A study of Year Six teachers' perspectives on the important aspects of teaching and assessing writing within maintained primary schools in England.

Thesis submitted by

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Abstract:

RQ: What do Year Six teachers perceive are the important aspects of teaching and assessing writing within maintained primary schools in England? Specifically, in relation to what they might teach versus what they have to teach and assess.

This research investigated Year Six teachers' perspectives of teaching writing, with a specific lens on the relationship between their personal views of and the statutory requirements for writing. It aimed to contribute greater clarity of teachers' understanding of constructs of writing, through an exploration of their experiences and practices of teaching and assessing writing. The research used theoretical understandings from Ivanic (2004) on writing discourses, research on cognitive and sociocultural perspectives on writing and writing assessment.

A qualitative methodology used data from semi structured interviews. The interview questions explored the role of writing, teacher understandings about writing, the influences on Year Six writing and the impact of policy. Deductive analysis using Ivanic's (2004) discourses of writing considered writing in National Curriculum documents. Inductive coding was used to explore teachers' views on writing, assessment and surveillance.

While teachers viewed writing as complex, the NC (DfE, 2013) construct dominated their planning, teaching and assessment. The creativity writing discourse was important to the participants despite being non-statutory and receiving limited attention in class. The statutory requirements limited teacher agency. Composition writing was focused on addressing the assessment criteria through transmission teaching using exemplar materials and topic teaching. The participants saw transmission teaching as a dependable way of addressing the assessment criteria. The teaching of grammar for the test was significantly different where participants made little reference to non-statutory forms of writing. The Teacher Assessment Framework and the moderation process dominated assessment. The participants saw Performance Tables and OFSTED surveillance as significant accountability mechanisms.

The contribution to new knowledge shows that the teachers' wide understanding of writing is not wholly reflected in their teaching due to their focus on statutory writing. The participants' classroom practice focused almost exclusively on addressing the assessment criteria.

Contents

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List of abbreviations

DCFS	Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007-2010
DfE	Department for Education, 2010-
GPS	Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation tests. Also known as SPaG.
KS2	Key Stage 2
NC (DfE, 2013)	National Curriculum, 2013
NLS	National Literacy Strategy, 1997- 2003
PNS	Primary National Strategy, 2003-2010
PoS (DfE, 2013)	Programme of Study
STA	Standards and Testing Agency
TAF (STA, 2018)	Teacher Assessment Framework, 2018
UKS2	Years Five and Six

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Chapter 1. The context and rationale for the research

1.1 Introduction

The focus of this research study is primary teachers' perceptions of KS2 writing. Specifically, the focus is Year Six teachers' personal perceptions of writing and the requirements of the prescribed NC (DfE, 2013) Programme of Study for English that the Year Six teachers are required to teach. The research uses the semi-structured interviews of the 11 participating Year Six teachers. Where academic research describes school writing in the primary school, it describes the skills, genre and process discourses of writing in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) and suggests teachers have personal conceptualisations of writing. There are suggestions, such as in Bearne (2017: 77) that primary teachers sought to achieve a balance between their personal views and the prescribed versions of writing. Further, OFSTED in reports (2003: 19 and 2005: 41) suggest that there is a need for imagination and creativity in teaching writing and that it was possible to teach in these ways in a high-stakes environment. This research focused on the participating teachers' perceptions of teaching and assessing writing combining the personal and the statutory writing forms. This chapter describes the context in which the research took place, the rationale for and the development of my interest in primary writing (the autobiography of the research question) and the statement of the research question.

1.2 The context

Michael Gove (2010-2014) was the Secretary of State for Education in the Cameron-Clegg Coalition Government (2010_2015). At the beginning of his time in office, in 2010, SATs tests on the grounds of the tests being too crude a measure of pupil attainment and the publication of primary school's SATs attainment data in national League/Performance Tables. The Secretary of State acknowledged that there were 'flaws' in the assessment, stated that there would be a review but insisted that the SATs would be held in the following year. Relatedly, at the same time, there were concerns by teachers, academics and politicians about the teaching and learning of writing in English primaries. In 2012 primary schools, teachers were accommodating to the ending of the PNS (2003) and the suggestions of further changes in the curriculum, associated pedagogy and the foci of assessment was regarded by many academics and teachers as excessive change. Some government figures during this period put an emphasis on the apparent weakness of writing, and the teaching of writing, despite having limited evidence that standards of

writing were 'weak' (Cremin and Myhill, 2012; Fisher, 2001, and Moss, 2017). For some politicians in 2012, and, indeed, subsequently, the KS2 statistics provided evidence for their negative concerns about the standard of writing and the teaching of writing. In 2012, using the end of KS2 statistics, writing attainment was lower than reading attainment. In 2011 Writing was below Reading by 9%. 2012 data is not comparable because the change of assessment format as well as the fact that assessment validity issues were glossed over (Alexander, 2010). Rather the public debate narrative continued to concentrate on the quality of writing teaching in English primary schools (Gardner, 2012). Indeed, in contrast to these complex and grave concerns, the Secretary of State (2014) stated that as there was no single unchallenged consensus:

> In government we have applied a simple set of tests to help frame education policy, for us, what's right is what works. And we have been lucky that our term in office has coincided with an increasing and increasingly robust body of evidence of what works in education. (Michael Gove speech to Policy Exchange, 7th June, 2014).

A new National Curriculum was published in 2013. The content of the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) is described in a 2013 Programme of Study (hereafter called the PoS (2013)) The PoS (2013) content is assessed through tests in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (hereafter called the GPS tests although sometimes called SPaG tests) and the Standard and Testing Agency controlled teacher assessment. The teacher assessment criteria are published by the STA in the Teacher Assessment Framework (2018) (hereafter called the TAF (2018)). The 'English programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2. National curriculum in England' (DfE, 2013) describes the statutory and non-statutory requirements for English in maintained primary schools. These two documents, the PoS (2013) and the TAF (2018) are supplemented by a non-statutory 'Exemplification Materials' (2017) which is intended to illustrate the writing features in the PoS (2013) as well as giving illustrated examples of the application of the three basic assessment categories to pupils' work. The selection of pupils' work is intended to show the three assessment categories of 'working at *greater depth*', 'working *at expected* standard' and '*working towards*' in the teacher assessment of compositional writing.

Moving on to the pre-pandemic situation of 2019, the end of KS2 data revealed that Writing was leading Reading by 5% (DfE, 2019). Comparisons between years are complex. Indeed, over the 2012-2020 period there have been changes to curricula, policies and assessment processes as well as the KS2 results. Validity issues further complicate the impact of changes of format and criteria. Analysis of concerns about writing are, therefore, difficult to substantiate in 2020. The situation post 2020 is equally difficult to analyse for

similar reasons. In 2023/24 Writing was 72% against Reading at 74%. (Appendix One). Nevertheless, academics have continued to raise concerns about the NC (DfE, 2013) construct of writing and its assessment. Academic research evidence suggests that pupils should experience writing both creatively and in contemporary forms as well as learning the process of writing, write for a genuine purpose and have agency both in their lessons and in the assessment (Dowdall, 2020; Merchant, 2021; Barrs, 2019; Bearne, 2017; Cremin and Myhill, 2012). However, for many including the government, there remains an unyielding commitment to using measurable attainment data, valuing what is measurable, which has kept the narrative of primary writing subjected to teaching and learning in terms of skills, genre and correctness (Clarkson, 2019; Cushing, 2020; Dowdall, 2016; Barrs, 2019; Bearne, 2017). For this skills/genre narrative good writing is conceived in terms of accurate or 'effective' linguistic and structural features (Bearne, 2017; Ivanic, 2004). Grammar and punctuation are seen in terms of the writing meeting external criteria (Cushing, 2021; Barrs, 2019) rather than meaning making and communicating intention. Wyse and Jones (2001: 128) expressed a concern that 'writing for real purpose and reasons to communicate meaning have been replaced by textual analysis' (Wyse and Jones, 2001:128) with success viewed in terms of knowledge of genre features and an assessment checklist. This 2001 analysis seems partly appropriate to the current statutory view of writing. Writing's personal, even emancipatory, nature, appears to be devalued due to the emphasis on seeing 'writing as a neutral act' (Clarkson, 2019: 198).

The participants had concerns about the construct of writing. KS2 classes focus on the writing product and the pupil's ability to include and correctly use the features in the assessment criteria. The nature of the STA's 'secure fit'/ 'all or nothing' assessment, although mediated by the 'particular weakness' discretion, continues with its insistent framing of on the 'correctness' of the age-related standard in 2016:

> Teachers will need to have evidence that a pupil demonstrates attainment of ***all the statements*** within the standard and all the statements in the preceding standard(s). STA, 2016:5 [my italics]

In practice, teachers may encourage pupils in the inclusion of a linguistic feature in pupil's work rather than using the linguistic feature to create meaning – such as the use of the subjunctive mood. The apparent focus of the NC (DfE, 2013) is on effective competence of both transcription and composition, and such competence is widely accepted. However, the 'secure fit' / 'all or nothing' assessment means that an effective, creative and

competent writer may be classified as '*working towards*' if all the assessment criteria are not appropriately met.

In the light of the above issues, a Year Six teacher is, at best, left in the position of teaching writing in a way that meets the demands of both the PoS (2013) and the TAF (2018) while incorporating their own personal views of writing. Such a position means going beyond, as Clarkson calls it, 'writing as a neutral act' (Clarkson, 2019:198).

1.3 My interest in primary writing

My interest in the teaching of writing springs from my interest in the development of the individual learner, my experience as a secondary English teacher of Years 7 to 13, experience in teaching Year Six and supporting ECT/NQT teachers when I was a Curriculum Deputy Headteacher and, finally, my interest in the EdD research.

My interest in the development of the individual was increased as I taught English at secondary level and I became increasingly aware of the problems students faced with extended writing. Whilst the pupils' primary experience had given them experience in the narrative genre and developing their voice/identity in writing, my pupils found the experience of writing with these qualities very difficult. In part the pupils' difficulties stemmed from their limited confidence in writing and, what they considered, a focus on accuracy and correctness in writing. Perhaps for some writing had been a negative experience because of the focus on accuracy and correctness in writing. Indeed, the ideas of identity and voice in writing for these pupils were submerged by the concerns about accuracy.

Another aspect of English writing appeared when I taught English in an 5-19 school and was asked to teach a Year Six class. Only with this involvement did I realise the extent of the restrictions placed on many teachers in the teaching of writing in KS2. The focus of many of the KS2 teachers in the school was about the assessment of the writing, the interpretation of assessment categories, test raw scores, learning grammar features, coherence, the number of linguistic features, the hierarchy of sentence structure and punctuation. Feedback was predominantly focused on transcription and very rarely on the affective nature of the writing. Success was defined as the ability to demonstrate correctly the assessment criteria and there was limited attention given to the individual development of the writer behind the composition. This may be what Bearne's (2017: 74) identified as

the ‘tyranny of the technical’. I felt a tension about what school writing was about. While I wanted to ensure that the pupils were well prepared for the SATs and would be successful, I wanted to offer them the opportunities to develop their identity and voice in their writing. This was a challenge and while I attempted to balance these elements, I was conscious of the pressure and weight of professional opinion within the school to achieve good outcomes for the pupils in the SATs, the need to ensure that the English Department was, in OFSTED (EiF, 2023) terms, ‘improving…and [gave] an effective and efficient’ educational experience’. The participating teachers’ opinion was, contrary to Jerrim et al.’s (2024) research, that they felt under pressure from surveillance.

Another experience made me consider the changing focus of English teaching. As Curriculum Deputy Headteacher with responsibility of ECT/NQT support and assessment, I ran weekly sessions to discuss their experiences. I offered to give my take on any issues that they were experiencing n their teaching. These newly qualified teachers, including teachers of English, revealed their concerns about accuracy and ‘correctness’ of writing, teaching grammar and extended writing to the male pupils in the school. The situation of the teachers of English was interesting as they expressed concerns about ‘accuracy and grammar’. This was not a great surprise as many of the English teachers were English literature graduates. Myhill et al. (2023) note that:

> The English literature route into teaching is a preparation for teaching reading, comprehension and interpretation (Myhill et al., 2023: 406).

