each had one parent attend the first session out of six. In the second session, three pupils each had one parent attend.

And,

> As the phonics group ends, the HLTA asks pupils about their weekly spellings:
>
> HLTA: Who has been learning their spellings at home then?
>
> Three pupils, out of a group of ten, put their hand up.
>
> HLTA: okay, it is really important you learn them because your spelling test will be on a Friday. Ask whoever it is at home to help you practise your spellings, whether it is mum, dad, grandma, or your brother or sister, it doesn't matter who it is just have five minutes practising.
>
> Pupils agree to ask someone at home to help them with their spellings.
>
> (Observation Data: 18.10.2016,
> 08.11.2016)

Although involvement in parent-pupil sessions like this was low, parent's evenings, seasonal concerts, and sports day were well attended. Staff were also observed continuously welcoming parental interest, and worked to create new spaces, events, and networks with parents.


*The Role of Education: Life Skills*

As the stated purpose of education becomes increasingly economic – and, as data suggests, formal education plays an increasingly dominant role in working-class communities – it is necessary to examine what the role of education is for the working class. Working within a Marxist tradition, education validates and reproduces capitalist structures, inequalities, and relations of production (Althusser, 2006). Through the curriculum and hidden curriculum

education reproduces the attitudes and behaviours that reflect and reproduce pupils' future occupational status, and economic position in capitalist society (Althusser, 2006; Bowles and Gintis, 2011). For Frances, the role of education *does* differ between schools. For pupils at Lillydown Primary, she believed its purpose was to get pupils to be 'the best person that they can be' and to 'raise their self-esteem' through educating the whole child. Invariably, staff saw the role of education at Lillydown Primary as a 'way forward' to help pupils 'better themselves' educationally and with employment. Like Frances, they also saw schooling as being about educating the 'whole child'; giving pupils the knowledge and skills to 'get by' academically, culturally, and socially and emotionally:

> It is not just about coming to school; it is about making them into people. You make them into a balanced individual; you're giving them the skills to get on with life, getting them to not give up and persevere… It is about showing them that it can be hard and it's supposed to be hard but you solve it and move on… how you manage the emotions as well. You are teaching them how to grow up; you're actually becoming the parent. You are the one telling them what the boundaries are, what the dos and the don'ts are, and what life is going to be like in the real world… I try to get across that education isn't just about literacy and maths, and doing tests and the work, it is about them achieving something more. I want to see them grow up and do well in whatever it is they chose to do. If they want to be a window cleaner – do it and do it well! Don't' give up on it (Louise, 05.07.2016).

What pupils appear to be learning at Lillydown Primary is the 'know-how' – the knowledge and skills academically, and socially and emotionally – to 'get on with life' (Althusser, 2006). Some staff also felt that education was also about learning the rules and attitudes necessary for their future role in society:

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It's building up skills and attitudes based around equality. Giving them that

knowledge that through life there are going to be times where they have to follow

rules and if they break them there are going to be consequences, and that different

rules bring different consequences. They have to understand that. It's giving them the

skills so that anyone of them could be a leader and have the skills and abilities to do

that. It makes them more equipped for life in the outside world (Louise, 05.07.2016).

Alongside learning to 'get on with life', data showed pupils also learn the 'rules of good behaviour' – "the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he is 'destined' for" (Althusser, 2006, p.89). Whilst Louise claims the skills and attitudes pupils learn should be centred around equality she ultimately reasons, however, that they are based on control and rule-following rather than, for example, providing pupils with the knowledge and skills to question and challenge society. Pupils' experiences of schooling and the skills, behaviours, and characteristics they learn, even at primary school, begin to reflect the skills and knowledge necessary for their future occupational status and economic position in society (Bowles and Gintis, 2011; Anyon, 2011). Data showed some staff were conscious of how particular forms of knowledge and educational processes reproduce wider socioeconomic inequalities and reflect pupils' future position in the labour market:

You should be able t' go anywhere you want with education; it shouldn't just be that

because you come from Lillydown that people at college or university are thinking,

'oh we are not taking them on because look at their address'. I don't like to think that

just because kids are from here that the' are going to work in a factory but maybe

education is putting them into certain groups (Zoe, 11.10.2016).

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Although staff did have high expectations of pupils' academic potential and believed that education could provide a means for some pupils to 'get on', the majority of staff believed pupils' current and future realities are shaped, to a significant degree, by their socioeconomic and material backgrounds. For Joe, pupils' lives are affected by particular forms of knowledge and educational experiences:

> I suppose you'd like to think that the role of education is to give 'em the skills and ability to better 'emselves and to move further up ' social ladder and do well for 'emselves but I think there is so much in ' way fo' a lot of 'em that it's not actually ' reality for ' most of 'em. Sometimes I think we are educating 'em and teaching 'em things that are not of any great relevance or great importance to 'em and won't be a great lot of use to a lot of 'em (Joe, 03.11.2016).

Staff believed education provides pupils with the knowledge and skills needed to 'get by' in life; but some, like Joe, questioned whether they are failing to expose pupils to deeper, more conceptual forms of knowledge that could be of 'more use to them'. In other words, data showed how some staff were conscious of how education reflects and reproduces wider social and economic inequalities through the knowledge and social conditioning processes pupils go through according to their social class.

*Educational Progression*

Most staff felt progression to college was a natural step for pupils but that university was "a different kettle of fish" (Wendy, 01.12.2016):

> You see when I wo at school it wo grammar school and it wo only expected that them kids at grammar school could ever achieve… it won't expected that people from this village would go t' university… I think the' wo always the pits that everyone relied on and now there isn't (June, 13.10.2016).

These traditional performances and beliefs, data showed, continued to be transmitted into the present. Staff reflected on how limited community knowledge and experience of university impinged on pupils' educational experiences:

> Well look at one pupil in my class, he's got no chance has he. If he wo born into a middle-class family he would go on t' university, maybe like a really good university not just an old poly, I mean like a proper university, and do really well because he *is* really bright, he gets things really quickly, he is articulate, and so on and so forth. I'd be willing to bet one thousand pounds though that he will never go near a university in his life… it would be almost beyond his comprehension and that of his parents… The' probably wouldn't even know that wo' a choice and even if the' did the' probably wouldn't understand why he wo doing it. I know some of the kids when the' go to secondary school the' do put 'em on a thing where the' take 'em to university and the' show 'em round so the' can get an idea but you need your parents' support don't you. There's loads of kids like that who are perfectly able but it's just beyond their comprehension and that of their parents that the' could do that (Joe, 03.11.2016).

Embedded within this was a belief that some pupils' educational progression would be constrained by their socioeconomic and material backgrounds. Partly, staff felt this was a result of limited cultural knowledge but they also felt that wider social structures within the community – relationships, networks, and traditional practices, for example – shaped their attitudes and educational experiences:

> For a lot of our kids round here, the' will choose to stay round here 'cos family ties are strong – the' stay wi' family. Take some o' ' kids in this class, they are living on ' same street as grandmas and grandads and cousins and that bond is really strong int it. I think Lillydown is maybe twenty or thirty years behind ' rest of Oakshire and I think, to some degree, they are tied to that principle that if you wo born here you die here… universities weren't really common you just went to your local tech (Estelle, 29.11.2016).

Familiar practices, relationships, and support mechanisms in the community provided pupils with a sense of security and continuity. Leaving these behind for education, data showed, would be a risk staff believed pupils would be reluctant to take. Staff also acknowledged how educational progression was influenced by pupil agency and wider socioeconomic factors such as availability of courses at universities and tuition fees.

In general, staff felt pupils could, if they chose to, progress onto college and university. A minority of staff, however, regarded vocational studies and apprenticeships as a more accessible educational pathway for pupils who are 'not academic':

> There are a lot of apprenticeships out there for children in vocational subjects if they are not academic. I know at one of the local secondary schools in Year 9 they can choose to do vocational paths, they can do construction and things like that. At 16-18

you can do hairdressing and things like that so there are lots of vocational

opportunities for 'em (Mark, 08.12.2016).

Traditionally, apprenticeships at the local technical college were valued forms of education

which led to progression within the mining industry. With the breakdown of traditional

educational and employment processes, alternative pathways are, as data showed elsewhere,

becoming increasingly important. Although staff generally viewed vocational pathways and

work-based learning as equally as valuable and accessible as university, this particular extract

from data highlights how a minority of staff perceived them to be of less value. This

demonstrates how processes of social stratification are being constructed. It highlights how

processes of social conditioning and the experiences of education pupils are exposed to

reflect and reproduce wider social and economic inequalities.

*Employability*

Although staff felt education functioned mainly to "get 'em [pupils] a job at end o' it" (Hazel,

08.11.2016), they were conscious of how pupils' realities and futures are situated and shaped

by the constraints of the labour market in Lillydown, and their socio-economic and material

backgrounds. For most, there was a realisation that there is little available for pupils to 'better

themselves':

> The worst case scenario is that the' end up taking and selling drugs, and drinking and
>
> that. The best case scenario is that the' end up working in a factory or a shop or
>
> something like that – I suppose that's ' best case scenario for ' vast majority o' 'em…
>
> I always like to think that there's a few who would go on and do really well but after

that I don't actually believe it… [The local warehouse] is not a proper job is it? (Joe, 03.11.2016).

Like other former industrial areas (see Shildrick et al., 2012) it was, however, not employment *per se* that staff thought problematic but the poor working conditions, increased job-surveillance, and the loss of job security:

> It is a very one size fits all system, you will finish your secondary education and you will go to college or do an apprenticeship but then after that you're out on your own and the' expect you to find something. The' is no support and it is semi-skilled jobs mostly in Oakshire and ' terms and conditions of pay are rubbish. There are no incentives fo' people to go and do it… I think we have the' same types of employment but the employment laws have been slackened to make it fit fo' employers, that hasn't helped the people… If you have a couple of days off as an agency workers it's off you go, off you pop on yha bike, and I have seen it done to people who are genuinely willing to work. I have seen kids at 18 who genuinely are willing to go and give it a go but it is easy picking. I don't think the work that wo on offer twenty or thirty years ago wo any different. I think we still have a high percentage of unskilled jobs and I think that is what Oakshire is; I think that's how it is going to be for a long, long time. Realistically it is ' terms and conditions that have changed, the' is no loyalty anymore (Estelle, 29.11.2016).

One result of the shift in terms and conditions, as Estelle notes, is the increase of expendable labour power. Whereas previous generations typically had a sense of gaining a 'job for life', the current labour market demands workers to be more individualised and flexible. Frank describes how these changes are problematic for young people:

There's no jobs rand eya fo' 'em. I mean the' need references n if the' han't had a job the' can't get a reference. The' gu for a job n the' need experience n the' haven't got experience. N the' gu for one job n there's 20 or 30 people who gu for it. It's just knocking 'em back. I'm glad I'm not in it, I've had ' best o' life me. But community in Lillydown int like it used to be…. I can see kids that I don't know what the' gunner do and yet education is theya for 'em nowadays n when we wo young ther' wo none. Education when we left school it wo straight into ' pits!... They've got t' gu elsewhere (Frank, 06.06.2016).

Data showed the availability of jobs was a concern amongst staff. Although some, like Frank, felt pupils could 'gu elsewhere', for Joe, employment in Oakshire, like many other isolated former industrial areas, also remains uncertain:

I mean even if the' do travel to work, like a lot of people do have to travel now, there isn't anything. I mean I guess there is the call centres [in the neighbouring village] but it is just crap. There might be a shop in Oakshire but there is not like a proper job for a number of people is the'? There is nothing really that will motivate people to get a job so there is no real hope for 'em (Joe, 03.11.2016).

For a small number of staff, however, the warehouses in Lillydown provide sufficient employment. They felt the jobs "made up for the loss of the pits" (Mark, 08.12.2016) with some staff regarding factory work as appropriate for those not continuing in education:

We do have a lot of business now; a lot of small business and factories. We have got local factories for people that don't want to go on to higher education (Jane, 08.11.2016).

A minority of staff saw local factories as a viable option despite the types of precarious employment available there:

> Our children might think, 'it's [one of the local factories] just packaging clothes and sending them to people who order online. I don't want to do that, I can get more money on the dole' but actually there are web designers working there on complex internet sites, there are fashion designers, and buyers. There are a whole range of people working down there not just people involved in sending out orders. We are trying to get local businesses in to talk to some of the older children to give them some future aspirations. We do quite a bit with first aid and that has led quite a few children going on to be nurses and paramedics (Erica, 13.01.2017).

Although the jobs Erica discusses are available, they are typically based elsewhere; in Lillydown is mainly in warehouses – lorry driving, picking, packing, fork-lift driving, and so on.

**Hidden Curriculum**

Implicit within a number of interviews was the importance of constructing teacher-pupil relationships based on an attempt to establish equitable relationships, rather than mechanistic regimes of control and subordination. In the main, data showed rules and educational process being actively formed and maintained through relationships based on trust and respect:

> We have all got good relationships with the children. Yeah we have the rules and we follow the same procedures but very rarely do we have to go further down the rules and procedures, it is stopped by the relationships that we have got with the children… The relationships are what holds the rules, what holds the routines, and what holds the respect within the school. We have got major respect for all our children and vice versa… If we didn't have the relationships then we would be following the sanction plan probably daily to the bottom (Clara, 21.11.2016).

In practice, staff were observed giving pupils a level of reasoning and understanding behind the use of rules: "we don't really bawl at 'em like, we just tell 'em you know if the' using running feet inside that it's dangerous and that" (Hazel, 08.11.2016). Data also showed traditional working-class humour being used to effect rules and educational processes in a relaxed, playful way:

> A pupil is walking to assembly with their collar up. The TA is stood at the door waiting for the class to pass through. As the pupil with their collar up passes, the TA comments:
>
> TA: Put yha collar down, Elvis is dead!

The pupil laughs and smiles at the TA. Whilst continuing to walk to assembly, they put their collar down.

And,

Two pupils are chatting whilst the HLTA is going through answers to a Maths test. The HLTA turns around and comments to the pupils:

HLTA: Yha not in ' local [pub] nar lads, callin' [chatting] away wi' each other.

The HLTA and pupils laugh. The two pupils nudge and smile at each other before apologising and focusing back on their work. The HLTA thanks them and continues.

(Observation Data: 09.06.2016, 06.10.2016)

Pupils appeared to understand and engage with these humorous exchanges with no observed levels of resistance. Observation data also revealed staff using mutual, open dialogue. Phrases such as, 'can you, 'would you like to', 'do you think you can', for example, were commonly used. Again, this was met with limited resistance:

One pupil arrives in class and goes straight to the HLTA to tell them what they want for dinner. The pupil is chewing gum and the HLTA notices:

HLTA: Do yha want to put that in the bin for me?

The pupil nods and goes straight to the bin. The HLTA thanks the pupil for putting their chewing gum in the bin – "tar".

(Observation Data: 11.10.2016)

Such discourse acknowledged the potential for individual pupil agency. It appeared to allow pupils to choose whether or not to engage with the rules and given processes rather than them being imposed upon them. Most staff believed taking a more authoritative, 'police-like' approach (Harris, 1982) for example, would result in pupils resisting education:

> The' hate being humiliated and shown up publicly… I think if you're overly authoritative with 'em it would just turn 'em totally away from you and the' would hate you. If the' hate you then the' won't work. If you are authoritative and aggressive wi' 'em… and make 'em try to behave in a way that's just to show you have control, it can lead to a danger that the' are going to hate you and you then lose control. In a school like this… I think it could be a very long day and it could be a very hard life so what you've got to do is find something that works for yourself. I think very early on I thought that if these children actually like you and you are nice to 'em that's what will work and what the' need… I mean it hasn't always been smooth but in the main it has and that's because you are showing 'em that respect and they are showing you that respect back, and the' won't let you down. The' don't want to upset you and let you down and if the' do the' are really disappointed in 'emselves… I think the' quite defiant and I think the' quite strong willed. I think a lot o' kids in Oakshire probably are like that… You would though wouldn't you, if someone wo nasty to me I would be nasty back to 'em, you wouldn't conform would you? (Joe, 03.11.2016).

For Joe, being authoritative and controlling could lead to conflict and pupils actively rejecting education. For many staff, there was a belief that historical social violence, in particular the 1984-1985 miners' strike, continues to affect the community's views on authority:

Yeah there is no respect now for authority really. We lived during the strike, and my Dad wo in it, and there wo a lot more respect then, people stood together, and we wo a really close knit community and t' be fair it still is a close knit community now, but I suppose there isn't as much respect now as the old village people had. It's different isn't it?... My dad and both my grandads were miners and they've still got a lot of respect for each other and other miners but wi' ' police force, because o' what happened in ' strike, he thinks he is owed respect from other people as well if he gives it. Whereas the police force now are bit more on your back, the' like their authority and the' like t' tell you t' do as you're told. Whereas maybe twenty years ago it wasn't like that, the' were both on ' same level and some people now think that the' are above you. And, for Lillydown people, coming from my experience, the' don't think the' are better than anybody (Zoe, 11.10.2016).

The strike disrupted community relationships with the police and authority more broadly. For Louise, these conflicts often unconsciously, affect pupils' views on authority and education:

What you are trying to build back is that respect to authority; that authority doesn't always have to mean that they are going to dictate. It is not a dictatorship it is a set of rules that should mean that everyone is treated equally (Louise, 05.07.2016).

Rather than coming into direct conflict with their pupils, staffs' shared class origins and identities, helped negotiate a degree of respect, stability, and agreement with pupils like the 'local coppers' at the beginning of the strike. Through their shared identities and staffs' particular approaches to rules and educational process, pupils actively engaged with, rather than rejected, education. Traditional performances of authority, moral codes, and ethics, appeared to penetrate and influence the rhythms and structures of the school through

relationships, and educational processes built on moral and equal grounds, rather than through regimes of control and oppression.

The Headteacher reflects on how, when she first took up the position, authoritative and inconsistent approaches to behaviour management, and a lack of positive teacher-pupil relationships, resulted in pupils rejecting the process and experience of schooling and authority:

> A lot of the kids used to climb up the boarding and things that used to be up around the school. Where we've got mental fences now it used to be white wooden slat fencing and they could climb them. They used to get onto the roof. They used to climb onto the flat roof or into all the wooded area in the trees to the top of the field and through into the cemetery. You know it was just a case of lots of bad behaviour and lots of disruption. There was no self-regulation. They had no idea how to behave socially or resolve conflict… So we really spent a long time trying to get all that social stuff in place, trying to get consistency, trying to get a secure place where we had got staff who stayed, where we were all singing from the same hymn sheet, where we were all agreeing to the same behaviour policy, and the same sanctions so everything was fair to the children (Headteacher, 09.06.2016).

For Estelle, past approaches to behaviour management – which she argued were, on reflection, often authoritative and controlling – resulted in conflict with pupils:

> If I said to them, 'you are going to do this!' I knew I wo spending ' next two hours walking around a cold, wet and windy playground trying to get 'em back in class. So, at the beginning, we maybe were a shouty authoritarian kind of school but it wo a steep learning curve when yha stood int playground wi' no coat on 'cos yha haven't

got time to pick your coat up before you go to bring 'em back in to class... Instead of talking at them sort of in a lecture kind of way, we flip it on its head and generally we are not very shouty people anyway. We are all very similar in how we deal wi' kids. I know having worked wi' tougher kids it doesn't work being authoritarian and shouty… I know I can get my point across better by saying something jokingly rather than shouting (Estelle, 29.11.2016).

Staff values and approaches to educational process appeared to be shaped by a belief that pupils' histories and backgrounds could affect the way they engaged with authority. Most staff believed that in order for pupils to engage with schooling and its processes, they needed to build respect, trust, consistency, and open relationships. For Zoe this is clear,

The' could all kick off but the' know that we trust 'em and I think that the respect we have in that class is really good… If you were just on at those kids constantly with how their upbringing is they are just going t' be thinking 'oh my god, well what's point in doing owt (Zoe, 11.10.2016).

Embedded within this, however, was an acceptance of the need for a degree of structure. Whilst structures and rules are typical practices, pedagogy appeared to be influenced and sharpened by an understanding of the specific socioeconomic disadvantages some pupils face at home:

We have some very troubled children that at times, you know, can have an outburst but it is always dealt with in a very nurturing way. We don't look at children and say they are 'naughty' or that they are 'behaving badly'; we try to get to the bottom of what is making them feel and behave like they are and normally it usually something really quite tragic and terrible that would be enough to send an adult spiralling…It is

all about helping our children to follow rules, to know that there are boundaries, and to be part of the community… I think our children are really well behaved because we have got those structures there but we are not a punitive place. People are not barking orders and shouting dos and don'ts to children, it is very much what we all believe and agree is right… A lot of our children are left to their own devices at night; they haven't got those rules and boundaries so they are out on the streets and there are problems in the community but we haven't got that in school because they have that respect for us and they know what the boundaries are (Erica, 13.01.2017).

