

# Chapter Seven

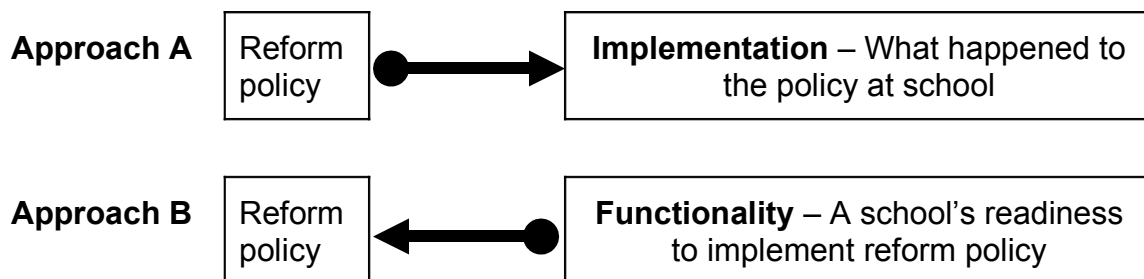
## Cape Flats' level of functionality

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### 7.1. Introduction

This research study is an investigation into why the DAS policy was never implemented at Cape Flats Secondary School (CFSS). In particular, the focus of the interview questions was 'appraisal specific' (see Appendix A). Despite my attempt to focus on the semi-structured 'appraisal specific' questions, most of the interviewees constantly spoke about 'what was going on at the school'. While the focus of the semi-structured questions was to elicit issues or challenges which could indicate why the DAS policy was not implemented (due to either components within the DAS instrument or processes of the reform policy), interviewees preferred to focus on the 'state' (functionality) of the school - the ability of the school community to implement anything new or different from outside the school. Interviewees believed that only by understanding the functionality of the school, would I understand why the DAS policy was never implemented at CFSS. They therefore turned my initial focus upside-down. Instead of allowing me to focus on DAS, and investigate why it was not implemented (Approach A), the interviewees forced me to focus on the functionality of the school, and then to investigate whether the level of complexity and depth of DAS was implementable given the lack of sustained support and the level of school functionality (Approach B).

Figure 16: Two approaches to reform policy evaluation



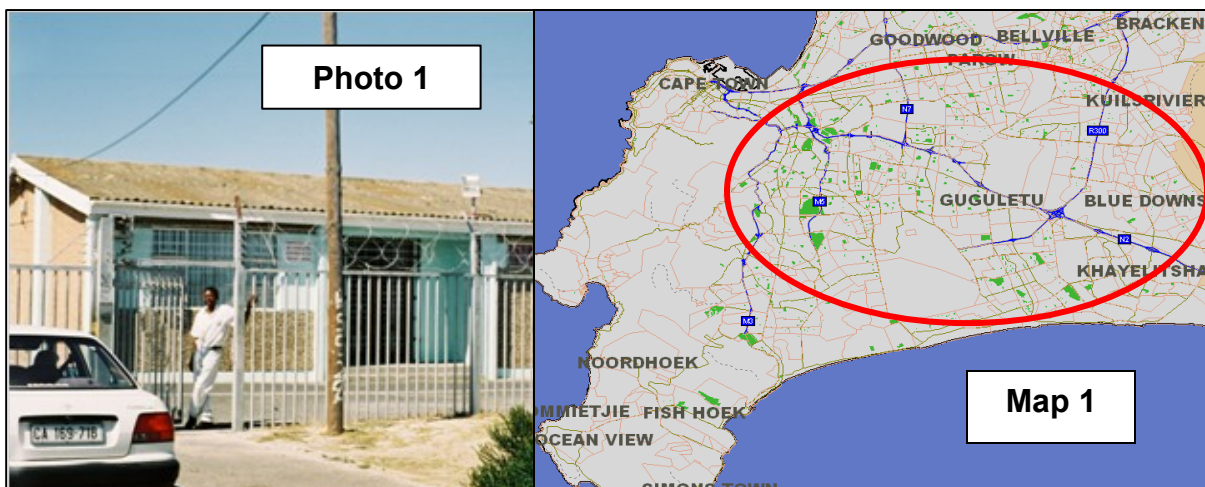
Since I interviewed only six staff members in order to elicit in-depth information on the non-implementation of the reform policy (Approach A), I decided to develop a

questionnaire which would be completed by all staff members, aimed at substantiating the comments of the interviewees about the functionality of the school. By interrogating literature on ‘school effectiveness’, ‘school improvement’, ‘school readiness to change’ (see Appendix B) and the ‘organisational capacity requirements’ indicated within the NDoE (1998) DAS manual, I developed a questionnaire (see Appendix C) based on the key areas in this literature and the manual. Through a combination of (1) the ‘functionality of the school and its readiness to change’ as well as (2) the responses to the ‘complexity and depth of the DAS policy to be implemented’, the concept of an ‘implementation readiness conditions’ matrix was developed in response to the question of this chapter namely, What was the level of functionality of CFSS in respond to the level of complexity and depth of DAS?

This chapter will focus first on the contextual and development history of CFSS, in order to locate the debate within the context where the policy had to be implemented. Second, I will discuss briefly the evaluation and analysis instruments that will be used to identify the level of functionality of the school. Finally, I will use the data from interviews and questionnaires in an attempt to determine the level of functionality of CFSS.

## 7.2. The contextual and developmental history of Cape Flats Secondary School (CFSS)

Cape Flats Secondary School (Photo 1) is situated in the Cape Flats area of Cape Town, a historically ‘coloured’ suburb established in 1959 under the Group Areas

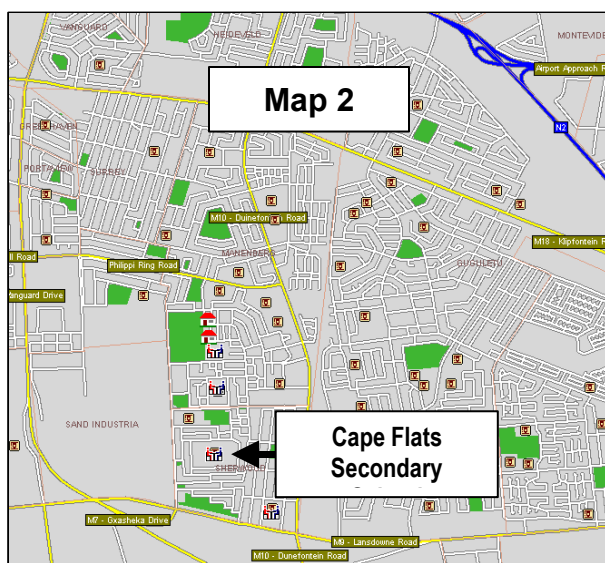


Act. This separate development policy was formalised in 1949, commonly known as the apartheid system. The suburb is approximately 15 kilometres from Cape Town (see Map 1) and is characterised by small brick houses and numerous blocks of flats (see Photo 2), complemented in many cases by wood and iron structures in the backyard. The inhabitants of Cape Flats are mainly working class, with more than half of them at retirement age. Unemployment, crime, substance abuse, general violence and gangsterism (see Photo 1, 3 and 4) are major problems in the suburb.

Established in 1960, the school was built to host 800 learners, but can accommodate approximately 1200. In 2002 the enrolled complement of learners was at 60% girls and 40% boys. Owing to the fact that most of adult community residents are at retirement age, the community



immediately surrounding the school is not supplying enough learners to the school. Those learners who come from the Cape Flats community are therefore residents' grandchildren. The children of these retired people (who are the parents of the learners) often leave their children in the care of their parents so that they can earn a living elsewhere. Sometimes this involves children coming from surrounding



suburbs into Cape Flats every school day or learners staying at their grandparents' home during the week, and returning home for the week-end. With a scarcity of learners from its own community, the school is now drawing from neighbouring suburbs (see Map 2). Some of these are established townships; others are squatter camps. The ethnic composition of the learners during 2002 was 65% coloured and

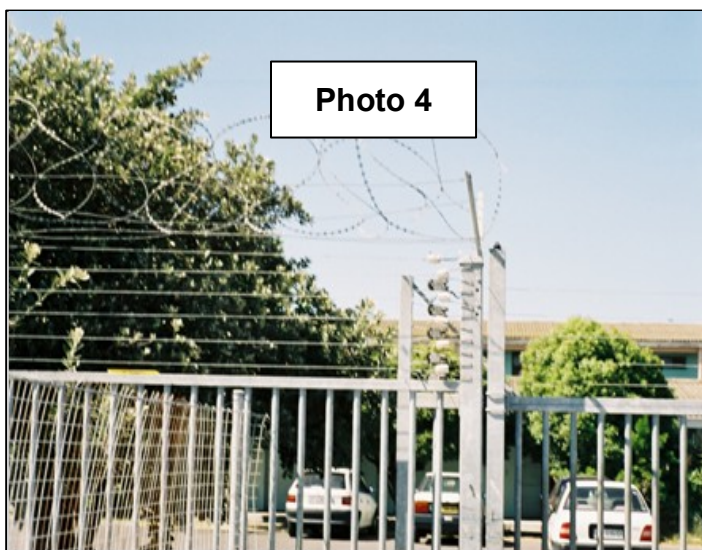
35% African (Xhosa speaking). English and Afrikaans are the mediums of instruction.

The teaching staff complement in 2002 was 31 (27 permanent and four temporary) with one administrative support staff member and four non-teaching staff members. The curriculum is essentially academic, with a concerted effort on the part of teachers to provide as many extra-curricular activities like



drama, sports and capacity-building programmes as possible. The lack of facilities and resources in the school is profound. In spite of this, the school offers athletics, soccer, netball and rugby.

The school has a long and proud history of being at the forefront of the 'struggle'. This was characterised by an active opposition to apartheid education and the



inequities of the system. 'People's education' was an influential source of development at CFSS, especially in the critical selection of learning support materials and the extension of learning beyond the syllabus. This 'activist' energy still appears to be very much a part of the school's culture, but the direction

of this vision and mission is not as clear anymore. Several staff members are key figures in teacher unions, particularly the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU).

The 'activist' culture of the school is also characterised by a remarkably stable staff, the majority of whom have been at the school for more than ten years. The current

principal has been at the school since the late 1970s, while a fair number of teachers have been learners themselves at the school, growing up in this particular community.

Since the macro political changes of 1994, the terrain of 'struggle' has shifted from 'protest politics' to 'reconstruction and development politics'. This shift has placed a different kind of demand on CFSS. Historically the 'enemy' was the 'illegitimate apartheid government'. Now the new democratic government requires support and input from teachers to make the transition to a fully-fledge democratic order. This poses a big challenge for the school.

Despite the many teacher union leaders and active union members at the school, CFSS appears to be an 'unsuccessful' school. Internally and externally it comes across as a severely adverse learning environment, characterised by typical socio-economic problems such as gangsterism, substance abuse, poor discipline among learners and teachers, and high levels of absenteeism and drop-out. The threat of gangsterism is both from outside and inside the school. More often than not, gang fights which are started at week-ends find their way back to school during the week. This threat of violence has



forced teachers to park their cars outside the secured school ground, within their own parking area (see Photo 5) in order to protect their cars.

Despite this gloomy context, I was motivated to work with the school, because there was a willingness among staff members to implement the DAS policy at the school. Our agreement was based on mutual responsibility and accountability indicators. First, I had to facilitate a series of information-sharing workshops with staff members between September and November 2001 and strengthen in particular the capacity of the Staff Development Team (SDT). These workshops consisted of five information-sharing sessions ranging from one-and-a-half hours to two-hour sessions, covering

a host of topics taken from a workshop manual developed by Jones (1993, p.15-31). The discussions were contextualised to make it relevant to the staff of CFSS. Although these workshops were recorded on tape, the content was not used for the study since these sessions were aimed at only assisting the school to understand the new appraisal policy.

Second, based on my commitment to facilitate these information-sharing workshops, the staff agreed to give me unlimited access to teachers and documents at the school. I further committed myself to sharing unfolding ideas during the process of the research as well as the draft conclusions and insights of the study. This commitment was fulfilled during February of 2004, when the six interviewees were invited to check the accuracy of the transcripts and fairness of the data analysis and conclusions.

### **7.3. The evaluation and analysis instruments that were used to determine the level of functionality of CFSS**

During the literature review in Chapter 2, I argue that the best ideas captured with reform policy do not guarantee implementation. I further suggest that the implementation of a reform policy is informed by the specific settings and the combination of factors and personalities that play themselves out at school level. In particular, I highlight two broad themes (see page 59) which include (1) the internal differences in the school (support structures, enabling environment, available resources, community it serves, capacity of individuals and collective, relationships between different individuals and groups and the leadership to manage change) and (2) the internal differences in teachers (their work, their interests, their development, their beliefs, their reasoning, their buy-in and their mission for being involved in education).