Their knowledge and understanding of grammar allied to the demands of extended writing caused some of them apprehension and, to some extent in my opinion, undermined their self confidence in teaching English. Conceptualisations of school writing has shifted. In 2003, Marshall commented that she identified an ‘epistemological shift’ (2003: 83) in school English. While Andrews et al. (2011: 4-5) sees teaching writing in five phases of dominant emphases. In some sense these ECT teachers showed an awareness of this in identifying extended writing and grammar. The extended writing was challenging for some ECT/NQT teachers as there was an expectation of types of genres and of multimodal or digital writing. These were not areas that some graduates had fully explored in their degrees or post-graduate experience. The exposure to the ideas of free writing was particularly helpful was helpful to them as teacher/writers and as teachers.

Finally, studying for the EdD has given me the opportunity to explore the literature on the NC (DfE, 2013) and the associated academic research. The exploration has sharpened my awareness of the conceptualisations of writing and the validity issues with the current

National Curriculum. I am motivated by the desire not simply to critique current narratives but instead to explore how to support teachers to navigate the tension between what is required and what is desired in the teaching of writing. Writing represents a unique opportunity for a child to develop and express their individual voice. Only by understanding how teachers and teaching affect the development of identity and voice is there an opportunity to develop the development of the writer alongside or above the development of the writing product. I am motivated not simply to critique current discourses of primary writing but to explore how to understand and support teachers to navigate the tensions, demands, frustrations of teaching writing in Year Six. Writing represents a special opportunity to develop, communicate and support others through their writer's perspective, identity, voice and emotions. Teaching with an awareness of these issues and supporting the pupil in developing of these characteristics will enable a better teaching of the pupil writer and the development of the writing product.

1.4 The research problem and the research question

My experiences motivated my interest in school writing. Specifically, the research interest in writing was Year Six teachers' perceptions of teaching and assessing NC (DfE, 2013) writing in relation to their personal beliefs about writing. There has been quantitative research on KS2 writing practices in terms of what and how writing is taught. Dockrell et al. (2016: 423), for example, in their research suggest that the KS2 English writing focus included an emphasis on vocabulary, word classes and cohesion. While this research is invaluable as revealing aspects of the pupil experience, it does not consider the complex of factors teachers make to arrive at these teaching practice decisions and their perceptions of what they are involved in. Therefore, this research study considers primary teachers' perceptions of writing in Year Six to include the statutory requirement alongside personal views about the writing and what they want to teach. The assessment and the associated surveillance are significant factors in this process. The emphasis and importance given to these teachers' interpretations may be seen in the decisions about their classroom practice in teaching writing in Year Six.

The research question has a focus on Year Six teachers' perceptions of their personal beliefs about writing while being required to teach NC (DfE, 2013) writing, apply the assessment processes in the GPS tests and the TAF (2018) and comply with the surveillance of Year Six teachers by the STA and OFSTED.
These perceptions were explored through this research question:

What do Year Six teachers perceive are the important aspects of teaching and assessing writing within maintained primary schools in England? Specifically, in relation to what they might teach versus what they have to teach and assess.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews and evaluates the literature and research around the issues of writing and assessment at the end of KS2 in maintained primary schools. The nature of writing in schools is relatively under researched in comparison to the considerable research on the assessment of writing.

The research literature on writing at the end of KS2 in maintained schools has suggested significantly different aspects of the writing discourses. Clarity about the discourses or constructs of writing is important because writing, in different forms, is assessed in the high-stakes primary school environment. This chapter considers views, discourses and paradigms of writing. Hyland's (2016:4) typology of writing is used which has a focus on the text, the writer or the reader. Year Six teachers' perceptions of writing guide this review as it considers how these teachers accommodate their personal beliefs of writing while teaching the statutory NC (DfE, 2013). Clarkson's (2019: 307) research suggests teachers have multiple and overlapping writing discourses which are used differently in different contexts. This chapter examines the literature on teachers' decisions about the nature of writing and writing processes in their classroom practice. Implicit in such decisions are understandings of the subject and pedagogical knowledge involved.

Shulman (1986) theorised different kinds of teaching knowledge. He proposed a typology of different kinds of knowledge used in teaching. Shulman (1986) suggested these distinctions: subject content knowledge (the academic domain); pedagogical content knowledge (how to teach that academic domain); and pedagogical knowledge (how to teach in general). Successive research has focused on Maths and Science rather than on writing, but the typology remains useful for consideration of my field of interest.

Ball et al. (2008: 389) describes Shulmans (1986) typology of seven types of knowledge which Shulman separated into two groups. The first group of Shulman's types of knowledge contains 'a broader concept of teacher knowledge that emphasised content knowledge' (Ball et al., 2008: 391), while the second group types of knowledge is of the organisational structure of content knowledge, curricular and pedagogical content knowledge. Curriculum/pedagogical content knowledge have, according to Shing (2018), are strongly focused on pedagogical knowledge, effective reflexive teaching and the pupils' experience. My research uses the ideas of content knowledge and

curriculum/pedagogical content knowledge in looking at Year Six teachers' experiences of teaching writing.

For this research, the subject nature of writing includes types of writing, forms including genres and contemporary developments. The different elements of writing include composition and transcription. Composition involves knowledge of and strategies to teach the writing process, types of writing, language choices, text level choices, the audience relationship and knowledge about personal resources and intentions including voice. Transcription involves knowledge and strategies to teach legible writing, spelling, punctuation and coherence. Effective teaching strategies for writing, according to Clements (2023: 9), include process and genre writing, teaching grammar and punctuation in the context of creative writing and, finally, a motivational writing environment. Composition and transcription are seen in terms of the statutory requirements and their assessment.

Further, as Haladyna (1994) points out, assessment needs a complete understanding of what is to be assessed. This is not easy where there are complex and competing theories about writing. There needs to be a scrupulously accurate definition of writing to avoid measurement issues of validity and reliability. A review of the literature on school writing identifies different understandings of the discourses of writing especially grammar teaching and assessment. Clarity about the discourses and construct of writing is important because of assessment reliability and validity issues. The final section considers teacher agency and identity within the context of the NC, Key Stage assessments, tests and Performance Tables. Foucault's (1977) panopticon metaphor applied to the surveillance of writing is considered. Teacher agency and identity are central to the research question which considers the Year Six teachers' perceptions as they teach the requirements for writing while holding views about creativity, identity and voice.

2.2 The writing processes

Writing is complex and under-researched. Gadd et al. (2017) comment that writing is 'arguably the neglected 'R' (Biancarosa and Snow, 2004; Gilbert and Graham, 2010) in both research and practice' (2017: 1552). Writing is a complex form of communication, and the literature reflects the complexity through different emphases. Camp (2009) argues writing is complex because its many aspects are grounded in community, are context dependent and there is only a contested understanding of the different practices and

strategies involved in writing. Sainsbury (2009) describes writing's complexity by suggesting it involves numerous elements working together. These elements, for Sainsbury (2009) include: knowledge of genre, structure, purpose, style, audience as well as grammar, punctuation, spelling, handwriting linked the ability to plan, craft and revise. Sainsbury (2009) describes writing practice as the

> complex orchestration of many elements...[with] different types of text that can be distinguished, each with typical organizational stylistic features (Sainsbury, 2009: 548).

Christensen (2009) offers a no less daunting description of writing as involving generation of and awareness of audience, syntactic awareness, spelling and genre. The complex understanding of writing have given rise to frameworks to integrate the numerous elements.

Camp (2012) says definitions of writing development have been numerous, with multiple frameworks using a range of different theoretical approaches. The definitions of writing are difficult due to historical shifts of emphasis in research and the theoretical frameworks underlying that research (Jeffery and Parr, 2021). The range of perspectives do not give a unified model of writing development. While Alamargot and Fayol (2009) observe that researchers who might hope for one comprehensive model to explain every aspect of the practice of writing or writer development will be disappointed as such 'does not yet exist.' (Alamargot and Fayol, 2009: 23). Nevertheless, while not suggesting a comprehensive model, there are important insights from recent research. Chen et al. (2020: 6) suggest a comprehensive view of writing development as a:

> ...dynamic and multi-dimensional concept, evolving and changing, and considers children's mastery of linguistic features, genre forms and purposes, their thinking and understanding, and their increasing sense of audience and self' (Chen et al., 2020: 6)

This helpful view complements the Myhill and Cremin (2018) research from the Craft of Writing (2016-18) project. The Craft of Writing (2018) was a research project to raise attainment and support the teachers' writing subject knowledge through working with professional authors. Their research suggests approaches to classroom writing. Myhill and Cremin (2018), in 'Teaching the Craft of Writing', describes the approach as offering an 'empowering pedagogical tool for teachers' (Myhill and Cremin (2018: 25)) by offering knowledge of teaching writing and suggesting support for writer identity.

Research by Cremin and Twiner (2020), Cremin and Oliver (2017) and Myhill (2017) stress the importance of teacher subject knowledge. Subject knowledge of writing includes

a wide range of understandings on topic, audience, memory of previous composition, familiarity with genre, language choices, contemporary writing forms, the nature of authorship, the writing craft process and the expectations of the community being written to. These researches suggested that reflecting on personal writing histories, writing, discussing textual processes in a community of practice can influence teachers' self-assurance as writers and their effective pedagogical approaches. While the National Curriculum English (DfE, 2013) gives importance to the 'rules of writing', the Craft of Writing Framework (2023) (CoWF), based on the 2017 research, addresses writing subject knowledge an emphasis on the creative, craft and composing aspects of writing.

The Craft of Writing Framework (2023) used teaching strategies that supported attainment, encouraged efficacy using a 'community of writers' approach to promote creativity, ideation and the craft of starting writing composition. It suggested that working with professional writers might lead to greater teacher awareness of the creative craft of writing composition through the use of prompts drawn from the framework's five areas. However, it did acknowledge some tension between the understanding of writing in NC (DfE, 2013) and the more expansive and social CoWF approach. The CoWF research illustrates the complexity of creating a framework on writing.

Frameworks on writing address the complexity by suggesting a range of factors for discussion about the nature of writing. Locke (2015: 17-25) categorises different approaches sequentially. Leggette et al. (2015) suggest both a sequential and topic framework in their literature review. Hyland (2016: 3) suggests that three broad approaches to understanding writing: a focus on texts and their elements and structure; a focus of the writer and the writer's practices in creating texts and, finally, the role of the reader for the writer. Hyland's (2015) schema identifies several approaches as significant contributions to an understanding of writing: texts as discourses including genre writing, writing as a cognitive process involving creative self-actualisation, and, finally, writing as reflecting a community membership and identity. While there are behaviourist theories of language development, the most referenced theories of language development are cognitive, sociocultural and linguistic theories of language development.

Language development with a focus on the text, according to Hyland (2015: 4), was the dominant model for conceptualising writing for decades up to the 1970s. Locke (2015) characterises such a writing focus on text as 'Cultural heritage'. The text approach considers writing as the result of following a set of rules to create a coherent writing. There are two main text approaches: text as autonomous products which are independent

of contexts, writers or readers, and texts as discourses which have a social purpose. The two understandings are briefly outlined.

Texts as autonomous products remove writing from any context and from the personal experiences of the writers and readers. This view is influenced by Chomsky's (1957) 'Transformational Grammar'. From this viewpoint, writing, as Shannon and Weaver (1963) held, is communication from one human mind to another through language. In this view meaning is delivered with the words, and the writing is transparent in reflecting meanings rather than in creating them. Learners' compositions are demonstrations of knowledge of forms and an awareness of the rules needed to create good texts. Accurate writing characterises good writing. Texts as autonomous objects do not view the text as a writer's response to a context. However, the complexity that Sainsbury (2009) identifies where writing is a response to a situation, including the writer/reader relationship and their common understandings, challenges this view of writing. Text as discourse is communication too but with a social action purpose.

Texts as discourse has the writer attempting to achieve goals and intentions and using the elements of writing to achieve these goals and intentions. The text is a discourse as it points to aspects of a context beyond the page and thus has language limits and choices. The goals, intentions, the audience relationship, and the content information are used in a text form. Text as discourse is part of a wider communicative perspective and is context dependent to achieve a social purpose. Hyland (2015: 8) describes the text theories of what (Schank and Abelson, 1977) called the 'schemata' of shared assumptions of the writer and reader as influential. Significantly, the nature and characteristics of texts as discourse are central to the idea of genre.