For the majority of staff, their values and beliefs appeared to favour equality, trust, and respect – arguably reflecting traditional working-class social norms and codes of practice.

*Hidden Curriculum: Pupil Autonomy*

Data showed staff were, at least in principle, committed to promoting autonomy and equality within their classrooms. Most believed that pupils were able, to some extent, to individually and collectively influence the processes, and their experiences of, schooling and authority. The majority of staff felt pupils needed to have some 'ownership' to actively engage in education:

They have to have some ownership on it or they will not do it. This is *their* place. The school and the classroom are theirs. It is the only thing that is their own. They have to have the opportunity to make some decisions about what is going on in here… Doing that has given them some ownership over their education… Some of the first tasks we do with the class is to make our identity so we come up with our own code of conduct with the class and what is going to happen if we break this code of conduct. They tell

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you, you don't tell them... Once they have got that then that's when that community starts to build and you come onto the same level as each other because you have built that level of trust. They know you are not going to overreact and they understand the consequences of their actions because they created them (Louise, 05.07.2016).

Although pupils were observed exercising a degree of agency over the formulation of class rules, this varied between groups. It appeared to be largely dependent on staff experience and personality and, in a few classes, resulted in class rules being more structured and driven by staff. The following field note extracts illustrates varying degrees of pupil agency:

The class rules are pinned up on the wall at the front of the classroom. The rules have been hand written in different coloured felt tips; they appear to have been written by pupils.

- Teachers to always be at school
- If they are finding things hard, help them
- Be firm but fair
- To have individual punishments
- Respond to questions
- Listen
- Don't get stressed
- Have a variety of sports
- Positive attitudes
- Interesting lessons – not boring
- Not to be grumpy
- Have respect

And,

> The class rules are on a printed image of a shield. Pupils have signed their name around them:
>
> - Put your hand up to speak and answer
>
> - Quiet when any adult or peer is talking
>
> - All chair legs on the floor
>
> - Always be determined to succeed even when things may be tricky
>
> - Keep hands and feet to ourselves
>
> - Spare hand on page (shop)
>
> - Line up quietly and sensibly
>
> - Best presentation at all times
>
> - Leave the pencil pot out of our hands
>
> - Always put equipment away tidy
>
> - Take care of our work and put them in the correct place for storage
>
> - Respect our equipment
>
> (Field Notes: 12.07.2016, 17.11.2016)

The class rules in the second extract appear more mechanistic, teacher-led, and focused on rule following whereas the rules in the first appear to favour a more pupil-led approach focusing on respect, equality, and active participation. In practice, although informality was the norm, rules were, at times, enforced in a more mechanical and authoritarian style:

A pupil gets up out of their seat without asking and begins to walk over to another table. The TA notices and comments abruptly:

TA: Why are you up out of your seat? You know our rules now, you put your hand up if you want to get up and do something.

The pupil sighs and goes and sits back down in their seat.

And,

The teacher stops the register as one pupil sat near them appears to begin to make quiet conversation with the pupil at the side of them. The teacher shouts the pupil's name and stares at them for a few seconds before adding,

T: Why do you need to go and put your name on the board?

The pupil shrugs their shoulders.

T: For talking!

The pupils grunts and reluctantly gets up and goes and puts their name on the board.

(Observation Data: 16.06.2016, 20.10.2016)

Although such practices were uncommon, when they did occur they were often met with low-level pupil resistance – sighing, slow-timing and disapproving facial expressions, for example. In a few instances, however, pupils appeared to engage in more open acts resistance:

Pupils are doing a test. They are sitting in rows and working in silence. The teacher, without warning, asks one pupil to move. The pupil asks why and the teacher replies,

T: Because you are talking and I have asked you to move!

The pupil slouches in their chair, sighs, and again questions the move. The teacher asks them to move again in a sharper, sterner voice. The pupil reluctantly moves. They sit in their new place slumped in the chair, mumbling under their breath, and sighing. After a few minutes, the pupil begins to tap their pencil on the desk. The teacher is watching and after around 20 seconds shouts:

T: Get on with your work and stop tapping your pencil!

The pupil immediately shouts back – "I am thinking!"

The teacher does not respond. For around five minutes, the pupil sits 'thinking' before putting their head on the desk.

T: Get your head up!

The pupil shouts back immediately and that they are 'thinking' and then refuses to continue the test.

T: Right, I've had enough of your attitude, go put your name on the board *the pupil huffs as they get up*. If it continues you are going to be moved to another year group.

The pupil slouches in their seat, reluctantly does a few more questions, and then sits for the last five minutes of the lesson doing nothing.

(Observation Data: 01.12.2016)

Such instances were uncommon and when they did arise, they were typically met with low-level resistance but were quickly and mutually resolved. In the main, data showed staff

creating a sense of community, respect, and equality within their classroom. For the majority of staff, providing pupils with a space where they felt comfortable and wanted to participate in learning was more significant than focusing on the processes of schooling, and enforcing rules. Here Joe and Clara's words provide some insight:

> Really, the function of being here is for us to learn. Whatever we are learning the purpose is learning, not about me making 'em conform. I don't even think the' need to wear uniform, I think that's like getting people to conform to like military standards. Half of 'em haven't got ' right uniform and it makes 'em feel awkward and it's difficult for 'em. I don't think the' should be made to wear PE kit; I think the' should just be able to do PE if the' han't got ' kit. It isn't your fault if you haven't got stuff and your parents haven't got it. I don't think there is any need for it because wearing your own clothes can be an expression for young people… It's not as strict here. I mean it's like one pupil who has always got big rings and stuff on but that's fine because she expressing who she is isn't she. It's fine with me, she is doing her work, she is engaging in her learning, and she will leave this school where she needs to be. If she wants to stick her nails on and put her gold jewellery on then I don't give a shit, why would I be bothered? (Joe, 03.11.2016).

And,

> Does it make you learn better if you sit up straight? I don't think it does! I just think it is silly to have that expectation and it is not something I have consciously thought about it is just the way I am. As long as I can see that they are trying their best, then I am okay with that. We are learning together and it's that sort of we are an extension of their family. So if you are in a family home are you going to be sat up straight? No.

We try to continue those family values to make sure we are all together… I want

everybody in my class to be comfortable… I took my shoes off this morning because

my feet were hurting me, does it make you a better teacher if you are stood up

formally at front? I don't think so. I do sit on the table to read a story… In the

classroom, on my own with my staff and the kids, I just do what comes naturally to

me and they do what comes naturally to them (Clara, 21.11.2016).

Data showed that a relaxed atmosphere and approach towards educational processes and rules was typical. Pupils were observed lining up freely in their chosen order; quietly chatting whilst working; sitting, kneeling, or occasionally standing whilst working ; and freely getting up to sharpen pencils, go to the toilet, or to get a drink. In most classes, rules relating to uniform were relaxed. In the few instances where slightly stricter regimes were observed, there was still a fairly relaxed atmosphere but pupils, for example, asked permission to move around the classroom, and were often lined up and dismissed for breaks in more controlled ways. In all classes, pupils were given rewards for good behaviour and learning. In the main, these were set whole school rewards but at times, individual class rewards, such as sweets and chocolate, were used.

**Formal Curriculum**

The vast majority of staff criticised the curriculum as being too narrow and instrumental. Teaching and learning, they felt, focused overly on 'traditional subjects' – English, SPaG, and Maths. Pedagogical practices focused on 'formal', instrumental and rote learning – where knowledge is imposed and pupils' consciousness suppressed – rather than on creative modes of teaching and learning:

> [The creative curriculum] wo brilliant, it educated our kids more and it wo more relevant to 'em in life… I think we are very near to going back to desks in rows and rote learning... I don't think it will be very long before ' government sends us down that bloody road and that is when we will lose our kids. We have put a lot of effort in to making things interesting, making them want to learn, and making it hands-on, I think that is being taken away from us bit by bit… it is very much geared to the SPaG stuff and it is very old school, very public school – it is not what suits our kids. It is very short, sharp, and specific and I don't feel that the' is very much room for manoeuvre in that… It is almost becoming very dry again and I find it dull to teach… We are going back to what these kids' parents, or Grandparents for some of 'em, endured when they wo at school… Don't get me wrong SPaG is a skill that the' need to have but is it going to make their lives any better by knowing the terminology of it? 'Cos that's what we are doing we are teaching the terminology of it, if not more than we are teaching 'em how to use it and apply it (Estelle, 29.11.2016).

Staffs' views appeared to be shaped by certain beliefs about the social and economic benefits of specific forms of knowledge needed to "get them through life in this community" (Clara, 21.11.2016). These views were often complex and tempered by a belief of the limitations of

pupils' socioeconomic and material backgrounds, and the constraints of the current labour market in Lillydown:

> Most of 'em are going to be stuck here and if the' do get the chance to... move out and get better jobs and that, the skills that the' need would be more life-skilled based and the stuff I teach 'em certainly isn't life-skilled based... Being able to circle a determiner in a sentence isn't going to be of any use to any o' ' kids in this class. All that it serves to do is for the government to say that they have raised standards... The irony of it is though that by doing that we are seen as a good school but we are not actually a good school because we are not meeting ' needs of ' kids… By meeting the kid's needs every afternoon we should be totally nurturing 'em… We should stop teaching 'em random things like how t' use a protractor which won't be very relevant. We should be cooking with 'em, teaching 'em about how to manage the' money, teaching 'em about relationships, and about sex education. All those things that are actually important to 'em and relevant but none of the stuff we do. Really though, by people like me by buying in to it and doing it you are actually perpetuating it aren't you? (Joe, 03.11.2016).

There appeared to be a degree of dislocation between the knowledge the National Curriculum serves to produce, and what staff perceived pupils needed to secure and retain employment, and to 'get by' in life more generally. Staff seemed to view more 'vocational' knowledge and skills – wood work, metal work, and gardening, for example – and 'life skills' – like cooking and managing money – as subjects missing from the curriculum. Although such beliefs were not necessarily seen as problematic amongst staff, as they appeared to advocate teaching 'vocational' subjects alongside the National Curriculum, there is a danger that such views could, in practice, result in educating pupils for specific, limited functions in society. It could

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also be argued that such pedagogy could fail to expose pupils to deeper, more conceptual forms of knowledge. But staff are limited in the space they have to engage in alternative modes of teaching and learning in ways which have the potential to empower working-class pupils. Staff argued that more flexibility is needed with the curriculum:

> They need life experiences like that and we don't because we are so crammed. We are crammed on punctuation, spelling, reading, and writing which are all vital skills but we are pushing all of the other things out and it is done at a detriment to the wider curriculum… We are under so much pressure to get the results in the other four key areas that we have not got the time to give the children the experiences that they need and have a right to have! It is those things that get them excited about the world and it gives them a push to explore an avenue that is their sort of love. I think if we don't give them those experiences then how are they going to know what their thing is and how are they going to know what their talent is; all they are going to know is what a subordinate clause is (Clara, 21.11.2016).

Despite such constraints and pressures, observation data showed staff engaging in some wider curricula activities that pupils might otherwise be excluded from – cooking, a variety of sports, theatre workshops, and technology, for example. These activities were, however, uncommon and often planned into curriculum subjects – the National Curriculum was their main focus.

*Professional Judgement and Autonomy*

Although state discourses have, for most staff, reduced their control over the curriculum, interview data revealed that staff felt they still had a degree of discretion. These spaces, however, tended to be within topic work rather than in core subjects. Data also showed that staff saw a clear distinction between autonomy and creativity:

> There is room for creativity but there is not room for autonomy. When I think about education, when I was at primary school, yes we had the maths and yes we had the English but the teacher who I had was building his own plane. I remember us doing lots of work about him building this plane and he even brought this plane into school and landed it in the field… A lot of what we did was his interest that engaged us and that to me was autonomy, and that is not what you have got now… you have very much got the National Curriculum and you have got to get the coverage in. I don't think you have autonomy but I think there is room for creativity and I think that is absolutely essential. You get judged on whether you are covering the National Curriculum… if you are not doing it you are in trouble (Erica, 13.01.2017).

On one level, more autonomy could allow staff to engage in deeper forms of critical, problem-based teaching and learning, which Erica alludes to. In practice though, teacher autonomy is complex and can be manifested unevenly. In the 1970s, for example – a period favouring autonomy and child-centred modes of teaching and learning – events such as the William Tyndale affair exposed the complexities that unstructured autonomy posed. At the time, the decline of the British economy was blamed on the education system and so-called progressive teaching methods (Whitty, 1990; Bassey, 2005). Most notably, these claims were documented in a series of articles known as the Black Papers (Cox and Dyson, 1971). Subsequently, education has been subject to increased state control which has, in various

ways, eroded and constrained teacher autonomy. In practice, staff were observed engaging in a range of creative teaching and learning practices both in topic and core subjects – experiential learning, following pupils' interests, using digital resources to enhance learning, and  through a range of wider curricula activities; bike ability, free-style football, Taekwondo, school trips, first aid, and theatre workshops, and so on. However, only in a few instances were staff observed exercising greater degrees of autonomy and engaging in deeper forms of teaching and learning – covering political and social issues for example, discussing local foodbanks and the European Union. They were also, at times, observed engaging in more activities related to pupils' identities and histories – such as, teaching and learning linked to the film *Kes* and a conservation topic linked to Lillydown. These practices were, however, uncommon and did not necessarily lead to critical forms of pedagogy. It is, however, important to exercise a degree of reflexivity about such matters. Critical pedagogy relies on staff being equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to engage in such forms of teaching and learning, within the current constraints and performative pressures in education – which should not be taken for granted. Nowadays, many degree programmes have been stripped of criticality and teacher education is mainly procedural and instrumental training driven by the demands of the state (Hill, 2017).

Staff felt able to engage in a level of creativity partly as a result of an environment in which they feel they are, at least in principle, the "king of your own classroom as long as you are getting those results" (Estelle, 29.11.2016). Data revealed, however, that such flexibilities were complex and largely dependent on experience and status:

> Whilst people do it... it tends to be more experienced teachers that are doing it rather than newer ones… You will have gathered that not every class is the same and having worked throughout school wi' ' majority of teachers I can see different approaches.

Year 6 I don't think have that room for manoeuvre and in Year 2… they are classes

that you are judged by – you live and die by them… as a HLTA I am not judged in

the same way as a teacher is, not as harshly anyway. Perhaps I can afford to do that…

not afford to do it more but I am willing to do that more (Estelle, 29.11.2016).

And by personality:

I'm aware of the fact that it [the curriculum] is dull, and that the way that it's

delivered is dull, and I think the only way you can make palatable for 'em is to make

it fun in terms of your personality and that, otherwise it would just be torture… I

don't actually think the activities are fun because you're just trying to plough through

'em so you do it through your personality and through the personality of ' kids (Joe,

03.11.2016).

Staff were observed exercising varied levels of creative teaching and learning. Their practices

were, however, affected by wider structural and performative pressures. Curriculum

coverage, tests, and assessments were observably the main focus in standard teaching and

learning practices. This was particularly evident in certain year groups and at certain times of

the year when exposed to external testing. Such pressures and constraints caused a level of

frustration amongst staff:

It shows the' don't trust us as professionals to do what's best fo' ' kids… nobody

comes to work wanting to be a bad teacher and if the' do the' very few and far

between. You sign up to it knowing it isn't the easiest job in the world but for God

sake the teachers who are teaching these kids have some experience on the' backs and

the' know what's what so let 'em fucking well do it. It is ridiculous 'cos all the' are

doing year on year is saying that we trust you less and less... that is everything that is wrong wi' this system (Estelle, 29.11.2016).

Data revealed that staff had a reasonable degree of freedom to plan lessons. Whilst the school did buy certain schemes – *Read, Write Inc*, *Big Math*, and *Get Spelling* – these were continuously altered to meet pupil needs. Most staff believed that frequent use of schemes would 'disengage' pupils and "kill any amount of creativity" (Estelle, 29.11.2016). Moreover, they believed that, although schemes are often marketed as 'creative', 'time-saving' packages, they are often problematic and result in a level of de-skilling:

> I hate schemes; I don't buy into anything… I can't be bothered spending ages trying to understand a scheme when I can just do my own. Like today, I wanted to draw, using a protractor and that, rectangles and squares, and triangles and parallelograms. I've got a million books and things, cupboards full of ' stuff on it. If the' can draw two rectangles, two different triangles, and a parallelogram and a rhombus you can do it! All you need is a piece of paper, do this, this and this, and two of each shape. You won't get that from a resource; you'll get pages and pages of 'em and I don't want pages and pages of 'em. Also, for the learning of the kids, if you can draw it twice accurately you can do it, you don't need to draw it twenty times do you. Schemes are like that and I've never got on wi' em because I can't understand 'em. I think, the process of planning, when you do your planning, your SMART Notebook or whatever, you understand what you're doing and where you are going and then the kids know where the' are going (Joe, 03.11.2016).

In the main, staff created their own lesson plans and supporting materials. High work-loads, a lack of time, and performative pressures, meant that some staff did use additional schemes

and pre-made PowerPoints, although this was uncommon. There were also observed difficulties when staff did use additional schemes – pace, suitable learning objectives, and errors in slides and supporting materials, for example.

*Formal Curriculum: Pupil Autonomy*

Observation data showed that teacher-pupil relationships were reasonably open and that pupils were able to exercise a degree of collective and individual agency. Whilst pupils appeared to be fairly active, these processes were, however, ultimately controlled by staff. Staff were, for example, often observed giving pupils set objectives to work towards and a degree of freedom to choose how they met them. Such processes were evident in observation data:

> Pupils are half way through their literacy lesson and are writing their own Greek story. One pupil gets up and walks over to the teacher. They ask whether they can write, 'he upset Zeus because he urinated in the water'.

> T laughs and replies: Yeah go on, get that one it. Get it in, I love it. You can do what you want, it is your story, just make sure you meet your objectives.

And,

> Pupils have been watching a series of videos on different shading techniques that they can use in today's art lesson. Before they begin, the HLTA adds,

> HLTA: Okay, whichever shading technique you choose today is fine by me. In one minute you are going to use the technique you choose to do a piece of artwork. You

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will be given a full-sized piece of paper and an I-pad. We've been learning about ancient Greeks and you are going to be using the I-pads – one between two – to find an ancient Greek building of your choice to draw and use your shading skills to contrast.

(Observation Data: 27.09.2016, 03.11.2016)

Data also showed pupils regularly choosing their own activities after completing set work – laptops, reading, and, on occasion, sports activities, for example – modelling and sharing knowledge, and voting on the order of some aspects of learning. Although there was broad agreement amongst staff that pupils had more influence over topic work this was, nevertheless, increasingly limited by various performative regimes and curricula pressures imposed upon staff. Here, Erica's words provide some insight:

There is room for children to influence it. For example, [within topic]… they might start off with asking the children:

- What do you know at the minute?

- What do you want to know?

They then might do some sort of discussion and collecting ideas, and the class teacher will try and incorporate everything they want to know. There is some scope for it but the reality is that teachers are planning away these things in the holidays so they are also trying to make fit what they have planned as well.

(Erica, 13.01.2017)

Workloads, time constraints, and other performative pressures limited spaces for pupils to influence teaching and learning. Pupil agency was further complicated by the level of experience and confidence of staff, and the year group taught:

> After SATs it is probably how it should be all the time because then you really can do things and if they are interested in something we can do that. Like one boy is interested in reptiles and another is interested in penguins and we ought to be following those interests… Like when we watched *Kes*, it grabbed a few of 'em so let's watch it. That's the sort of thing we should be doing but I haven't got time to be doing stuff like that which is a shame. If you wo brave enough to say, 'oh I'm just going to do that all the time' then we'd probably get horrendous SATs results (Joe, 03.11.2016).

What appeared to be key to successfully allowing pupils to exercise a degree of agency over their education was a balance between staff knowing the curriculum well enough to be able to challenge it, whilst ensuring standards are met. Performative regimes and pressures limited staff's ability to fully establish spaces where pupils and teachers were able to actively engage in critical teaching and learning.