In Chapter 3, I argue that these internal differences in the school and teachers are indicators of the level of functionality of the school community. To this end, I identify three types of schools, namely those that are 'non-functioning schools' (NFS), those that are 'low functioning schools' (LFS) and others that are 'high functioning schools' (HFS) (see page 69). I further argue that on a scale of 0% to 100%, HFS are functioning between 61% and 100%; LFS are functioning between 21 and 60%; and

NFS are only functioning between -20% and +20%. I also make the comment that these percentages (levels of functionality) are not used to label the schools, but rather to allow district support agents to assist schools as individual institutions rather than a one-size-fits-all approach to school support.

I will therefore use the eight issues which were raised during the interview process related to the 'organisation capacity requirements' which policy makers assumed should be present in schools. Finally, I will use the data from the questionnaire (ten themes), which is a confirmation of the interview data, to determine the level of functionality of CFSS.

#### 7.4. What teachers say about their school - The analysis of interviews and questionnaires

There are two types of data presented in this section, namely (1) the interview comments from six teachers [in italics] and (2) the questionnaire responses for the CFSS staff [indicated by a question number]. The comments from interviews will be represented through quotations, while the opinions from questionnaires will only be represented by the number of the questionnaire question and the percentage of support or disagreement among teachers. The proof of these percentages will be located within Appendix D (Summary of analysis of questionnaire responses). Table 12 is only an extract (two questions) from the list of hundred questions.

Table 12: Extract of the summary of analysis of questionnaire responses

<i>Y = Preferred response (both Yes and No)</i>		<b>Summary of Responses</b>				Pos	Percentage			
Y= n	<b>A. School Ethos</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Diff .</b>		%	Yes	No	Don't know
Y= p	Questions									
N	1.1 Are attendance, discipline and vandalism by learners major problems in school?	<b>23</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>0%</b>	
P	1.2 Are most of the parents proud that their children are attending this school?	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>67%</b>	
<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>			<b>(4)</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(6)</b>			

The summary should be read in the following way:

- (1) The first column indicates whether the preferred answer to the question is negative (No) or positive (Yes). For example, the preferred answer to question 1.1 is 'No', while the preferred answer to question 1.2 is 'Yes'.
- (2) The second column shows the question asked.
- (3) The third, fourth and fifth columns represent a summary of the total respondents who answered the question, either 'Yes', 'No' or 'Don't know'.
- (4) The sixth column represents those respondents who did not answer the question in any way as reflected in (3).
- (5) The seventh column represents the preferred response, whether 'Yes' or 'No'.
- (6) The eight, ninth and tenth columns represent the total responses in percentage. The total percentage is made up of responses only, and therefore non-responses were excluded from the calculations. For example, the total responses in question 1.1 are 24 out of a possible 26. The response percentage is based on 23 'Yes' opinions out of 24, and not 23 out of 26.

The eight sections below reflect the four issues within the NDoE DAS manual, under the focus of organisation capacity requirements (see Chapter 6, p.127). The power relations and union issues, (7.4.1) as well as implementation issues (7.4.2) will focus on the democratic organisational culture of the school. The discipline (7.4.3), contextual conditions (7.4.4) and leadership (7.4.5) sections will focus on the learning culture of the school. The policy issues (7.4.6) and appraisal issues (7.4.7) will focus on the commitment of the teachers to develop, and finally the trust and respect (7.4.8) sections will reflect on the openness and trust among teachers.

#### **7.4.1. Power relations and union issues**

Teacher P1 confirmed, as indicated in the history of Cape Flats that,

*“We have a very strong SADTU group at our school, who often clique together in support of a position, whether or not it is the right or wrong thing to do ... In general, I think the positions are intended to be positive rather than negative ... I think they (the positions) are about 50/50.”*



The union was such a dominant force at school that it could eliminate the influence of any stakeholder other than the teachers. This was indicated when teachers (63%) indicated there was not a positive and harmonious relationship with the SGB [question 9.1]. Teachers (50%) felt that most of the SGB decisions are not taken seriously, and therefore their decision-making process is not presenting a threat to teacher control at the school [question 9.2]. Often the decision-making process by teachers was influenced from a ‘teacher as political activist’ approach, since this group looked at the approach as *“this is where we want to steer the school and these are the things we need to do to make that happen”*, indicated teacher P2. Teacher P6 regarded the origin of the power as “being unionised and being streetwise is what the power that the staff has.”

As far as unionism is concerned, teacher P2 asked *“How and where does the mandate come from”* when union members are represented at different levels of the negotiation process? This question was asked by interviewees based on the strong culture of democratic decision making (78%) at the school [question 6.3]. Furthermore, teacher P2 noted what he called a *“contradiction”* in the policy and practice of the union members. He argued that

*“there is a contradiction in terms of taking the teachers out of the class, but then not to supply a substitute. If people need to go, obviously the advancement of the union is also important and if that is the best person to go wherever, then that should be allowed. But then the union must then make money available to pay for a substitute.”*

The obvious benefit of these union involvements was a well-informed staff (67%) at the school [question 6.10].

Teacher P3 also indicated that

*“it is a problem if union members have to keep on leaving the premises. In the first instance those classes of those people are unattended and as manager of the school you have to ensure that those kids are taken care of and perhaps we are fortunate or, I would say, I am fortunate that the community we are serving here is not as demanding as in the southern suburbs.”*

This concern was repeated when teachers indicated that only 46% of them felt that the school was trying to build a learning environment for both teachers and learners

[question 7.5]. These two opinions (the low demand for accountability from parents and the low demand for a learning environment) are in contradiction to another statement where 75% teachers indicated that parents are consulted about significant developments affecting their children [question 8.5]. These sets of opinions can only be true if the consultation with parents is limited to the demands placed on learners by teachers and thus excludes consultation about the overall operations and vision of the school.

#### 7.4.2. Implementation issues

Teacher P1 believed that *“we wanted to start with implementation, but were undermined by some administrative problems.”* Teacher P2 indicated that one of them was to *“see that these people will be trained and to do training; it’s going to cost money; you need people to facilitate training and that is going to need money.”* About this issue, teacher P3 agreed that, *“at the time the preparation, the training of management in my opinion wasn’t thoroughly done.”* Furthermore, according to staff members, very little joint planning (35%) took place at the school [question 7.7].

On asking whether the culture and climate is right, teacher P2 said that

*“for the implementation I would say it’s not the right climate ... I will say the climate for the implementation of any system is not right. It needs to form part of our everyday work ... If it is part and parcel and there is a commitment from management, then it would work. It mustn’t be an add-on.”*

Only a minority of teachers (33%) felt that the principal was clearing up doubts where they are expressed, and used the opportunity to the advantage of education [question 10.3]. According to the teachers, a supportive culture and climate does not exist at the school.

Teacher P3 also admitted that the DAS policy

*“... it is not implemented yet. ... At the time there was also a lot of confusion. Now where this confusion came from I really don’t know, but messages were signalled or sent out that DAS is no longer on the table. Even though I did not get anything official in my hands, but I think what reinforced that perception was the fact that nobody was policing it. ... there was no – nobody came and said, listen you must give us feedback now as to how the process is going. ... that sort of*

*reinforced this message which I got from – I don't know – which said it is no longer to be implemented."*

This response is very much in line with opinions of teachers (39%) that a coercive atmosphere of 'policing' prevails [question 1.7] at the school. Teachers only engage in processes when they are 'forced' to do it, and are not doing it because it is in the interest of the school and education in general. This opinion was echoed by teacher P4 in that

*"... unless we are forced, I think it's the 'we don't know how' and therefore 'we don't do it'. ... If there is a form that has to be completed that has to go away now. Otherwise it will just remain there."*

The working atmosphere was thus not stimulating, enjoyable or satisfying to implement policy, as expressed by 88% of teachers [question 1.10].

#### **7.4.3. Discipline among learners and teachers**

The issue of discipline was perhaps the most consistent issue that was raised by all six teachers, without them specifically being asked about discipline. This should not amaze anyone since 96% of teachers regarded discipline as one of the major problems in the school [question 1.1]. And therefore the biggest percentage (67%) of 'Don't know' responses was recorded to the question that dealt with whether parents are proud that their children attend this school [question 1.2]. Teachers responded unanimously with a 'Yes', when asked whether the success of their practices (their ability to be good teachers) was hampered by the lack of discipline in the classroom and at school in general. Teacher P3 indicated that,

*"constantly you have to tell children to go into the classroom, but you can see that they just don't want to be there. They do not want to be part of the formal academics of the classroom."*

And because they do not want to be part of the academic programme, teacher P2 indicated that they (learners) disrupt the class activities and this is how "discipline spills over (and undermine) the academic responsibilities."

The nature of this ill-disciplined behaviour often intensifies into anger and aggressive behaviour from these learners. The fact that 74% of teachers felt that both learners and teachers were not safe at the school does not assist in its management [question 1.9]. This was described by teacher P3 as,

*“then we have a problem of children fighting. There is a lot of anger in these kids. The moment a child just bumps into another one then it’s a fight. It’s massive swearing and then it’s a fight. It would seem that these children don’t know ho to deal with conflict. Perhaps it’s something that also stems from the communities that they come out of. The only way we can solve the problem is either to swear at the person or to fight it out with the person and the stronger of the two wins – that is how a conflict situation is solved.”*

And sometimes it went as far as was described by teacher P3 –

*“Kids who challenge teachers and the manner in which they challenge teachers is unacceptable. As a teacher I want to shout at the child, but will not allow the child to shout back at me. So it’s a whole power relationship.”*

We therefore see the issue clearer when we look at the smaller details of what teachers are saying. It is not necessarily learners deliberately disrupting the class activities, but that the school might need to look at the origin of these problems and to analyse them, instead of responding only to the ill-behaviour of learners.

Teacher P5 made a surface analysis that *“the kids don’t want to be here”*. This was important for a school where only 46% of teachers felt that there was not a questioning and critical attitude present at the school [question 1.4]. An enquiring environment will allow learners to question the essence of education, and their contribution to the success of the process. And the functional role of the principal is crucial in setting the tone for creating this environment, but the responses from the questionnaires expressed a great need for development of the principal. All questions under the section of ‘3 - The Principal’ indicated that a big percentage of ‘No’ in the responses [questions 3.1-5, 3.7].

On the other hand, teacher P3 attempted a deeper analysis to this issue by saying:

*“It’s a group of learners. I would say about 30% – 40% that’s causing us this type of headache. While the others – they have their problems – but they are manageable. If one look at the type of problems, firstly children who don’t want to be in the classroom. I have done my investigations already along those lines. I discovered that the child could not read. Now the teacher without realising that assumes that if a child came into the classroom everybody can do the task, because*

*you are on that level. Then the child has some behavioural problems and seeks attention.”*

Teacher P6 took a stronger view - *“Don’t talk about the lack of discipline among learners when we ourselves lack discipline.”* This teacher saw the problem as not just on the side of learners, but that the problem was also on the side of teachers, or perhaps that the origin of this ill-discipline was ‘modelled’ by teachers themselves. Furthermore, the majority of teachers (65%) were holding low expectations of learner behaviour and achievement, and thus not displaying confidence in the learners [question 1.6]. But regardless of the origin of this problem, teachers (79%) were at least concerned about the provision of quality education [question 1.3].

#### **7.4.4. Contextual conditions**

Teacher P1 was convinced that

*“those people at national level do not know what is going on at school level. When the circuit manager comes to school, he is only presented with the good things of the school. I think we need to drastically do something to change this.”*

What came through the statement was that principals might be engaging in ‘window dressing’ when their seniors arrive at the school, and therefore do not give the opportunity to these seniors to see the school as it is (with all its problems) in an attempt to start solving those problems, rather than to hide them. This buffer action (expressed by 42% of teachers), as an attempt to protect staff [3.8], undermined teachers’ incentive to grow and improve [question 1.5].

Most of the interviewees felt that the school lacks direction. This was displayed through their responses to section ‘2. Vision, Aims and Strategic Planning’ in the questionnaire, where 54% of teachers felt that there was no common vision [question 2.1], 71% felt there was no action plan [question 2.2], 71% felt teachers were not sharing common educational values and purpose [question 2.3], and 63% felt that policies were not owned by teachers [2.4]. Teacher P2 replied to the question whether the school has a vision and mission statement in action:

*“... No ... There is something on paper ... At the beginning of the year when we received this lovely document for the year – it was in there –*

*we actually forgot about that already. ... we don't have a common vision."*

Due to the lack of contextual understanding among policy makers and departmental officials, teacher P3 argued that *"with any new system, any change, one has to make a shift."* And given the lack of capacity of the principal to manage a school like Cape Flats Secondary, he argued that

*"I am compelled to be in a classroom. Now with that I don't have a problem per se, because as an teacher I need to be in contact with the curriculum, but if one looks at the situation in which I find myself in, I always want to say that people who work on that policy, they weren't perhaps well informed or too well informed about the realities on the ground. Where a principal in a situation like in Cape Flats has to deal with so many different aspects in one day that ultimately the children that you have to take care of suffer in the end ..."*

Teacher P3 supported the abovementioned argument by suggesting that *"there are certain schools that need to be treated at this stage of transformation, differently to others."* Despite the call for flexibility by an interviewee from the policy makers and departmental officials, 46% of teachers felt that the school was not affording learning the same learning and academic flexibility which they are requesting [question 2.5].