Text characteristics are important in genre. The purpose and function of text is central to the idea of genre discourse and writing. Genre discourses are seen by Ivanic (2004: 225) 'as a set of text-types, shaped by social context'. Mo and Troia (2017) describes these set types as organisational patterns based on expectations from reading and writing practice. Kramsch (1997: 51-2) comments on the characteristics of text and emphasises the writer – reader relationship, the assumptions the writer-reader relationship is based on, the cultural nature of the text and the notion of texts relating to or echoing other texts. From this standpoint, text forms are related to the purpose and function of the text. Hyland (2015: 9) stresses that each genre has distinct features; that is, every genre has a specific purpose, an overall structure, specific language features and shares a culture. Wyse and Jones (2001)

describe the work of Halliday and Matthiessen and Martin as genre theorists. The genre theorists' work had an emphasis on 'skills and direct instruction' (Wyse and Jones 2001: 121) about the 'structure and range of various genres that are available' (Wyse and Jones (2001: 125).

Doran (2020: 5) sees genre, while acknowledging its linguistic and educational origins, in Martin's (2009) terms as a recurrent configuration of meanings which for educational purposes is characterised as 'a staged goal-oriented social process' (Martin, 2009: 13). Martin sees genre texts as 'a meaning making resource and a semantic choice in social context' (Martin, 2009: 11). Martin enlarges on this definition by explaining the elements:

> (i) staged: because it usually takes us more than one phase of meaning to work through a genre,
> (ii) goal-oriented: because unfolding phases are designed to accomplish something and we feel a sense of frustration or incompleteness if we are stopped,
> (iii) social: because we undertake genres interactively with others (Martin, 2009: 13).

The educational origins of genre are significant. Michael Halliday developed Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as a theory which viewed language, including genre, as a means of making meaning through grammar and lexis dependent on social context and the individual's language choices. Rose (2016) suggests SFL as a means by which:

> schools can more effectively redistribute the semiotic resources of contemporary culture to democratize the outcomes of education (Rose, 2016: 227).

Echoing Halliday's (1985) comment that 'linguistics cannot be other than an ideologically committed form of social action' (Halliday, 1985: 5), Rose (2016) sees genre as a means to support the teaching of language for pupils who are underachieving. Martin (2009) comments that genre informs about KAL [Knowledge about Language] without a 'costly induction into knowledge about functional grammar and discourse semantics' (Martin, 2009: 12). Doran (2020: 5) also stresses the benefits by describing genre as a 'way in' for teachers that avoided a saturation in grammar. Doran suggests particular forms of genre:

> in its re-contextualized form for teachers ...as a 'text type'...as a 'staged, goal-oriented social process' – was a relatively easy and unobtrusive starting point for teachers to understand and teach the texts that students need to write (Doran, 2020: 9).

Doran (2020) argues that this was necessary as grammar teaching had been marginalised and thus grammar knowledge could not be assumed to be known by the teacher (Rose and Martin, 2012: 1-4).

Genre theory has been influential, according to Clarkson (2019), from the 1980s to early 2000s in writing pedagogy. Hyland (2015: 12) suggests that specific genre texts may borrow features from other genre features. While the focus on writing as a text is significant, writing focusing on the writer is also influential.

The commitment to a form of social action has not been universally accepted. Rosen (2011) in his blog draws attention to the influence of genre writing since 2000. He argues that practice may lead to 'top-down instruction' with an impact on pupil agency. This, he argues, might happen as 'the teacher owns certain kinds of language use' (Rosen, 2011: 4) and becomes a gatekeeper controlling access to forms of writing. Indeed, Rosen comments that:

> students are passive recipients of what the teacher gives them which serves to reinforce the system of power and control and domination over the pupil (Rosen, 2011: 4).

In response, Christie, who was involved at University of Sydney in 1980s, suggested that genre teaching should engage and consult the pupils and if that is not the case:

> …children are [not] necessarily rendered powerless… [and where they are] it is inappropriate pedagogy, and a problem not of genres or genre theory (Christie, 2013: 3).

While Christie (2013) convincingly stresses pupil agency, the TAF's prescription of genre may cause genre to be taught in an inflexible way to meet the assessment criteria.

The focus on the writer considers the activity of composing in order that learners may learn from these approaches. Hyland (2015: 12) suggests that there are three main areas that result from a focus on the writer: the writer's creativity, the cognitive processes of writing and the writer's context. Hyland characterises the first of these as the having a focus on writing as personal expression.

Examples of writing from personal experience is found in the work of composition theorists such as Elbow (1998) and Murray (1985). Hyland (2015) labels such composition theorists as 'Expressivist'. Generalising, Locke (2015) suggests that expressive writing might be called a 'Progressive growth' paradigm and characterised the 1960-80 period in the UK. In expressive writing there is a belief in writer self-discovery and personal development. Moffett (1982) sees writing development and personal development as interdependent such that:

> good therapy and composition aim at clear thinking, effective relating and satisfying self-expression (Moffett, 1982: 235).

Expressive writing inspires self-examination and connects with readers. Expressive writing identifies writer's voice as an important characteristic of writing. Elbow (1981) offers a definition of writer's voice as 'words that capture the sound of the individual on the page' (Elbow, 1981: 287). For expressive writing, grammar does not have the significant status that Kress (1994) gives it:

> the function of grammar is to allow the (writer) to express a range of thoughts (Kress, 1994: 160).

Indeed, notions of correct grammar may limit the act of writing as a creative act of discovery. Elbow (1981) commented:

> For most people, nothing helps their writing so much as learning to ignore grammar (Elbow, 1981: 169).

Expressive writing is not taught as it is self-learnt where the writer makes their own meanings. Writer self-discovery is supported through pre-writing tasks such as journal writing and analogies (Elbow, 1998). The self-discovery in writing is the 'discovery by a responsible person of his uniqueness within his subject' (Rohman, 1965: 117-8). Such self-discovery rules out explicit and clear criteria to appraise the quality of writing or provide guidance to write well. These are not possible because this form of writing does not have writing rules but stresses the writer's personality, imagination and spontaneity. There is the implication in this approach that all writers have creative potential and simply require the right conditions to express it. Hyland (2015) identifies concerns with expressive writing:

> Under-theorized and leans heavily on an asocial view of the writer…in a context where there are no cultural differences in the value of self-expression; no variations in personal inhibition, few distinctions in the writing processes of mature and novice writers, and no social consequences of writing (Hyland, 2015: 13).

To some researchers and teachers, creative writing is characterised by the writer's personality, imagination and spontaneity achieved through the writer's self-discovery and voice. The expressivist approach contrasts to theoretical approaches which focus on form or the writing product. The expressive writing approach has an emic focus on the internal, personal aspects of writing. The interest in the writer's composing staged process is extended beyond creativity and self-expression in the focus on the cognitive aspects of writing.

Cognitive writing processes views writing as a mental, problem-solving activity where the writing task is the problem and the writer uses intellectual resources to resolve it. The cognitive writing process is distinct from the pedagogical staged model of process writing. The pedagogical model involves ideational, planning, drafting, writing and editing stages. The pedagogical model is commented on later in this chapter. The cognitive writing approach does not view the writing as an uninterrupted linear sequence of pre-writing, writing and post writing. As Zamel (1983) describes it, writing is a 'non-linear, exploratory and generative process where writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning' (Zamel, 1983: 165). Emig (1983) described the writing process as 'recursive' rather than uninterrupted. According to Hyland (2015) the cognitive process approach was the dominant approach to teaching writing until recently. The work of Flower and Hayes (1981) was important in viewing writing in the terms of the cognitive writing task and the writer's long-term memory. The features of the Flower and Hayes (1981) framework were important and were related to a number of cognitive sub-processes.

The features of the Flower and Hayes (1981) cognitive framework were important as were the research methods used. The features in the framework included a description of writing goals, planning, reviewing and editing and a recursive writing process. The Flower and Hayes (1981) model enabled writing explanations of both immature and mature writers. The research methods included writing approaches such as think-aloud protocols, verbal reports on the writing process, task observation, retrospective interviews and product analyses of drafts. Such methods enabled insights into automaticity, the roles of long-term and short-term/working memory, and writing bursts. Particularly important, is this research approach into the interrelationship between voice and automaticity. Some research suggests that working memory is a significant factor in the quality of writing. The degree of automaticity relates to the memory space for developing voice and other aspects of writing. The metanalysis by Kent and Wansek (2016: 589) illustrates this relationship through a number of research studies. While the research has made significant contributions to an understanding of the composition, there have been concerns about the insights and the research methods.

There have been reservations about the research used in and based on the Flower and Hayes (1981) framework. The Flower and Hayes's (1981) model used data research based on adult writers and may be skewed due to using an understanding of adult learning. Alamargot and Fayol (2009) comment that the research was based on 'data yielded by

studies of adults' (Alamargot and Fayol, 2009: 26). The concerns centre around the different learning practices of children and adults. The use of the think-aloud protocols while giving a record of the articulation of the writing task, may offer only a partial view of the cognitive processes because the participant has to articulate what s/he is thinking while some cognitive processes are unconscious and not available to verbalisation. Afflerbach and Johnson (1984) have described such overloading of the short-term memory 'a crowding of the cognitive workbench' (Afflerbach and Johnson,1984; 311). Flower (1990) acknowledged some of the model's limitations. However, there are reservations about the Flower and Hayes (1981) model as a fully worked out framework or as a full explanation of writing behaviour.

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) identified concerns and proposed two models to account for the significant differences between 'novice' and 'expert' writers. They argued that the practices of these two groups of writers differed significantly as a result of the complexity of the writing task and their lack of topic knowledge. According to Hyland (2015), subsequent research seems to have supported some of these insights. The key concepts of this approach were content knowledge, discourse knowledge and the nature of the recursive planning and editing.

The novice writer's cognitive process is characterised by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) as 'knowledge telling'. The novice writers plan and revise less often and less thoroughly than expert writers. Their composition focus is with generating content from their internal resources in remembering about the content knowledge or discourse knowledge. Here the discourse knowledge is the structure and features of different text types. Research by Olinghouse, Graham and Gillespie (2015) provided empirical support for this aspect of 'knowledge telling' as they concluded that discourse and content knowledge were significant, independent predictors of writing quality. The 'knowledge telling' model is described as a 'natural [and]... efficient' task of writing in that it flows from the ability to talk and demands relatively little cognitive effort (Riley and Reedy, 2001). Composition is initiated when key words or themes are noted and are then compared to a prior text version in the writer's mind – retrieval of existing writing forms. Consequently, the 'knowledge telling' model requires content and discourse knowledge, and these may be restricted by limited automaticity in transcription.

A 'knowledge-transforming' model also requires content and discourse knowledge and uses retrieval from memory as the skilled or 'expert' writer resolves the writing tasks. The

writing task is presented as problematic and requiring significant cognitive effort. Such skilled writers are able to reflect on the complexities of the task and resolve problems of content, form, audience, style, organization, and so on within a content space and a rhetorical space. Consequently, there is continuous interaction between developing knowledge and text. Composition in this transformative model involves discourse and content knowledge as the material is crafted and revised.

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) describe this transformative cognitive process:

> Thoughts come into existence through the composing process itself, beginning as inchoate entities ('driblets') and gradually, by dint of much rethinking and restating, taking the form of fully developed thoughts (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987: 10).

'Knowledge transforming' composition, according to Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), shows that a consciousness of creation and revision 'allows a measure of deliberate control' (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987: xiii) in writing. The transformative process of the knowledge is dependent on effective and high-quality planning as the research by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) using 'think-aloud' protocols and other researchers (McCutchen, 2006) illustrated. 'Knowledge transforming' thus involves actively reworking thoughts so that not only text, but also ideas, may be changed. McCutchen's (2006) research insight is that a skilled young writer plans with a focus on the presentation of their ideas in the light of the demands of the discourse and audience. Kaya and Ates (2016) researched the influence of metacognitive thought and reflection about narrative writing tasks and suggest that young writers made more progress in writing using such techniques – and it positively changed the young writers' attitudes to writing. The two models reflect an attempt to break down an enigmatic mental process into constituent parts and their inter-relationships based on self-report and an evaluation of outputs. Reasonably, something is bound to be lost or undervalued in such a process. There are some reservations about the use of these two models.