# Relationships

*Research Question Two: How do teachers establish and build relationships with working-class children?*

> *a) Whether class positon of teachers affected relationships with pupils.*
>
> *b) Whether wider historical and current political and socioeconomic forces affect teacher-pupil relationships.*

## Shared Identities

In the main, staff believed their class origins helped form and maintain teacher-pupil relationships. Those who participated in the research were either from Lillydown or Oakshire, or had moved to the area and had connections to Lillydown. Staff largely identified as 'being working class'; a small minority of staff, however, believed their class identity had shifted over time and was shaped by their professional occupations, and current socio-economic and material conditions. Although Joe and Louise identified as being working class, they believed others may perceive them as 'being middle class' by virtue of their profession. Frances and Erica described how they have become more 'middle class' but believed their identities were firmly embedded in their working-class backgrounds:

> My Dad was an accountant but my Grandads were both miners and worked in the pits. I am from a working-class background and my parents, even though they went into less manual jobs, still very much have that working-class ethic. I am totally comfortable with the situation that I have got here and I think that helps part of the relationships… I understand the difficulties that have been there and that are there in working-class communities because I see the community that my grandparents were

in… My parents may have moved out of the true-working class in that they went to do jobs that weren't manual occupations but we still have those values and I certainly have those values instilled within me, and it makes me able to really appreciate what it is like (Erica, 13.01.2017).

For some, although their class positions may have become more fluid, their working-class backgrounds remained embedded within their identities. In many ways, all staff held in common a continued engagement with their working-class identities and, through this, a powerful connection with their pupils. For Clara, this was a shared sense of being embodied deep within her identity:

> Yeah, I get our kids and I get where they are coming from. I get that it is really hard and I think it is maybe something that I can't even speak about or grasp but I know that I am the same as these kids. I can't really put it into words; it is just something deep inside that is installed within me and within all the other children… It is just something inside you; I can't really put it in to words (Clara, 21.11.2016).

Most staff described how their backgrounds allowed them to be perceived as being 'equals' by parents as well as pupils – "not posh, just normal like everybody else" (Hazel, 08.11.2016). They believed this worked to develop teacher-pupils relationships through common values and dispositions, and an understanding of pupils' lived experiences:

> I think it gives you an understanding of the kids though… they will think that we are no better, we are still like their Mums and Dads and we are just local… Yeah I am working class definitely. See they won't understand class and stuff like that but yeah sharing those personalities and values does help. It is a better understanding for you about what they are going to go through (Jackie, 28.11.2016).

Data showed that how their lived experiences of growing up working class allowed staff to empathise with and understand their pupils:

> I suppose the' [the pupils] are very similar to how I wo as a kid. I wo a typical council estate kid. I grew up on a council estate and I come from a family where the' wo very little money… we wo a family that got by. I think that makes me appreciate and understand a little bit more what some of these kids have or haven't got (Estelle, 29.11.2016).

Estelle adds,

> I understand where ' struggles come from wi' these kids. Like a lot of these parents I had kids when I wo really young... so I have quite a lot in common with our parents and kids. I think to some degree, the' see us as one of them but the' do also know we are the' teacher. Everything I have I have had to work for or wait for, I wo never one of those kids at school that had everything and anything. I have seen what it is like to be that kid in a classroom and there is another kid who has a birthday on the same day as you and they have this amazing thing and you have a card – I get it! I see it, I know it, and I get it. So yeah, I do think having had that experience and background it helps me relate to ' kids. I can talk to them about my life and my upbringing and they can relate to me (Estelle, 29.11.2016).

For most staff, their relationships were strengthened through their knowledge and understanding of working-class life. Living in Lillydown or nearby gave staff a shared understanding of the particular socioeconomic and material conditions some pupils' experience. Staff felt this gave them knowledge of their pupils' home lives, their family, and community. Particularly for staff living in Lillydown, they also felt it gave them shared

experiences with their pupils. They discussed how seeing pupils in the local supermarket, in the community, and 'trick or treating', for example helped develop a shared sense of being and strengthened their relationships. The specific working-class dispositions and values, social norms and practices, and material conditions most pupils experienced would, staff argued, be difficult for someone from 'elsewhere' to understand:

> Somebody from a completely different area, especially if the' are used to a different type of education and a different community, might struggle to understand it. The' might struggle to understand where some of these children are coming from and some of these things these children have to face daily. Whereas being from this area you do know what happens in ' area and what some families have got to deal with. So yeah, it does give you that understanding (Jennifer, 17.11.2016).

Although there is little doubt that shared identities have strengthened teacher-pupil relations, such specific codes of working-class life have traditionally worked, and arguably continue to work, as exclusionary markers to those perceived as different – by race, sexuality, gender, and class, for example. Estelle recalls how a previous member of staff, although they lived on the outskirts of Oakshire, was 'othered' due to her particular accent and appearance:

> E: Lillydown is not necessarily welcoming to those who are different. A few years ago we had a teaching assistant who wo the most intelligent person, well intentioned, and had a heart o' gold but she got the most stick and the highest amount of disrespect from these kids ever.

> I: Why?

> E: She wo different.

I: Different how?

E: She wo well-spoken and she wo well-dressed. I am very aware of how I dress and that sounds ridiculous, I know it sounds silly, but one teacher wo referred to by parents in ' playground as 'The Model'… the parents hated her and the' judged her from the' off. All her clothes wo designer and her shoes, and she learnt that the' hard way. She wo Oakshire through and through and an amazing teacher but the' pick up on it – don't make yourself a target.

(Estelle, 29.11.2016)

Estelle illustrates how appearance and accent work as markers of who you are and, ultimately, whether you belong. Being 'well-spoken' and wearing designer clothes marked this teacher as being 'different'. Frances recalls how her accent and language marked her as being different when she worked in a school 'down south':

… it was just little things like you would go in to schools and you would never think there is anything wrong with how you speak but they would pick up on my 'northern accent'. I was thinking, 'ooh do I have an accent' and the way I spoke was different to the children in the class and the adults in the school. I found it tougher going into the southern schools... there I was the outsider going in. Also, the thing down south is the different humour. I have grown up in this area with you know, Mum, Dad, aunties, uncles, cousins and a big family who all had got the same kind of humour, and then when I was going down there I found it difficult; I felt like the outsider going in (Frances, 10.11.2016).

At Lillydown Primary, shared language and accent, most staff felt, made them more approachable and, ultimately, helped build and maintain teacher-pupil relationships. Although language can, data suggests, work to marginalise and exclude, some members of staff believed spaces are available to, over time, 'learn' their language. This was a particular belief amongst staff who had either moved into Lillydown or surrounding villages from elsewhere, or lived in Oakshire, and whose accent differed somewhat from the specific accent and dialect used in Lillydown. For Clara, speaking the same language as her pupils helped develop relationships with parents:

> Whenever I speak to parents, especially if they are parents that I know I need to get on side or parents that are a bit standoffish towards education and coming into school, my accent gets stronger because I just feel that it puts them at ease… I do it on the phone as well and when they hear that familiar accent they realise that I am actually down-to-earth – I am a real person from Oakshire. They see that I am not some authoritative figure from somewhere that doesn't understand and I think they open up a bit more and see me more in a friendly manner, rather than just a teacher (Clara, 21.11.2016).

Being able to speak the same language as their pupils marked staff as insiders. An important part of this, data revealed, was being able to use humour to develop and maintain relationships. Traditionally, humour served as a coping strategy for the arduous and dangerous work miners faced and was an important part of community life. 'Pit humour', in particular, often involved 'taking the piss' and being able to understand and engage with humour was an important part of creating and maintaining solidarity, trust, and relationships underground. Joe describes how pupils and staff carry their histories, and how traditional working-class humour continues to be important:

I think it is very important… it is almost like a semi-industrial type of humour, isn't it? It reflects what you would have found in the industry… It's that sort of almost unkind ribbing of each other sort of thing and that's probably 'sense o' humour these kids have got from their industrial background and where the' have come from and they've probably kept that haven't the'. That's probably why the staff in my class have still got it and they get it as well and probably why I've got it (Joe, 03.11.2016).

Humour continued to be key to the structures and rhythms of the school (see Hidden Curriculum) and, most importantly here, used to develop teacher-pupil relationships. Staff reflected on how the ability to understand and use humour is deeply embedded within pupils' working-class identities. Data showed understanding and engaging correctly with such humour skilfully used and understood by pupils irrespective of age:

With the class I am in now one of the boys gets it and he is seven. He gets the banter because who he is living with is a working-class bloke – he was a miner – and they give the banter at home so he knows he can do it at school. Sometimes he does not know when to stop because he is young but he is very good and he just gets it. I love it when they give it – I love it! (Jackie, 28.11.2016).

It also showed how distinctive forms of working-class humour continue to function to develop solidarity, trust, and relationships between both staff and pupils. In practice, humour was commonplace and used by both pupils and staff. Such humorous exchanges were evident in observation data:

- One pupil has volunteered to come and work out an answer to a sum and whilst on their way to the board T comments,

  T: Can you move a bit quicker today 'cos, you know, I'm off to my Mum's for Christmas dinner.

  Everyone laughs and the pupil walking to the board laughs and shakes their head at the T – they continue walking at the same pace to the board.


- One pupil puts their hand up to tell T that they are off to rounders and T smiles at the pupil and adds,

  T: You're not going are you? *the pupil nods* why? You're rubbish at rounders.

  The pupil laughs and tells T to 'shut up'. T and the pupil laugh. T puts their arm around the pupils and tells the pupil to 'have fun'.


- T asks one pupil to read,

  T: You can read the next bit, let's check whether you're awake. *pupil laughs and reads on*

  The pupil reads extremely loudly. Mid-way T jokingly says,

  T: Are you struggling for confidence there?

  The pupil laughs and continues reading at the same volume.


- T asks pupil at the side of them whether they have a flowery festival headband like another pupil. The pupil tuts and says 'no'. T jokes about getting one. The pupil responds, 'why tha han't got any hair'.

T laughs and says: 'yeah but I can still have one, I'll get us both one for x-mas'.

The pupil shakes his head and laughs at T.

- Pupil tells T it is break time and T replies,

  T: Who are you ' union representative?

  Staff and pupils laugh.

  One pupil shouts, 'yeah we are, it's brek'.

  T laughs and responds: You'll be ' death o' me you lot, go on get out to play.

- Two pupils have been moved together for an activity but sit far apart.

  T: What's up wi' you two? It looks like Moses has parted the sea in-between you two. Come on you'll b' reet, you've known each other years, get on wi' yha work.

- Pupils are in a line walking to the hall for dinner. As T moves down the line, they notice one of the tables is covered in felt tip pen. T reminds the pupils to draw on the paper and not the table and comments,

  T: I hope it comes off or the table will be ruined.

  One pupil hears the comment as they are walking by and replies, 'at least it will be colourful'. All staff burst out laughing.

  (Observation Data: 09.06.2016,

  09.06.2016, 12.07.2016, 27.09.2016,

  06.10.2016, 07.07.2016, 10.11.2016)

There appeared to be a cultural skill which, largely, pupils and staff were able to use to understand the 'piss takes' and fluently engage with the humour. Although staff argued that humour does, in the main, create and strengthen relationships, they also reflected on how such distinctive forms of humour, at times, could cause offence to people from 'elsewhere':

> You could offend people from elsewhere with the type of banter… I mean if the' [pupils] don't get it the' just look and think, 'what the' on about' but you will always have those certain kids that really get it and it works. If it was someone from a different area you could probably offend 'em. I think you know yourself if you can have that banter wi' 'em (June, 13.10.2016).

Whilst positive teacher-pupil relationships are essential foundations of teaching and learning, what is significant to Lillydown Primary is the situated reproduction of traditional working-class modes of being to develop and maintain teacher-pupil relationships. Language, appearance, values, and identities continue to work as forms of inclusivity and exclusivity. For staff, there is an undoubted sense that growing up working class, and their continued engagement with their class origins, enables them to develop strong, trustworthy, and, arguably, potentially powerful relationships with their pupils.

**Pupil Engagement: Relationships and Environments**

Implicit within a number of interviews was the importance of taking time to get to know pupils on a more individual level. In practice, however, workloads, time constraints and other performative pressures limited spaces to develop relationships. This often resulted in staff using their own time – before and after school, during breaks and dinner times, for example – to develop teacher-pupil relationships:

> I will sacrifice mi own time before or after school fo' 'em. I mean last night one of last year's Year 6 lads came up and I had literally got mi' coat on and I had just packed mi stuff up, it must o' been quite late on 'cos I would have had after school club so it would o' been about ten to four-ish, so I took my coat of and sat down wi' him. If it is important enough for him to come then I will stay (Estelle, 29.11.2016).

The impact increasing performative pressures could have on teacher-pupil relationships was a concern amongst staff, particularly as they believed that without their relationships pupils would reject education:

> … If you're relying on the curriculum to inspire 'em and engage 'em yha fucked!… Seriously all it's good for is propping up an uneven table leg… relationships are really important and all the way across school you have to have those relationships or we would just fall apart at ' seams – we really would (Estelle, 29.11.2016).

Most staff believed that pupils were only engaging with education through teacher-pupil relationships. In other words, pupils engage because they want to please staff. Here, Joe provides some insight:

No I don't think the' are disengaged from education but I think the' are more engaged by the adults than the' are by education. … Okay, so let's think about (names a pupil) and why he wants to do his maths today. He wants to do his maths today because he is sat wi' me, he likes me, and he wants me be to be happy. He doesn't want to do it because he is motivated by education, by being good at maths, by getting good results in his SATs, by going on to get good results in his GCSEs at high school, or by getting a good job. None of that stuff matters. He's not bothered because it hasn't worked for his mum and his dad, it won't work for his brother, and it won't work for anybody else in his family. He is not motivated by education and learning; he is motivated by the fact that he wants (names a member of staff in the class) to smile at him and say well done and he wants to please me. He is not engaged by education, he is engaged by the adults. Why would he want to? What's ' point? What's in it for him? (Joe, 03.11.2016).

Joe describes how pupils, even at primary school, are conscious of how their individual realities and futures are situated and shaped by their socioeconomic and material conditions. Staff believed pupils' lived experiences affected their view of education. Relationships, staff argued, worked to create a sense of togetherness which, to some extent, reflect traditional notions of industrial camaraderie. Coming to school, they felt, gave pupils a sense of being; it gave them structure, routine, friendships, and a place to feel 'safe'. For staff, it is the relationships and environment that motivate pupils to engage with education:

Z: There is probably some kids in that class that are out on the streets 'till nine or ten o'clock on a night and I don't know how the' can be bothered to come t' school on a morning but the' do! And, it's them getting themselves up and ready and coming t'

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school most of the time not anyone else so there is something here that's making 'em want t' come.

I: Why do you think that is?

Z: Maybe routine, attention for 'em because they might not be getting it at home, respect… yeah 100 percent because say they're getting something at school that they're not getting at home then the' are going t' want t' be here. Especially in previous classes, and the last class, some just wanted t' be here more than the' did at home. Some hated having t' go home; we create a sort of family here – I call this my school family.

(Zoe, 11.10.2016)

Traditional structures, rhythms, and identities of community have, in many ways, been replaced by instability and fragmentation. Pupils' lives are increasingly fraught with poverty, unemployment and other social ills. Data suggested, however, that the school appears to be providing pupils with a sense of being – an identity – and a sense of security traditionally embedded throughout their community. In some ways, the school provides a feeling of ontological security; a level of trust, continuity and stability – 'that things are as they should be' (Giddens, 1991). In practice, observation data showed pupils actively engaging with education largely through the relationships with staff and/or the environment. For example, when the day's learning was discussed with pupils, low-level resistance – grunts and sighs – was often observed. When it came to lessons, however, observation data showed pupils were keen to participate. They actively volunteered to model their learning and working out, read, answer questions, complete given tasks, and much more. Staff created an environment where pupils felt comfortable, and a space where they wanted to come. Pupils were often observed

being able to carry out their work with music of their choice on in the background, whilst quietly chatting to others, and in a positon they felt comfortable – stood up, on their knees, and so on. Pupils appeared keen to complete their work to engage in the activities frequently offered to pupils at the end of the day – Lego, football, and laptops, for instance. Pupils were also observed bringing in examples of continued learning at home, engaging in extra curricula activities, and, for those in certain year groups, voluntarily attending booster sessions.

# Teacher Expectations

*Research Question Three: What are teachers' expectations of working-class children?*

     *a) Whether teachers' expectations were influenced by the historical and current climate in Lillydown, and whether these have changed over time.*

     *b) The extent in which wider structural forces and pressures influence and control teacher expectations.*

## Academic Expectations

Throughout the interview process, the influence that pupils' social class had on teacher expectations was apparent. Data showed that academic expectations were shaped by a discourse that pupils' socioeconomic and material backgrounds are important elements and influences in their educational success or failure. For staff, this materialised largely within practice as they raised their expectations, it appeared, to compensate for the disadvantages some pupils faced. Phrases such as 'going above and beyond' and having 'more groundwork to do' were typical as staff claimed that, on reflection, their expectations are higher than teachers working in a 'leafy lane' school:

> We know what they are getting is it! This is what they are getting – us. We are the ones making a difference and whilst they are here we are the ones doing the work and pushing them to be what they can… our expectations are higher and stronger than those that are working in leafy-lane schools where there is more parental involvement and you know when the kids go home that they are reading for ten minutes a day, they are doing their spellings, and their homework. It doesn't happen like that here for the

majority and it's the majority for us that this is all that they are getting (Louise, 05.07.2016).

Whilst staff did have high expectations for all pupils, embedded within this was a belief that some pupils would, as a result of their socioeconomic and material conditions, fail to achieve their educational potential. This, alongside pressures from dominant neoliberal discourses that largely overlook such complexities, caused some frustration amongst staff:

When they take away the socio-economic side of it and start comparing you to a more affluent area it is frustrating because you just can't. You cannot put them on the same page. The lives of the children in Lillydown are the complete opposite of the children in a leafy lane area. There isn't the parental involvement here and it is one of the most deprived areas in the country... When they give you these national expectations and you know when you get them in foundation stage some of them don't even know how to speak but somehow you have got to get them to where everyone is getting their kids. It's an enormous task and it doesn't change my expectations because at the end of the day you have to get them there. What it does do is it frustrates, it angers, and it piles on the extra stress and pressure (Louise, 05.07.2016).

The majority of staff, at least in principle, were committed to celebrating the progress of each pupil. Dominant educational discourses appeared, however, to make it difficult for them not to be affected by performative targets and expectations:

We are given these incredibly high targets and we have to go an incredible long way to reach them and everybody's wellbeing suffers from it. So yeah, we do set higher targets and to be fair I understand that but we do it in ' wrong way because we reduce 'em to a number and percentage to get a higher score whereas what we should say is,

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'it's okay to be better'. Too much is attached to a number for attainment and target, what we should be saying is it is okay to want better for yourself academically and non-academically (Estelle, 29.11.2016).

In practice, data showed that performative regimes did penetrate pedagogy and pupils were frequently subjected to tests and assessments. Staff appeared, however, to exercise a level of resistance against this in what seemed to be an attempt to protect pupils from being emotionally and materially affected by performative regimes. Tests and assessments, staff often reasoned, were a process being exercised to test their own capabilities and performance, rather than the pupils. Staff were observed reassuring pupils to 'try their best' and 'not worry':

> Pupils are with the HLTA doing a science test. The HLTA is at the front of the class explaining what the test is for and what the pupils have to do in it.
>
> HLTA: It's just a few questions, just try your best. Anything you get wrong just means I need to go back over it again. All I am looking at is whether I have taught things well enough.
>
> The HLTA hands out the tests and then reads the first question. One pupil appears to be upset because they can't do the question. The HLTA reminds the class:
>
> HLTA: If you can't do it, it means I need to teach it more. It isn't worth getting upset about. The problem is with me, not with you.
>
> (Observation Data: 17.11.2016)

Pupils were nevertheless acutely aware of their actual and expected levels of performance, and how this compared to others. They were, at times, emotionally affected by assessment regimes; most frequently this was displayed in low-level refusal to share their results and, at other times, resulted in pupils becoming emotionally distressed at the prospect of 'their best' not being good enough.

Staff were, in general, committed to celebrating and developing each pupil's progress. Expectations were, however, complex and data revealed some subtleties amongst staff's expectations. A minority of staff appeared, perhaps subconsciously, to construct a low aspirational discourse of some pupils' academic abilities. Some expressed concerns over the pressures pupils faced; they felt that, even though they had high expectations, staff shouldn't expect too much as they are 'just kids':

> I think the' aim high and the' want to challenge the children. I don't think the' expect too much of 'em, the' do try and cater to their level. So, you know, the' do try and adapt things to their level and bridge gaps as the' go along. I think you've got to have high expectations for 'em to thrive. Obviously you can't set ' bar too high and set 'em up to fail but you've got to have high expectations and encourage 'em to do well (Jennifer, 17.11.2016).

Observation data also revealed a low aspirational discourse through the occasional use of certain phrases, such as:

- Who would have thought you would be using brackets at the end of the year.

- I didn't expect you to do that well – well done.

- We haven't done (negative numbers) so don't worry about those – you can't do them.

<div align="right">(Observation Data: 05.07.2016,

06.09.2016, 18.10.2016)</div>

Although such discourses were uncommon, low expectations could, if they became commonplace, limit some pupils' opportunities for progression and result in the social stratification of pupils within the classroom.