Teacher P3 argued that they

*"... are dealing with kids that come from a socially and culturally deprived community. A child who comes from a gang-infested area, a child who comes from single-parent families – so many different factors. You spend so much time dealing with those problems that you cannot really get on with your core responsibility – that is teaching."*

Teachers (65%) indicated that the school aims to provide an environment where learners are happy, feel valued and acquire universal moral values [question 1.6]. The flexibility as far as cultural and social issues are concerned, does exist within the school. But the contradictory response to being flexible with regards to social and cultural issues, and not academic learning, is adding to the mistrust among individuals and groups of teachers, often described as *"things that people fear. There are still people with hidden agendas."* Without knowing how others would react, e.g. in support or in attack, when they act flexibly and supportively towards the learners, teachers (88%) were not willing to take risks [question 1.10]. Teacher P5

described that *“in a day the climate at the school shifts. You function on a day-to-day climate trying to get through the day,”* because the management team (as indicated by 67% of teachers) does not display the capacity to avoid crisis [question 2.10].

Teacher P3 argued that the policy makers do not really understand that there are different types of schools. The policy approach of policy makers, which is based on a ‘one-size-fits-all’, is not assisting schools like CFSS. What he argued for was

*“not a policy change but an interim measure to be put in place where the principals who find themselves in that situation, somehow something can be worked out.”*

He further explained the non-implementation of DAS as follows - *“It is not so much because we tried to implement it and we had practical problems. We did not start with it yet.”* Without this accommodation within the system, P3 felt that *“I can’t deliver the way I should be delivering”*, since the context was prominently dictating his performance. But despite their difficult situation, teachers (61%) observed a management team that failed to think and plan strategically [question 2.8].

Teacher P4 felt that the school often never got to the practical implementation of policy, because the staff talked too much about the policy. P4 called for action, meaning that

*“it would be really nice if things could be sort of pushed along if we could really get to the practical part of this because that is what I want I think that is why I got on to this thing. I want to see what is going to happen and I want to learn something. Somebody can help me make a mind shift. So many people, out there at the school, have the same problem.”*

This inactivity could be due to the inability of management to anticipate developments and their implications of these developments by management (as stated by 46% of teachers), therefore no action was a safe option for them [question 2.9].

Teacher P5 felt that,

*“... at our school we have issues that appear to be more important than education. Education in isolation is not targeting the needs of*

*children.” He continued, “We’re not doing the actual job, we’re doing the normal paper work.”*

And those teachers (63%) who go beyond ‘doing the normal paper work’ did not feel valued [question 7.2] for the additional support they render to learners. He further argued that the operation at the school of every year is *“the same approach in a different way and it has become frustrating.”* Due to the lack of a common vision, P5 felt, *“we are all pulling in completely the wrong direction”,* which results in the lack of team spirit, as expressed by 50% of teachers [question 7.1]. He said that although some could say that there is something on paper, *“I think its dead. We don’t have a plan. We need to know where we are going.”*

As advice to tackle the problem, teacher P5 argued that *“the first thing that should be done is to have a plan. Where is the school going? What part we have in it? Who is going to be doing what?”* This plan must recognise that *“the school comes with so many attachments, so many personalised attachments basically a power struggle, basically differing personalities ...”* argued teacher P6. He said that this *“has been going on for a long time and that I think is partly to the blame of the retardation in implementing DAS.”* The lack of common vision and a work-plan is diverting the focus of teachers from their core responsibility towards personalised and petty differences and arguments.

Teacher P6 further indicated,

*“Secondly I think – I’m not going to down play what I’m going to say now, there is a massive – apathetic approach by teachers at the school – that is the apathy I’m speaking about. There is apathy to want to change; there is apathy to implement change.”* And *“the third thing why I think DAS was not implemented ... peer assessments and group assessments.”*

He felt that *“there is a lot of undermining here as well.”*

Furthermore, a healthy working culture must be established. Teacher P6 argued that

*“Don’t you in your management capacity walk into my classroom and remove a cap from one of my student’s heads. You are telling me that I cannot carry out one of the clauses in the Code of Conduct.”*



Therefore, all teachers at the school must “*start with self-analysis – make an analogy of your contribution in the school. ... A lot of self-restoration and maybe re-examining my purposes*”, indicated teacher P6.

#### 7.4.5. Leadership

Teacher P1 in particular was very upset about the ‘crisis management’ approach that was going on at the school. He said that “*everyday there are meetings ...*” Teachers (63%) believed that these daily meetings are not kept to a minimum [question 6.6] while 67% also said that the management team does not have the capacity to avoid this crisis management approach [question 2.10]. And when having these meetings teacher P6 indicated that

*“there is never a compromise; things hang in the air. (For example), the problem of our bunking students, every time we have the same discussion and we come with the same resolution and in a day or two it is peaceful, but in a week’s time, there is no sustainability. I’m saying don’t say there is not sustainability and you don’t have a solution for that.”*

Teachers (54%) believed that the inability to implement decisions is due to the lack of strong leadership, a definite sense of direction [question 3.1] and (58%) strategic thinking and planning [question 3.2].

Furthermore, teacher P2 believed that when the department wants something done, management tends to respond more vigorously (as expressed by 50% of teachers), than when it comes to supportive or developmental issues [question 3.10]. As an example, he indicated that “*progressive discipline, it came from the department and it was vigorously implemented*”.

Teacher P2 argued that the appointment of principals must be looked at. He said,

*“A mistake that was made in terms of appointments of principals was that we didn’t train the governing body, because you know if the governing body is not properly trained, they are not going to be capacitated to appoint a person to do a job that they had no inkling about.”*

Teachers (83%) already indicated that parents are not encouraged to understand the curriculum part of education [question 8.6], and 88% of the teachers felt that

parents are not invited to join educational excursions [question 8.7]. So, without building capacity within the parents, they cannot make informed decisions or contribute support which undermines the governance leg of management decision making within the school community.

Teacher P2 further argued that some principals are not aware of what the responsibility of a principal entails, therefore *“when you applied for a job you need to know what the job description is.”* And *“so that we can see that they are taking the lead. They are the leaders of the school, we want to see that”*, argued teacher P2. In the case of the school, teachers (46%) felt that the SMT does not work well together as a team [question 4.1]. Despite his concern, teacher P2 admitted that

*“for this year I must say, they have met quite a lot of times. The previous years they only met when there was a problem and they met during school hours. That contributed to the chaos at the school.”*

As an example, teacher P2 referred to an incident of chaos where

*“teachers refused to go to class because they wanted to sort something out ... four teachers are absent. You will find at a time 100 learners are outside during school time. That is part of the culture of creating learning and that has been broken down.”*

And teacher P2 believed that the origin of the problem is often apportioned to learners. To this, he argued that *“we cannot blame the learners ... I blame our teachers, they are absent, they leave any time ...”* despite the regular briefing meetings (as stated by 67% of teachers) with teachers [question 6.9]. Therefore, teacher P2 argued that *“to correct you need to first acknowledge that you are wrong.”*

Teacher P6 argued that solving the problems among teachers must be approached in a way that empowers everyone, and should not be an attempt to score points. He said:

*“Don’t in a position of power, ‘skimp’. Don’t tell me that yesterday I was absent so today I mustn’t complain about children who are running outside because yesterday I had to look after your kids when you were absent. If management is throwing stones like that can you imagine what the undercurrents are like.”*

To this, teachers (50%) felt that the SMT was not delegating meaningful tasks to develop and empower staff [question 4.10].

#### 7.4.6. Policy issues

Teachers had a lot to say about policy. Teacher P1 commented during the interviews that

*“they (policy makers) want us to implement a whole host of things in a very short period of time. Those in disadvantaged schools find themselves in difficult conditions.”*

Often these teachers did not know why a particular policy was developed and then blamed policy makers for developing ‘policy in search of a problem’. Teachers (75%) indicated in the questionnaire that there existed real scepticism about the current changes (question 10.2). Teachers therefore did not see policy as an instrument of solving a problem, but rather as an instrument that’s causing problems. One teacher, during an open discussion, referred to policy as a form of ‘invasion’. Teachers (50%) felt there was an overload of these ‘invasions’ in education [question 10.4].

Teacher P2 held the opinion that *“I just feel that the problem lies with policy making and implementation.”* Teacher P2 continued by saying,

*“between the development of policies and the implementation ... there is a gap where I feel that sometimes teachers are not properly informed. They (policy makers) are not on the ground, they are not involved and if you look at policies that are made I think from the department’s side it is not clearly thought out.”*

Furthermore, teachers (59%) felt that these changes are not successfully managed [question 10.8].

Teacher P3 argued that one problematic thing is

*“capacity ...was one of the major problems ...If we had to go evaluate a peer; what would happen to our classes, at that particular time? ... they (teachers) say that they did not have the necessary skills, for example, to observe and to comment on a colleague who works in a classroom.”*

How policy makers could not have anticipated the lack of capacity building, was difficult for Teacher P3 to be understood. In continuation of this argument, Teacher P3 said that, as a member of the SDT that must lead others, *“if I do not understand it, if I have not seen the thing in operation yet”* there was no way that Teacher P3 could speak with conviction to other teachers about the policy, since most of the teachers (74%) felt that most of the education policy in South Africa ends up ‘left in the air’ and not fully implemented [question 10.5].

Teacher P6 felt that sometimes *“it’s a matter of having a policy on paper and wanting to make it work.”* The issue here was that policy makers must have the ability to admit when a particular policy needs to be adjusted or even changed in order for school to implement it. Teachers (46%) argued that the school is also not re-aligning their structures in line with the changes [question 10.6].

It was also argued that communication needs to be improved between different people involved in the policy-making and implementation process. Teacher P4 said that: *“I think we need to be adequately informed.”* Furthermore, Teacher 6 felt that policy makers need to take into account that *“the mentality of a primary school teacher in comparison to a high school teacher is totally different.”* It is argued that policies need to be different for different kinds of schools.

#### **7.4.7. Appraisal issues**

Teacher P1 described the nature of the old inspection policy as:

*“I think about inspection as one person coming to the school once in five years to inspect you. He just informs you that he is coming to inspect you on a particular day.”*

What became clear was that the unhappiness about the old policy was mainly about the process, and not necessarily about the policy. This could be why teachers (54%) felt that the school was not ready for the new appraisal policy which includes more changes than expected by teachers [question 10.1]. They often did not understand the extent of the policy change, and why it was developed in the first place.

Teacher P2 defined appraisal as:

*“In my analysis appraisal centres around number one, the mission statement, and secondly there should be a quality culture and thirdly there should be constant organisational review – what are we doing and are we doing it the best way – and out of those three things need to flow what is called the organisational development plan. So what I need to do as a teacher adds or contributes to the bigger plan.”*

Teacher P3 explained the purpose of appraisal as: *“In a developmental system, many people understood it to be – if I had a weakness, this is where I can improve, and people saw that as positive.”* P4 indicated, *“... at the end I’m going to be helped to become a better teacher”*. These appraisal definitions and purposes, interviewees attributed to the insights and understandings gained during the information-sharing workshops.

Teachers like P6 also realised that *“appraisal can also in a positive way highlight my shortcomings. How am I going to know where I am falling short if I’m not going to be appraised?”* He continued by saying that without implementing appraisal, teachers could end up *“go(ing) into your little corner and I in mine.”* And this could already be a reality at the school since teachers (50%) felt there was no good team spirit [question 7.1]. The majority of teachers (70%) indicated that they were striving to improve their professional practice [question 7.6].

Teacher P6 argued that in the policy-making process in South Africa,

*“there is no continuity. Appraisal can say we should be here – that is where we should be. We are lacking a bit in our class management skills, I suggest and advise you I’m criticising you in a positive way. I would start with the positives and would tell you, you know that is fantastic what you used. Where do you get it? And then you go and talk about that guy in the corner was disruptive and this is maybe how you could have managed him. This is maybe how you could draw his attention to the fact that you are aware of what he is doing. Appraisal is a major plus point.”*

For the relationship between appraiser and appraisee to be supportive, both material and human resources have to be allocated strategically in support of policy implementation success. The opinion of teachers (46%) was that resources were not allocated to support reform policy implementation [question 10.7].

Teacher P3 then gave me a sense of the way the school has prioritised its operations by stating that

*“What I must say is due to the fact that there was a lot of confusion around DAS. We don’t have DAS as a slot on our year plan. But now if we get a clear indication from WCED (Western Cape Education Department) or whatever which says listen, by June you have to hand in reports, or October you have to hand in reports, then surely management would make provision for that on the year plan where it is engraved and people know that say, every Monday or Tuesday or every Friday, the appraisal has to take place.”*

Since teachers (61%) felt that the DoE was not playing a significant role, the school was stuck because of no instructions came from the Provincial Department of Education [question 9.9].