Kress (1994) considered that the adult expert writing cognitive process may be different rather than impoverished. Some empirical research, including that by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987: 13), suggests that young writers think less than adults while writing. Typically, young writers start writing after being set a task. The young writers' 'think-aloud' protocols are shorter than adults', and young writers' preparatory notes show less development than adults'. Another limitation concerns the writing environment. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) do not consider the multitude of factors that might affect the shift

from ‘knowledge telling’ to ‘knowledge transforming’ such as school environment, teacher attitudes, pedagogy, writer agency and assessment. A further approach which still has a focus on the writer, writing as a situated act gives a greater emphasis to writing as a social activity within specific situations. The writing is infused with the writer’s attitudes and social experiences within the context of the political and institutional aspects of the environment.

The expressive writing and cognitive perspectives enable a greater understanding of writing when compared to the finished writing product. These expressive writing and cognitive perspectives may overemphasize psychological factors at the expense of the social and environmental forces outside the individual that also guide, frame and shape writing. The writer in these approaches is seen as a solitary individual engaged in a struggle to discover and communicate personal meaning and fails to recognize writing is a social activity. Writing, however, may be thought of as a situated act which considers the social environment in which the writing takes place.

In contrast to the cognitivist view discussed in the previous section, writing as a situated act gives greater emphasis to the actual performance of writing in a context. Writing is seen as a social act that can only occur within a specific situation. It is influenced both by the personal attitudes and social experiences that the writer brings to writing and the impact of political and institutional contexts in which it takes place. The research methods used in this approach are detailed observations of acts of writing, participant interviews, analyses of surrounding practices and other techniques. These methods suggest a fuller account of the local writing context, exterior to the writer’s mind, and consider physical and experiential contexts. Flower (1989) describes this as ‘context cues cognition’ (Flower, 1989: 282). Flower considered the relevance of prior knowledge, assumptions, expectations, and the writing environment as triggers for knowledge and the writing task. Ethnographic methods have been used to consider the impact of some of these factors. Hyland (2015) has described the results as ‘rich, detailed descriptions of particular contexts of writing’ (Hyland, 2015: 21). Such accounts do not describe everything in the writer’s consciousness or the context which might influence composition. Highland (2015) comments that the focus on writers does not offer a developed account of the way experience is constituted and interpreted in social communities and neither does it give a full description of the writing environment. Hyland (2015) suggests that the concern with the social environment has resulted in research which highlights the social environment.

The third perspective sees writing not as simply text or the cognitive resolution of a writing task but rather as writing reflecting an audience, or community membership and identity. This perspective stresses the context beyond the composing situation and the purpose that the writing might fulfil. The writer selects words and formats that make the most sense to their readers. Halliday and Mathieson (2013) suggest that encoded into every language choice is this 'interpersonal function'. As a writer the concerns we make about writing structure, the language and grammar choices are intended to be seem familiar to our reader and simultaneously acknowledge the readers' processing text needs including background understandings and their perspectives about the written content. Writing from this perspective is interactive between the writer and the reader. Writing is social and composition is seen as heavily influenced by the reader/audience.

The perspective of writing as social and influenced by the reader/audience contrasts with the cognitive perspective where the writer is seen as a solitary individual engaged in a struggle to discover and communicate personal meaning while failing to recognize the social activity of writing. Such a perspective echoes Bakhtin's (1986) view that language and writing are dialogic as a conversation between writer and reader in an ongoing activity. Nystrand (1989) describes composition as an exercise in satisfying the reader's rhetorical demands which sees the writing as part of a discourse world:

> The process of writing is a matter of elaborating text in accord with what the writer can reasonably assume the reader knows and expects, and the process of reading is a matter of predicting text in accord with the reader assumes about the writer's purpose. More fundamentally, each presupposes the sense making capabilities of the other. As a result, written communication is predicated on what the writer/reader each assumes the other will do/has done (Nystrand, 1989: 75).

In such a social interactive model, meaning is created by what the writer and the reader bring to the text. The text or discourse is framed and shaped by the writer balancing their purpose with the expectations of the reader. Meaning is co-constructed between the writer's and the reader's understanding of the other. Nevertheless, audience may be a difficult concept for writers. A writer who understands of the audience's needs and interests has important knowledge about the appropriate genre, content, stance and style to use. However, the ability to analyse an audience becomes more problematic as the audience becomes larger and less familiar to the writer. Thus, not all readers will recover every intended meaning. However, the expectation is that the writer exploits the reader's ability to recognise previous relevant composition to locate the current text. This is intertextuality which originates in Bakhtin's (1986) view that text is a conversation between writer and reader where the two meet to create meaning. Developing the

perspective that there is a conversation, is the notion of community of membership of the writer and reader.

The community membership of the writer and reader leads to notions of the socially constructed reality that written language is shared in. Writing in such a way does represent self-expression but also relates to the community genres the writer belongs to uses. One such concept in these genres is the discourse community where the writing not only communicates with the world at large but with members of the social groups that they are part of. Bazerman (1994: 128) comments that the idea of a discourse community is often imprecise but is valuable in stressing like-mindedness. The social context, the community membership and the associated discourses introduce the issues of the exercise of power and the ideologies that maintain these relations.

The social context of writing and the relations of power within has been researched through Critical Discourse Analysis of texts. In this approach language is linked to the activities surrounding it such as the social relations, identity and knowledge. The discourses are not simply texts but are constructing the social and political environment. This view uses the analyst's investigation of the way the text language is used to reflect the interests, values and power relations in a sociocultural context of the dominant group(s). The approach is intended to be emancipatory. A central concept in this approach is that of ideology which looks at how individuals experience the world and how these experiences are reproduced in their writings. The perspective identifies aspects of writing which have privilege and the extent to which the writing is shaped by the valued ways of writing. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) describe the character of Critical Discourse Analysis in these terms:

> What is distinctive about Critical Discourse Analysis is both that it intervenes on the side of the dominated and oppressed groups and against dominating groups, and that it openly declares the emancipatory interests that motivate it (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 259).

Hyland (2015:30) raises a concern that there is often a privileging of the analyst's viewpoint and Hyland (2015) feels that the plausibility of any text not only depends on our willingness to accept it but also on the views of the text producers and readers. Clearly, critical discourse analysis offers a social analysis and an insight into to reader/audience. Whichever focus is used, whether text, writer or reader, the nature of writing is complex.

The complexity of writing has been illustrated through reviewing these different research lens. The focus on writing through the three areas of the text, the writer and the reader,

have attempted to illustrate that writing is neither just the words on the page nor an activity of a solitary individual. Contemporary conceptions are complex and view writing as both an individual and social practice reflecting the social, cultural environment that it is used in as well as the uses that are made with it. The forms of writing include digital and multimodal forms. Writing in this sense is 'socially constructed, grounded in genuine purpose and social communication' (Hyland, 2015: 30). Thus, the writer's intellectual and cognitive processes respond to the social context to enable the 'context [to] cue cognition' (Flower, 1989). Writing includes assuming roles, identities and relationships with the reader, and community audience. As Bakhtin (1981) suggests, writing is dialogic, a conversation between the writer and reader. Every act of composition is both individual and personal while being social and using culturally recognised purposes which acknowledges a community relationship. Finally, writing is in Kress's (1994) terms, socio-semiotic meaning making process, promoting the understanding of grammar through examples that have been used to craft meaning.

These complex, competing and intertwining approaches to writing have led to frameworks for understanding writing that have influenced English maintained primary classroom practice. For example, Chamberlain (2011) suggests three appropriate concepts of writing for maintained primary education: skills-based, the genre discourse and the process discourse. Another more complex example is Ivanic (2004). Ivanic (2004) describes six different discourses of writing that may reflect pedagogy where:

> connections are drawn across views of language, views of writing, views of learning to write, approaches to the teaching of writing, and approaches to the assessment of writing (Ivanic, 2004: 220)

which relate to the teaching and assessment of writing. Ivanic (2004) describes her understanding of discourse as:

> constellations of beliefs about writing, beliefs about learning to write, ways of talking about writing, and the sorts of approaches to teaching and assessment which are likely to be associated with these beliefs (Ivanic, 2004: 224)

Ivanic (2004) states that a discourse identifies the participant as belonging to the group who speak, write and act within the same discourse. However, she stresses that the discourses are not always homogeneous, but can be hybrid, intermingled or draw on two or more other discourses. Six framework categories are not intended to be exclusive or that one more important. Indeed, as Myhill and Clarkson, (2021: 162) explain, Ivanic offers a multi-layered view of language with her typology suggesting 'the possibility of a comprehensive pedagogy'. Nonetheless, Ivanic (2004) produced a writing framework of six discourses. (Appendix Two)

Each of these six discourses has a writing aspect and an associated writing assessment discourse. The first discourse, the skills discourse, is focussed on the writer developing the skills of composition, such as sentence construction, spelling, punctuation and grammar, across different writing tasks and so is focussed on the written text. The corresponding writing assessment discourse, the skills mastery discourse, places an emphasis on the author's skill in writing, particularly at the word, sentence and text level, with the same rules applied independent of text type. The creativity discourse and the process discourse are both linked to the writer as an individual and a writer's cognitive development. The creativity discourse has a focus on the quality of the content and style of a piece of writing. The meaning of the writing is celebrated over linguistic accuracy and presentation of the transcription. The discourse is recognised by expressions such as 'creative writing', 'the writer's voice', 'story', 'interesting content' and ', self-identification'. Ivanic and Camps (2001) suggests that identity is created inevitably in the act of writing:

> the lexical, syntactic, organisational and even the material aspects of writing construct identity just as much as do the phonetic and prosodic aspects of speech and thus writing always conveys a representation of the self of the writer. In this sense 'voice' is not an optional extra: all writing contains 'voice' (Ivanic and Camps, 2001: 3).

The creativity discourse is linked to reading and, therefore, class reading is used for writing purposes. The writing assessment discourse identifies and rewards self-expression, description and exciting vocabulary choices, interesting content and style. Ivanic's process discourse refers to a belief that writing consists of composing processes in the writer's mind and their realisation in writing - a staged model. The process discourse concentrates on the progress made through the different writing processes of planning, drafting editing, revision and, therefore, concentrates on a writer's thinking and decision-making. The process discourse has no associated assessment discourse. Ivanic sees no value in assessing processes divorced from an end product. The genre discourse describes writing as a set of text-types shaped by social context with a focus on purpose and audience. The writing assessment discourse acknowledges appropriateness of text type to purpose, register, formality and audience interests. Social practices discourse conceives writing as being purpose driven communication within a social context. The writing assessment discourse acknowledges appropriateness of text to purpose. The social and political discourse is the belief that writing is a socially constructed practice and has consequences for identity and is open to contestation and change. The writing assessment discourse acknowledges social responsibility and critical literacy of the social power of the writer and audience. Each of these discourses and the hybrid mixtures make the exercise of

assessing KS2 writing far from easy. However, Ivanic (2004) suggests in the framework that both the theoretical understandings and the associated pedagogies might be integrated into the teacher's personal understanding of the nature of writing and the pedagogic practices associated with that understanding:

> the multi-layered view of language could also be a basis for imagining a holistic, comprehensive writing pedagogy...[with] written text, writing processes, the writing event, and the socio-political context of writing ...progressively embedded within one another, and intrinsically interrelated. .... six beliefs about [writing].... make a contribution to a comprehensive view of writing, that anyone without the others may be an impoverished view of writing, and that the same is true of the beliefs about learning to write (Ivanic, 2004: 241).

The situation regarding school writing is especially complex considering the number of parties involved. Ivanic (2004) describes the parties to include that policy makers, ministers of education, teachers and other stakeholders will draw upon different aspects of these theories or combine aspects of these theories to create new discourses. In the light of this complexity, the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) might be viewed as a complex mix of elements and discourses.

Ivanic's (2004) typology, supported by the insights in Myhill and Clarkson (2021), offers teachers a comprehensive understanding of the nature of writing to enable the balance to resolve the 'dilemma' (Bearne, 2017) that teacher face in teaching writing in maintained primary schools. A teacher's comprehensive understanding of writing is in part, in my view, what Clements and Tobin (2021) are referring to the:

> different interlinked viewpoints …[including] the nature of the school's model for teaching writing, any school wide systems and…national or local curriculums or statutory assessments (Clements and Tobin, 2021: 204).