## Behavioural Expectations

What appeared to be most important for pupils was 'consistency'. Here Wendy's words provide some insight:

> I had a little boy and his Mum and Dad split up and she went on to drugs… he wo out playing all ' time, she didn't have any boundaries, and she didn't fetch him in on a night. So obviously, he would come to school and he didn't have any sleep, he hadn't had nothing to eat, he wo dirty all ' time, and he had not been bathed... You can't expect that child to concentrate on everything when that is going off (Wendy, 01.12.2016).

Most staff recognised that pupils' backgrounds can, at times, affect their behaviour. 'Lack of routine' and 'poor role models' were frequently cited as factors that affected pupils behaviour and enforced the need for staff to have high and consistent expectations. However, a minority of staff expressed concerns over the consistency of expectations and behaviour management in the school. For Jackie, Jennifer, and Zoe, behavioural expectations were variable with

some staff allowing "pupils' t' get away wi' probably more than what another teacher would" (Zoe, 11.10.2016). Although staff recognised that an understanding of pupil's personal histories and backgrounds is essential, they also noted how behavioural expectations can become problematic and inconsistent. Staff expressed concern over expectations and practices corresponding with personal approaches and expectations, level of experience, and individual pupils and their backgrounds. Joe acknowledged that behavioural expectations can often be 'unrealistic':

> People should give 'em a break and the' need to remember that a lot of these kids struggle… some of them are living really chaotic lives… to expect them to conform, when they don't have to conform in any other setting, is nearly impossible for them. So, for example, to make 'em try and sit in assembly and conform when they have never been made to conform before is totally impossible. I just think the' are expecting, if you like, middle-class behaviours in assembly and stuff. My kids know the' should sit quietly in assembly but these kids just sit and shout over each other so that's what the' going to do in assembly. It's not naughty, it's just what the' do. That expectation of 'em behaving how you want when really the' are not capable of doing that because someone has never shown 'em, or the' so troubled, or so deeply pre-occupied with something that's gone off at home – domestic violence or whatever – is totally unfair. I think sometimes some people just need to give some of 'em a break and sit and talk to 'em, just get down on their level and talk quietly to 'em (Joe, 03.11.2016).

Data showed that an understanding of pupil's personal histories allowed staff to support them academically, socially and emotionally. There was however, as some staff claimed, an observed displacement between the consistent expectations that staff claimed to have, and the

practices that some staff actualised within their classroom (see Hidden Curriculum). In general, though, data showed that expectations and behaviour management was largely consistent and high across the school.

**Wider Expectations**

When asked about their wider expectations for pupils, almost all staff concentrated on pupils' educational progression to the local secondary academy and fears about the level of support that would be available to pupils. At Lillydown Primary, pupil premium money is used to ensure each class has three members of staff which, as the majority recognised, provides them with the resources and mechanisms they need to nurture pupils academically, socially, and emotionally. Staff believed that without these mechanisms and supportive environment, pupils would struggle:

> I can see a good percentage of the class, and it has been proven in past years, that are kind of borderline and are toeing the line and once they leave this school and go to secondary school they lose it. You can pick those kids out, and take them under your wing, and keep them just under that line of what is acceptable but then they leave here and within months you hear that they have been excluded, then expelled, and then they have had to go to a different school… We try and keep it under wraps here and for years you do keep them under what is acceptable but you know full well they will blow it at secondary. They will not get that one-to-one and that relationship. Maybe it is secondary school that fails them. They have not got someone there to support them and say, 'wind it back in' (Elaine, 17.11.2016).

For staff, the local secondary academy fails to offer the continuity of support, and social and emotional security that pupils are given at Lillydown. The familiar sense of security, established relationships and environment, and support mechanisms are replaced by larger class sizes, fragmentation, and instability. Whilst these concerns are commonplace elsewhere too, for staff at Lillydown, they are sharpened by particular historical and current economic and material conditions of the school, community, and pupils. Erica makes reference to the difficulties that academisation – in particular admission and exclusion polices, causes for pupils:

> Academies are pretty much a law unto their selves… I think it creates big issues and I think it is going to be a real problem to future society. I think there will be a lot of children who grow up in areas such as Lillydown, and while the primary schools might do everything that they can to support them, who are not getting that level of support in secondary and they need it. They are still only eleven and they still need a lot of guidance, our own children do that are coming from very sound backgrounds and situations. Teenage years bring a lot of hormones – and goodness knows what – so children need a lot of guidance but they are going to secondary schools that aren't giving them it. The secondary schools are just pushing them on at the first sign of a problem and I think that is just going to perpetuate into a really bad situation nationally (Erica, 13.01.2017).

For Joe, however, wider expectations are lacking across Lillydown Primary School. He argues that staff are failing to provide pupils with knowledge about their future pathways both inside and outside education:

I think in terms of the wider future expectations those are sadly lacking probably from me and from the whole school. I think we should be saying to kids when they are young like this you can… I mean I do occasionally but I don't even bother saying it to 'em and when I think about it that's really pathetic isn't it? I should be saying to kids, 'come on let's have a look at this university on ' internet – you could go here, you know' and planting that seed and I don't and I think he's got no chance. As a school we should be doing that. We should be getting people from Oakshire College in and saying you could do this, this, and this (Joe, 03.11.2016).

Only in a few instances were staff observed making reference to pupils' futures. This consisted of encouraging pupils to come to after school revision sessions on several occasions and, across all year groups, all staff frequently using vocabulary related to particular job occupations to praise pupils – 'brilliant mathematicians', 'authors', or 'scientists', for example. Wider expectations of pupils, in practice, were, as Joe noted, quite limited.

# Grouping Processes and Dimensions

*Research Question Four: To what extent do teachers' practices differentiate between pupils?*

> *a) How children are grouped and whether this creates social structuring within the classroom.*
>
> *b) Whether teachers' expectations and pedagogy differs amongst pupils.*

## Types of Pupils and Grouping Dimensions

Initially, all staff claimed to view pupils as unique individuals – both in relation to their academic needs and their personalities. Frances summarises the general consensus about pupils at Lillydown:

> There are lots of different characters in this school and lots of different personalities. You have those who are really outgoing and flamboyant, the quieter and shyer children, and those who harder to turn around. You also have children who have specific needs and we are doing a lot of work on attachment which is really key… So yeah, there is a real scope, there is the full range of children (Frances, 10.11.2016).

Implicit within most interviews was, however, a secondary categorisation of pupils by their social and economic needs, and backgrounds. The influence that home life and parental support had on pupils was articulated on several occasions during the interview processes. Here, Erica's words provide some insight:

> … We have pupils that come from all sorts of different types of backgrounds. We have children who are very well supported by their families, they might not

necessarily be on high incomes but they are really supportive. We then have got other children that are very, very unsupported. Their parents aren't bothered about their education at all and they don't spend time with them. Their parents are bothered about their own needs rather than those of their kids. Then you have those in the middle where it is inconsistent. Sometimes the parents can't do enough for them and then at other times the parents are totally putting their own needs first so they have a yo-yo situation going off (Erica, 13.01.2017).

Joe makes clear the distinctions between the differing home lives of pupils:

J: I think there are two distinct groups. There are kids from stable homes and there are kids from chaotic homes. I think… 70 percent are from stable homes and 30 percent are from chaotic homes. I think the kids from the chaotic homes are the kids that have the social and emotional needs, the kids who do find it difficult to sit still and conform and stuff.

I: What do you mean when you say a 'stable and chaotic home'?

J: I think for me a chaotic home would be… not necessarily that they are not working because I think you can have a stable home and not be working. I have family relatives who haven't worked for years and that's stable. I think it's more when there are different people coming and going, different partners coming and going, domestic violence, drugs, and all that sort of stuff. I think a lot of these kids are troubled by that and I think it manifests itself in different ways. I think there are a lot of kids like that in this school and I think they are very obvious from the kids who have got a stable home life.

I: So a stable home life would be what?

J: Just that knowing which adult the' are going to go home with, knowing that there's going to be some tea for them, knowing their clothes are going to be clean – basic fundamental stuff. For a lot of these kids the' might not know what the' getting for tea, whether they're going to get any tea, whether they're going to go hungry or what. Again, that comes back to me knowing what's going on for 'em because I can imagine exactly what's going on … if the' go home the' mam and dad's pissed on ' sofa and the' asleep and the' dun't get any tea and that's probably what does happen and then they are wandering ' streets and that.

<div align="right">(Joe, 03.11.2016)</div>

Opinions such as those expressed by Erica and Joe were not uncommon. Although staff generally recognised the diversity and individuality of each pupil, interview data revealed that they largely classified pupils by their economic and material backgrounds. Within practice, however, pupils were grouped according to ability in the core subjects and often put in mixed-ability groups for topic work.

Pupils were classified into three different perceived ability groups – higher, middle, and lower. Staff sought to mask any overt classification by ability through re-branding these groups into colours. Such processes are longstanding, with debates continuing around the pedagogical and academic efficiency of setting, streaming, and mixed ability grouping (Jackson, 1966; Reay, 2017). Grouping by ability appears to have become a popular way of implementing the National Curriculum and carrying out assessments, in primary schools. All staff said there was a degree of fluidity between the groupings, both at set assessment points throughout the year and within lessons. Although classes at Lillydown Primary have three

members of staff, Louise reflects on how, in practice, meeting individual needs is often complicated by time and resources, and performative regimes:

> The first term… I only had one TA and she was being used in other classes, so I had to really be on the ball… When we got the extra adult we could be a little bit more flexible. I swap them round in the lesson, I do actively move them. I don't want to see 26 answers, if you can do five you're onto the next challenge, for me. There isn't that hierarchy or restriction in my class with the groups. The only issue I have with it is my books and showing differentiation because they can be here, there, and everywhere. It can be hard to explain because sometimes it can look like everyone is doing the same work… I don't' care how much trouble it will get me into, they are not staying in those groups forever. They are here to learn and they have got to get as much out of it as they can – end of! That does not mean they sit there in that place for 40 weeks of that year. That means I am crap at my job, to me that does (Louise, 05.07.2016).

Wider pressures and structural forces – time constraints, accountability processes, staff ratios, and rising class sizes, for example – appeared to influence practice. Such pressures affected pedagogy mainly during staff absences which resulted in more groups of pupils working independently and staff struggling to give pupils the individual support they typically received. In general, however, it is important to acknowledge that staff appeared to try to mediate such pressures. Although some processes and structures were, at times, limiting, observation data showed staff working with different groups each lesson and actively moving around groups to facilitate learning, and distributing their time evenly between pupils. Within the grouping and differentiation processes, staff were observed actively moving pupils on to

the next level of work, giving them extension work if needed, or moving pupils into another group.

Although staff viewed the process of grouping as fluid, for Estelle, grouping has implications for pupil agency:

> Majority o' time the' move around and that. You might have kids that are in ' higher ability group for maths but the' might be in a completely different place in your next lesson so it's not fixed. To be fair, that doesn't seem to happen very often 'cos if you are a high achiever in maths you tend to be a higher achiever in literacy. So again, that's why I am mindful of that… What's wrong wi' saying this is this work and saying which one can you do? Which one challenges you a little bit but is not going to be too difficult? And let 'em make a bit of a choice (Estelle, 29.11.2016).

Pupils were not, however, passive subjects in the grouping processes. They did show a degree of individual and collective agency through the regular use of assessment for learning techniques and, on a few occasions, moving on to the next group's work without staff intervention. The following extracts provide some insight:

> The HLTA has finished teaching the input for maths. They have explained each group's work for today and before pupils start, they add:

> HLTA: If you think you are confident to get on with your work, I'm going to leave you to get on with it. If you think you want a bit more support and are unsure, you can move down to the board and we will do a couple more together. So, think carefully before choosing what you do.

One pupil asks what work they are doing today. HLTA asks what group they are in and the pupil is in blue.

HLTA: Well blue group then but if you feel confident and you want to have a go at red then you can.

The pupil starts on blue group's work and then, after they have done two questions, moves on to red group's work.

And,

One pupil in front of me is helping the pupil at the side of them complete their last question. After they have finished the pupil who was being helped replies,

: tar mate, are we on to red now?

The pupil nods and the both move themselves on to the next colour group.

(Observation Data: 20.10.2016, 08.09.2016)

Although pupils were actively encouraged to move between groups, some appeared to lack the confidence to do this independently and relied on the approval of staff before moving to a different group. 'Aspiration', 'confidence', and 'improvement' were frequently associated with progression between groups. Although staff did make clear that the fluidity between groups was not just an upward movement, pupils were only observed moving into more advanced groups.

*Grouping Effects*

Interview data revealed most staff were concerned over the affect grouping could have on pupils identities. Frances explained how their own experiences of grouping influenced their practice:

> I remember back to my own school days and in science if you didn't get in to the top science set you did a lot of practical work; you would be outside in the garden, finding out about things outside, and growing vegetables and things like that. They got the nickname 'duggy diggers' and it was just awful. Now a close friend of mine… was in the duggy diggers and she is a teacher now but she was written off. They all work with different adults here as well and I would hate it if they knew (Frances, 10.11.2016).

Implicit within the interview process was the idea that pupils only become conscious of grouping processes as they progressed through school and the deepening of performative cultures become more evident:

> … Maybe not so much in ' early days but by ' time you are getting to ' back end o' school, the back end o' Year 4, you start to realise perhaps a little bit more… It doesn't matter how you group 'em or where you sit 'em, kids are acutely aware of who is the most intelligent in that class and who is not – they are not stupid. It also doesn't do anyone's self-esteem any good to look around and see that grouping (Estelle, 29.11.2016).

Observation data showed that, within the foundation stage, pupils appeared to be less conscious of and affected by grouping process. Staff would often work with groups during free play and just 'call 'em', as Jane notes, when needed. Although focused activities took

place daily, there was no observed awareness or direct effects of grouping processes. As pupils progressed through school, they appeared to become conscious of grouping processes:

The teacher is discussing a pupil's writing being good but their spelling being 'shocking'. The teacher turns to the pupil and jokingly says:

T: Yours was really good but your spelling was shocking – you need to work on that.

The pupil laughs and so do the majority of the class. Another pupil then shouts,

: And they are in the second to ' top group!

T: Brilliant, I can't wait to see ' bottom group.

(Observation Data: 12.07.2016)

Older pupils appeared to have internalised an understanding of divisions by ability. The pretence of being stratified by colour, or being called to a group to work, ceased to hide the stratification and objectification of pupils. This particular extract also highlights that staff periodically grouped and labelled pupils by ability. 'More able', 'middle group' and 'bottom group' became embedded within their identities. Although teacher practices and time spent with groups were consistent, a process of stratification is constructed through grouping processes and dimensions within the classroom.

A minority of staff, however, saw grouping as helping the 'confidence' of pupils. The comments of Erica summarise this discourse:

It does but it almost puts a slight competitiveness in there but they are almost only competing against their self and that self-competition sets them up to aim the highest.

It is teaching them to push them self and to go out of their comfort zone. We have to do that, life is about that. Many opportunities and situations in life push you out of your own comfort zone and you have to have had some experience of that in order to be okay with it (Erica, 13.01.2017).

Such processes of individualism and competition increasingly displace traditional notions of collectivity and solidarity which working-class communities are more accustomed with. As data showed, pupils advanced through groups either collectively or individually with support from staff. Regardless of whether some individuals can achieve through competition, the advancement of a few depends upon the failure of the many. It also places a greater degree of responsibility on pupils and embeds their success or failure within their identities.

# Chapter Five: Discussion and Analysis

## Post-Industrial Lillydown: A Social Haunting?

*Research Question One: What are teachers' perceptions of the role of education for working-class children?*

> *a) Whether the historical role of education in Lillydown affects current pupils and their education.*
>
> *b) What the role of education is for pupils in a post-industrial climate.*
>
> *c) The relevance of the hidden and formal curriculum.*

The first part of this section considers the extent to which historical structures and ways of being and doing, specific to Lillydown and its industrial past, are transmitted and reproduced into the present. Within this, I examine how historical roles of education – both formally and informally, for example, through institutions and networks within the community more broadly – continue to influence pupils' experiences of education. Here I suggest that the school, its structures and networks, rhythms and practices, and teachers' perceptions and practices are shaped by their working-class identities and histories. Much as Avery Gordon (2008) suggests, it is these echoes and murmurs – the ghostly matters – of their past that continue to haunt. In my research, Gordon's concept of social haunting serves to demonstrate and enhance understanding of how a particular trauma, loss, or social injustice affects the present in complex and often covert ways. In Lillydown, such loss and injustices relate to the closure of the mining industry, the 1984-1985 miners' strike, and the effects of deindustrialisation thereafter. This research complicates Gordon's notion of social haunting

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and argues that, although loss and trauma create ghosts, their hauntings are not always negative. As data showed in the previous chapter, at Lillydown Primary their ghosts often positively shape teachers' practices and pedagogy, and pupils' experiences of education. It is through teachers' and pupils' shared identities and histories that their ghosts can be reckoned with, opening up alternative spaces for traditional ways of being and doing to be ghosted into the present which, in the main, encouragingly affect pupils' experiences of education. The second part of this section focuses more broadly on teachers' perspectives of the role of education for pupils at Lillydown Primary in a post-industrial climate, and the relevance and role of the formal and hidden curriculum.

## The Role of Education in Lillydown and its Ghosts

The findings presented in the previous chapter indicate that many years after the miners' strike and pit closure, the community's history continues to affect pupils' lived experiences. Most basically, the tensions and conflicts of loss and unresolved injustice continue to haunt the present, and often construct negative accounts of life in mining communities. As Estelle described in the previous chapter, Lillydown is 'banded' by a reputation of poverty, crime, drugs, and other social ills'. Gordon (2008) wrote that after social injustices, violence, and/or losses occur, "the state creates an identity that remains to haunt those marked by its hand and all the others to whom that hand is extended" (p.127). The notion of being 'banded by a village' captures how, generations after the strike and pit closure, the losses and injustices – their ghosts – remain to haunt those 'marked by its hand', and affect young people's lived realities and identities. As Gordon argues, these losses have created ghosts that remain to haunt and, as Estelle illustrates, work in some forms, to create an identity – 'a reputation' – of poverty, crime, and other social ills. Such an understanding of how the past continues to

affect the present helps explain how, for post-strike generations, their history is often unknown yet their lived experiences continue to be shaped by historical and current economic and social structures. For the pupils of Lillydown Primary, they are, as Frances said, living in an 'unknown aftermath'.

Although the hauntings of the community remain largely negative, I would argue that they are, in the school, often encouraging and constructive. This broadening helps to understand how historical structures and modes of being and doing once worked to create a sense of being, as well as a sense of security and collectivity which arguably held the community together. Perhaps the clearest example here was in data around the transmission and reproduction of cultural norms and practices. As previous research has shown (see, for example, Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012; Turner, 2002, and Dennis et al., 1956) coal *was* a way of life that created distinctive social structures and cultural practices built around the industry.

The school served as an alternative space where traditional social and cultural activities are arguably being reproduced and transmitted. Although such activities occur in most primary schools and were observed periodically over the course of the ethnography, it is important to stress that they arise sometimes subconsciously as a response to, and understanding of, historical and current conditions, and performances of working-class life in and around Lillydown. It is also worth reiterating that these activities were typically carried out as an extension of pupils' general experiences of schooling rather than as part of the formal curriculum. For example, Frank volunteers to continue teaching first aid, which was traditionally taught at the Stute, and was an essential and valued part of the mining industry (see, for example, Dennis et al., 1956), through a personal and affective commitment to pass on traditional practices, skills, and knowledge to pupils, not to meet curricula objectives. As

Gordon observes, in a social haunting, "organized forces and systemic structures that appear removed from us make their impact felt in everyday life" (p.19). It is through the school, the staff, the pupils, and their particular knowledge, experiences, and ways of being and doing that allows their histories to be shared and for their ghosts to be present and affective.

The school provides a space where particular forms of cultural knowledge can be passed on. These transmissions are a link back to community relations, networks and performances once evident in Lillydown. The importance of these transmissions and the loss suffered can be illustrated by returning to the words of Mark:

> The older people that gave all the advice to the younger members of the community when they went to the pits at 14 or 16, has gone. That was there to give them advice on how to keep them out of trouble or whatever. That's gone and now you just have your teachers (Mark, 08.12.2016).