#### **7.4.8. Trust and respect**

Teacher P2 argues that in order to implement the policy, *“you want someone who you can trust.”* Teacher P2 explained the word ‘trust’, by referring to an example: *“People have respect for him because he earned it because he has shown respect to those people.”* Teacher P4 also agreed that *“it’s a trust issue!”* When teacher P4 was asked how many staff members were trustworthy, the response was *“about half of the staff ..., but I’m not sure whether or not they will be objective.”* Despite the lack of respect and trust among staff members, teachers (67%) still expressed their views openly and honestly [question 7.3]. This might result in ‘good conversations’ without the seriousness to make a decision or even to implement a decision.

Furthermore, teacher P6 believed that

*“there are too many teachers with personal insecurities. An example that I speak of is trust – there is very little trust. There is very little sincerity. There is very little comradery. In a nutshell from the perspective of the learners, at the school I’m sorry to say that the learners at the school had a major academic backlog, partly because of – I will not degrade my colleagues – it’s not incompetence, it’s laziness... The teachers are lazy at the school. I’m saying the kids have an academic backlog because your performance at the school is not as it should be.”*

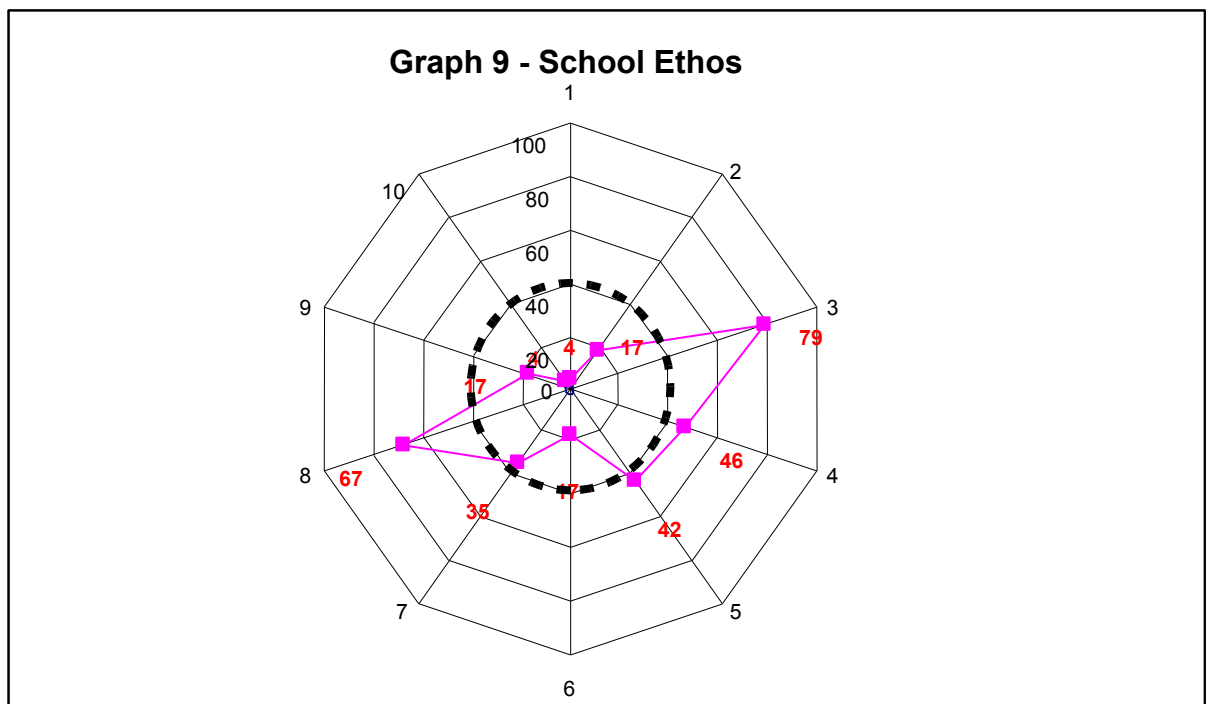
## 7.5. Understanding the level of functionality of Cape Flats Secondary School

While the previous section dealt with the seven broad issues raised by teachers during the interview process, this section will summarise the broad trends from the questionnaires in order to identify the level of functionality of CFSS. This section will be organised in line with the ten broad headings of the questionnaire, and will reflect the average comments from participants within the study.

### 7.5.1. School ethos

The average responses of participants on the questionnaire section dealing with 'School ethos', reflected an almost 50% split among those who responded with a 'Yes' and those who responded with a 'No'. A fair amount (21%) of the respondents did not know, or either did not respond.

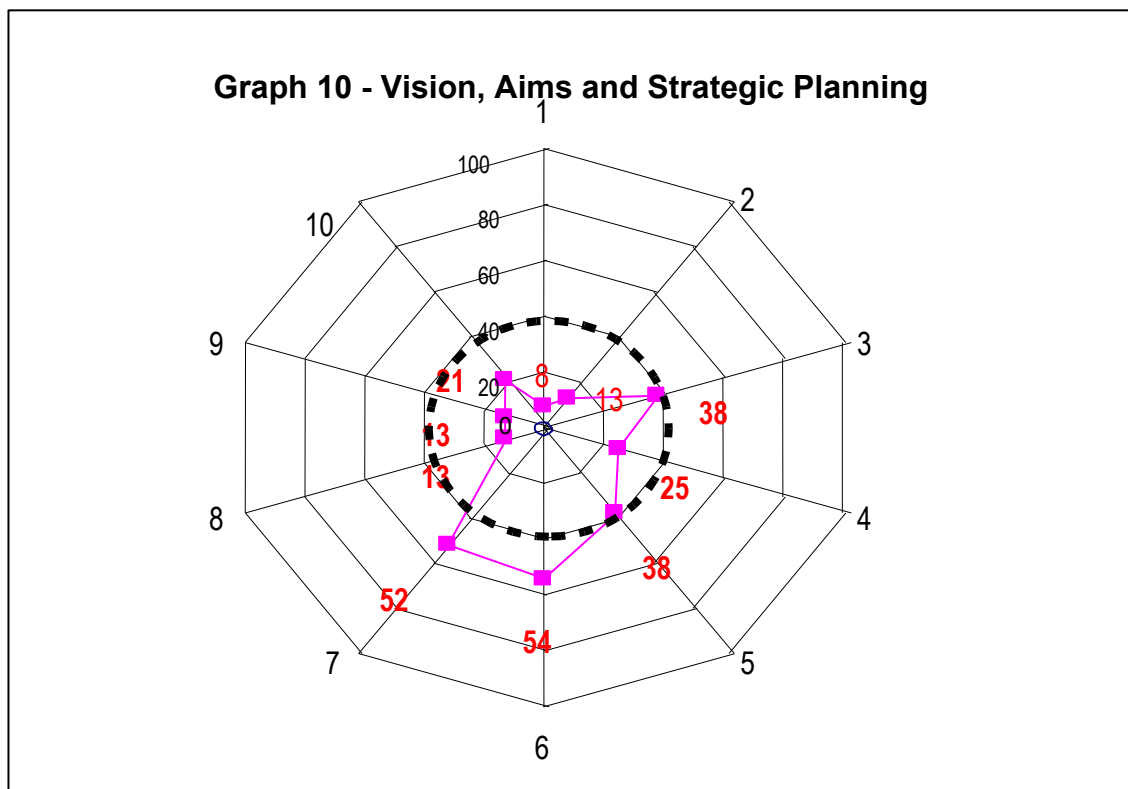
When I take the preferred responses, which include the 'No' responses of 1.1 and 1.4, and the rest of the 'Yes' responses of this section, the situation changes dramatically (see Graph 9). Apart from 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 and 1.8, all other responses are below and far below 40% (6 out of the 10, as indicated by the bold circle at 40%). The average of these ten responses is 32.8% (see Appendix F).



### 7.5.2. Vision, aims and strategic planning

The average response on the section dealing with 'Vision, aims and strategic planning', reflected a high 'Yes' response, only because the amount of 'I don't know' responses were extremely high.

When I reflect on the preferred responses, which include all the 'Yes' responses, question 2.6 and 2.7 are the only ones where it is over 50%. All the other responses fall below and way below 40% (8 out of 10, as indicated by the bold circle at 40%). One of the core questions (question 2.1) of this section, which focuses on 'a shared vision among the principal and staff', ends up being only 8%. On the other hand, the two questions (2.6 and 2.7) that deal with 'pastoral care' got high responses [54% and 52% respectively] (see Graph 10). The average of these ten responses is 27.5% (see Appendix F).



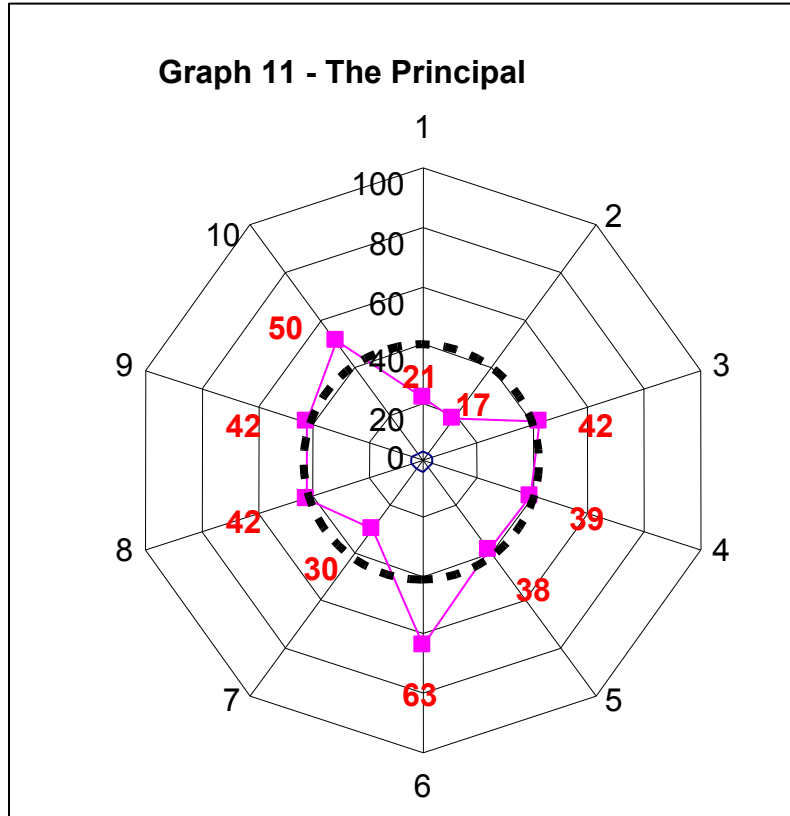
### 7.5.3. The principal

The average responses to this section, focusing on the 'Role of the principal', reflected a low perception among staff about the productivity and effectiveness of



the principal. The majority (41%) stated that the principal is not effective, while only 35% stated that he is effective.

When I take into account the preferred responses from staff, which include all the 'Yes' responses against the 'No' responses, the 'Yes' responses reflect a fairly high

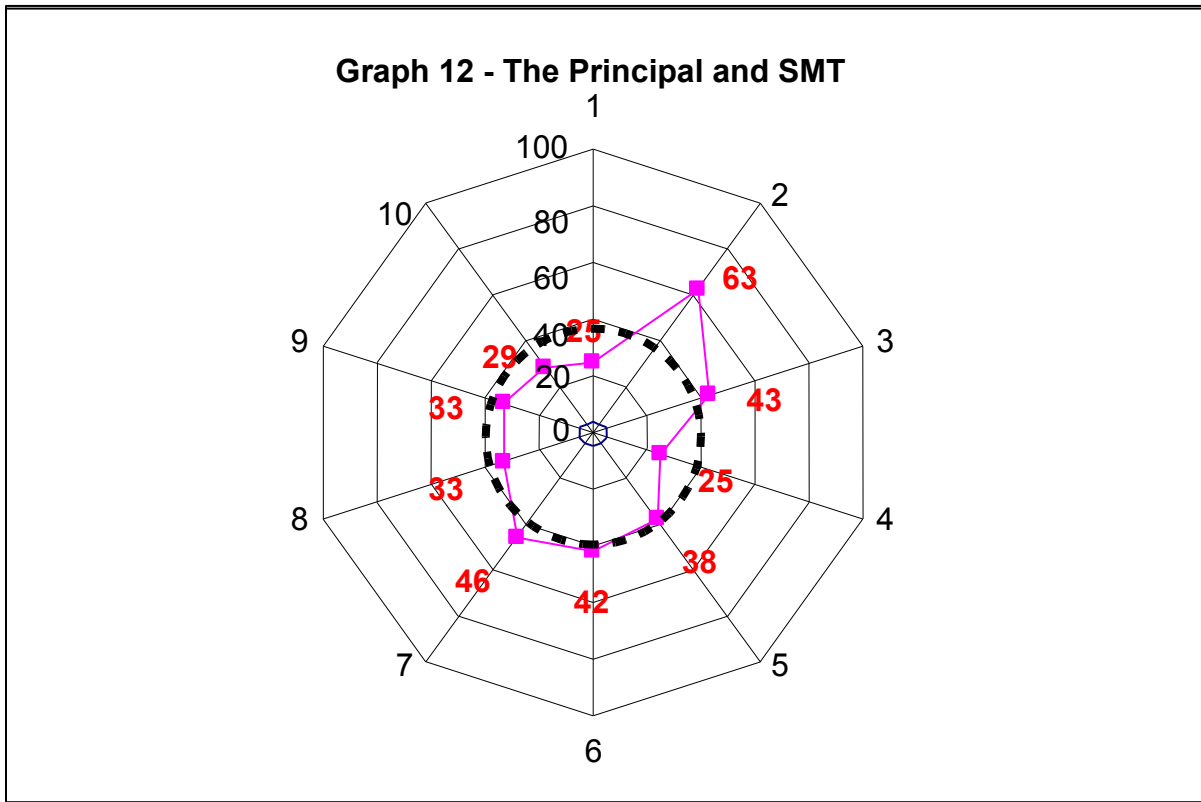


percentage of preferred responses because the 'I don't know' and the 'non-responses' are 24% of the total responses. Five of the ten questions (3.3, 3.6, 3.8, 3.9 and 3.10) have a score higher than 40%, which is particularly high when comparing this section with previous sections (see Graph 11). The average of these ten responses is 38.4% (see Appendix F).