The statutory National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) prescribes, in this sense, a particular understanding of writing.

2.3 NC (DfE, 2013) writing

The National Curriculum is a government statutory curriculum for all maintained primary and secondary schools. Historically, the emphasis in National Curriculum versions has been on addressing achievement in writing. The NC (DfE, 2013) is a generic term that refers to the material to be covered in a Programme of Study, the assessment criteria and strategies used to assess primary English. The assessment criteria in 2013 were NC Level Descriptions while the assessment strategies were KS2 English tests. This section

considers the changes made to these policy and assessment arrangements in general terms and then more specifically to the construct of writing in the NC (DfE,2013)

The 2010 change of government, according to Helks (2019: 21), brought in changes relating to the explicit teaching of skills with spelling, punctuation, grammar, handwriting and accurate writing increasingly emphasised in policy documents. There were further changes in 2011 and 2015. In June 2011, Lord Bew reviewed the Key Stage 2 tests. The Bew Report, an 'Independent Review of Key Stage 2 testing, assessment and accountability' (2011), suggested a division of primary English into transcription and composition. It suggested composition should only be teacher assessed, with the more technical aspects of English - such as grammar, punctuation and spelling - assessed via an externally marked test. It proposed 'spelling, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary' as elements of writing 'where there are clear 'right' and 'wrong' answers, which lend themselves to externally-marked testing' (Bew, 2011: 60). Bew's recommendations were accepted. In 2015 the 'Commission Assessment without levels' published recommendations to remove Level Descriptions in English. This Commission recommended that schools should be given the opportunity to develop their own approaches to assessment 'tailored to the curriculum followed by the school' (Commission, 2015: 14). Schools were to design their own assessments and create 'systems to support more informative and productive conversations with pupils and parents' (McIntosh, 2015: 14). These changes significantly impacted on the primary teachers in Year Six: reconfiguring their understanding of writing from the previous National Curriculum and changing the writing assessment criteria. These created an increase in workload and changed the nature of teacher apprehension about assessment. A further complex change was the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) which was implemented in 2016.

The National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) was introduced after a period of dissent and conflict. Indeed, changes to the writing assessment English were in part a response to the boycott of the assessments in May 2010, when approximately 4000 schools refused to administer the tests (Harrison, 2010; Paton, 2010). The boycott was a reaction to the use of the KS2 tests as an accountability measure and the publication of results in Performance Tables. One significant concern was the issue of the unreliability of the marking of the writing tasks (DfE, 2011, June). This period of dissent came against a background of concerns about writing attainment. Historically, governments have identified lower

achievement in writing especially the underperformance compared to reading (Parr, 2011). In England, in 2012, the DfE stated:

> Writing is the subject with the worst performance compared with reading, maths and science at Key Stages 1 and 2 (DfE, 2012: 3).

These views were shared by Ofsted (DfE, 2012:3). Since then, attainment in writing, appears to have risen. From 2015-9, writing performance using assessment data appeared to be better than reading performance. The Office National Statistics 2023 statistics show that post 2021 teacher assessed writing attainment remains below Reading test performance. The National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) and assessments were partially implemented to raise standards; correspondingly, the government increased the difficulty of the assessments by making them 'more demanding' (DfE, June 2012).

The new National Curriculum was published in July, 2013. In the NC (DfE, 2013) writing is divided into transcription, composition, and vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. I am following Smith's (1982) distinction between transcription and composition. The differences between transcription and composition are summarised in Smith (1982:20) below. On one hand, composition is associated with 'authorship'. Transcription, on the other hand, concerns, what were termed, 'secretarial qualities'. Transcription is significant as developing automaticity is a core requisite for the development of the writer (Collins, 2013; Kelly, 2013; McCutchen, 2006; Smith, 1982; Wyse and Jones, 2001).

Figure 2: Composition and transcription.[1]

Composition (author)	Transcription (secretary)
Getting ideas Selecting words Grammar	Physical effort of writing Spelling Capitalisation Punctuation Paragraphs Legibility

For Dowdall (2017) this NC (DfE, 2013) division is seen as 'exemplifying through its very structure the predominance of a skills based, rather than ideation or interpersonal perspective on the writing process' (Dowdall, 2017: 166). There are suggestions that the language about writing practice the language of rules. Indeed, Myhill and Clarkson (2020) describe the NC (DfE,2013) as essentially a prescriptive view of writing:

[1] Figure from Smith, 1982:20.[1]

> [it has a] prescriptivist views of language… [giving] primacy to rule-based learning decontextualized from communication, personal engagement and imagination (Myhill and Clarkson, 2020: 162).

The language used in the Programme of Study to describe writing is of effectiveness, control of sentence structure and the correct use of tense and agreement (DfE,2013: 1-14). The PoS (2013) requires that pupils:

> write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences (NC, 2013: 1-4).

Writing is effective when it demonstrates:

> … effective transcription ... effective composition [which] involves articulating and communicating ideas and then organising them coherently for a reader' (NC, 2013: 1-4).

Finally, writing is expected to use Standard English and correctly use tenses and agreement. Dowdall (2017) describes the statutory requirements for KS2 writing as a focus on effectiveness, control and correctness. She summarises the DfE's requirements (2013: 36-38) as:

> ...rule and terminology learning, using models for composing; selecting appropriate grammar and vocabulary; assessing the effectiveness of writing; ensuring consistency and correctness; and making appropriate choices (Dowdall, 2017: 166).

In the NC (DfE, 2013) the directive-led character of the PoS sees writing as linear activity and suggests a sequential process model of writing stages. This is almost suggesting a writing rule. Clements and Tobin (2021) describe the composition process using the NC guidance as:

> a process approach to writing with the following steps:
> - planning
> - drafting and writing
> - evaluating and editing
> - proof reading
> - reading aloud and sharing (Clements and Tobin, 2021: 200).

However, research, especially cognitive based research, suggests that the writing process is recursive. Clarkson (2019) also observes that there is a strong focus in the PoS (2013) on writing composition as linear; she notes that:

> the writing process and composition is portrayed as linear, rather than iterative and laid out in the PoS as a series of steps. This does not support the recursive view of writing proposed by Hayes and Flower (1980) in their cognitive models (Clarkson, 2019: 177).

The description of the writing composition through directive-based statements of sequential stages suggests a product approach to writing. The character of such a writing gives less weight to personal qualities in writing such as creativity, identity and voice.

The conceptualisation of writing in the NC, in contrast to the previous version of the national curriculum, has only one reference to voice and creativity. Creativity is only referred to as teachers' creativity. The references to voice are in the working *at greater depth* examples in the non-statutory Exemplification Materials. (STA, 2017). Clarkson (2019) draws to attention to the limited reference to voice and the lack of references to creativity in the Programme of Study and the Teacher Assessment framework:

> There are no references to creativity within the curriculum, either explicitly or implicitly…. voice is not mentioned in the assessment framework or the Programme of Study (Clarkson, 2019: 190).

Clarkson (2019) continued that 'the lack of references to creativity, multimodality, and writer's voice sets up a particular view of writing' (Clarkson, 2019: 187 and 234). The 'particular view' of writing is a rather narrow, skilled based view of writing. Contemporary writing forms are not acknowledged. The 'particular view' of writing contrasts to the emphasis in understandings that see writing as a 'function of the readers' and writers' relationships and expectations rather than a static quality of the text' (Christensen, 2009: 271). In addition, the statutory views of writing are slightly different in the different statutory and non-statutory documents.

Different aspects of writing are emphasized in the both the statutory and non-statutory NC (DfE,2013) documents. Clarkson (2019) in her research suggests that there are different content emphases in the PoS (2013), and in the TAF (2018). Admittedly, the purposes of the document are different: the PoS (2013) describes content whereas the framework identifies assessment criteria. Nevertheless, Clarkson (2019) suggests the documents should be complementary, but there is low alignment between them. The difference of emphasis is in the language used and the extent of the elements assessed. In the non-statutory document voice is mentioned while not mentioned in the other documents.

The descriptive language of writing used in the PoS (DfE, 2013: 37 and 31) talks of effectiveness of writing, control of sentence structure and the correct use of tense and agreement (DfE,2013). Dowdall (2017) describes the statutory requirements for KS2 writing as a focus on:

> the rule and terminology learning, using models for composing; selecting appropriate grammar and vocabulary; assessing the effectiveness of writing;

> ensuring consistency and correctness; and making appropriate choices (DfE,2013:36-38) (Dowdall, 2017: 166).

Dowdall's (2017) suggestion about the stress on the 'rules' and the measurement of 'consistency and correctness' might be related to Bearne's (2017) insight that these discourses in the NC construct are 'things more conveniently measured' (Bearne, 2017: 74). Less easily measured elements are not given the same focus. Indeed, as Murray (1982: 73) and Rosen (2015: 102) argue, given that writing is a form of communication of ideas, thoughts and feelings, and perhaps the writer's expression of their identity, emotional connection and voice are as important aspects of communicating effectively. The aptness of the measurement comment may be seen in the features in the PoS (2013).

Using Clarkson's (2019) research where the frequency of reference in the text is taken as a measurement of importance, the most important, highest referenced elements in the PoS (2013) are spelling, grammar and genre forms. Narrative is the most mentioned genre. Following these in frequency is 'Evaluation of written work'. These are the skills, process and genre discourses. Spelling is focused on the application of the rules and guidance of spelling as well as spelling of words separated from their pronunciation. The grammar focus is on an understanding of grammar especially the concepts in NC PoS Appendix 2 and the metalanguage of grammar. Helks (2019) comments that the language used to describe grammar elements suggests a traditional view of grammar and language:

> Phrases such as 'should learn' and 'should be understood' and 'the meanings set out' suggested a much more traditional rule-based approach (Helks, 2019: 22).

Handwriting is mentioned and should be fluent, legible, cursive and speedy. In the TAF (2018), the highest frequency of references is to genre texts, followed by grammar elements and then spelling. Genre is a common element in the PoS (2013) and the framework.

'Evaluation of written work' is in terms of the process discourse of writing where it understood in terms of the correctness of a finished text product rather than any evaluation for impactful vocabulary or creativity. The qualities of writing are described as a concept associated with the following adverbs to describe writing: 'fluently', 'accurately', 'clearly' and writing should be 'fluent and effortless'. Such categorization as these supports the perspective of writing in terms of the correctness of a finished text. It is in this sense that Clarkson's (2019) conceptualisation of writing in the NC (DfE, 2013) is of 'a neutral act' (Clarkson, 2019: 198). Thomas (2022) suggests that the NC (2013) and the Ofsted

'Research review for English' (2022) have 'a linear progression through foundational skills repertoire leading to independent writing'. That is, that the focus on Spelling, Grammar and Handwriting are the foundational, lower order skills that have to be mastered before the:

> higher-level skills of writing such as organising, revising, etc., have to be later than and dependent on the acquisition of skills in the phoneme-grapheme correspondence (Thomas, 2022: 66).

These aspects are about the writer's skill after having internalised the appropriate grammar and spelling rules. The limited reference to the writer is about writer stamina and writer attitude rather than the writer being creative, independent or expressing individuality. Likewise, there is little about the social or political context of writing perhaps because the intention in the PoS (2013) is to portray writing as 'a neutral act' or perhaps that associations with class or political context are not either important, relevant or appropriate for children of this age.

Arguably, the curriculum represented in the PoS (2013) does not present a complex view of writing for a number of reasons. First, the PoS (2013) represents writing through skills, process and genre discourses while paying scant attention to wider social and political understandings of writing. This implies that there is little attention to the writer and writing for meaning. Essentially this puts forward a unilinear sequence of composition through research notes, planning, revisions, evaluation or reflection. There may be an expectation that the writer can explain planning and evaluation choices. Second, the process discourse model of stages which lead on to the next developmental stage seems to contrast with cognitive research which suggests that such stages are recursive in nature. Where the PoS (2013) does discuss process, it frames it as a skill – the skill of planning. Consequently, for the PoS (2013) the focus is on technical skills over other more individual developmental aspects of writing. It is a more 'traditional' understanding in terms of the ability to create fluently written and accurate texts - with the emphasis on the conventions, 'rules' of spelling, grammar, punctuation and structural conventions. This is one of the arguments in the 20 March 2013, letter to the 'The Independent' by 100 academics who expressed concerns about the 'endless lists of spellings, facts and rules' in the PoS,2013. Third, the PoS (2013) gives a great deal of attention to grammar, and there are some limited teaching practice suggestions. Research on traditional grammar instruction has not found many positive effects on children's writing. In contrast, the focus on automaticity in spelling and handwriting does appear to have a positive effect on children's writing (Graham and Harris (2000), Adoniou (2014)). Fourth, writing for the

writer is limited in its coverage and understanding. While technical skills in writing are acknowledged, what these might mean for the writer are rarely acknowledged. Many writing features and skills are identified to be mastered, but the information about their use to create meaning is largely ignored. Clarkson (2019) refers to:

> an invisibility of the writer … the focus is on the writing, rather than being a learner of writing (Clarkson, 2019: 1999).