As Mark suggests, there has been a displacement of traditional means and spaces for transmissions of particular forms of knowledge. The school and staff, however, provide an alternative vehicle for some forms of cultural transmission of knowledge to be recovered. It is through staff's shared experiences of growing up working class – their knowledge, values, and experiences of working-class life in Lillydown – that these transmissions are possible, and are recognised and received agreeably by pupils. These transmissions of knowledge, alongside other performances discussed elsewhere, could be likened to Warwick and Littlejohn's (1992) notion of 'local cultural capital':

> The outcome of the sharing of knowledge about the place, its history as a mining locality and the social networks and institutions which have developed. Further it is the sharing of skills, particularly those of communication which help to maintain,

confer and renew identities and membership among them. Finally, it is the set of dominant values which characterise relationships and activities in the locality… it is possible to sense that the dominant local culture is held as a kind of capital which is transmitted and sometimes modified from generation to generation (Warwick and Littlejohn, 1992, pp.84-95).

Although these codes and guidelines often contributed to the rather 'closed' nature of mining communities, they also worked to maintain, strengthen, and protect (see, for example, Dennis et al., 1956). The social structures and networks – Miners' Welfare Club and Institute, unions, the pit, the Corp, and the home – all provided spaces in which particular forms of knowledge, values and morals, behaviours – largely based on kinship, collectivity, and trust were passed from one generation to the next. Mining communities relied on intergenerational transmissions of 'embodied knowledge' to not only keep men safe underground, but to protect their communities more broadly (Invinson, 2017). In some ways, Lillydown Primary provides an alternative space where staff can pass on 'embodied knowledge' relating particularly to pupils' personal lives and behaviours outside school.

The particular relationships, networks, and performances created an alternative space where a sense of 'community', a microcosm of what once was, is ghosted into the present and shapes pupils' experiences of education. As data suggests, staff believed the school was a space where pupils' lived experiences were 'completely different to their outside lives', and was a place where pupils felt a sense of security, collectivity, and a sense of being. This was established both through the particular relations and networks in the school and through material and emotional support – clothing and other material needs, and providing pupils with breakfast, for example. There are several similarities here to traditional notions of collectivity

and community support that many mining communities, and other working-class communities, depended on for day-to-day living, particularly during times of hardship.

Traditional notions of collectivity, friendship, and community continue to haunt the present and encouragingly affect pupils' experiences of education. This reflects the work of Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012) who examine the place of affect in community relations and trauma in a working-class community following the closure of a steelworks in a South Wales Valley. Using psychoanalytical approaches of affect, they argue that in finding ways to cope during periods of hardship and uncertainty, communities, particularly those built around coal and steel, create affective relations and social practices that hold the community together. It is these rhythms and practices, they suggest, that create a 'containing skin' allowing the community to feel emotionally contained, and providing them with a feeling of ontological security (p.77). In the event of community trauma, such as the closure of the industry, they argue that the protective skin becomes exposed and risks becoming ruptured as these practices and structures are threatened.

Walkerdine and Jimenez's notion of a 'containing skin' helps explain how traditional relations, structures, and networks continue to be transmitted and reproduced into the present. The school appears to provide an alternative space where traditional structures and relations are reproduced and, as a result, a new containing skin is formed. It is, "the rhythms and patterns of everyday life, both materially and emotionally, that [traditionally] held the community in place" (p.77) that continue to provide particular structures, performances, and a sense of security for pupils at Lillydown Primary. Although pupils' lives are increasingly fraught with instability, insecurity, and socioeconomic difficulties, the school provides a space where their community's complex social traditions, relations, and structures can be transmitted and reproduced, positively affecting pupils' experiences of education.

To understand how pupils at Lillydown Primary approach education, it is important to appreciate how their community's historical experiences of, and attitudes towards, education continue to affect the present. The effects that social class and parental attitudes towards education have on young people are well documented (see, for example, Jackson and Marsden, 1966; Ball, 2003; Reay, 2005, 2006; Evans, 2007). At Lillydown Primary, although staff created a culture where parental support and engagement was welcomed and encouraged, this remained relatively low. Parental attitudes were regulated by personal memories and experiences of education – low levels of literacy and numeracy, low confidence, for example – and, more specifically, by low prioritisation of education. This worked to limit the value placed on education. Although individual agency, characteristics and dispositions, and broader social and economic structures affect individuals in particular ways, the way in which traditional community attitudes and experiences of education continue to affect pupils was considerable.

Historically, education for the working classes has functioned largely to control and maintain class structures and relations of production. In Lillydown, most young men entered the mining industry and, whilst some women were also in paid work, most took on traditional roles in the home – domestic, financial, and parental, for example. Consequently, traditional performances and views of formal education have been one largely shaped by conditions of the labour market – one that "instils in the working classes a sense of their limitations and the feeling of having few options" (Reay, 2017, p.184). Despite this, education and training provided through the NCB were traditionally valued modes of knowledge. Day-release training at local technical colleges, for example, worked as a mechanism for progression into higher or alternative job roles, at least for some. Particularly for young men, transitions from school to work were often swift and collective. Pathways into further education and

employment are now, for men and women, increasingly extended, individualised, and precarious (Simmons and Thompson, 2011).

Despite these changes, experiences of education and employment continue to be influenced by performances and traditions of their community's past. This was most evident in perceptions about the value that education and educational qualifications:

> [T]he' dun't see it working fo' anybody do the'? So like how many people do the' actually know who've worked really hard at school and gone on to a successful life and career and done really well for 'emselves? Probably very, very few… So why would you bother? ... And if they' do want a job like that [call centre] or like caring you don't need any qualifications for that anyway do you? (Joe, 03.11.2016).

Data suggests most pupils' consciousness is situated and shaped by historical and current conditions of the labour market which maintains that education and qualifications remain of limited value. In Lillydown and surrounding areas, most employment requires low levels of education; further education may not necessarily improve career opportunities, and employment fails to offer the broader social benefits once offered by the coal industry. This reflects Willis (1997) whose study exposed how the lads' culture denies that, "knowledge is in any sense a meaningful equivalent" for their future employment opportunities (p.126). Willis argued that the lads' cultural orientations exposed three educational contradictions for the working class, which, to some extent, parallel the views expressed by Joe. First, Willis argues the lads' saw through the 'educational fallacy' that "opportunities can be made by education, that upward mobility is basically a matter of individual push, that qualifications make their own openings" (p.127). Second, they make an assessment of their immediate labour market and the quality of obtainable work. Although Willis questions whether the lads

can gain secure employment in the first place, what employment is available is becoming increasingly 'standardised, de-skilled, and intensified' (p.127). As Shildrick et al. (2012) make clear, even those with degrees and further qualifications often engage in the "low-pay, no-pay churning labour market" (p.194). In Lillydown, further levels of education and qualifications do not necessarily predict improved labour market fortunes. Finally, for Willis, the lads' differentiate between, individual and collective logic and success:

> Some working class individuals do make it and any particular individual may hope to be one of them. To the class or group at its own proper level, however, mobility means nothing at all. The only true mobility at this level would be the destruction of the whole class society (Willis, 1977, p.128).

In Lillydown, similar observations shape pupil consciousness. With their immediate labour market opportunities consisting of mainly low-skilled, low-pay, and precarious jobs, it remains unwise to place considerable value and trust in education.

Despite this, data indicates that, over time, there has been a shift in parental attitudes with formal education gradually becoming regarded as more important in the community as traditional, collective certainties have become displaced. Whilst some staff believed this will provide pupils with alternative pathways which could allow young people to exercise individual agency, form new identities and take more risks, others alluded to such shifts as an effect of enforced deindustrialisation. Or, in other words, education becomes important but not through positive choice or progressive movements within the community:

> There isn't the industry and it isn't that dads, grandparents, and then you, can go in to a certain industry so I think they see that they have got to have other options (Frances, 10.11.2016).

Ulrich Beck (1992) uses the term 'enforced emancipation' to describe the way in which the displacement of traditional social and economic structures has forced individuals into alternative and more individualised decisions about education, employment, and their futures more broadly (p.35). Though education has traditionally benefitted young people in Lillydown, particularly through the pit and the Miners' Institute, here conditions of increasing social and economic insecurity are forcing young people to take more individualised and risky pathways. Yet, despite this, traditional attitudes and values towards education and employment continue to be embedded in the present and are, at least to some degree, influencing young people's attitudes and experiences. Their community's historical experiences and values remain important sources of cultural knowledge for future generations to draw on which help them negotiate their futures within increasingly insecure socioeconomic conditions. Such processes are important to understand when considering the role of education for young people in Lillydown.

*Post-Industrial Lillydown: The Role of Education*

Although popular notions of education as a progressive force continue to be advanced by various parties, education also validates and reproduces capitalist structures, inequalities, and relations of production. My analysis draws on Althusser's *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (2006),* which builds on Marx's concept of society, demonstrating how the ruling class secure and reproduce relations of production and labour power through ISAs and RSAs (p.96). As explained in the literature review, Althusser offers a way of understanding how education works as a mechanism to maintain current capitalist systems and class structures. For the majority, education prepares and 'ejects' youth into their relevant places in

the division of labour. Although Althusser's work is powerful, drawing on notions of social haunting takes this analysis further by developing an understanding of how Lillydown's history continues to be ghosted into the present affecting experiences of, and attitudes towards, education and employment.

At Lillydown Primary, staffs' perceived role of education is to get pupils to be 'the best person they can be': to educate the whole child by giving pupils the knowledge and skills to 'get by' academically, culturally, and socially and emotionally. These perceptions echo John Dewey's (1902) thoughts on child development and the curriculum. Although notions of educating the whole child are somewhat resonant of progressive movements throughout the 70s and 80s, they are, in many ways, still advanced in early years and primary education. The stress placed on skills to 'get by', rather than knowledge and skills to challenge, create, and be critical – which the ruling classes often receive (see, for example, Anyon, 2011) – could, however, be regarded as limiting. This suggests the perceived function of education is to equip pupils with the skills and knowledge to cope with the requirements of their assumed future places in the labour market – low-skilled, precarious, alienated and mundane factory labour and low-level service-sector work – rather than gaining an education which facilitates, at least to some degree, the skills and knowledge which promotes principles of criticality, equality, and accountability (Cole, 2001). The Hillcole Group (1997) critique popular assertions that "the generality of the population does not need extensive schooling; they need education for service, obedience, basic skills and earning in socio-economic and social matters that inculcates 'the right kind' of thinking' (pp.4-5). Either way, what pupils are anticipated to learn at Lillydown Primary is the 'know-how' (Althusser, 2006) – the knowledge and skills academically, socially, and emotionally – to 'get by'.

Data presented in this research suggests pupils also learn what Althusser calls the 'rules of good behaviour' – "the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he is 'destined' for" (p.89). Whilst most staff initially claimed attitudes and dispositions should be centred on equality, ultimately some staff reasoned these should be established, to some extent, on a basis of control and rule-following. For Althusser, the reproduction of labour power requires not only a "reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order" (p.89). Bowles and Gintis' '*correspondence principle*' illustrates how schools, through a structural correspondence, validate and reproduce the social relations of the workforces (Cole, 2008). Their work gives emphasis to the importance of reproducing behaviours and characteristics of the divisions of labour within schools (Sarup, 1983). The discord between teachers' perceptions and everyday classroom practice of the hidden and formal curriculum are examined in the final section of this research question.

For many staff, education functioned mainly to "get 'em [pupils] a job" (Hazel, 08.11.2016). There was, however, also a realisation that the current labour market in and around Lillydown offers few opportunities for pupils to 'better themselves'. Generally though, data showed that staff believed that education could, for some, provide a means to be socially mobile. Nevertheless, it also showed that staff are conscious that most pupils' futures *are* shaped, to a significant degree, by the constraints of the labour market in Lillydown, and pupils' socioeconomic backgrounds more generally. As Reay (2018) observes, aspirations tell only a fragment of the complexities of life for the working classes; what are more effective are the "reproductive strategies of the already privileged, the constraints facing working-class young people, and the changing economic and educational landscapes that make social mobility increasingly difficult" (p.34).

The effects of deindustrialisation continue to affect pupils' lived experiences. Staff frequently spoke of the pride miners felt about their job, their identity and their community but what was most apparent was a sense of loss 'ghosted' from one generation to the next. Following Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012), we can begin to understand the effects of these losses. Their study shows how traditional notions of pride that many steelworkers once experienced differs somewhat from the sense of hopelessness felt especially by many men in their study. Rather than seeing such loss as a shift in traditional experiences of employment, Walkerdine and Jimenez view this as an 'intensification' of prior conditions – "[it] is not a break from security, but the ongoing chronic insecurity and the loss of ways of providing mutual support and solidarity that were developed during the time of the steelworks" (p.47). Walkerdine and Jimenez's notion of an intensification of insecure working conditions, alongside Gordon's notion of social haunting, develops an understanding of how historical dispositions and experiences of employment continue to affect the present. The shift towards insecure and precarious employment makes traditional ways of being and doing – pride, collectivity and solidarity, and workplace ethics and performances – difficult to reproduce. And so, the ghost remains to reveal what has become lost, and supports, to some degree, the validation and reproduction of broader structural inequalities.

Historic and current labour market conditions have created complex circumstances in Lillydown for both men and women. Traditional notions of collectivity, solidarity, and pride in a job done well are, data suggests, increasingly difficult to reproduce. Shildrick et al. (2012) nevertheless highlight how, despite work ethics becoming 'withered', traditional dispositions and commitment towards employment are remarkably durable (pp.93-94). However, since their study conditions for the working class have worsened further – welfare 'reforms', increased zero-hour contracts and precarious work, amongst other things.

Although data from this research supports Shildrick et al.'s findings, the resilience and lasting work commitment their research observed may gradually be becoming lost as individuals spend repeated periods churning between unemployment and low-paid jobs, and can no longer enact traditional performance and dispositions of employment. If traditional ways of being and doing continue to be constrained, and precarious conditions of employment are intensified, data from this ethnography suggests traditional work ethics may become a shadow of the past. For the majority of staff, notions of worklessness and benefit dependency are explained mainly by wider structural changes in society and the economy. Nevertheless, a certain minority believed that worklessness was a choice, though it was seen as an act of *resistance* rather than simply fecklessness. It is also possible to view such individuals as constituting part of a 'stagnant reserve army of labour' in which their labour, in contemporary capitalist society, is essential (Byrne, 1999, p.56). For those living in Lillydown, the economy ensures their agency is limited and that they remain in a cycle of recurrent poverty, trapped between low-skilled, poor work and unemployment.

The majority of staff recognised how worklessness can be explained by broader historical and current socioeconomic structures which serve to limit opportunities in Lillydown. This reinforces Shildrick et al.'s view (2012) that "we cannot understand recurrent worklessness and recurrent poverty without also understanding opportunities on the demand side of the economy" (p.13). I would add that the socioeconomic disadvantages young people face cannot be understood without also understanding how historical employment opportunities and practices continue to affect the present. What remains problematic and continues to haunt the present is the ability to engage in well paid and meaningful employment in Lillydown that provides opportunities for progression, and the sense of being and security that the mining industry once provided. As education becomes more marketised, and the labour market in

Lillydown remains precarious, education continues to play a major role in the validation and reproduction of capitalist structures, inequalities, and relations of production.

Despite staff's awareness of the precarious nature of work in Lillydown, a minority of staff saw such employment as appropriate for those that "don't want to go on to higher education" (Jane, 08.11.2016). The significance of Althusser's work on the role of the educational state apparatus is relevant here. Althusser advances the idea that through education 'each mass is ejected *en route'* at various junctures of their education according to the different divisions of labour in which they are destined:

> Somewhere around the age of sixteen, a huge mass of children are ejected 'into production'... Another portion of scholastically adapted youth carries on. .. until it falls by the wayside and fills the posts of small and middle technicians, white collar workers, small and middle executives, petty bourgeois of all kinds. A last portion reaches the summit, either to fall into intellectual semi-employment, or to provide, as well as the 'intellectuals of the collective labourer', the agents of exploitation, the agents of repression, and the professional ideologists (Althusser, 2006, p.105).

Although the way in which some staff's perceptions are articulated implies a degree of pupil agency – 'for those that don't want to' – the implied function of education is evident: those who are deemed 'not academic' are ejected at the earliest possibility from education into production. Such views are problematic. Although popular assertions about the expansion of higher education are typically offered as evidence of 'social mobility', access and participation remains complex across institutions, social classes, and ethnicities (Archer et al., 2003; Bathmaker et al., 2013; Reay, 2018). Continued underrepresentation of the working class in higher education, alongside complexities associated with access to elite institutions,

reinforces the role education plays in validating and reproducing inequality. A minority of staff regarded vocational studies as a more accessible pathway for 'non-academic' pupils. Arguably, such a discourse reinforces and validates the idea that portions of youth deemed 'academic' are directed into higher education, whilst 'non-academic' pupils fill various forms of low-skilled, low-paid employment or take various vocational pathways. Although vocational-academic divisions are long-standing, these perceptions demonstrate how processes of stratification are being constructed and reproduced. It highlights how, through different values, forms, and experiences of education, pupils are exposed to play a role in validating and reproducing wider inequalities and classed divisions of capitalist society.

Michael Ward (2015) proposes an alternative analysis which suggests vocational-academic aspirations and performances are historical. Ward examines the lives of a group of young working-class men in a post-industrial community in South Wales. His research focuses largely on two differing groups – 'The Valley Boiz' and 'The Geeks' – and how their region's industrial past and working-class culture continues to be embodied and re-traditionalised through particular performances across various educational and leisure spaces. Ward showed how the Valley Boiz were more disposed to participate in vocational courses – mechanics and construction, for example – which provided a platform to engage in traditional, localised forms of masculinity. Re-traditionalising these performances not only reflected traditional forms of masculinity, but offered the Valley Boiz a space to engage in performances typical of the shopfloor culture in industrial workplaces (Ward, 2015). The Geeks, on the other hand, participated in more 'academic' courses – English, mathematics, science, and languages – in the hope of progression into higher education. Data from this ethnography shares some similarities with Ward's analysis inasmuch as, that despite changes in the labour market, in the economy and society more broadly, traditional legacies and

performances remain and continue to haunt the present in multiple and complex ways. Traditionally, apprenticeships and vocational training, for some, led to further qualifications and progression into higher levels of employment within the workplace. There was, therefore, little need for alternative options. Vocational learning continues, through a historical transmission, to be a valued pathway for the working class. Ward recognised that these performances could become 'damaging' for working-class men – and I would add for many working-class women – as they do not have the resources to create alternative options. Providing access to conceptual knowledge within vocational courses could, however, allow learners to understand and critique not only particular forms of knowledge, practice and structures in the workplace but also in wider society, equipping pupils more suitably with the skills and knowledge to negotiate their futures (Avis, 2004).

Most staff saw college as a natural progression for many pupils – as it is local, accessible, and a familiar form of education – but university continued to be perceived as a "different kettle of fish" (Wendy, 01.12.2016) – not 'expected of from people in this village' (June, 13.10.2016). Data suggest that such views are a result of historical knowledge and experiences of education. It is not necessarily a matter of 'low-aspirations' or determinism, but more a result of a historical absence of need and experience. Put simply, the community of Lillydown, in the main, generally do not have the experience or knowledge of higher education – where to go, how to apply, what courses are available, how to manage finances, travel, and accommodation, or what opportunities are available after university. Although traditional modes of education and employment no longer exist, values and performances continue to be ghosted by Lillydown's industrial past. This analysis shares similarity with the work of Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012) who describe Jim's experience of education and employment. Jim, a 40-year-old former steel worker, left school with no qualifications. But

after the closure of the steel industry, and after taking career advice from his union, became a youth and community worker and pursued further qualifications at university. Evidence from this ethnography emphasises Walkerdine and Jimenez argument that, for the working class, participation in higher education is not necessarily an entrepreneurial or aspirational concept. Rather it is, for some, more a 'revelation' – the opening up of a "new or better world of work previously unknown, rather than any sense of wanting or needed to work towards new or better form of work, or for upward class mobility" (Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012, p.108). Jim notes, he 'did not realise there were jobs like that' until particular ways of being and doing became displaced and alternative knowledge became accessible (Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012, p.108). What data from this ethnography does suggest, however, is that what was once largely an absence of the unknown becomes increasingly a form of 'cruel optimism' (Berlant, 2011; Reay, 2017). What opportunities become known are progressively difficult to access as pupils' education and employment continues to be affected by their histories, relations of class and culture, and agency, alongside social, economic, and political structures of inequality.

Historical experiences of education, specific to Lillydown's industrial past, both formally and informally, continue to influence pupils' experiences of education. At times, these transmissions are negative but observation data shows how, particularly within the school, their ghosts *can* work positively. Lillydown Primary serves as an alternative space where traditional social and cultural performances, and ways of being and doing, are transmitted and reproduced. The school creates a sense of 'community', where pupils felt a sense of security, collectivity, and a sense of being, as a result of particular structures and relations. It is through staff and pupils' shared histories and experiences of growing up working class – their shared ghosts – that such performances are able to be established.