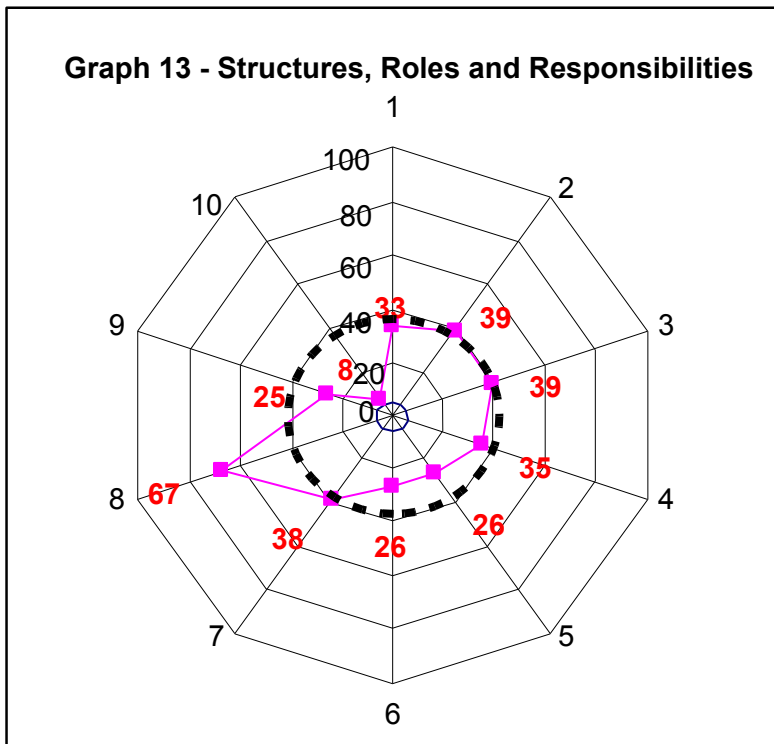
#### 7.5.4. The principal and the Senior Management Team (SMT)

The average responses of this section dealing with the 'Principal and SMT', reflected almost a one-third split between 'Yes' (34%), 'No' (37%) and 'I don't know plus difference' (29%). In particular, the 'No' responses are more than the 'Yes' responses.

When I take the preferred responses, which include all the 'Yes' responses of this section, only four responses (4.2, 4.3, 4.6. and 4.7) scored over 40%. Only 25% of staff believes that the principal and the SMT 'are working well together' (question 4.1). This percentage (25%) is also relevant for question 4.4, which deals with 'a sense of joint ownership' (see Graph 12). The average of these ten responses is 37.7% (see Appendix F).



**7.5.5. Structures, roles and responsibilities**



The average responses of this section dealing with the ‘Structures, roles and responsibilities’ of staff, reflected a majority ‘No’ response (39%) from participants. The ‘Yes’ (31%) and “I don’t know plus different’ (30%) are very close in scores.

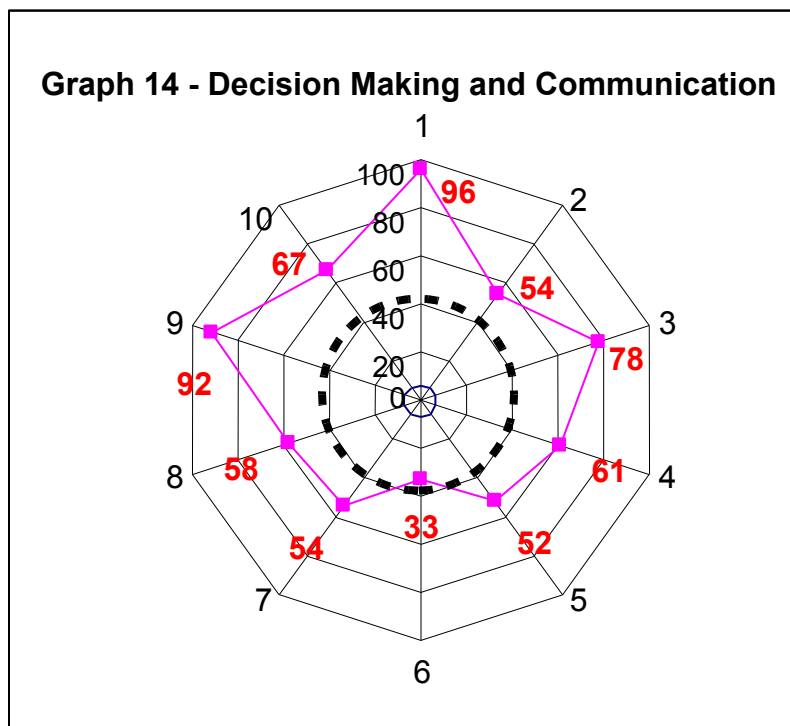
When I take the preferred responses, which include all ‘Yes’ responses, only question 5.8 scores a response above 40% (see Graph 13). In particular, the question (5.10) focusing on

response above 40% (see Graph 13). In particular, the question (5.10) focusing on

the gender representation within the management level, scored the lowest (8%). The average of these ten responses is 33.6% (see Appendix F).

### 7.5.6. Decision making and communication

The average responses of this section dealing with the 'Decision making and communication' of staff, reflected an extremely high percentage of 'Yes' responses, especially if compared with all the other sections. The 'Yes' responses is 56%, the 'No' response is 25% and the 'I don't know plus difference' is 19%.

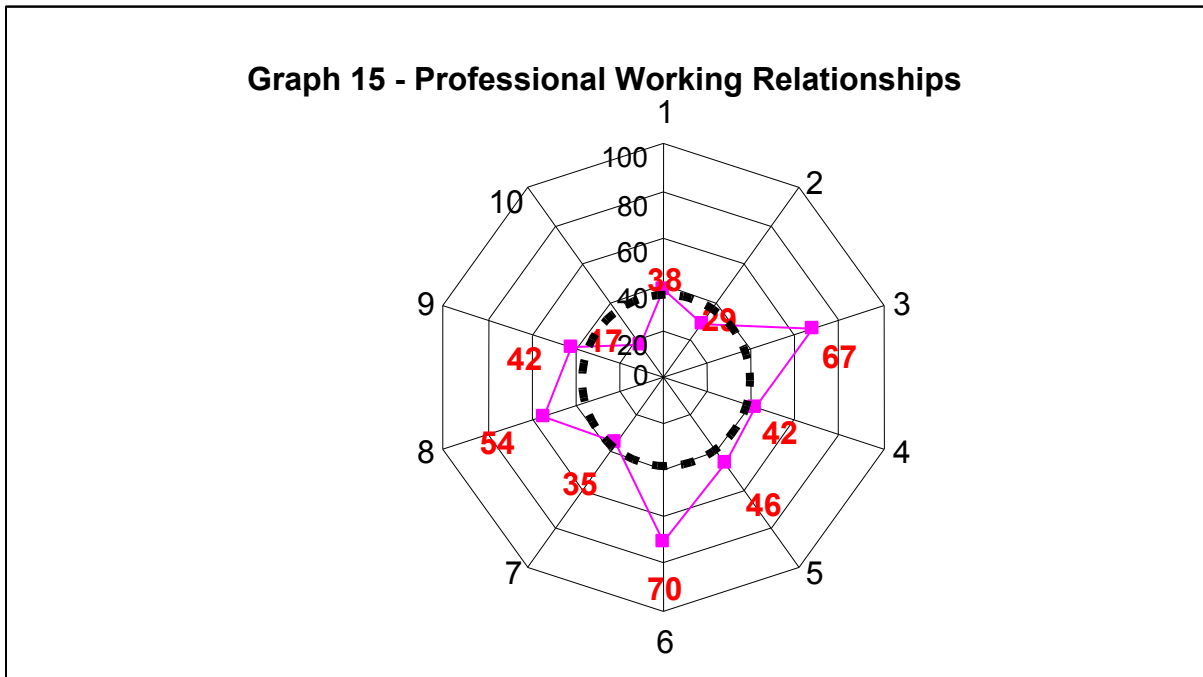


When I take the preferred responses, which include all 'Yes' responses, only question 6.6 scores a response below 40% (see Graph 14). In particular, the question (6.10) focusing on the availability of information scored the highest of the entire questionnaire (97%). The average of these ten responses is 64.5% (see Appendix F).

### 7.5.7. Professional working relationships

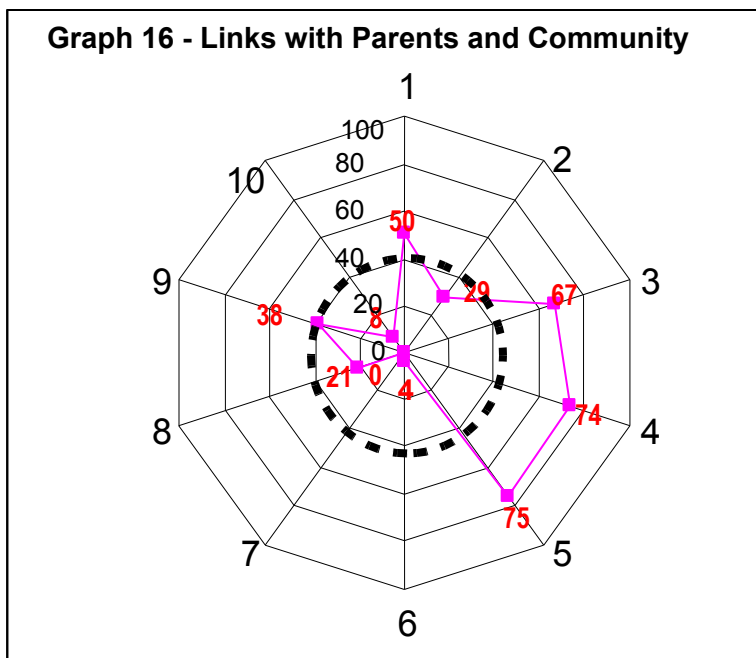
The average responses of this section dealing with the 'Professional working relationships' of staff, reflected a majority 'No' response (40%) from participants. The 'Yes' (39%) and "I don't know plus different" (21%) make up the other scores.

When I take the preferred responses, which include all 'Yes' responses, six questions (7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.8 and 7.9) score a response above 40% (see Graph 15). In particular, the question (7.3) focuses on the voice of teachers ('Freedom of speech' scores 67%). The average of ten responses is 44.0% (see Appendix F).



**7.5.8. Links with parents and the community**

The average responses of this section dealing with the ‘Links with parents and community’, reflected a majority ‘No’ response (42%) from participants. The ‘Yes’ (37%) and “I don’t know plus different’ (21%) make up the rest of scores.



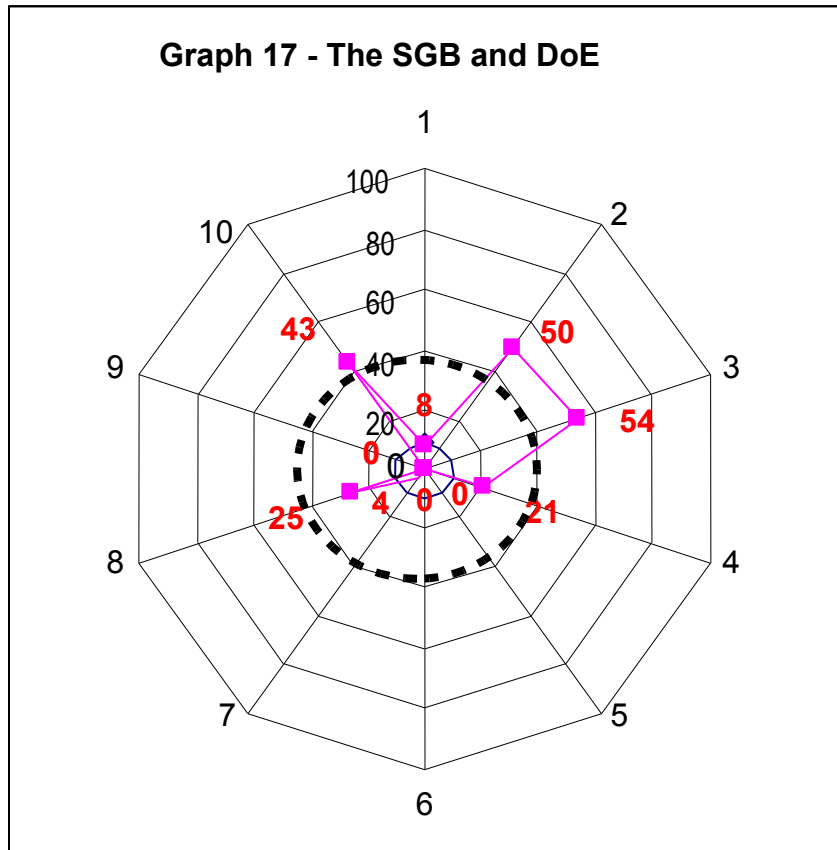
When I take the preferred responses, which include all ‘Yes’ responses, four questions (8.1, 8.3, 8.4 and 8.5) score above 40% (see Graph 16). In particular, the question (8.8) focusing on the involvement of parents in educational outings scores 0% (only one of four questions to which participants scored a unanimous 0%). The

average of these ten responses is 36.6% (see Appendix F).