Christensen (2009) details this point:

> a piece of writing ought to matter to ...students...who willingly invest time and emotional energy in their writing...inscribing meaning and their emerging identities as well (Christensen, 2009: 271).

The Secretary of State for Education wrote a 'strongly worded article' (Roberts, 2021: 12 House of Commons Briefing) in reply to criticism of the NC (DfE,2013) saying,

> I refuse to surrender to Marxist teachers hell-bent on destroying our schools (Daily Mail, 23 March 2013).

The impact of the PoS (2013) on Year Six teachers is significant.

This research considers the impact of the NC PoS (2013) on Year Six teachers while acknowledging the differences and the significance of the differences between the PoS (2013) and the TAF (2018). First, Year Six teachers are better equipped for their classroom practice if they have the teacher knowledge about constructs of writing, the construct of writing in the PoS (2013) and the development of writing implicit in the PoS (2013). The standards used in teaching must be explicit and understandable to those using them and, as Troia et al. (2016) comment, 'must reflect theory and research about learning and pedagogy' (Troia et al., 2016: 128). In this area, a good knowledge of genre, text types and different purposes of writing would be a real asset. However, the PoS (2013) references a limited range of text types with a stress on narrative genres. Second, Year Six teachers would need to have knowledge of the metalanguage contained in the glossary to explore the PoS (2013) in relation to skills and process discourses. Marshall (2017: 36) comments on the challenges primary teachers face concerning the accuracy and conventions of terminology in NC (DfE, 2013). Clarkson's (2019: 200) comments on a reference "choosing nouns or pronouns appropriately for clarity and cohesion" (DfE, 2013:30) where the teacher is required to have technical language knowledge in addition to an understanding of how these terms might add to clarity and cohesion. This research into Year Six teachers' perceptions might suggest a need for a curriculum with a wider, comprehensive understanding of writing development which includes elements of creativity and writer's voice.

Grammar in the NC is addressed both in the teacher assessment and in the grammar test paper. While there is some difference in the grammar approaches in the composition requirements of the teacher assessment and the test paper, both require the identification of and use of grammar features. However, Clarkson, (2019:41) stresses that the NC writing construct had an emphasis on the technical, declarative aspects of grammar. Clarkson (2019: 218) also suggests teachers may find the lack of clarity between knowledge of grammar and its use potentially confusing as there is little to no explanation within the PoS (2013) about the embedding of grammar within writing, or about grammar as a way of creating meaning. There are phrases such as "selecting appropriate grammar and vocabulary, understanding how such choices can change and enhance meaning" (DfE, 2013: 37), which may seem vague in a prescriptive document and suggest an implicit reader knowledge in interpreting what this might mean in practice. Evans and Green (2006) caution about understanding grammar using a 'dictionary view of grammar' (Evans, et al., 2006: 160). Cushing (2019: 430) comments on some grammar content in the NC (DfE, 2013) being inappropriate, including archaic moods, while still stressing the correct use of Standard English. Cushing (2019) argues that the NC requirements embody:

> a prescriptive ideology and societal stigma, with the use of evaluative adjectives such as 'correct' and 'incorrect' serving to promote Standard English and 'right ways of speaking' at the expense of non-standardised forms (Cushing, 2019: 429).

Safford (2016) in her research commented that there was a tendency 'to reconstruct Standard English as 'correct', 'proper' and 'right', with non-standard forms labelled with the opposite adjectives'. Such criticisms were widened by others who suggested that the grammar approaches were contrary to existing research evidence. Statements from national professional bodies levelled criticisms of artificial language and lack of context. For example, the United Kingdom Literacy Association (UKLA 2013) expressed concerns about high stakes testing, and the impact of tests on narrowing the curriculum. Linguist, David Crystal (2013: May 05), expressed his alarm in his blog, stating that:

> My basic view is that it, and the view of language lying behind it, turns the clock back half a century...This is how grammar was taught before the 1960s (Blog, On a testing time, para 1 and 2. https://david-crystal.blogspot.com/2013/05/on-testing-time.html).

Indeed, the 'secretarial' nature of the tests of spelling, grammar, punctuation and vocabulary are eminently suited to excessive test preparation as Bearne's (2017: 74) suggests with the comment on 'what was measurable'.

The NC (DfE, 2013) exists as several documents, and they reflect different aspects of school writing. The statutory documents prescribed for teaching in maintained schools in England are the PoS (2013), the STA's TAF (2018) and the GPS tests. The character of the NC statutory construct, according to the literature, is of interrelated discourses of skills, genre and process. The non-statutory document is the Exemplification Materials (2017). According to Clarkson's (2019), these documents have low alignment with each other.

2.4 Classroom practice

The research on the classroom practice in maintained primary schools reflects the practices of a school culture, the individual teachers' beliefs and experience as well as the policy environments that relate to primary schools. In this context the policy decisions about the curriculum form the backdrop. Bell, a former HM Chief Inspector, referred to the English primary curriculum as 'the two-tier curriculum' composed of the 'basics' (English, Maths and Science) and the rest (Alexander, 2012: 149). Alexander (2012) also notes that the Cambridge Primary Review evidence showed 'a hierarchy of teaching quality as well as allocated time' (Alexander, 2012: 149). It is within this context that Clements and Tobin (2021) make their point that an individual teacher's decision about teaching school writing as depends on their views and values, the school culture and the statutory requirements. From such a standpoint the changing nature of the maintained primary school is relevant. Classroom practice may be seen, then, an intermingling of policy, research insights, the culture of the school and individual teacher's practice. The individual teacher makes decisions about planning the class experience to accommodate these elements. The research literature will be considered in relation to the nature of primary schools, the writing research on research-based practice, and writing research on writing practice in the classroom. The classroom practice of teaching compositional writing and grammar is reviewed.

According to research, the primary classroom experience has changed over the decades. The research surveys (2010) as part of the Alexander's Cambridge Primary Review (2006) suggested that the nature of maintained primary school had changed. Shuayb and O'Donnell (2010) comment that while the child centred philosophy of 'at the heart of educational progress lies the child' (Plowden, CACE, 1967: 7) was not challenged by subsequent primary policy, increasingly there were additional emphases on the economic needs for standards of literacy and numeracy. Consequently, Shuayb and O'Donnell (2010) argue that there is a significant change:

> A hybrid view of primary education seems to be emerging. This almost contradictory hybrid of child-centre and economically - and socially- motivated philosophies of education seems to…combine the requirement to prepare children for their economic role in society with the need to identify their individual strengths and weaknesses, to provide them with the necessary support to achieve targets (Shuayb and O'Donnell, 2010: 333).

These changing emphases in primary policy introduced the notion of measurement against expectations of targeted performance. Shuayb and O'Donnell's (2010) identification of 'almost contradictory' nature of education identifies a tension that primary teachers might feel as they nurture their pupils' writing development.

Leggette et al. (2016: 2) suggest that the teaching of writing has seen different models and emphases the teaching of writing. Pre-1970 focused on 'improving student errors', post 1970s had an emphasis on writing as 'an activity of the mind' and finally on 'the situated social context'. Leggette et al. (2016) suggest that

> writing research has become more holistic and, focusing more on the situation as a whole and not on the writer and text (Leggette et al., 2016: 2)'.

For over thirty years, the teaching of writing has focussed on models of classroom writing: the workshop approach (Graves, 1983); the skills-based approach (Berninger and Swanson, 1994); genre theory (Synder, 2008) and, more recently, a return to a skills-based approach within a prescriptive curriculum has metamorphosed into the same skills-based approach within a less prescriptive but more accountable framework. Of late, it has been acknowledged that the act of writing is complex, and that teachers need a pedagogy for writing, underpinned by excellent subject knowledge, to support and develop young writers (Cremin and Myhill, 2012). While such research literature on the pedagogy of writing has identified a number of areas of concerns, a number of educational researchers agree with Stafford's (2010:28) conclusion that 'there is no single approach to teaching writing'. Nevertheless, there are helpful insights.

Meta-analyses of research into effective writing evaluates among other things writing strategies. Clements (2023) refers to meta-analyses of research-based practices on effective writing. Graham et al. (2024) carried out a thorough meta-analysis of 148 control comparisons, based on Graham et al. (2023), and found six elements that positively impacted on secondary student attainment. Four writing treatments had medium to large Effect Sizes (ES): process writing, writing instruction, transcription instruction, and peer support. Graham et al. (2024) points out the need for a wholistic teaching strategy based

on including a range of writing strategies, skills and knowledge. Significantly, the Self-Regulated Student Development (SRSD) model incorporated a range of strategies to complement process writing. The SRSD includes self-regulation of the writer, the writing behaviours and writing processes. The ES for SRSD was 0.84. Graham et al. (2024) make several practical points arising from their meta-analysis. First, a comprehensive model of writing instruction does improve student attainment, and the model requires the planning, drafting, writing and editing strategies of process writing. The model incorporates constructing a variety of sentence structures and applying language choices showing a thoughtful awareness of grammar. Second, writing in a social environment with peer shared writing is beneficial. Third, feedback both from teachers and peers is significant. The meta-analysis's positive emphasis on process writing is also found in other meta-analyses (Gadd and Parr, 2017, Slavin, 2019).

These analyses include experience in the UK, US, New Zealand and Australia and offers comments on either common or effective writing practices in these contexts. Earlier meta-analyses by Graham et al. (2015) looked at 20 studies to suggest 13 'research writing practices' to improve the quality of primary pupils' writing. Gadd and Parr (2017) had a sample of 13 teachers and suggested eight aspects of effective writing practice. Slavin et al. (2019) examined 14 studies which offered 'good writing outcomes' in terms of effect size. Significantly these meta-analyses are focused on effective writing rather than product-based learning or teaching to the test; this might be a significant distinction in the research. However, one of the common elements in all three of these research analyses was the positive impact of the process approach to teaching writing.

The process approach to teaching writing was a move from the 'traditional, product-orientated approach' (Clements, 2023: 9) to a staged model of writing. Troia et al. (2009) describe this change as 'a paradigm shift [that] occurred in writing instruction'.

In process writing the focus is both on the final composition product and the stages a writer goes through in composition. Writing is seen as involving pupils thinking equally about the composition stages and the end product. Emig (1997) uses the phrase 'writing as process and product' (Emig,1997: 124). The thinking about writing enables the product to be examined and engaged with to make it more insightful; Smith (1982) describes the writer's self-discovery process in writing as a way to 'put thinking to work and increase its possibilities [for us]' (Smith, 1982: 35).

The results of this process of self-discovery can lead to change of world view. In this sense, for the author, writing is potentially a transforming activity. Such self-discovery is in line with the attributed comment by C. Day Lewis (1947):

> We do not write in order to be understood; we write in order to understand. (Day Lewis, 1947: 15).

Smith (1982) puts an emphasis on writer confidence and a strong self-image. These qualities may be helped by scaffolding strategies.

Graves (1983) and Murray (1982) suggest a pedagogical model of writing involving various stages with conferencing conversations between teacher and pupil, pupil and pupil, about the choice of topic and its elements, planning and composition of a first draft. Then, the writer starts editing and proofreading the draft, and finally publishing, the writing. These stages are recursive with the author going back and forth to review the phases rather than a linear progression through the phases of writing. This reflected the cognitive research findings of Flower and Hayes (1981), and Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987). Conferencing with knowledgeable others contributes to a positive writing environment and a sense of a writing community - a writing workshop. Graves (1981) uses the metaphor of 'ownership' to describe the pupil relationship to their writing. Emig (1971) carried out insightful case study research looking at expressive and expository types of writing, the time spent on the different stages in each of the types of writing and the writers' approaches and mindsets. Writing success reflects the writer's automaticity of mechanics and confidence in completing the phases. Finally, the process approach requires writer/pupil agency in decisions about topic and method.