Despite evidence that some shift in parental attitudes is taking place; data suggests that most pupils' consciousness continues to be situated and shaped by historical attitudes and experiences of education and work. Particular networks and support mechanisms – family and friends – continue to be powerful forces affecting education and employment. Increases in tuition fees for further and higher education, and an increasingly congested labour market, in which graduate jobs are not guaranteed, have together created conditions in which extended periods of post-compulsory education entail various dimensions of insecurity and risk. Local networks, family and friends continue to work as a mechanism to maintain a sense of security and a sense of being within the community. As Althusser notes, the most dominant ISA in capitalist society is the school, but this is coupled with the role of the family in the transmission and reproduction of ruling ideology and social formations. If these transmissions, as Bowles and Gintis (2011) argue, are facilitated by a "rough correspondence between the social relations of production", they are likely to reproduce the divisions of labour (p.143). The distinctive social structure of Lillydown has, for the majority of people, traditionally worked to maintain notions of collectivity, solidarity, and security. It is these rhythms and structures of their past which remain (Gordon, 2008).

This is not a straightforward notion of aspiration or reproduction of inequality through the school and/or family, but a complex process influenced by a number of factors – the family, the school, the socioeconomic and political, and the individual intertwined with historical transmissions of Lillydown's industrial past. In a number of ways, the effects of some factors can be likened to what Invinson (2012) calls transmissions of 'community survival', rather than educational failure. Such perceptions and processes demonstrate how different values, forms, and experiences of education, expose pupils to processes of stratification. It highlights how education plays a role in validating and reproducing wider inequalities and classed

divisions of capitalist society. When considering the role these factors play in the reproduction of capitalist society, one transformative process lies, as Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012) argue, in working out how to make the working class feel "safe enough to make changes by themselves for themselves and to create a new vision of a possible future" (p. 190. That is to have the means, the knowledge, and the conditions to actualise their imaginations and 'be who [they] want to be' (pp.190-191).

Education and employment are not only affected by social, political, and economic structures, but by historical, current, and future specificities of place, culture, class and agency. The final part of this research question, *what are teachers' perceptions of the role of education for working-class children?,* will consider agency, structures and relations, and the effects of deindustrialisation inside the school through analysing the perceived and actual role of hidden and formal curriculum.

**The Hidden and Formal Curriculum**

*The Hidden Curriculum*

Bowles and Gintis' *Schooling in Capitalist America* (2011) argues that the role of schools in contemporary capitalism is primarily to reproduce an obedient, differentiated workforce reflecting classed divisions and relations of capitalist society. They illustrate how pupils' exposure to particular values, characteristics, and relations, based on their social class, reflect and reproduce their likely future occupational status, and economic positon in society. For example, working-class schools expose pupils to an education based largely on control and rule-following whereas middle-class schools focus more on pupil-led participation – a negotiation of rules and processes – where good behaviour is an internalised behavioural trait (see Anyon, 2011; Bowles and Gintis, 2011).

The work of Althusser and Bowles and Gintis is useful in highlighting how education plays a role in maintaining class structures and reproducing wider inequalities in capitalist society. Little attention however is given to the potential of human agency. And so, to examine the role of the hidden curriculum at Lillydown Primary, Willis' model of cultural reproduction is used to analyse the way pupils *and* staff create their own responses and resistance to the structures and relations of schooling. The notion of social haunting further complicates the way relations and structures are effected and engaged with at Lillydown Primary. I argue that staff's ability to reckon with Lillydown's ghosts, through their shared working-class backgrounds, creates, in the main, conditions and relations that pupils want to and can engage with. At times, however, the haunting 'harbours the violence' of Lillydown's past, particularly the 1984-1985 miners' strike, and creates tensions and conflicts (Gordon, 2008,

p.207). When met with arguably more authoritative and oppressive discourses and practice, often a result of limited professional experience, the ghost unveils itself in a negative form.

Data presented in the previous chapter showed a commitment amongst most staff to construct relations and systems focused on creating a sense of equality, participation, and respect. This was evident in the way processes of schooling and rules where actualised. Mutual, open dialogue – "can you please", "would you like to", for example – and a given level of understanding and reasoning behind structures and rules – "we just tell 'em if the' using running feet inside that it's dangerous and that" (Hazel, 08.11.2016). This discourse promotes notions of participation, respect, and relative autonomy rather than mechanistic regimes of control and subordination. This contrasts with the work of Geoff Bright (2011a, 2012) whose youths referred to a persistent struggle with teachers, particularly those from 'elsewhere', who talk to them "like crap" and "don't say 'please' or nothing" (2011a, p.72). Staff at Lillydown Primary understood the need to create a climate that promoted a sense of community and solidarity where pupils felt a sense of security and validity.

Harris (1982) wrote that the processes and relations teachers engage in represent 'in-class police-type' activities – maintaining order, governing emotions and movements, and administering punishments – and 'out-of-class police-type' activities – 'playground duty, assembly supervision, dinner duty and so on (p.95). Rather than spending, as Harris writes, significant portions of the day undertaking activities of control and surveillance, at Lillydown Primary staff created more open and relaxed structures and relations. A specific example of this can be illustrated by returning to observation data that showed that as long as pupils were engaging, staff were not concerned if they 'had jewellery on', 'didn't have the right PE kit or uniform', 'are stood up or knelt at their table', or 'are quietly chatting to their mates'. If those conditions allowed pupils to engage 'then why should staff be bothered?' after all, the

function of being at school, staff believed, 'is for pupils to learn, not make 'em conform' (Joe, 03.11.2016).

In a few instances observation data showed slightly stricter regimes – pupils asking for permission to move around the classroom or pupils being lined up or dismissed for breaks in particular ways, for example. There was, nevertheless, a reasonable degree of flexibility and scope exercised in day-to-day classroom structures and relations. These were not observably overly mechanistic or oppressive and pupils showed little resistance towards them. There was also a belief amongst staff that a degree of structure was needed to provide a level of consistency, and a sense of security for pupils that everything is, each day, as it should be. These beliefs emerged from staff's understanding of specific socioeconomic disadvantages some pupils face at home, rather than a desire to engage in practices and relations which parallel that of a prison warden or police officer (Harris, 1982 p.95). For Harris, the police-type activities are "part of the technical job as determined by the conditions and context of schooling" and teachers, he argues "cannot escape them as schooling now stands" (p.97). The conditions and relations at Lillydown Primary suggest, however, that there *is* potential for staff and pupils to collectively and individually resist structures and relations of contemporary capitalist society, and for the creation of alternative conditions. Staff's particular values and approaches towards schooling are shaped, data suggests, by their own experiences of growing up working class and their understanding of pupils' historical and current backgrounds. Their values, performances and relations favoured notions of equality, trust and respect which, at least to some extent, reflect traditional working-class social norms and ways of being and doing.

Data from my ethnography showed how pupils and staff carry their histories through traditional working-class humour. 'Pit humour' was used to effect rules and educational processes in a relaxed and playful way. For example, to:

- manage uniform, "put yha collar down, Elvis is dead!";

- make certain the classroom was tidy at the end of the day, "what I don't want is loads o' paper on ' floor 'cos I don't want 'r cleaner in my ear 'ole at home time";

- ensure pupils moved between scheduled activities without wasting time, "can you move a bit quicker today 'cos, you know, I'm off to my Mum's for Christmas dinner";

- confirm and reinforce the use of particular equipment, " if anyone draws a table without using a ruler, I'm sending you to another school";

- manage noise levels and pupil engagement, "yha not in ' local [pub] nar lads, callin' [chatting] away wi' each other".

<div align="right">

(Observation Data: 09.06.2016, 01.12.2016,

09.06.2016, 27.09.2016, 06.10.2016)

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In all cases, pupils understood and engaged with these humorous exchanges, and the desired outcomes were achieved with no observed resistance. The use of humour appeared to diffuse hierarchical structures of authority and oppressive processes which *could* have been enforced.

Here, the work of Willis (1997) is useful. For Willis, 'having a laff' was used by the lads to penetrate and regulate power and to 'win a space' from the school, its values, and relations of authority. The laff was enacted as a form of class resistance against the oppositional school culture. Its purpose, although multifaceted, was primarily used to "defeat boredom and fear,

and to overcome hardships and problems" (p.29). Willis observed the class significance of the laff. It was an important mechanism for the lads to prepare them for particular rituals and performances of shop-floor culture, and it drew on broader working-class traditions of the lads' culture. The intention here is to complicate Willis' analysis of the use of humour as a method of resistance.

Like Willis' lads, humour was used as an unofficial, yet powerful resource to manage social relations, forms of authority, and educational structures. At Lillydown Primary however, humour served as a creative response to manage and penetrate relations and processes of education by both pupils *and* staff. Humour is used collectively in an 'attempt to win a space' from larger processes of schooling and capitalist society more broadly. It appeared to reflect and serve as a mechanism to counter the often complex and alien conditions pupils face, and arguably in current educational discourses that staff face too – testing, assessments, grouping, curricula content, structures and rules, for example. It also worked as an apparatus for creating and maintaining relations of solidarity, trust and equality as it had historically done for miners underground and in community life more broadly. It is, I stress, their shared working-class backgrounds that gives validity to this particular cultural resource.

In the main, data from this ethnography showed staff's beliefs, relations, and performances acknowledged the potential for relative pupil autonomy. Staff advanced the idea that pupils needed to have a degree of control over their education, particularly over the formulation of class and school rules to engage. Although pupils were generally involved, in practice the degree of pupil agency varied between classes. This differentiation appeared to be largely dependent on staff experience and personality. Typically, more established and experienced members of staff's class rules were more pupil-led. In a small number of classes, particularly those of newer members of staff or those who favoured a relatively more structured approach,

class rules were more regulated and teacher-led. The variation of pupil agency and rule formation is illustrated in detail in the previous chapter.

Despite dominant educational discourses, pupils generally engaged and showed little resistance to educational relations and processes at Lillydown Primary. Data from this ethnography, however, shows that pupils' histories and backgrounds have potential to affect the way they engage and value structures and relations of authority. Evidence suggests the effects of the 1984-1985 miners' strike – particularly the disruption of relations between miners and their families, and the police and authority more broadly – continue to be ghosted into the present affecting pupils' experiences of and attitudes towards authority. Perhaps the clearest example here is to recall the account of the behaviours displayed by pupils when the current headteacher first took up her position and reports from past Ofsted inspections. Four years after Lillydown's colliery closed, the school was deemed to be making 'unsatisfactory progress' (Ofsted, 2002). The school had been experiencing high levels of staff turnover and this lack of continuity and stability, and somewhat more authoritative approaches to behaviour management, was attributed, some staff reflected, as the main reasons for low-levels of attainment and the resistant behaviours of pupils – climbing on the school roof, starting fires, truanting, and abusive behaviours.

Such conflictual relations are reminiscent of those displayed by the lads in Willis' study. For Willis, the most basic and overt element of the counter-school culture is the deep-rooted opposition to authority (p. 11). Rather than being viewed as a 'regime of coppers' (Bright, 2012, p.228), and coming into direct conflict with their pupils, at Lillydown Primary staff's shared class origins and identities helped 'build back that respect to authority' (Louise, 05.07.2016). This helped to negotiate a degree of respect between staff and pupils. Their shared working-class backgrounds allowed staff to understand pupils' histories and create

positive relations – "the' could all kick off but the' know that we trust 'em" (Zoe, 11.10.2016) – rather than structures and relations of domination and control. The problem with this interpretation, of course, is that it fails to account for individual consciousness of both pupils and staff; and the professional experience of staff. Although informality was the norm, in practice data showed rules and processes enforced, although infrequently, in a more mechanistic and authoritarian way which appeared to create a level of conflict between staff and pupils. Generally, this was more evident with newer members of staff. Typically, low levels of resistance were observed but in a few instances pupils enacted more overt and arguably more developed forms of resistance. Following Gordon's notion of social haunting, I argue some staff's exercise of authority parallels the role of the police officer and, therefore, the ghost of the 1984-1985 miners' strike is transmitted and reproduced through the conflicts of power. This reflects the work of Bright (2011a, b) who sees pupils' refusal and rejection of schooling as a complex performance of historical working-class culture – "namely, a propensity for 'bottom-up' action" (p.502). For Bright, the historical conflicts and disputes with authority are "complex, dangerous, and incomplete" social memories (Bright, 2011a, p.69). Like the youths in Bright's study, when met with authoritative discourses and performances, pupils at Lillydown Primary act within a 'socially remembered repertoire of refusal' (Bright, 2011b). In the main though, staff's shared working-class backgrounds and understanding of Lillydown's particular history appears to have strengthened teacher-pupil relations.

It is through their shared histories and class backgrounds that traditional performances of authority, moral codes and values, I argue, penetrate and influence, at least to some degree, approaches to rules, educational processes, and relations at Lillydown Primary. As little resistance was observed in established staff's classrooms, it would be hoped that, over time,

conflicts between new members of staff and pupils would dematerialise. Willis argued that, "once students find a bridge across institutional and cultural hazards; they can find a world of knowledge, mental development, and expression that can be appropriated and appreciated in autonomous ways" (Willis, 2004, p.164). Staff's shared working-class backgrounds and their understanding of pupils' historical and current realities, I argue, help to build that bridge. What becomes apparent is that staff must reckon with Lillydown's ghosts, past and present, to create conditions where pupils can engage with education. Reckoning with a social haunting is ultimately, Gordon writes, transforming a "shadow of a life into an undiminished life whose shadows touch softly in the spirit of a peaceful reconciliation" (p.208). Staff's ability to reckon with and understand pupils' historical and current realities diffused and re-organised, at least to a certain degree, relations of authority and control along arguably more horizontal lines based on trust, equality, and respect. Critical education begins, as Freire (1993) argues, by solving the teacher-student contradiction. The relations, processes, and structures at Lillydown Primary arguably provide conditions for transformative practice. To determine the critical scope of education at Lillydown Primary, it is necessary to examine the application and dissemination of knowledge – the role of the formal curriculum.

*The Formal Curriculum*

The previous section demonstrated how particular structures, relations and processes at Lillydown Primary provide some scope to counter class-based and wider structural inequalities which schooling in contemporary capitalist society reproduce. It is, however, not only particular characteristics and experiences, transmitted through the hidden curriculum, that are needed to maintain and reproduce capitalist structures and relations. Particular knowledge – the content and dissemination of the formal curriculum – also plays a role. Marketised discourses and performative pressures: the National Curriculum, school inspections, increased testing and target setting, and performance league tables, for example – have, in various ways, contributed to the erosion of teacher autonomy and the suppression of opportunities to engage in critical pedagogy (Hill, 2005, 2016; Mather et al., 2007). Nevertheless, in this section I argue that there is still some space to engage in more meaningful teaching and learning. Although evidence shows these spaces are currently exploited by some staff, I argue that they could be developed further to engage in more critical and socially-just forms of education at Lillydown Primary. Such practices could also answer staffs' call for a more 'relevant' curriculum that provides pupils with the skills and knowledge needed not only to 'get by'. Engaging in more 'practical' and critical forms of education, Archer (2018) argues, aligns better with pupils own 'values, interests, and ways of being' (p.162).

Staff responses in the previous chapter frequently alluded to decreased levels of autonomy. Teaching and learning, staff felt, was increasingly mechanistic and instrumental, focusing largely on the imposition and recall of knowledge, rather than "teaching 'em how to use it and apply it" (Estelle, 29.11.2016). This reflects Freire's (1993) belief that education is suffering from "narration sickness" whereby the teacher's task is to 'fill' pupils up with

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deposits of instrumental knowledge "detached from reality", and for pupils to "memorize mechanically the narrated and alienating content" (pp.52-53). What Freire made clear though, is the potential for teachers and learners to engage in more critical and potentially transformative forms of education. To practice what he calls 'problem-posing' education. Here, pupils become critical co-investigators *with* their teachers and are "increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world" (Freire, 1993, p.62). Though pupils showed little resistance or disengagement towards current forms of teaching and learning, as education becomes more socially-just and representative of pupils' social class and lived realities, Freire argues that pupils will feel increasingly 'challenged and obliged' to respond in more critical ways (p.63).

It is, however, important to recognise the increasingly complex constraints and pressures which limit, though do not determine, the space available to engage in more critical and socially-just forms of education. Data revealed a degree of frustration and demoralisation amongst staff as professional judgment and autonomy are becoming increasingly displaced – "it shows the' don't trust us as professionals to do what's best fo' ' kids… that is everything that is wrong wi' this system" (Estelle, 29.11.2016). This corresponds with Mather and Seifert (2014) who examine the effects of managerial discourses in further education. An intensification of surveillance, performativity, and oppressive management has led, they argue, to a displacement of professional trust, relations and autonomy (Mather and Seifert, 2003, 2014). Essentially, they argue that current conditions and processes reflect the main principles of Braverman's conceptualisation of the degradation and alienation of the labour process in capitalist society (Braverman, 1998; Mather and Seifert, 2014). For Braverman, these are inescapable conditions of labour under capitalist relations of production. Evidence suggests that staff at Lillydown Primary were, however, able to exercise a certain level of

agency over professional judgements and pedagogy. This was most evident in their resistance against what Giroux (1988) calls 'management pedagogies' – pre-determined and instrumentalised curriculum schemes and packages (p.124). Staff believed the prescriptive nature of curricula packages and schemes could result in a level of 'disengagement' and 'resistance' from pupils, and 'kill any space for creativity'. Staff generally saw such schemes and packages as problematic resulting in a tendency to de-skill.

Yet my data suggests that minority of staff, at times, want to utilise these packages. In part, this was a result of increasing performative pressures and workloads. Status and experience were also contributing factors. Although managerial discourses have a tendency to de-skill and fragment the labour process, for many teachers, my research shows these processes are not fully deterministic. Staff were able to exercise a degree of agency over the planning process.

Exercising autonomy over curricula content was, however, complex and challenging. In a few instances, my research showed some staff engaging in 'deeper' forms of teaching and learning – discussing current political and social issues, local foodbanks, conditions and labour relations at a local factory, conservation in Lillydown, and the European Union, for example. Nonetheless, these discussions were limited in scope and failed to engage in more conceptual and critical forms of teaching and learning. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire gives an example of how, when a concept is posed as a problem, instead of a generalised conversation, people start to become masters of their own thinking as they question, critique, and discuss topics and concepts in relation to their own thoughts and realities, and those of their peers. Freire gives the following example on nationalism:

One of the group members may say, for example: "I'd like to talk about nationalism." "Very well," says the educator, noting down the suggestion, and adds: "What does nationalism mean? Why is a discussion about nationalism of any interest to us?" (Freire, 1993, p.105).

This illustrates how problem-posing education could have developed particular discussions in to more critical and conceptual forms of pedagogy, and made learning more concrete and relevant to pupils. It is important to stress, as Hill (2003) writes, that this does not imply a "forced acceptance or silencing" of opposing perspectives (p.21). Rather, it advocates critical dialogue and practices where knowledge is actively questioned, challenged, and related to pupils own realities and those of others.

Evidence showed teaching and learning was generally interesting and stimulating but, overall, somewhat limited in scope to engage in critical forms of education. This echoes Erica's claim that "there is room for creativity but there is not room for autonomy" (Erica, 13.01.2017). It also complicates Anyon's analysis of the reproductive nature of the formal curriculum (Anyon, 2011). In many ways, pedagogical practices and dissemination of particular knowledge at Lillydown Primary challenges teaching and learning typically associated with working-class schools whilst simultaneously reproducing some limiting practices. Pedagogy consistently advocated creativity; touched on broader conceptual bodies of knowledge; linked, at times, learning to pupils' historical and current experiences; and advocated a degree of pupil autonomy – for example, the use of their own concepts and ideas within set objectives. Where practices were observably limiting – the recall of facts and curricula coverage, limited engagement with more conceptual and critical forms of education, and a need for greater degree of pupil autonomy – I argue that these were largely dependent upon two factors. First, wider structural and performative pressures, which have already been

discussed, and second, evidence suggests experience, status, and knowledge were also influential factors. It is important to consider these points further.

Engaging in critical pedagogy not only relies on staff having space, but also requires them to be equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills. Nowadays, teachers are generally trained in 'how to' manage and deliver curricula content, behaviour management, and assessment, for example (Hill, 2017). Many teacher-training programmes are dominated by procedural and instrumental training driven by the demands of the state rather than more theoretical and conceptual forms of education – the "'whys' and the 'why nots' of the contents of the curriculum, pedagogy, and educational purposes and structures" (Hill, 2017, p.275). These changes have limited exposure to more critical aspects of education, particularly to sociological and philosophical concepts of schooling. Such processes have "renewed a commitment to the blindness of race, class, and gender and all the values, realities and experiences these words carry in their wake" (Gordon, 2008, p.207). Choosing blindness, Gordon argues, creates a confined world in which these 'phantom words' remain to haunt (Williams, 1991; Gordon, 2008). Developing a language and practice of criticality is, I argue, necessary to engage in more critical and socially-just forms of education.