### 7.5.9. The governing body and Department of Education (DoE)

The average responses of this section dealing with the 'Governing body and the DoE', reflected a 50% split between 'No' response (41%) and 'I don't know' responses (41%) from participants.

From the preferred responses, which include six 'Yes' (9.1 and 9.5 – 9.9) and four



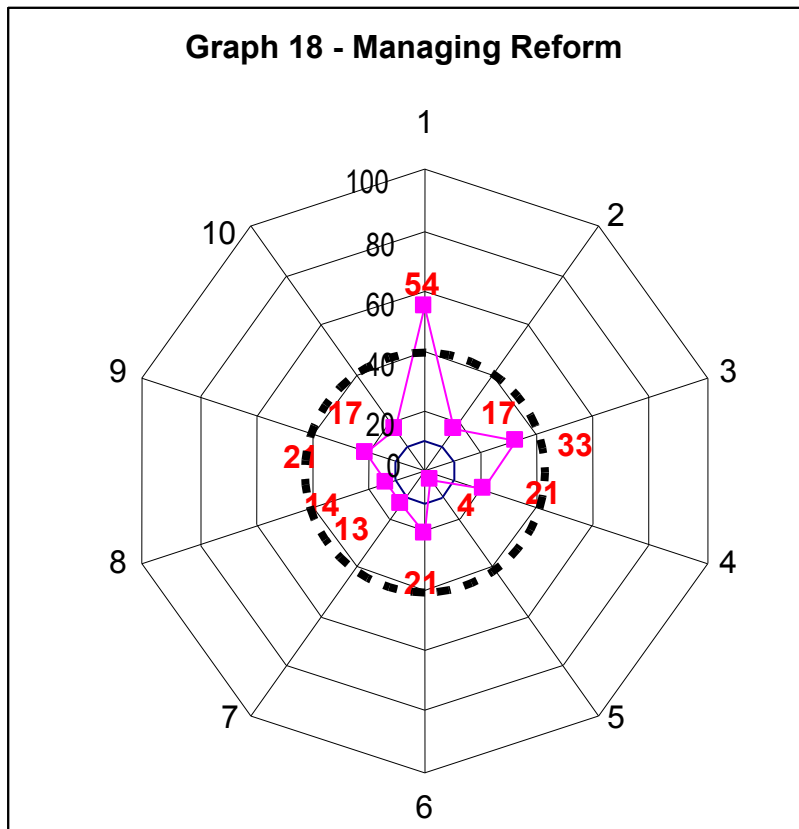
'No' responses (9.2 – 9.4 and 9.10), only two questions (9.2 and 9.3) score above 40% (see Graph 17). In particular, the question (9.9) focusing on the role of DoE in school management is non-existent (0%). This is one of three questions (9.5 and 9.6) which got a score of 0% within this section. The average of these ten responses is 20.5%,

which is the lowest score for a section (see Appendix F).

### 7.5.10. Managing reform

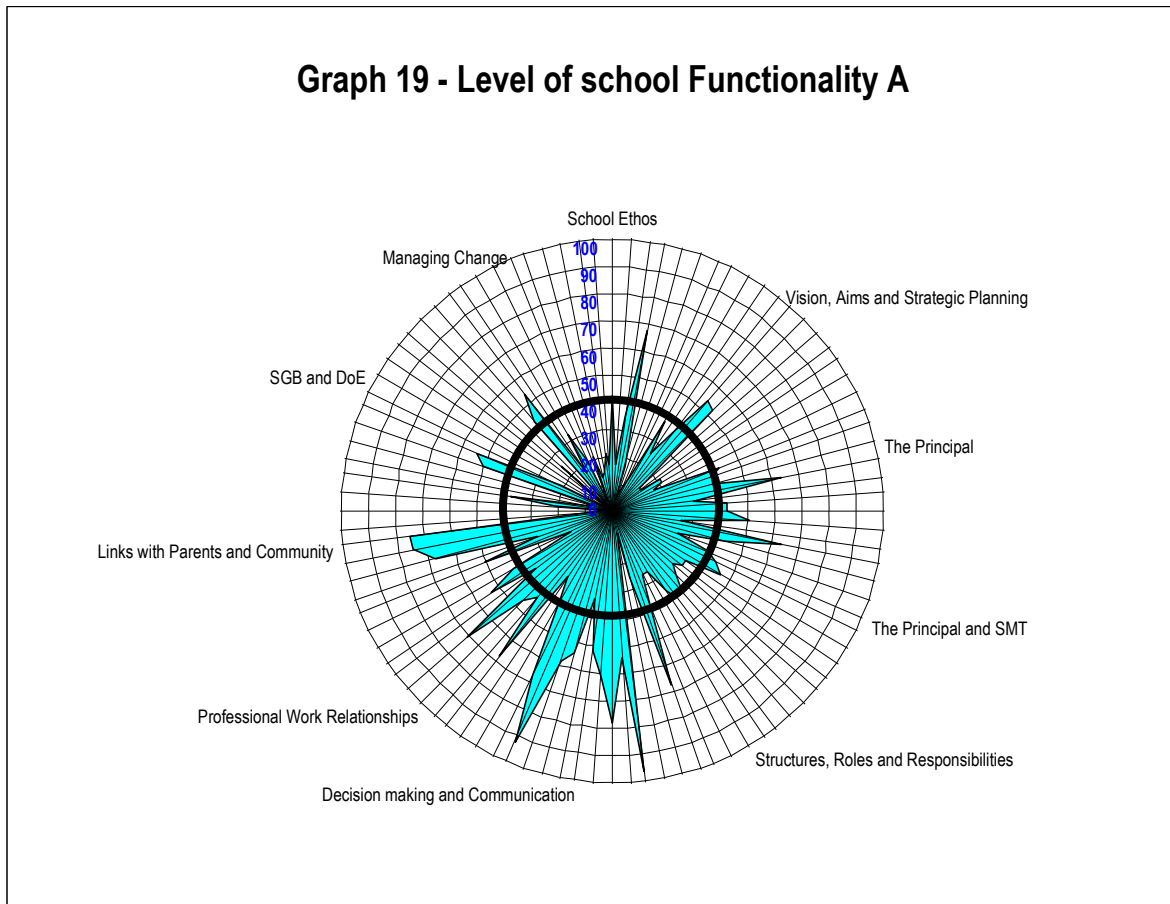
The average responses of this section dealing with the 'Managing reform' reflected a one-third split between 'No' responses (33%), 'Yes' responses (31%) and 'I don't know' responses (30%) from participants.

When I take the preferred responses, which include seven 'Yes' responses (10.1, 10.3, 10.6 – 10.10) and three 'No' responses (10.2 and 10.4-10.5), only question 10.1 (dealing with the receptiveness to innovation and reform) scores a response above 40% (see Graph 18). In particular, the question (10.5) focusing on the

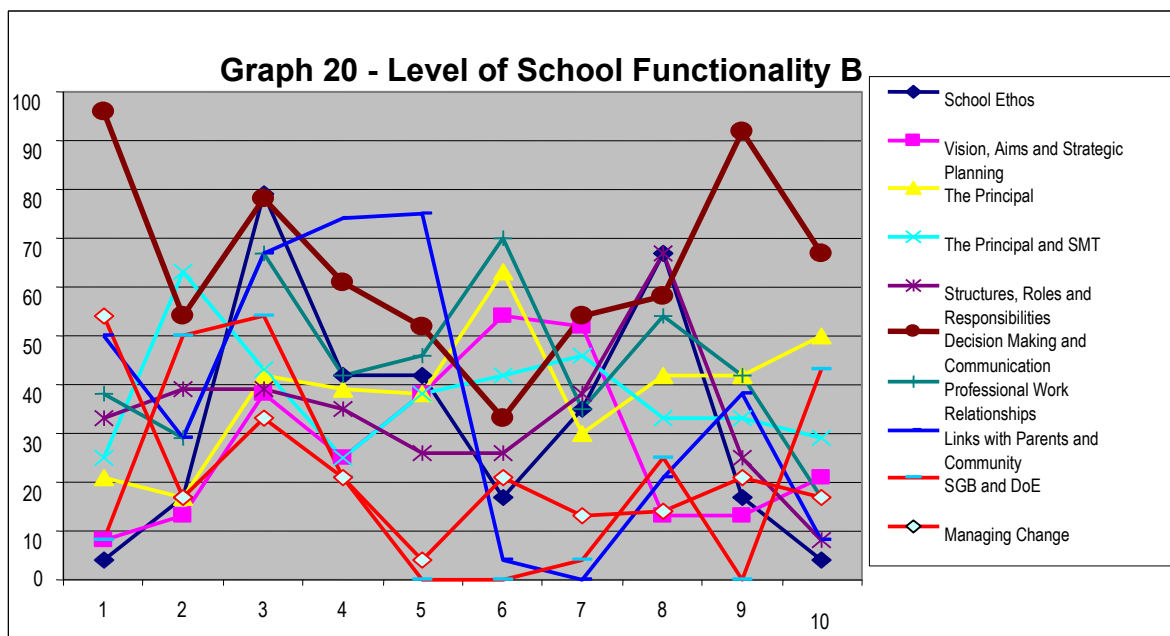


implementation of innovations, scored the lowest (4%). The average of these ten responses is 21.5% (see Appendix F).

Finally, when all the sections are put together, the summary of responses reflected a 39% 'No', 34% 'Yes, 21% 'I don't know' and 6% 'difference'. But when the preferred responses were taken into account across all sections (see Graph 19), the overall school functionality of CFSS was reflected a 35.7% (see Appendix F). The shaded circle at 40% display most of the sections not covered. Only a few sections have responses beyond the 40%, in particular the 'Decision making and communication' and the 'Links with parents and community' sections. Such quantitative data on schools has the potential for support staff in education to approach schools with an informed data source for teacher development, instead of only relying on the opinion of individuals and groups of teacher about the capacity-building and development need of the school.



In Graph 20, I display the individual sections on a line-graph. Within this graph the 'Decision making and communication' section as a higher functioning component and 'Managing reform' section as a non-functioning component are evident.



## **7.6. A summary of the chapter**

Central to this chapter is the determination of the level of school functionality at Cape Flats Secondary School (CFSS). Both at theoretical and empirical level, school functionality is discussed in relation to earlier conceptions which reflect school effectiveness and improvement approaches. From this chapter, I conclude that determining a school's level of functionality could serve as a measurement to guide policy makers when formulating policies. In particular, the complexity and depth of reform policies will then inform policy makers at which schools their policy has the potential to be successfully implemented, and which others will need additional support and development before such policies should be attempted to be implemented. The potential of a school feedback system based on the functionality indicator study is argued to be a useful tool to assist and understand schools, especially during the implementation of reform policies.

The next chapter will conclude this study, and make recommendations about future research with this 'functionality-indicator' approach to school functionality.



# Chapter Eight

## Theoretical and methodological considerations in this study

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### 8.1 Introduction

The key question of this research was to address the following: Why was the highly promising DAS policy, intended to change the practice of teachers, not implemented at all at Cape Flats Secondary School (CFSS)? This chapter makes use of the discussions in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 to justify the importance and value of the Implementation Readiness Conditions (IRC) framework, which forms the central contribution of this study (see page 72). In particular, the IRC framework captures the degree of complexity and depth of a reform policy; the level of support needed to implement a policy; and the level of functionality of a school. As is known from the literature review in Chapter 2, implementation of reform policies has been a weakness of the South African education system since 1994. The DAS policy is but one such reform policy under question.

The first section of this chapter concludes the study by synthesising the arguments presented in Chapter 5, 6 and 7 which leads to the construction of the Strategic Integrated Policy Process (SIPP) model. This model, I argue, adds a bottom-up component (IRC framework) to the current 'disconnected', top-down policy process which is often the basis for critique of the current policy process. The second section discusses the policy insights of the study. In particular, the ideas developed from the three policy-making stages will be discussed. Finally, before I conclude the chapter, I will discuss the contributions of this study.