The EEF (2015) writing evaluation suggests using stages for KS2 pupils using the process discourse. In addition, the NC (DfE, 2013: 29) has a simple writing procedure reflecting the process approach which is part of the PoS (2013) construct of writing. Significantly, Clement (2023:12) stresses that the process approach is more complex than phases of composition as it includes a positive writing environment, significant pupil interaction, personal responsibility and ownership of writing and, lastly, self-reflection and evaluation. Integral to the process discourse is the author's motivation.

The impact of process model on classroom experiences has been significant and, as Hyland (2016:155) comments, is difficult to exaggerate. However, there are some reservations about the research or the approach. Smagorinski's (1987) concern was with the quality of Graves' research for the conferencing process. Lensmire (1994) felt that the

workshop approach needed to reflect the character of the writers and their ability to work independently. Timbur (1994) was concerned that Emig's case study research was limited as it insufficiently challenged the dominant classroom writing traditions of the time. Hyland (2016) also has reservations about the general application of the 'individualistic emphasis of the methods' and the attitude towards 'writing with no particular content' (Hyland, 2016: 156). A similar comment is made earlier by Schreiner (1997) who felt that process writing is a successful approach for a proportion of writers but, despite contrary intentions, preserved 'the elitist impulse at the heart of literacy education' (Schreiner, 1997:100). However, Hyland (2016) comments that the process approach embraces 'many different approaches applied unevenly and different ways' (Hyland, 2016: 156). Hyland (2016) stresses that writing is embedded in communities, purposes and contexts at the same time dependent on pupil motivation.

Pupil motivation was another common element in the meta-analyses. The key element, according to Slavin et al. (2019) was the enjoyment through pupil agency and being valued as a writer with an opinion. Graham et al. (2015) suggest a strong correlation between pupil enjoyment, motivation and writing achievement. These elements are linked to self-efficacy. Clements (2023) points out that school writing may involve both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation which are associated with the social experience of writing in a class and collaborating with peers. The social experience of writing in class leads to another common element in the meta-analyses which is the combination of a writing environment or writing community with instruction. Teaching strategies included an enjoyable environment, pupil agency, teacher knowledge and instruction. Writing using text types is central to teacher knowledge and instruction.

Two of the meta-analyses suggest the importance of writing genres. The knowledge of text types and genres is identified by many studies as this knowledge makes explicit the links between language and the social situation. Halliday and Hasan (1989) comment that genre addresses the relationship between language and its social function in the belief that texts that have common purpose often have common structures. Rose (2011: 225) suggests awareness of and ability to use genre may be a significant factor in pupil attainment in school. Derewianka (1990) suggests six broad genres defined by their primary purpose. The NC PoS (2013) includes genre in the writing construct. However, as Halliday (1985) and Freedman and Medway (1994) point out, genres change over time and may appear differently depending on use and context. An awareness of the subtle nature of genre as language attempts to reflect the social context is part of Rosen's (2011) reservation about

genre in education. Additionally, there has been well founded criticism by Wyse and Jones (2001) that the genre approach may lead to an inflexible understanding of language and consequently to formulaic teaching. Wyse and Jones (2001) suggest that in using a transmission model of teaching the pupils are given the key features of the text type and then attempt to recreate the structure. The teacher assessment of the pupil's success is based on how closely the pupil's attempt replicates the original. Wyse and Jones (2001) note that such a situation leaves little opportunity for creativity and pupil agency. Such a situation is not inevitable as writers might develop, as Myhill and Fisher (2010) note, through the formulaic stage to recognise the subtleties of a situation. Though an assessment requirement to demonstrate genre characteristics might mediate against mature pupil writing. The demands on the teacher to encourage pupil writing development as well as meet any policy or assessment writing demands make teacher planning important. Planning the classroom experience involves assigning priorities to activities.

Graham's meta-analysis suggests the importance of creating a positive writing environment with regular and frequent opportunities for writing instruction and practice. Part of establishing and maintaining the positive writing environment may well be the use of dialogic teaching methods. Brindley (2015) suggests that using dialogic teaching methods positively alters the nature of the classroom from a 'monologic teacher discourse to one that values learning thorough discussion between teacher and student, and student and student' (2015: 52). This is a contrast between collaborative dialogue between teacher and pupil rather than IRE ('initiation-response-evaluation' Alexander, 2022: 197) dialogue which has a focus on teacher control of external knowledge. In addition to dialogic teaching, is being positive and practical about writing opportunities. Graham et al. (2015) in their research suggests writing for at least 15 minutes per day. Graham et al. (2015) comment on the positive impact of 'students composing together' in 'shared' or 'guided' writing class experiences. Dockrell et al. (2016) in their extensive research on primary writing suggests that some writing activities are given priority over others with an emphasis on the technical. For instance, planning, reviewing and revising writing was a monthly practice, text or sentence level work was weekly and word level work happened several times a week. In Dockrell's (2016) whole primary age range research the experience of KS2 pupils was on word roots, punctuation, word classes, grammar and sentence/paragraph construction. The writing environment may reflect what are the priorities for a teacher and may reflect the conventions of grammar and punctuation are given prominence in policy requirements.

Finally, Slavin's (2019) meta-analysis suggests the importance of teaching writing conventions of grammar and punctuation within the context of creative writing rather than teaching these grammar and punctuation through transmission teaching or 'teaching to the test'. Clements (2023:26) comments that there is a body of research suggesting that discrete, prescriptive grammar teaching, such as doing Grammar or Punctuation test papers, has little impact on the quality of children's writing. Myhill and Watson (2014) comment on the issue of teacher subject knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge about grammar. Myhill and Watson (2014) note the concerns about teacher knowledge of grammar including self-opinion of their grammar knowledge. Myhill and Watson's (2014) research noted the negative associations teachers had about grammar and grammar teaching. Myhill and Watson (2014: 52) reference work done by Myhill et al. (2013) which suggested concerns about understanding grammar in semantic rather than functional definitions, difficulties of accurately describing sentence features, difficulties in linking grammar to writing practice and a reluctance to engage in metalinguistic discussions with pupils. Such research suggests the need to ensure teacher confidence in analysing and discussing grammar functions. The issues have added importance because of the NC (DfE, 2013) GPS tests which Safford (2016) suggests have led to more formal grammar teaching in classrooms. Nevertheless, Myhill et al.'s (2012) research on class discussion of grammar within the context of pupils' own writing has suggested that this is a productive strategy. Approaches such 'grammar for writing' approach and sentence combining may create what Myhill and Newman (2016) have called a 'creative pedagogy for teaching grammar'. These are, of course, positive strategies for creative classroom writing. Research suggests that there are classroom writing strategies with other focuses than good creative writing. The classroom strategies are in the defining, controlling hands of the teacher.

Cremin's (2006) research on 18 teachers found their confidence in composition was enhanced by being positioned as writers themselves. The acquisition of an 'insider informed perspective' (2006: 418), developed through reflection and discussion, gave teachers a clearer view of the relationship between secretarial and compositional aspects of writing, as well as a better understanding of the connection between composition and the social context of the writer. Cremin and Oliver (2017) in a systematic review of research of teachers' relationships to writing suggest that the teaching of writing is problematic for some teachers because of limited views about writing, low confidence and negative writing histories. Also, the systematic review suggest that teachers have a narrow conception of what counts as writing and being a writer:

> Findings reveal that teachers' narrow conceptions of what counts as writing or what makes a 'writer', often centred on print-based text, 'authorship' and narrative/expressive genre (Cremin and Oliver, 2017: 291).

Other researchers such as the CLPE (2017) and Writing for Pleasure (2022) have seen teacher writing confidence as a significant area. Nevertheless, for some teachers the consequence of limited confidence, Gardner (2018) suggests, is that the NC (2013) focus on key writing skills, such as spelling, handwriting, grammar and genre forms, tend to dominate the teaching practice at the expense of writer identity and the situated experience of writing.

Research on classroom practice identifies the class teacher's priorities reflected in the planning decisions. Keen (2017) researched English primary writing and comments that the teaching of writing is dominated by transmission teaching:

> Most English teachers in UK primary and secondary schools currently use a product-based approach supported by genre- based strategies and occasionally one or two elements of process approaches, usually prewriting activities of some kind, to teach writing. Drafting and revision hardly figure beyond the exhortations to proofread for spelling, punctuation and expression (Keen, 2017: 378).

Indeed, Keen (2017) emphasises by using a forceful verb:

> [product teaching approaches] currently dominate classroom teaching in the UK (Keen, 2017: 383).

The NLS (1988) made extensive use of exemplar teaching and current practice draws on that experience including the exemplar teaching with topic work. Keen (2017) develops the idea of 'genre-based strategies' by suggesting teachers typically use of the following approach:

> start with model text, identification of features of the genre, instantiate in own writing (Keen, 2017: 376).

Keen's (2017) suggests that the teachers' decision about this strategy reflect their concern to meet the meet the statutory requirements of the NC (DfE,2013). Keen comments that there are consequences in using such an approach to writing as the teaching approach may limit the nature and extent of pupil learning. Keen (2017) also suggests that using transmission teaching through models:

> may achieve a creditable end but at the cost of taking the struggle out of learning…written composition' (Keen, 2017: 381).

However, transmission teaching is more amenable to annual planning with assessments in mind.

Classroom practice is planned throughout the year. The focus on the assessment criteria and the testing arrangements is important consideration in planning. The planning according to ASCL (2017) survey backed up the Cambridge Review findings (2010) findings that a 'disproportionate amount of time was spent on subjects tested at the expense of creativity and personal development' (ASCL, 2017: 16). Planning involves what needs to be covered in class teaching and the identification of appropriate non-class intervention including its character and timing. The ASCL survey (2017: 16) found schools plan to do weekly test papers and set Mock SATs to prepare their pupils for the end of year assessments. Bradbury et al. (2021) suggests that primary schools have developed planned interventions where borderline achievers are given support as a form of 'educational triage' (2021:150). Richmond (2017) suggested that there is some a degree of tension in exclusively planning for the assessed criteria in the test and teacher assessed writing while conscious of wider understandings of writing. Richmond continued by suggesting teacher agency, is affected by the degree of prescription in the current NC (DfE, 2013) and the need to plan for its achievement:

> teachers of English in primary schools in England are effectively treated as machine operators, given sets of instructions narrowly related to method, and told to follow them (Richmond, 2017: 4).

Brindley (2015:46) similarly commented in looking at the DfE Teaching Standards notes that 'professional development activity' is focused exclusively on the teacher. Implicitly the teacher is viewed as a deliverer of knowledge rather than as a teacher involved in a dynamic relationship with the pupil. The focus on performance and attainment is associated by some researchers with the notion of lesson pace.

Research by Lefstein and Snell (2013) noted that lesson pace was identified by the DFEE (1998:8) and OFSTED (Worlds Apart, 1996) as associated with educational achievement. Lefstein et al. (2013) commented that alleged poor performance in English education was compared to other countries where 'time and pace feature prominently in…. countries' success' (Lefstein et al., 2013: 75). Myhill (2006), while acknowledging the change of emphasis in policy comments (DfES, 2006) on lesson pace in the 'Primary Framework' (DfES, 2006), commented in her earlier research that teachers:

> …felt under pressure to cover the teaching objectives and to achieve pre-specified goals, they felt reluctant to hand over their tight control to the children for fear of not covering what they needed to cover in the lesson (Myhill, 2006: 29).

However, neither in the OFSTED publication of 2022 ('Research review series: English') nor in OFSTED's 'Education Inspection framework' (2023) are there references to lesson pace.

2.5 Assessment of NC (DfE, 2013) writing

This section considers the nature of assessment, the purpose of educational assessment, high stakes assessment in an accountability culture and the nature of NC (2013) summative assessment of KS2 writing. The NC (2013) is explored through the research literature on the Programme of Study (PoS, 2013), the STA's Teacher Assessment Framework (TAF, 2018) and the Exemplification materials (2018). Finally, aspects of the research literature on teachers' views about writing is explored. This means for the research giving a description of the features that influence the teachers' perceptions and classroom practice with regard to NC (DfE, 2013) writing.