My research showed a belief amongst most staff that particular forms of 'vocational' knowledge and skills would be more socially and economically beneficial to pupils. Data also showed how particular themes and concepts reflective of and/or relatable to pupils lives – the conservation topic in Lillydown, and literacy and art work based around the film *Kes*, for example – appeared to engage pupils in learning more than topics covered in the National Curriculum. Staff emphasised the need for education to be more relevant to pupils' lives. 'Relevance', evidence proposes, represents something more 'vocational' and 'life-skill based' which draws on pupils' social class and lived experiences to create potentially more relevant

and localised forms of education (Archer, 2018). Most staff appeared to be advocating the re/constructing of education through a class-based lens – personalising and localising teaching and learning according to pupils' historical, current, and future realities – with forms of knowledge which have an "immediate use within their [pupils'] daily lives" rather than knowledge which only has "value in its potential for exchanges" (Archer, 2018, p.168). For staff at Lillydown Primary, I argue that their shared experiences of growing up working class provide them with the skills, knowledge, and experiences to understand and re/construct ways of negotiating and discussing more relevant and localised forms teaching and learning. There is a danger that such practices could result in staff educating pupils for specific functions in society, particularly as more vocational subjects are somewhat reflective of traditional working-class labour relations. Evidence from this ethnography suggests, however, that staff are advocating the teaching of more 'practical' subjects alongside and/or intertwined with more traditional forms of academic learning.

Although staff and pupil autonomy is complex and challenging to achieve, evidence suggests there are spaces at Lillydown Primary to challenge, question, and critique the reproductive nature of the formal curriculum – "to teach children not 'what to think', but...'how to think'" (Hill, 2017, p.275). My data shows that there is at least the potential for staff to exploit these spaces further and pursue more critical and socially-just forms of education *with* working-class pupils. The inclusion of more theoretical and conceptual forms of teaching and learning in teacher training programmes is, however, essential to equip future teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge. As Pavlidis (2015) writes,

> Educators cannot fight for a genuine transformation of society unless they are
>
> emotionally, ideologically and politically attached to the social force that mostly
>
> needs this transformation. And such a force within capitalism is only the class of

wage-labourers. Consequently, educators who strive for social transformation should be perfectly aware of the essential contradiction of capitalist society that necessitates and enables its revolutionary overcoming, and consciously work inside and outside schools, in the fields of social theory and practice, as wage-labour organic intellectuals, contributing to the understanding and expression of its strategic interests, thus serving the cause of the emancipation of labour and humanity (Pavlidis, 2015, pp.32-33).

I argue that staff's experiences of growing up working class, observed commitment to pupils, and socioeconomic and political consciousness, provides a foundation to begin engaging in more critical and socially-just forms of education. Such practices, it is hoped, will equip pupils with the necessary skills and knowledge to "perceive the reality of [their] oppression not as a closed wold from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform" (Freire, 1993, p.31).

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# Relationships

*Research Question Two: How do teachers establish and build relationships with working-class children?*

> *a) Whether class positon of teachers affected relationships with pupils.*
>
> *b) Whether wider historical and current political and socioeconomic forces affect teacher-pupil relationships.*

The previous chapter suggests that it is essentially two connected factors which make positive teacher-pupil relationships possible. Firstly, through shared histories and experiences of growing up working class; and, secondly, through the environment and particular sense of being that Lillydown Primary creates. Throughout each, specific working-class dispositions, behaviours, social norms, and practices are reproduced and transmitted in ways which reflect the notion of social haunting (Gordon, 2008). But here, rather than functioning simply as a reminder and legacy of past social violence, such practices work to strengthen relationships and open up educational possibilities.

## Growing-Up Working Class

What all staff held in common was a continued engagement with their own working-class identities. They were able to 'call upon' their knowledge and experiences of working-class life to influence their relationships and pedagogy (Maguire, 2005b). Although, for some, their class positions may have become more fluid, working-class culture remained embedded within their identities, and their particular socioeconomic and material experiences. A

specific example of this is illustrated by returning to the words of Estelle, who reflected on how her own childhood and experiences of schooling allowed her to understand the realities some pupils face:

> I grew up on a council estate and I come from a family where the' wo very little money… I have seen what it is like to be that kid in a classroom and there is another kid who has a birthday on the same day as you and they have this amazing thing and you have a card – I get it! I see it, I know it, I get it (Estelle, 29.11.2016).

This reinforces the work of Meg Maguire whose research purports that sharing the same classed biographies allowed the teachers in her study to understand the challenges their pupils faced (Maguire, 2001). Maguire argues that one of the most 'powerful factors' is the ability to 'speak the same language'; emitting to pupils a sense of 'social cohesion' and a feeling that their teacher is an 'insider' (Maguire, 2005a, p.433). My research suggests that staff's working-class backgrounds allowed them to be perceived as being "normal like everybody else" (Hazel, 08.11.2016). They spoke the same language as their pupils and were, consequently, viewed as 'insiders'. This contrasts with the work of Geoff Bright (20011a) which referred to an ongoing struggle against teachers who 'come from elsewhere'. In order to protect themselves, and their "intergenerational core values underpinning life in their communities", the young people in Bright's study fought back against outsider teachers (p.72). Like 'the lads' in Paul Willis' (1997) study, the youths in Bright's research also felt a sense of superiority to their teachers who "do not know the way of the world" (Willis, 1997, p.39). For Bright, the youths' resistance is a haunting – an intergenerational transmission – of their resistant histories which negatively impinge on their educational experiences. Social haunting is occurring at Lillydown Primary. However, shared histories – shared ghosts – work positively, in some ways, to develop and maintain teacher-pupil relationships. I argue

that it is, essentially, staff's ability to see, to 'know the way of their world', and understand

their pupils' historical and current realities through their own experiences of working-class

life, that opens up positive ways of negotiating relationships and education. Although there is

little doubt that shared identities and histories have built and strengthened teacher-pupil

relations, it is also true, as Gordon (2008) argues, that ghosts are, not by any means, innocent.

Such specific codes of working-class life have traditionally worked, and arguably continue to

work, as markers of inclusivity and exclusivity. Class differences, data revealed, were not

merely assumptions based on class origin; differences in language and appearance were also

powerful markers. Perhaps, the clearest example here is to recall Estelle's observation of how

appearance and accent worked to place a previous teacher as 'posh', 'the model', and,

ultimately, as someone 'other'. And Frances, whose 'northern accent' marked her as an

outsider when teaching 'down South'. Once again, this supports the work of Maguire which

considered the ways in which classed practices can work in schools to separate out and

exclude those who sound or look 'other' (Maguire, 2005a). It is important to stress, though,

that, whilst particular class codes and practices can work to marginalise and exclude, data

suggests there is scope to, over time, learn the class logic and language. This was

demonstrated by Clara whose learnt ability to speak the same language as her pupils become

one of her most powerful pedagogic skills and, as a result, strengthened her relationships with

both parents and pupils.

Maguire argued that speaking the same language is more than just having the same accent; it also means sharing the same humour (Maguire, 2005a). Evidence from the ethnography suggests that being able to understand and engage with distinctive forms of humour marked staff as insiders. What became apparent was how staff and pupils carried their histories as traditional forms working-class humour were deeply embedded within their identities. Applying Gordon's notion of social haunting helps explain how a shared humour – "a semi-industrial humour… that sort of almost unkind ribbing of each other" (Joe, 03.11.2016) – continued to be transmitted and reproduced into the present.

Traditionally, humour served as a coping strategy for the arduous and dangerous work miners faced and was an important part of community life. Being able to understand and engage with the humour helped create and maintain solidarity, trust, and relationships. Although traditional 'pit humour' and, albeit more subtly, the humour exercised in the classroom between staff and pupils, continued to be that 'unkind ribbing of each other', such exchanges should not be viewed as negative. The point rather, I argue, is that distinctive forms of working-class humour continue to function as a mechanism to develop solidarity, trust, and relationships between staff and pupils. This finding is in contrast to the work of Bright who described the use of traditional working-class 'pit humour' as an essential form of the youths' culture of resistance. At Lillydown Primary, however, its main function is to develop and strengthen teacher-pupil relationships and, as findings suggest elsewhere, positively influences wider educational processes.

Having a laff today continues, like the lads in Willis' study, to contribute to the formation and maintenance of a particular culture. Here, however, it is less about resisting authority and

educational cultures and more about using humour as a coping mechanism for the arduous and difficult work that both teachers and pupils face. 'Having a laff' acts as a means of creating and maintaining solidarity, trust and relationships within the classroom as it once did underground and in their community. Although such distinctive forms of humour can be problematic, particularly to people from 'elsewhere', the fact remains, as Gordon argues, that it is the particular way of seeing and understanding the connection between particular histories and present realities that is necessary to understand a haunting. It is the specific cultural know-how – recognising and understanding pupils' ghosts – that is essential in order to create positive relationships and educational experiences.

Staff at Lillydown Primary represent teachers who, I propose, not only hold a professional commitment to their pupils but also a personal and affective one. Despite concerns about increasing pressures from dominant neoliberal discourses, staff collectively reinforced the need to get to know pupils on a more individual level. Nevertheless, spaces available to do so were largely external to formal learning time. This often resulted in staff using alternative moments and spaces – before and after school, during breaks and lunch times – to develop relationships. Their continuing commitment to pupils and resistance of performative discourses, I would suggest, is a result of their shared class identities, values, and experiences. This analysis shares similarities with Maguire (2001, 2005a) who illustrates how teachers in her study contest normalising discourses and find alternative ways of being and doing through their perceptions, pedagogy, and values. These are embodied with notions of their class histories, class consciousness, and teaching experiences.

Although Maguire recognises historical influences of class, I would submit that, for staff at Lillydown Primary, their commitment to maintain positive relationships and networks is representative of traditional working-class modes of being and doing specific to small mining

and steel towns, for example. It is these traditional networks and relations that appear to be transmitted and reproduced in the school and are continuing to serve as a mechanism, as they had traditionally done so, to support each other through times of hardship, and social and material difficulties. Like the teachers in Maguire's study, staff at Lillydown "do what they do" as a result of their shared historical and current classed identities, experiences, and subjectivities (Maguire, 2001, p.315).

Staff believed that without these relationships, pupils would reject education. They felt that, even at primary school, most pupils were conscious of how their realities and futures are situated and shaped by their historical and current socioeconomic and material conditions. Yet, despite this consciousness, rather than rejecting education, data showed pupils engaging through teacher-pupil relationships. Perhaps, the clearest example here is through returning to the words of Joe:

> He doesn't want to do it because he is motivated by education... or by getting a good job. None of that stuff matters.... because it hasn't worked... for anybody else in his family… he is motivated by the fact that he wants [staff] to smile at him and say well done, and he wants to please me (Joe, 03.11.2016).

Like the lads in Willis' study, pupils at Lillydown Primary were "consciously but uncritically aware" of their own historical and future realities (McLaren and Scatamburlo-D'Annibale, 2004, p.35). Staff believed that pupils saw through the rhetoric of meritocracy and were conscious of the limitations education and qualifications brought to their futures. Rather than viewing this analysis as deterministic, I would suggest that by drawing on broader working-class knowledge and experiences, pupils' cultural consciousness gives a more realistic observation and analysis of the value of education and qualifications, and some of their

futures. Although pupils' historical and current realities provide some with a level of consciousness about the value of education and their future, these cultural penetrations are, like those in Willis' study, only partial. They fail to form a deeper understanding and questioning of how wider economic and material conditions, structures, and modes of knowledge are formed and reproduced. Although such considerations relate more to specific discussion around forms of critical pedagogy, dealt with later in this section of the thesis, it is important here to recognise that teacher-pupil relationships at Lillydown Primary provide the conditions in which to engage with some form of critical pedagogy. In contrast to the lads in Willis' study who rejected education, its content, values, and processes, pupils at Lillydown Primary, in the main, engaged. The problem with such engagement, I would suggest, is that for most, it appears to be largely a product of the relationships rather than an intrinsic desire for knowledge, personal growth, and development. This is not to suggest that all pupils lacked a desire to engage largely with education. The point rather is, as data shows, engagement with education was largely a result of the teacher-pupil relationships rather than a desire for education *per se* – although such desires may follow as a consequence. This was most evident in observation data were pupils exercised a degree of low-level resistance – grunts and sighs, slumped on the desk, for example – when the day's learning was discussed. And through the words of Estelle:

> If you're relying on the curriculum to inspire 'em and engage 'em yha fucked… you
> have to have those relationships or we would just fall apart at ' seams (Estelle,
> 29.11.2016).

When it came to lessons, observation data showed pupils were keen to participate and complete work. But they did so to please staff – they engaged through the relationships. Such relationships are, I would argue, representative of traditional working-class relationships and

networks once established in former industrial communities – such as those built around coal. Like the miners underground, it was not the work itself that they necessarily enjoyed but the camaraderie, teamwork, and relations. Equally, within their community, when socioeconomic and material difficulties were faced, it was the friendships, networks, and sense of community that held them together (Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012). In many ways, it is these relationships and networks that continue to be ghosted into the present and, I argue, positively affect pupils' experiences of, and approaches towards, education.

Data also showed the particular environment staff created contributed to pupil engagement and maintenance of teacher-pupil relationships. In classrooms, staff created an environment where pupils felt comfortable, a space where they wanted to be. Collectively, the relationships and environment provided pupils and staff with a sense of security, continuity, and a sense of being. This, in turn, provided pupils with a sense of structure, routine, friendships and networks which worked to create a sense of ontological security. To some extent, this reflects traditional structures and networks, notions of industrial camaraderie and collectivity. It echoes Walkerdine and Jimenez's (2012) notion of a 'containing skin' to explain how traditional relations, structures, and networks are transmitted and reproduced into the present and provide pupils with a sense of security, continuity, and a sense of being.

The answer then, to the second research question – *How do teachers establish and build relationships with working-class children? –* is through their shared histories and experiences of growing up working class which validates staff's membership and, ultimately, develops and strengthens relationships. Although mining in Lillydown ended some time ago, pupils' histories *are* ghosted into the present; they are mediated through the institution, staff and pupils, and the rhythms and structures of everyday life at Lillydown Primary. It is through staff's understanding and knowledge of their past and present that the haunting is understood.

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The ghost is known and welcomed – although not often intended or recognised as class or historical processes by staff – and used as a positive mechanism to establish and sustain relationships, and further educational possibilities. This suggests that what is needed are teachers who, whilst spaces are available, know or are willing to understand the subtle yet often complex ways in which pupils' histories are transmitted and reproduced into the present, and how these influence educational experiences.

# Teacher Expectations and Grouping Dimensions

*Research Question Three: What are teachers' expectations of working-class children?*

> *a) Whether teachers' expectations were influenced by the historical and current climate in Lillydown, and whether these have changed over time.*
>
> *b) The extent in which wider structural forces and pressures influence and control teacher expectations.*

**And,**

*Research Question Four: To what extent do teachers' practices differentiate between pupils?*

> *a) How children are grouped and whether this creates social structuring within the classroom.*
>
> *b) Whether teachers' expectations and pedagogy differs amongst pupils.*

This final section demonstrates how, despite the majority of staff professing to hold high expectations for all pupils that, at times, subtle processes of stratification are reproduced. Data suggests discrepancies between staff's expectations and classroom practice are largely affected, though not determined, by current neoliberal discourses in education. The notion of social haunting serves to illustrate how staff's expectations *are* influenced by their experiences of growing up working class and their awareness of pupils' historical and current realities. Though some expectations could arguably be seen as limiting, I suggest staff's cultural awareness and experiences provide a way of mediating, at least to some degree, oppressive discourses and/or reified identities which working-class pupils often experience

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(see, for example, Sharp and Green, 1975; Reay, 2017). I argue that pupils' performances within grouping structures at Lillydown Primary School are also shaped by historically-validated notions of collectivity, co-operation, and solidarity, which working-class communities are more accustomed to, rather than individualism, self-advancement, and competition.

**Teacher Expectations**

The majority of staff, at least in principle, had high expectations for all pupils and were committed to meeting individual needs. Data nonetheless showed they were influenced by a belief that some pupils' academic potential could be affected by their socioeconomic and material backgrounds. Staff felt they had to raise their expectations and practice somewhat more than teachers working, for example, in 'leafy lane', 'middle-class' schools where parental involvement is usually more evident. Pupils' home lives also appeared to result in staff categorising pupils into distinct groups: "I think… 70 percent are from stable homes and 30 percent are from chaotic homes" (Joe, 03.11.2016). Such perceptions should not necessarily be seen as limiting. Staff did not negatively fix pupils' academic potential based on their backgrounds. Rather, evidence indicates staff's own experiences of growing up working class, and their awareness of pupils' home life and backgrounds, gives them the ability to reckon with the difficulties some pupils face. Staff saw pupils firstly as individuals, each with different needs and potentials who secondly come from working-class backgrounds.

Neoliberal discourses, however, overlook such complexities, causing a level of frustration amongst staff, complicating their ability to actualise their expectations in practise.

Attainment, competition, and 'outputs' were frequently privileged over a focus on the individual and holistic *progress* of pupils:

> We do it in ' wrong way because we reduce 'em to a number and percentage to get a higher score whereas what we should say is… it is okay to want better for yourself academically and non-academically  (Estelle, 29.11.2016).

Data revealed subtle paradoxes within some 'high' expectations. For a number of staff current discourses in education place 'unrealistic' expectations on pupils: "they are only kids… I wouldn't want to aim too high" (Jennifer, 17.11.2016). Further paradoxes were evidenced as a minority of staff, perhaps unwittingly, constructed a low-aspirational discourse of some pupils' academic abilities – 'I didn't expect you to do that well' and 'don't worry about those – you can't do them', for example. Although such phrases were uncommon, such a discourse reflects an inequality of expectation. If such vocabulary became commonplace, it could contribute to the stratification of pupils and reification of their identities by perceived ability.

Behavioural expectations were generally high. Again, staff believed pupils' historical and current socioeconomic and material backgrounds have potential to influence behaviour. However, rather than categorising pupils by oppressive and deficit terms – 'disturbed' or 'maladjusted' (Sharp and Green, 1975) – staff appeared conscious of the dangers of labelling pupils based on their working-class backgrounds. Most staff believed historical and current 'reputations' associated with mining communities continue to haunt pupils:

> With it being the area that it is, folk will point their finger and say, 'that kid is going to be rough'. A prime example is when it was the night of one of the proms and there was a new boy starting in our class. He was a big lad, not big built but a tall lad, and

people were saying he was a 'bad one'. We never had to speak to him, he was a lovely kid…They said he was a bad one but he wasn't, they just thought that because of the area (Jackie, 28.11.2016).

Through their shared experiences of growing up working class, staff are able to understand how pupils' backgrounds have the potential to affect their behaviour, without creating or reproducing oppressive categorisations of pupils. Nevertheless, staff did not regard pupils' backgrounds as being irrelevant. 'Lack of routine' and 'poor role models', alongside more severe factors – domestic violence, drugs and alcohol at home, for example – were cited as affecting pupil behaviour. Rather than placing the defects in the pupils, their home life, and/or working-class background, staff placed a focus on what they, as a school, can do to support pupils. In practice however, evidence showed behavioural expectations were sometimes inconsistent, with some staff allowing "pupils t' get away wi' probably more than what another teacher would" (Zoe, 11.10.2016) and some staff having 'middle-class' and 'unrealistic' expectations:

> People should give 'em a break and the' need to remember that a lot of these kids struggle… to expect them to conform, when they don't have to conform in any other setting, is nearly impossible for them… because someone has never shown 'em, or the' so troubled, or so deeply pre-occupied with something that's gone off at home (Joe, 03.11.2016).

Evidence from this research shows teacher expectations are sometimes contradictory and messy. At times, data showed a disjuncture between the expectations some staff claimed to have and their actual practice. In these cases, expectations and actual practice were bound

largely by personal behaviour management styles, staff's role within the school – for example, a TA or HLTA covering lessons – and experience.

Data presented in the previous chapter showed staff's responses to wider expectations focused largely on pupil progression into the local secondary academy. It revealed a belief amongst most staff that the secondary academy would fail to offer the continuity of support, established relationships, and sense of security that they considered pupils at Lillydown Primary receive. Whilst these concerns are typical in most primary schools, evidence indicates they are sharpened by staff's understanding and experiences of historical and current conditions in Lillydown and, more specifically, the complexity that academisation – particularly admission and exclusion polices – causes for working-class pupils. To some extent, this reflects Joe's belief that Lillydown Primary is somewhat failing to equip pupils with the knowledge needed to understand and access further educational and employment pathways. This is, Walkerdine (2011) argues, is not simply a lack of aspiration but a complex amalgamation of historical and current cultural, economic and social factors which work to create circumstances which constrain and make conditions increasingly risky for the working class to open up new spaces and actualise their imagined futures. Nevertheless, my data suggests there are spaces for staff to begin equipping pupils with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to negotiate their futures.