### 8.2 Synthesising the arguments of Chapters 5, 6 and 7

In Chapter 5, I discussed the level of complexity and depth of the DAS policy. In particular, I made reference to five types of reform policies, which increase in complexity and depth from Type 1 to Type 5 reform policy. Concluding this chapter, taking into account the 22 steps, I identified the level of difficulty of the DAS policy in

the region of a Type 4-5 policy (calculated at 4.3). In Chapter 6, through analysing the PATT and the school-based information workshops, I argued that both workshops focused only on ‘understanding’ or ‘information sharing’ of the DAS policy and not on deeper capacity building to assist teachers to implement the policy. I found that no real support and development took place to assist teachers to implement the policy. The existing school capacity and skills of teachers had to be utilised to implement the policy. This existing capacity and skills at school, displayed through the level of functionality (operations) in Chapter 7, was ascertained through analysing the information from interviews and questionnaires. I concluded this chapter by indicating that the school was only operating at a ‘low-functionality’ level (35,7%). Based on Table 4 (p.74), CFSS was only ‘ready for change’ of a Type 1 policy; it would find a Type 2 policy challenging; and it would have been difficult to implement a Type 3 policy. Since the DAS policy was at a Type 4.3 complexity level, it was far too difficult for CFSS to reach for or stretch to implementing the policy. This analysis gives me the reason why it was impossible for CFSS to implement the DAS policy.

In an attempt to overcome the development of policies which end up unimplementable by institutions, this study pulled together these three conceptual components from Chapters 5, 6 and 7 into an Implementation Readiness Conditions framework (see p.72). I argue that these three components form the missing ‘first leg’ of the ‘bottom-up’ policy process (see Figure 12, p.73). This additional first leg will allow policy makers to make informed decisions (information-driven decision making) about (1) the level of complexity of the reform policy; (2) the support, development and mediation needed to support the implementation of the reform policy; and (3) the level of functionality of schools to implement reform policies. Based on this information, they will construct policies in a way that takes into account ‘what is going on’ in schools (readiness to change) and the support system. The inclusion of the IRC framework into the current policy process is therefore adding the missing information component to the current ‘disconnected’ policy process.

The adoption of the SIPP model will bring about a two-tier approach to the education policy process. Both these approaches will be informed by the information gathered

by the IRC framework, namely (1) to increase the school functionality until the level of possibility; and/or (2) to decrease the complexity and depth of the policy for different schools. First, as discussed in Table 4 on page 74, non-functioning schools already find it difficult to implement Type 1 policies. All other policies are out of their implementation reach. Therefore, these schools should not be expected to implement Type 2, 3, 4 and 5 reform policies. Rather, it should be the responsibility of both district support agents and the school staff first to build capacity and skills in order for the school to implement the Type 1 policy; and thereafter to build capacity and skills to take on Type 2 and 3 policies. Once the school has mastered these skills to implement Type 2 and 3 policies, the next step will be to build capacity for Type 4 and 5 policies. This capacity-building process should be incremental and gradual, and based on the commitment, energy and will that can be mustered from teachers and other roleplayers (see Figure 17).

Figure 17: The SIPP model with its two-tier approach

Policy complexity		Implementation Support		School Functionality
Type 5				High +
Type 4			High	
Type 3			Low +	
Type 2			Low	
Type 1			Non	

Second, it is possible to decrease the complexity and depth of a reform policy in order for different schools to implement the policy. The challenge of this approach is a reduction in ‘democratic processes’. This does not mean the adoption of ‘autocratic processes’, but more the restriction of ‘collective activities among teachers’. The decision-making form Type 1 to Type 5 reform policies increase in collective decision making. In a Type 1 policy, the individual is the decision-making entity, while a Type 3 policy involves the decision making of the entire school. For example, instead of developing a policy that requires the involvement of a team or group of teachers to make decisions, such a policy could restrict the decision making to activities that involve only individual teachers. In the case of the DAS policy, the

demand is for the formation of the SDT to guide the implementation of the policy. At non-functioning schools, teacher will find it difficult to form such a structure because of tensions and infighting over who must serve on such a team. Policy makers could allocate this role to senior personnel to fulfil such functions, such as the Head of Department (HOD) of the particular teacher involved. By decreasing the complexity level (from a team or group to an individual), movement along the implementation steps will become possible, instead of the policy getting stuck at the earlier implementation steps.

Both these approaches will have to be accompanied by intense support to schools that are committed and willing to improve and develop. Schools that are functioning below the complexity level of the policy can be enticed through human resource strategies at the operational implementation stage and policy improvement strategies at the policy formulation stage. This discussion, taken from the experience of DAS, leaves aside the question of how to transform schools whose teachers are not willing to reform. Therefore, it in particular does not deal with policies which focus on constitutional imperatives such as non-racialism and access to schools. These policies I regard as 'politically driven' rather than 'educationally and professionally driven', and they therefore need a different strategy than the argument in this section.

### **8.2.1. Human resource strategies**

There are many reasons why a school may not be ready for change and these require different strategies rather than the current one-size-fits-all approach. Schools which are complacent either because they are serving low-risk communities or because they are actually succeeding beyond the expected levels may perhaps be left alone. Well-crafted assessment and accountability systems may provide an adequate incentive for such schools to examine and gradually improve their practices. Some schools might be identified to be 'low-functioning' schools for reasons which are only temporary. This could be because the school is undergoing changes in principal/leadership or is losing experienced teachers.

The responsibility to change is enormous, and the human and financial resources to do it are limited. It therefore, makes sense to focus on schools that are ready for change with an expectation that many schools not ready for change this year may in

the normal course of events become ready within a few years. In particular this approach can be useful since South Africa does not have 'laboratory' schools where these policies can be 'tested, amended and/or adjusted' within controlled situations. Again, well-crafted accountability systems, consistent district-level support for change, and the growing availability of technical assistance over time make it likely that schools that 'sat out' one opportunity for temporary reasons will adopt or create a change plan in later years.

In some cases, schools not otherwise willing to adopt a change, but in need of major change, might be offered substantial inducements to do so. However the element of choice is still important to maintain. In other cases, it may be possible for schools to work with organisational development experts or other advisors to help them become ready for change. For example, if interpersonal problems, factionalism, and inadequate leadership are inhibiting a school's ability to reach an informed consensus on a direction of change, an organisational development consultant might help the school's staff recognise and solve the problem. Another supportive role might be played by mediators - individuals aware of a broad range of changes, who can help staff members assess their needs and resources to make a rational choice between promising alternatives. This assistance may help non-functioning schools to move toward readiness for change.

The most difficult situation is presented by non-functioning schools that are also deeply dysfunctional (indicated by the negative percentage in Figure 10 on p.71). Dysfunctional schools are a section of the non-functioning schools of which there is no development taking place or it is negative (downward spiral), meaning that their level of functionality is not improving or it is even getting worse. At the extreme, these schools may be actively harming children. More often, an incompetent principal, or faction-ridden staff are running non-functioning schools incapable of developing a common vision or change plan. Working with such schools to try to create a climate for change is extremely difficult and unlikely to succeed. These schools are prime candidates for principal changes and, in some situations, reconstitution. Reconstitution, a potential strategy to revive schools, is an unpopular strategy among teachers and teacher unions. It is typically applied to schools that are very low and declining on accountability measures. It usually means transferring

out all staff except those who apply to remain and are accepted by a new principal under a new vision and change plan. Such drastic measures have actually been carried out in other countries, but are very uncommon within the South African education context. But this possibility has become part of the options mentioned by the current Minister of Education (Naledi Pandor) during her visits to the Eastern Cape Province in 2005, as an attempt to save learners and communities from non-functioning schools that are getting worse.

### **8.2.2. Policy strategies**

As argued previously, schools in turmoil might be reconstituted, possibly to emerge with a new staff committed in advance to implementing a Type 2 reform policy. Within the South African context, this argument will need legislative amendments to allow the necessary structures and personnel to take such a decision. In particular, getting the teacher unions to agree to such a mechanism will be a major challenge.

Additional to human relations strategies, policy strategies that would be necessary to create an infrastructure for the implementation of reform policies include the following:

#### *8.2.2.1. Implement reform policies around clear performance standards and accountability expectations*

An important first step in any reform policy plan is to come to an agreement about what the expected standard of delivery is and then hold schools accountable. By themselves, performance standards, assessment, and accountability are unlikely to make a substantial difference in school practices or learner achievement. But if they are tied to an array of practical, attractive, proven options for school and classroom change, they can help motivate school staff members to do the hard work necessary to implement more effective practices. They can also help identify schools that are not facilitating learning among learners so that these schools can receive special assistance and, if assistance is ineffective, reconstitution.

#### *8.2.2.2. Help schools make informed choices among a variety of implementation strategies*

One general problem of reform policies is that school staff members are not given the option of choosing an implementation strategy that suits the school because most of the policies are developed as one-size-fits-all approaches. Schools must be

given the option of choosing implementation approaches that match the characteristics of the staff and functionality level of the school, and therefore responding to the school's needs and capabilities. Failing to allow this choice will result in frequent mismatches between the complexity of the reform policy and the functionality of the school.

#### *8.2.2.3. Target funding to encourage adoption of proven change practices*

Almost all reform policies should be designed to be implemented in the long run more or less within the existing financial structure of schools, but many require significant additional investments in the early years (for extensive professional development, materials, technology, and so on). Further, additional funding may be necessary to motivate schools to invest their own resources in the change process. Schools should be given the responsibility to write proposals for funding, indicating the way the school intends to use the resources in order to enhance ownership of the change process.

To promote the transformation of schools and the implementation of reform policies on a broad scale, a stable, predictable source of funds needs to be earmarked just for this purpose. Proposal such as the creation of a 20% set-aside (ring-fenced) fund from the initial education budget could be an option. Dedicated funding for the implementation of reform policies is essential, as displayed within Chapter 6, regardless of the level of funds available to schools for other purposes.

### **8.3 Policy insights of the study**

This section will draw some insights from this study. It refers, in particular, to the policy formulation stage, the policy intervention support stage and the school operational implementation stage. The insights fall into two categories, namely (1) those insights that would be drawn from empirical data like the interviews, questionnaires and my own experience within the policy process; and (2) those insights that would be of a conceptual nature (new thinking), and from which a study of one school could not furnish me with enough information to make generalisations of all other schools.

### 8.3.1. Policy formulation insights

#### Insight One:

*Policy makers have to re-assess and re-conceptualise the current policy-making paradigm in operation when developing 'professional' policies such as DAS.*

I argue that there are possibly two ways policies could be made in education, namely by following either a 'labour paradigmatic' approach or a 'professional paradigmatic' approach of policy making. The difference between these two approaches is more about the process of making the policy.

As far as the DAS is concerned, this policy was negotiated within the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), the official bargaining council for public teachers in South Africa. Policies are negotiated here based on 'trade-offs', 'compromises' and 'collective agreements'. The essence of negotiations is thus not necessarily to find the best possible solution to a particular problem, but more about getting an agreement on the table that would satisfy most or the majority of stakeholders. Stakeholders would allow changes to the initial policy if it could result in an agreement (majority support). This 'labour-paradigmatic' approach to policy making might be acceptable and useful within a process of salary negotiations and conditions of service agreements. However, the ELRC would be too narrow a structure to make policy that affects the education system as a whole, especially where the policy would affect different stakeholders either negatively or positively (the need to sacrifice individual benefits for the greater good). On the other hand, a 'professional-paradigmatic' approach to policy making would focus on finding the best relevant solution to the problem or vision. In this case, the focus is not about the benefits of individual stakeholders, but rather what is relevant and suitable in solving the problem. Inevitably, some of the policies would affect teachers negatively. For example, a policy that requires teachers to go for professional development during their vacations might be the best possible solution to the problem of teacher capacity at that point in time. During such debates, the vision of attaining quality education for all learners would be the overall driving force or consideration, and not the particular benefits of individual stakeholders.

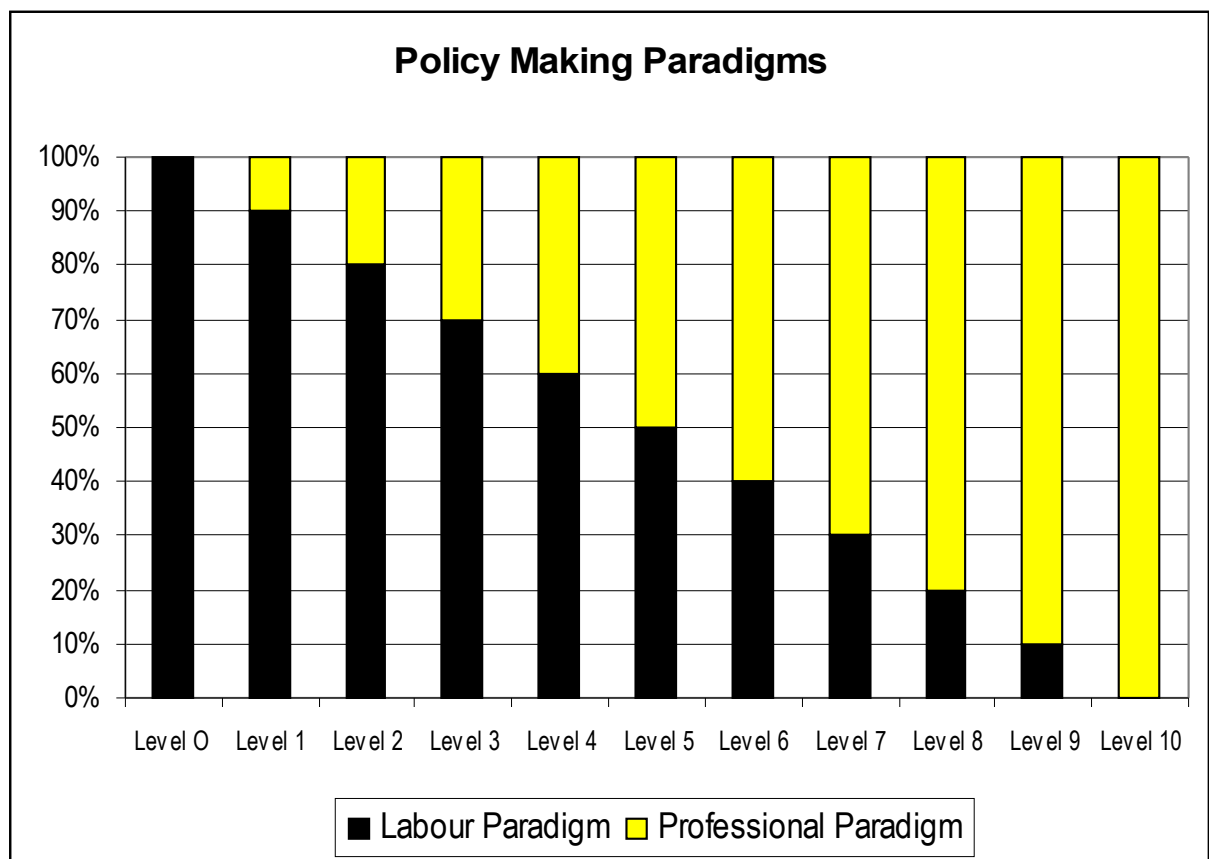
With this conceptual framework in mind, I do acknowledge the hard fought history of teacher union rights for collective bargaining, and the past deliberate undermining of



teachers by employers. But it is important that the policy process shows some movement away from a 'no-trust' environment to a 'trust' environment where parties attempt to share the common intent of a policy, instead of, in opposition to each other, looking for ways and means to outmanoeuvre each other. With reference to Figure 18, I argue that the current South African policy process might be somewhere to the left of level 5, and therefore focused more on labour-orientated approaches rather than professional-orientated approaches to professional policy making.

Another possibility is to subject all professional policy processes within the ELRC to the scrutiny of a professional council. In this case, the work of the ELRC would be seen as a sub-process of the professional council, which would look at the proposals of the ELRC from a professional point of view. This professional council would look at the possible impact and effect that such a policy would have on the profession at large.

Figure 18: Moving from a labour paradigm to a professional paradigm of policy making



**Insight Two:**

*The limited capacity and skills of employer and employee parties in the DAS policy-making process must be re-assessed and re-conceptualised in order to strengthen future policy making processes in South Africa.*

The current education policy process terrain is saturated by only two sets of stakeholders, namely the employee representatives (teacher unions) and employer representative (Departments of Education). When making education policy, there are far more than two roleplayers that could contribute fruitfully to the terrain. In fact, some of those who have been excluded are normally very good at criticising the policy, and therefore could be utilised fruitfully. But the inclusion of additional or new roleplayers must not be based on ‘silencing’ the current two stakeholders, but on recognising that other roleplayers can add value to the process of policy making.

When I look at the South African processes of policy making, the current two stakeholders certainly have a major role to play during the ‘political’ and ‘mobilising’ stages of Hodgkinson model (see page 11), but I argue that other roleplayers will have a more prominent role to play during the ‘philosophy’, ‘planning’, ‘managing’ and ‘monitoring’ stages. Especially during the ‘managing’ and ‘monitoring’ stages, implementation must be left to those who are employed (district officials) to fulfil those roles, but not necessarily without accountability towards other stakeholders. This confusion of roles, which is often expressed by district officials as interference by union representatives or officials, is very prominently demonstrated in my analysis of the DAS policy formulation stage in Chapter 5. Within the DAS policy, teachers are expected to play the role of ‘education managers’ in the SDT, while teachers are primarily employed to be facilitators of learning and teaching at school level. If teachers have to take on these additional roles within these policy processes, it might result in them (teachers) not having enough time to do what their primary role is, or neglect their role.

My argument about multiple roleplayers during the policy-making process is divided into three focus areas (see p.11), namely the recognition and importance of (i) universities and education researchers during the focus on ideas (ii) teacher unions and departments of education during the focus on politics and (iii) districts and school representatives during the focus on technical implementation.

### 8.3.2. Intervention support insights

#### Insight Three:

*The lack of systems (both technical and human), at different levels of education, makes it impossible to support, develop, monitor and evaluate the effective and efficient implementation of the DAS policy.*

The DAS policy lacks an integrated development, monitoring and evaluation approach during the intervention support stage. The current 'paper' accountability process through report writing by officials and union representatives, is open for use and abuse by different stakeholders. Most of these reports, during the NATT process mentioned in Chapter 6, have been discovered to be not a truthful account of what is going on at local levels. In fact, most of these reports were discovered to be 'political' reports rather than 'monitoring and evaluation' reports.

By building an ICT (information, communication and technology) database system that reflects the reality at local levels, early-warning signs can be detected and remedied. ICT systems allow principals and policy makers to put mechanisms in place like passwords to control and manage the access of selected individuals and groups to appropriate information. Such a database system will also allow and ensure confidentiality and transparency during the process of appraisal. Those who should have access to the necessary documents would be given the necessary access, and others would be barred. Furthermore, those who should monitor the process of appraisal would know the progress of different schools and individuals.

### 8.3.3. Operational implementation insights

#### Insight Four:

*Understanding Cape Flats Secondary School, as an individual organisation with unique characteristics, is a key pre-requisite for developing policies that are aimed at addressing real problems at the school.*

During the process of interviewing, almost all teachers at CFSS doubted whether the policy makers actually understood the schools for which they made the DAS policy. Even when I, who had been part of the policy process of DAS, indicated that I certainly understood their school, they were not convinced. After looking deeper into their concerns, I realised that they could not reconcile the demands placed on them by the policy, with the current condition prevailing at their school.

It was evident that the DAS policy has Type 3, 4 and 5 change requirements built into it. On the other hand, CFSS only functioned at 35,7%, making it a low-functioning school. The school therefore could attempt complexities of Type 3 policies, but it was too difficult for the school to attempt Type 4 and 5 policy changes. Because the DAS policy, for example, assumed as given the ability of teachers to trust each other when setting up appraisal panels, it would be a major task to adhere to the formation of panels at this school. As discussed in Chapter 7 (see page 153), there is not a high level of trust amongst teachers at the school, and therefore panels would only be formed if they are made up of those people with whom the teacher feels comfortable or only people who are trusted by the teacher. Whether the formation of panels based on the abovementioned process is in the best interests of the teacher is doubtful. And the lack of trust cannot be solved overnight since trust is something that has its origins deeply rooted in the history of relationships and events at the school.

Although this is a conceptual analysis, it is necessary to indicate that the policy of DAS is only relevant to high-functioning schools. Low-functioning schools are operating far beyond the expectations of the DAS policy. For currently high-functioning schools to adhere to this policy would involve a 'down-grading' of what is already happening at these schools. On the other hand, non-functioning schools need other support first, before they could consider implementing the DAS policy. Quite often, these schools must first ensure that they start school on time and close at the expected time; that the teachers are present and in their classrooms. I therefore argue that policy development in South Africa must focus on the three distinct categories of schools, rather than on one-size-fits-all models. Policy makers certainly undermine schools when they attempt to treat different schools as if they are the same.

**Insight Five:**

*The lack of leadership and management skills at Cape Flats Secondary School turned out to be key contributors to the non-implementation of the DAS policy*

A central response, separating the opinions of those in leadership and management positions (SMT) at CFSS from that of other teachers, was that the SMT indicated that all the processes and systems are in place (meaning that the 'paperwork' has been

done), while teachers responded that the processes and systems are not in place (meaning that they have not been implemented). If the evaluation of effective and efficient leadership and management at school level continues to focus on scrutinising documents, paperwork and report writing, the gulf between what those 'outside' the school, like circuit managers/inspectors think about the level of functionality of the school and what teachers really experience will increase.

These two perspectives in particular, are very prevalent at non-functioning and low functioning schools. The SMT and the principal are held responsible for what is going on at school, despite the fact that this group has very limited influence in what really happens at the school. Most circuit managers/ inspectors will not accept that their principals are not in charge of the school because they believe in positional leadership. At non-functioning and low-functioning schools, the position is often a burden to those who occupy the principalship. These individuals feel that they carry the problems of the school and school community on their shoulders - problems they believe they have no control over or capacity to solve. Their day-to-day planning, if any, is about survival (surviving the day). A good day will be when not a lot of chaotic things happen and individuals respond to problems the same way fire-fighters respond to calls of emergency. They often leave the school at the end of the day, believing that they have made no difference to the situation at school, but they just hope that the next day(s) will be better.

Most of these principals have never been empowered or capacitated with skills to solve the problems confronting them. Sometimes it will be social problems affecting the community that will spill over to the school, thus affecting the school directly or indirectly. Other times it will be political or cultural problems finding their way into the school. These individuals feel like mediators or negotiators all the time; that there is no real support or understanding of their situation from their seniors or supervisors. The development of the school functionality questionnaire and arguments are attempts to assist school principals and circuit managers/ inspectors to support schools and principals on those things which really need development and improvement.

## 8.4 Contributions of the study

This study makes the following contributions in these areas:

### 8.4.1 The 'Policy-Practice Gap' literature

This study shows that the common reference to policy-practice gap issues in the literature, both international and local, can be overcome by the different stakeholders in the policy-making process. If these issues are broken down in the different policy process stages, these gaps can be addressed by different roleplayers and interest groups. For example, policy makers are responsible for the Policy Formulation stage, district support officials are responsible for the Intervention Support and the principal and teachers are responsible for the Operational Implementation of policy.

### 8.4.2 Implementation Readiness Conditions (IRC) framework

This study highlights three insightful, conceptual components captured within the three policy process stages.

#### 8.4.2.1 *Level of school functionality*

Understanding Cape Flats Secondary School as an individual organisation with a unique level of functionality is a key pre-requisite for developing reform policies like DAS that are aimed at addressing real problems at the school. Because the policy makers of DAS never took into account the level of functionality of the school, teachers at CFSS could not reconcile the demands and challenges placed on them by DAS (Type 4.3 difficulty level), and the current contextual conditions prevailing at their school (low-functioning).

#### 8.4.2.2 *Relevant intervention support*

Understanding the level of functionality of CFSS, and the implementation demands on the schools by DAS could have assisted intervention support agents at district level to tailor their support (both the breadth and depth of support) to the particular needs and characteristics of the school. From the questionnaires, which represent the opinions of the majority of teachers, early deductions could be made that the school was functioning way below the demands of the DAS policy. The commitment and will of the CFSS staff was not sufficient to facilitate the implementation of DAS. The lack of enough capacity and support contributed to the non-implementation of the policy.

#### 8.4.2.3 *Level of complexity and depth of reform policy*

Understanding the level of complexity and depth of the DAS policy could have assisted policy makers, intervention support agents and operational implementation agents in understanding the effort and resources needed to implement DAS at a school like CFSS. By analysing every step in the DAS process, and its related complexity level for CFSS as a low-functioning school, policy makers would realise that the same implementation process would not work for high-, low- and non-functioning schools. A one-size-fits-all approach to policy is therefore not just unfeasible, but rather inappropriate in the South African school context.

### **8.5 A summary of the chapter**

Is there an easy way of solving our inability to implement education policies in our schools, especially when these policies amount to over a dozen in South Africa? If there were simple and easy answers, it is likely that this study would not have been conducted in the first place. The vastness of the literature on this subject is testimony to the complexity involved in responding to this question. However, I would argue that although there is no one simple recipe for facilitating successful implementation of education policy, there are common issues which are essential for successful policy implementation. How these issues are interpreted and assimilated within the contextual space of a school constitutes the intrinsic complexity of trying to answer such a broad question.

The experience of Cape Flats Secondary School (CFSS) highlights the importance of taking an open and flexible approach when looking for blockages within the implementation process. It further emphasises the importance of contextual factors and conditions as well as the need for flexible, non-homogeneous implementation. Therefore, the study shows that policy makers must let go of their one-size-fits-all notion of policy making. All policy would inevitably be reshaped and adapted based on the character and culture of individual schools, but the essence of the policy should stay the same.