**Grouping Dimensions**

This next section concerns the relationship between teachers' assumed expectations and the construction of pupils' identities through their actual practice. Pupils were grouped into three main ability groups – higher, middle, and lower – in core subjects, and typically in mixed-ability groups for topic work throughout the school. Overall, staff viewed grouping as fluid. Conditions at Lillydown Primary, specifically the employment of a teacher, TA, and HLTA in every classroom, allowed staff to operate in a fairly fluid fashion. As data showed in the previous chapter, staff actively moved around the classroom distributing their time relatively consistently between different groups and individual pupils. This appeared, at least partially, to mediate any overt processes of stratification. This is in contrast to the work of Sharp and Green (1975). Though all three teachers in their study claimed to support egalitarian and child-centred principles, in practice, a marked degree of differentiation amongst pupils was observed particularly in relation to the amount of time and level of interaction teachers accorded to certain pupils. The 'most able' pupils received extra attention compared to those regarded as 'normal'; these two groups held reasonably fluid positions in the classroom. Those categorised as 'peculiar', 'dim' or 'difficult' received little contact and support, and their low-status was relatively fixed (pp.120-122). Evidence from Lillydown Primary did, however, reveal grouping dimensions were, on occasion, affected by wider pressures – time constraints, accountability processes, increased complexity of pupils' needs, and class sizes, for example. These sometimes generated a subtle level of stratification, as staff's practice became increasingly constrained, resulting in more pupils spending time working independently.

My data also indicated that grouping dimensions had implications for pupil agency. A number of staff advocated notions of 'competition', 'self-advancement', and 'independence',

echoing Erica's belief that "competing against their self and that self-competition sets them up to aim the highest" (Erica, 13.01.2017). Such notions appeared to increasingly individualise grouping dimensions, placing the failure or success on the part of the pupils. In the classroom, evidence showed that where practices of individual advancements were observed, pupils relied on the approval of staff or other pupils before moving up in to a different group. Most pupils appeared to lack the confidence or desire to advance independently. Evidence showed, however, that pupils confidently and frequently advance upwards collectively. This supports Walkerdine's (2011) argument that the demand for the working class to refashion themselves – embracing notions of individualism and competition – increasingly displaces traditional notions of collectivity and solidarity that working-class communities are more accustomed with. Walkerdine argues individualism and aspiration is, for some young people in working-class communities, often viewed as a form of disloyalty to traditional working-class values and performances. In many ways, this can be seen in pupils' reluctance to advance individually. It is these echoes and murmurs of the past – performances of collectivity, solidarity, and co-operation – that continue to be ghosted into the present affecting pupils' experiences of education. To move beyond neoliberal discourses, I argue that staff must reckon with and draw on traditional values and performances to create conditions where pupils, through mutual support, positively experience education and feel safe enough to open up further educational possibilities.

Staff sought to mask any overt classification of pupils through re-branding groups into colours. Although this was general school policy, data from my ethnography showed this was reinforced by staff's own experiences of grouping, and awareness of the potential effects on pupil identities. Within the foundation stage, data showed no observed pupil awareness or direct effects of grouping processes, staff generally just 'called 'em' [pupils]' during free-

play. As pupils progressed through school however, the pretence of being stratified by colour ceased to hide categorisation by ability. The previous chapter showed pupils *were* conscious of grouping processes and appeared to have internalised an understanding of their divisions and how this compared to others. Data also showed that some staff's particular use of vocabulary, which, at times, overtly referred to pupils by their perceived ability, reinforced the reification of pupil identities. This was particularly evident when pupils were observed referring to themselves and others by ability. Although staff's expectations and practices sought to hide overt classification of pupils, a process of social stratification *is*, at times, being constructed through grouping processes and dimensions.

The relationship between staff's expectations and actual practice is complex and influenced by a number of factors which appear, in many ways, to prevent them from creating the conditions and relations their expectations endorse. Data has shown that staff's expectations are influenced by pupils' backgrounds. However, rather than creating oppressive and fixed categorisations of pupils, staff's shared experiences of growing up working class, and their understanding of pupils' historical and current realities, places a focus on what the school can do to support pupils, whilst retaining an awareness of the effects pupils' socioeconomic and material backgrounds could have on their experiences of education. When considering grouping dimensions, pupils' histories *are* being ghosted into the present; historical transmissions of solidarity, collectivity, and camaraderie continue to influence pupils' experiences of education. Staff must reckon with Lillydown's ghosts to create conditions which value and develop traditional ways of being and doing to positively influence pupils' experiences of education, and potentially open up further educational possibilities.

# Chapter Six: Conclusion

This chapter concludes the thesis. It argues that reckoning with and harnessing the 'goodness' of our ghosts is necessary if we are to truly understand and transform experiences of schooling for working-class young people in contemporary society. To achieve this, teaching and learning must be located within the historical and cultural context of the locale in which schooling takes place. This is not a call for a return to the past though. Most simply, it is a call to reckon with and harness the goodness and value within working-class history to refashion education so it is more meaningful and socially-just. I revisit Dave Hill's (2017) four aspects of teaching and learning to consider a number of strategies I believe are key to understanding and transforming the relationship and role of education for the working class. Here I build on Hill's proposals by identifying and combining the findings of this research. I highlight how the 'goodness' of Lillydown's ghosts are being reckoned with and propose ways in which these might be developed further to fully harness the ghosts' potentiality.

## Beyond Schooling: The Haunting of De-Industrialisation and its Utopian Grace

Throughout the research, I have shown how pupils' experiences of education continue to be affected by ghostly aspects of their histories. Particular cultural values, relations, and ways of being and doing continue to be transmitted and re-traditionalised across various spaces at Lillydown Primary, in often covert and multiple ways. I have shown how these continue to frame the processes of education in the school. Such transmissions, at times, work to reinforce and reproduce class-based inequalities. But, whilst a haunting is somewhat

implicated in reproductive processes, I have suggested that if we reckon with and harness the ghosts' *goodness*, the ghost is alive with possibilities for change. For Gordon (2008), a ghost combines the 'injuries', *the goodness*, and 'the utopian' (p.135). I have shown how particular relations, structures and performances are reflective of Lillydown's industrial past and culture, and have suggested that such historical transmissions encouragingly shape pupils' experiences of education and open up further possibilities for change. I have argued that specific conditions and performances at Lillydown Primary are associated with staff's shared histories and experiences of growing-up working class, and their ability, to varying degrees, to reckon with and begin to harness the 'goodness' of their ghosts.

This thesis provides an original contribution to knowledge in several ways. By bringing together neo-Marxist theories on the reproductive nature of schooling, and complicating Avery Gordon's notion of social haunting, it moves beyond conceptualisations of what 'is already understood'. The research opens up a 'new way of knowing and seeing' the interplay and experiences of class and education. It offers a particular theoretical framework that not only recognises relations between those under study and their social, economic and political contexts but frames their experiences within the relations and effects of their history. Attention to ghosts of their past emphasises the importance of understanding how class, as a historical transmission, is 'deeply embedded [and] affectively lived' through particular performances, structures, and relations in education (Walkerdine, 2001, p.258). This research moves beyond Gordon's (2008) notion of social haunting which recognises a haunting as a 'frightening experience' that 'always registers the harm inflicted or the loss sustained by a social violence done in the past' (p. xvi). It recognises that to produce the 'something-to-be-done' – the 'utopian grace' – we must also recognise and harness the 'goodness' a haunting transmits. This in itself is a significant contribution. Understanding the full complexity of a

haunting is crucial if we are to truly understand the nature and experiences of schooling for working-class youth. This research suggests that any serious examination of the role of education within any specific culture, class, or locale must reckon with and harness the ghosts of those we seek to understand.

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> Following the ghosts is about making a contact that changes you and refashions the social relations in which you are located. It is about putting life back in where only a vague memory or a bare trace was visible to those who bothered to look. It is sometimes about writing ghost stories, stories that not only repair representational mistakes, but also strive to understand the conditions under which a memory was produced in the first place, toward a countermemory, for the future (Gordon, 2008, p.22).

This subsection builds on Hill's (2017) four proposals for teaching and learning – *Pedagogy, Curriculum, The Organisation of Students, and the Control of Education* – by identifying how the 'goodness' of pupils' ghosts are being reckoned with at Lillydown Primary, and suggesting ways in which these could be harnessed further and come to be potentially transformative.

*Pedagogy*

For Critical and Marxist educators, 'top-down' processes of schooling, what Freire referred to as 'the banking model of education', reflect and reproduce capitalist relations of authority, oppression, and control. To break down such relations, Hill (2017) argues that educators must attempt to utilise different types of pedagogy, focused on more dialectic – non-hierarchical, democratic and participative – models of teaching and learning (p.2).

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This research has shown how particular historical, class-based performances at Lillydown Primary work to establish more dialectic models of teaching and learning. Rather than effecting authoritative pedagogies, which working-class pupils often resist and reject, dominant processes of teaching and learning are displaced by relations and pedagogies of trust, equality, and solidarity. These have worked to create conditions where pupils feel a sense of belonging, a sense of security, and of collectivity. Perhaps unwittingly, Lillydown Primary places pupils' histories and culture at the centre of its structures, relations, and performances. Most notably, this research has illustrated how pupils experience and negotiate schooling through a class-based, rather than a neoliberal-educational, paradigm. Staff were able to understand and 'speak their language' – working-class codes, dispositions, performances and spoken language – through their shared histories. This, I argue, worked to establish and maintain particular relations and conditions that pupils identified with; they felt a sense of belonging, a sense of security and, therefore, engaged with the other processes of schooling. For those whose histories are 'other' there is space to reckon with and harness differing ghosts. To reckon with the histories of the working class, I suggest four '*Affective Working-Class Dispositions*' (Simmons and Smyth, 2018) – Honesty, Authenticity, Dignity, Solidarity (pp.7-11) – in order to let the ghosts in.

Reckoning with and harnessing pupils' ghosts is key to creating encouraging relations and engaging in more dialectic, socially-just forms of pedagogy. To be blind to such ghosts, or to mishandle them, this study warns, risks constraining their goodness and re-awakening the 'unhallowed dead' – the ghosts that carry the loss, the social injustice and resistant histories (Gordon, 2008, p.22). Choosing blindness ultimately risks rupturing transmissions from the past that this research suggests are critical if we are to open up and transform the role of education for the working class.

The essential foundation of Marxist pedagogy is carrying out the 'role of social analysis' of 'revolutionary pedagogy' to activate a public imagination and critical debate – 'through leaflets, newspapers, booklets, books, and social media, conversations, and rhetorical speeches' – on various political, cultural, and economic matters from "a class conscious perspective" (Hill, 2017, p.4). It is about engaging critically through a variety of cultural apparatuses, and other domains of cultural production. It should take place:

1) Within the classroom/ seminar room/lecture theatre;

2) Within the wider school community / organization – such as the staffroom, the union branch;

3) Within the local community/ town/ city and within local political parties; social movements and trade unions;

4) And, at national levels within such movements, parties and organisations.

(Hill, 2017, p.1)

Such a proposal is welcomed and necessary. However, it is important to remember that effects of deindustrialisation, alongside cuts to public funding, have generally resulted in working-men's clubs, libraries, trade unions branches, institutes and various other public spaces, which previously functioned as places for critical debate and action, being either boarded-up or demolished, and their histories lost – at least in part. For those that remain, their purposes are simply recreational. This research suggests that Lillydown Primary, in many ways, functions as an alternative space, a microcosm of what once. The school could, therefore, develop itself and begin, effectively, to function like the Stute and Club once did; providing a central point where various forms of social, educational, and cultural activities are available to all. Although Lillydown Primary does currently invite community members

into the school for various purposes – for example, Frank, a former miner, who volunteers at the school teaching first aid – these spaces need to be advanced to a more critical level. As this research ended, the headteacher planned to develop the ex-caretaker's house into a more functional space where a range of educational, social and cultural events can be made accessible to the community. Once established, this space could run a range of community projects and activities, alongside more informative events that, for example, engage residents in political, cultural, and economic dialogue. A good starting point, for example, would be to distribute information and run sessions on access and participation into further and higher education, course availability and funding. This could go some way to addressing and challenging various historical values and experiences of education which often impact pupils' futures.

*Curriculum*

The curriculum, both hidden and formal, is another area that Hill (2017) argues Marxist and other Critical educators can and should critique. The increasing de-professionalisation and erosion of teacher autonomy is well documented. Hill nevertheless reminds us that there are always spaces for resistance. He argues that educators should examine and ask questions about 'social class, 'race' and gender'. They should question the 'whys and why nots' of the curriculum; and question and challenge the processes, relations, and structures of education and their role in reproducing capitalism (p.5). Schools and various other education and training spaces should:

(i) Encourage critical thinking across the curriculum. Teach children not `what to think' but also `how to think'.

(ii)    Address and value ecological literacy and a readiness to act for environmental justice as well as economic and social justice.

(iii)   Ensure that schools' curriculum and `hidden curriculum' are anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic and actually address, identify, critique, and combat social class exploitation under capitalism, and its attendant class discrimination.

(iv)    Have an honest sex education curriculum.

(Hill, 2017, pp.4-5)

As Cole (2001) writes, "anything can be taught honestly at any age" (p.268). This research suggests that in order for education to be critical, pedagogy must firstly engage pupils – it must be meaningful, placing emphasis on and/or starting with pupils' histories and culture. Chapter Four illustrates how particular concepts reflective of pupils' histories and narratives – teaching and learning based around the film *Kes* and the conservation topic in Lillydown, for example – appeared to engage pupils' more than traditional subjects and curricula content. More localised, class-based forms of teaching and learning gave pupils the opportunity to locate their lived experiences, social relations, and histories within what was being taught. Most staff at Lillydown Primary advocated re/constructing education through a class-based lens – personalising and localising teaching and learning according to pupils' historical and lived realities. They called for a more practical and relevant curriculum, alongside and/or intertwined with more traditional curricula content, that emphasised forms of knowledge that have an immediate value in pupils lives, rather than knowledge which so often alienates and only has value in its "potential for exchanges" (Archer, 2018, p.168). There is potential to exploit current spaces further, to not only give pupils the appropriate knowledge and skills to 'get by' but to pursue more critically and socially-just forms of education. Again, I emphasise the need to reckon with and harness pupils' ghosts; to recognise their histories in order to

effectively re/construct the curriculum. For staff at Lillydown Primary, I argue their shared experiences of growing up working class provide particular skills, knowledge, and experiences to understand and begin to re/construct forms of knowledge *with* and for their pupils.

Alongside teacher-pupil relations, this research stresses pupil engagement at Lillydown Primary is contingent upon the way the hidden curriculum is enacted as legacies of class struggles and historical injustices continue to frame pupils' relations to authority. Through their shared histories, staff appeared to establish particular structures and performances which diffused and reconfigured, at least to a certain degree, relations of authority along more horizontal, equal lines. These were based on traditional performances of authority and working-class codes and ethics, favouring trust, equality, and respect. Most evidently, the use of traditional working-class humour continued to serve as a mechanism to effect educational processes and rules in a more relaxed way. Mutual and open dialogue, and pupil agency in and around the classroom, worked to create a sense of community, equality, and trust. Pupils appeared to experience a degree of relative autonomy, a sense of security and validity, rather than experiencing regimes of control and subordination. Again, it is important to reiterate that reckoning with and harnessing pupils' ghosts improperly risks becoming haunted by their resistant histories, and creating tensions and conflicts within education.

*Organisation of Students*

The third area that Critical and Marxist educators can and should challenge concerns the organisation of students (Hill, 2017). Hill argues that educators should question how pupils of different abilities, social class, gender, ethnic backgrounds, and sexual orientations are

organized within classrooms, and the role such processes play in reinforcing and reproducing relations and structures of inequality (p.7).

At Lillydown Primary, data has shown how more open, pupil-led grouping processes challenge neoliberal discourses of individualism, self-advancement, and competition which often serve to oppress working-class pupils and reproduce class-based inequalities. I have, however, argued that despite such relatively fluid grouping structures, pupils' performances within groups continue to be framed by historically-validated notions of collectivity, co-operation, and solidarity. I therefore propose that staff must understand and reckon with their ghosts to fully understand and harness the potentialities of their histories. To do so, I suggest staff need to look at ways to make grouping processes more authentic and valid for working-class pupils; focusing on areas of learning and success valued not only in dominant educational discourses but within working-class histories and culture. Such processes, it would be hoped, could create more fluid and equal grouping structures in which pupils feel safe enough to transgress collectively *and* individually between focused grouping dimensions.

*Control and Organisation of Education*

Hill's (2017) final call is for a fully comprehensive, or what Brian Simon (1955) called a 'common school', system. Such changes demand an end to existing private and selective systems of schooling as well as 'faith schools' and organised religious schools (p.7). This raises the question of who should own and control schools, and how should they be 'managed'. Some Marxists believe schools and other education and training facilities should be placed under democratic, locally-elected control. They should be run by and with

education workers and students, as well as elected community representatives. After all, education is a public good that should not be "distorted and corrupted by private ownership" or "run and governed by rich businessmen or women, or by transnational corporations or by national `for-profit' private companies" (Hill, 2017, p.7). At Lillydown Primary, the current headteacher believes she got the job because she is, essentially, an insider:

> I think one of the reasons why I got the job is because the community has such a sense of loyalty and they knew me from working down at the school in The Village. I didn't think I would get the job because it was the first headship interview I had been for. But for them it was that, you know, I've worked in the community, I knew the community, I'm kind of one of them and had been accepted (Headteacher, 09.06.2016).

The particular ways that Lillydown Primary is structured and experienced by pupils and staff is, at least partly, a result of the current headteacher's 'management' of the school. Most notably, I would argue that without three members of staff – a Teacher, HLTA, and TA – particular performances, relations, and structures described throughout this research could be more constrained and complicated by wider pressures and structural forces controlling education. Lillydown Primary is, however, under pressure to leave local authority control. The school faced a significant budget shortfall for 2019/2020. Proposed cuts placed staffing structures in a precarious position and resulted in a number of staff staging strike action for a number of weeks. Although this has now been resolved, future budget projections still indicate a deficit; a further review of staffing is likely in the near future. As teachers – as educators – we do, as Hill (2017) writes, 'have a role to play in transforming education, and we must and will play it' (p.11). To fully effect radical change the above proposals need to be enacted alongside socioeconomic reform (see Simmons and Smyth, 2018, pp.253-254).

Ultimately, we must work towards replacing capitalist society with 'democratic Marxism' (Hill, 2017).

**Final Thoughts**

Whilst this research has developed understanding about how working-class pupils experience education at primary school, it has highlighted potential areas for further study. I believe future research needs to be conducted into the ways in which pupils experience education beyond primary school. Being able to see how pupils negotiate secondary schooling would be of particular interest as a number of staff highlighted various concerns over the relations, structures and processes pupils are believed to experience at the local secondary academy. It would also be of interest to carry out a longitudinal study to track a cohort of pupils to further examine the role of education for working class pupils in Lillydown, and whether the pathways predicated in this research are actualised. Finally, research needs to be carried out in other former mining communities and/ or similar industrial areas, and in various settings and sectors of education to further investigate the nuances of how schooling for working-class young people is experienced, and the way in which particular histories are enacted and reckoned with.

This research tells the story of how education is perceived and experienced in a small, working-class school in South Yorkshire. But the story that emerges, of a community full of ghosts, is central to how we research, and how we come to know, understand, and potentially transform education for the working class. To truly understand and change young people's experiences of education, schooling must be understood through the notion of social haunting. That is, it must be located within the historical context of its locale which so

critically frames and affects their lives. Society, communities, and schools are full of ghosts. A haunting *can* be 'magical' – "the ghost can lead you toward what has been missing, which is sometimes everything" (Gordon, 2008, p.58).

I want to close this thesis by recognising the relentless commitment from staff at Lillydown Primary who, like many others, continue in their jobs despite current conditions in education. Their spirit to 'get by' during times of hardships, and their passion and creativity remain undefeated. Most notably, their working-class 'pit humour' gives joy in times of despair. These are powerful tools that offer hope – and have restored my hope – that education does have a role to play in reimagining and transforming futures for the working class. Lillydown Primary offers the conditions, the relations, and the knowledge to do this. Staff's shared working-class histories place them in a unique position to fully harness their ghosts' potentialities. They have fight, passion, and creativity in their histories. They must harness these ghosts to reignite the fight for change, for a future with and for the working class.



(John Sturrock, 1984)

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