2.5.1 Definition

Assessment is concerned with measurement and, in education, refers to the strategies used to investigate what pupils know and can do. Assessment results are used to inform decisions about whether pupils have learned what was expected. An important distinction is made by Baird et al. (2017) that while assessment:

> generate observable performances from students, the concern is not merely for the performance, rather the performance is used as a warrant for inference to competence; although all there is to go on is performance (Baird et al., 2017: 317).

The subject matter being assessed is termed the construct, and learning Baird et al. suggest:

> implies improved proficiency in the construct variable' (Baird et al., 2017: 317).

Baird et al. (2017) comment that learning may come from a 'variety of sources, but they are partly shaped by our theories of learning' (Baird, 2017: 318-9). From such a viewpoint, the lens used to view writing as a text product, the writers' cognitive processes or engagement with the reader, is important. The NC (DfE, 2013) mainly views a text product lens although there are parts of the other lens too.

2.5.2 Educational assessment purposes

Stobart (2009) identifies different purposes that assessment might be used for. These purposes include results which show pupil achievement, school and local authority accountability and providing information for future targets. The purposes at a national level are to give data on achievement over time even though such assessments only give a

snapshot of achievement, and, lastly, to raise educational achievement standard. Regarding the latter, Stobart (2009) maintains that most research shows only short-term effects showing that performance has improved rather than attainment has improved. Newton (2017) offers a more exhaustive range of purposes many of which are applicable to KS2 assessments. Issacs (2010), referencing Stobart (2008), suggests that the purposes of accountability assessments provide

> a tool to raise standards; to ascertain individual students' progress; to judge individual teacher's performance; to ascertain where intervention in a school was necessary; to hold schools accountable (Issacs, 2010: 324).

2.5.3 Educational assessment categories

The research literature suggests that assessment in education may be categorized into two categories according to their function. Popham (2013) acknowledges that Scriven (1967) first made the distinction where formative assessment was intended to support learning with the intention to improve the experience for the pupils in contrast to summative assessment which was to 'determine the worth of mature, already-completed education programs' (Popham, 2013: 20).

Baird et al. (2017:319) comment on the interdependence between assessment and learning in the research literature. Such interdependence may be, according to Alderson and Wall, (1993) 'washback', or 'backwash' or, according to Bew (2011), as 'over-rehearsal' and 'teaching to the test' (Bew, 2011:9). The research literature has commented on a variety of effects of assessment practices. Kellaghan, Madaus, and Airasian, (1982) claimed that testing had no negative effects on schools. However, others have suggested that testing has narrowed the taught curriculum to what was expected in the test (Au, 2007; Madaus, Russell, and Higgins, 2009). Reay and Wiliams' (1999) research refers to this as 'narrowing the experiences of students to that which can be assessed' (Reay and Wiliam, 1999: 352). Both Daly et al. (2011) and Darling-Hammond and Rustique-Forrester (2005) suggest that testing resulted in more superficial learning of certain types of knowledge. Where the testing culture is very influential, it is often referred to as 'high-stakes' testing. Madaus (1988: 29) describes 'high-stakes' tests as tests that have a direct link to rewards or sanctions for students, their teachers or their institutions. Baird et al. (2017) comment that 'high-stakes' tests are used as an accountability measure. Baird et al. (2017: 319) references Stobart and Eggen, (2012) who argue that the high-stakes testing drives teachers and learners to change their behaviours to respond to the test and narrow the taught curriculum. Alexander (2022/2014: 91) characterises this as 'distortions produced

by high-stakes testing'. The impact on teachers and learners of high-stakes testing is justified by Ministers of Education as a measure of raising standards. Michael Gove (2011 speech) described this:

> But it is the case that exams do have a critical function alongside the changes that we might make to inspection, and indeed to the national curriculum, in making sure that we continue to raise standards in all our schools for all our children. They have, as we all know, an accountability function. Exams are one of the ways in which we judge schools, one against the other (Gove, 2011: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/michael-gove-to-ofqual-standards-summit).

Here Michael Gove makes a link between examination standards and accountability. Comparison between schools' attainments suggests that their attainment outcomes are compared to the schools' inputs. Brill (2018: i) comments that accountability is viewed as a mechanism to deliver high quality education and suggests that accountability is viewed by government as directly contributing to improvements. Michael Gove (2011) refers to aspects of accountability in the above speech.

2.5.4 Summative assessment in a high-stakes environment

High-stakes summative assessments have historically been challenged and there are critics of their use when, as in the case of KS2 NC (2013), it is an accountability measure. NFER (2018) research offers a definition of accountability and suggests its two-fold nature:

> We define accountability as a government mechanism for holding educational institutions to account for the delivery of high-quality education. The idea that the practice of accountability can contribute *directly* to improvements in education is a powerful one that underpins policy (Brill, 2018: i).

Brill (2018: i) also notes that accountability systems can also produce negative impacts on education, making it more difficult to deliver the sought-after quality. The ASCL report, Sense and Accountability (2018), comments on the negative impacts on primary schools attributed to the accountability which included the de-professionalisation of teachers and school leaders, a narrowing of the curriculum because of testing, excessive pressure on pupils and teachers and the incentive to 'game the system'. The House of Commons Education Select Committee commented on the interrelationship between assessment and accountability and attributed to the accountability system negative influences:

> Many of the negative effects of assessment are in fact caused by the use of results in the accountability system rather than the assessment system itself. Key Stage 2 results are used to hold schools to account at a system level, to parents, by Ofsted, and results are linked to teachers' pay and performance. We recognise the importance of holding schools to account but this high-stakes system does not improve teaching and learning at primary school… [and concluded] this high-

> stakes system does not improve teaching and learning. (House of Commons Education Select Committee. 28April, 2017)

The literature suggests that there may be several key issues associated with the use of KS2 English writing for accountability purposes. First, the construct of writing has changed to ensure reliability but at the expense of validity. Second, KS2 English writing has changed from the pre-2014 NC understanding because of a political ideology and the commitment to an accountability system. Third, the construct of writing for some teachers has been destabilized consequently. Fourth, the change in the construct of writing has affected the comparability of writing attainment especially with the disaggregation of the grammar, spelling and punctuation. Fifth, grammar, since its disaggregation through a test, is no longer an element in the accountability system. Sixth, the nationally published results as part of the accountability system may affect schools, pedagogy and classroom practice. Seventh, the relationship between Reading and Writing attainment has changed since the 2016 changes and changed again in 2020 as Reading overtook Writing attainment. Eighth, there may be issues with the reliability of teacher assessment because of issues such as 'independent writing', 'particular weakness' and the nature of the assessment categories.

Stolz (2017: 380) maintains that large scale standardised testing is too narrow and limits teaching as only certain types of knowledge are assessed; additionally, 'back-wash' increases. As Stobart (2009) points out, there is a conflation of high standards with good test performance, and a further assumption is the link between test performance and how well the pupil has been taught. Stobart (2009) and Stolz (2017) question using summative assessment, such as the GPS tests, as an accountability measure. Bearne (2017) references the Cambridge Review (2010) which she suggests made apparent that the assessment purposes were unclear and challenge the correlation between assessment and rising standards. Marshall (2017) suggests that there are issues about the understanding of the grammar perhaps due to a static, prescriptive understanding of grammar. Indeed, she points out that the GPS grammar requires the identification of terms rather than 'actual proficiency in writing itself' (Marshall, 2017: 35).

These criticisms of summative assessment were subject to public attention through national media sources in response to the NAHT 'Redressing the balance' (2017) report or Mansell's work (2007) 'Education by numbers: the tyranny of testing'. Ofsted too voiced concerns about the use of writing assessments being used as an accountability measure where inspectors 'rely too heavily on data over observation' (House of Commons,

Education Committee, 27April, 2017). There have been changes to aspects of the assessment structure which acknowledges such concerns.

There have been changes to the assessment structure. The TAF (2018) was amended, and these amendments were criticised for being confusing (Ward, 2017, November 15). Writing assessments have been the subject to the criticism: they have a negative effect by encouraging teachers towards formulaic approaches to writing; by different interpretations of the assessment criteria; the avoidance of writing forms not assessed, and writing that lacks originality (Hillocks, 2002, Clarkson, 2024). Bearne (2017), Richmond et al. (2017) and Wyse and Togerson, (2017) maintain that NC (2013) shows an ignorance of wider research in school writing which compromised the assessment. Bearne (2017) describes the PoS (2013) and the English curriculum as leading to a narrower construct of writing because of 'the stranglehold of an individualistic view of writing development' and 'a tyranny of the technical' (Bearne, 2017: 74). Additionally, Bearne (2017) described the TAF (2018) as 'restrictive' because of its emphasis in the statements on grammar, spelling, vocabulary and handwriting (Bearne, 2017: 74-5). Further, as the Teacher Assessment Framework is 'Secure fit', or a 'mastery framework', pupils may be penalised for not consistently illustrating a criterion while creativity is not credited in the assessment criteria. Bearne (2017) considers these as serious shortcomings.

2.6 Teacher identity and teacher agency

The focus in this section is on the teacher's perspective on the influences on them rather than perpetuate 'a discourse about the teacher' (Akkerman and Meijer, 2011: 308). Teacher agency, although as Priestley et al. (2015: 19) notes, is 'a slippery and contested term', it may be viewed as the teacher's capacity to make decisions about their understandings and actions in relation to their teaching and teacher identity. In contrast to viewing agency in terms of individual capacity as a determinant of action, Biesta et al. (2007) and Priestley et al. (2015) suggest an ecological understanding of teacher agency. This understanding views teacher agency, as Priestley et al. (2015) suggest in their Scottish research, as emergent and 'results from both the individual's capacity and their interaction with the context' (Biesta et al., 2007: 132).

Priestley et al. (2015) uses both Emirbayer and Mische's (1998: 963) and Biesta et al. 's (2007) understanding of teacher agency. Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) define agency as having three relational dimensions:

> a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternation possibilities) and "acted out" in the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects with the contingencies of the moment) (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 963).

This definition sees agency as having temporal, contextual and relational aspects relating to the teacher's past, their future and their present. These three dimensions with Biesta et al. (2007) understanding of agency as a form of achievement, were developed by Priestley et al. (2015) as an ecological model for understanding teacher agency. Priestley et al.'s (2105) emergent agency is a consequence of three elements. This emphasis means that teachers' pasts, including life histories and professional experience are also considered. Priestly et al.'s (2015) research included teachers in a primary school. The research reviewed a range of personal and structural elements in discussing teacher agency: teacher beliefs and identity, teacher age and experience, the school's context and the accountability performativity cultures.

Priestley et al. (2015) suggest, from their research data, that teacher agency is 'shaped by a range of different features of the context of schooling... in addition to being formed by the capacity of teachers' (Priestley et al., 2015: 136). The research identified a performative, high-stakes culture in the primary school with daily 'monitoring of attainment, checklists of 'essential' practices and high levels of surveillance' (Priestley et al., 2015: 57). Priestley et al. (2015) also noted a focus of 'evidencing of outcomes, and... identifying, recording and reporting practices against the experiences and outcomes of the curriculum' (Priestley et al., 2015: 136).

For Burnitt (2016) this is the pressure to be continually raising standards to enable 'the UK to succeed with in the evermore competitive global market' (Burnitt, 2016: 95). Perryman (2011) argues that the focus on standards has led 'to a low trust regime of increased accountability in education' (Perryman et al., 2011: 181). Priestley et al. (2015) suggest from their research into the primary school that:

> 'Agency... is... limited and is shaped predominantly by the habitus formed by prior practice and the continued emphasis by external bodies on accountability' (Priestley et al., 2015: 136).

Additionally, this research suggests the teachers' attitude was one of a 'strategic compliance with policy'. Such an understanding of agency gives an emphasis towards the importance of context. My research acknowledged that the participants were highly

conscious of the significance of their contexts, as Priestley et al. (2015) described it, in relation to their views and actions in teaching writing.

2.6.1 Accountability

Perryman (2011) suggests that since the 1988 Education Reform Act there has been a shift over decades in accountability from:

> teacher professionalism, characterised by accountability of teachers to themselves, their colleagues and their students (self-regulation) to accountability to agencies such as the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and OFSTED (Perryman et al., 2011: 182).

The current equivalent of the QCA is the Standards and Testing Authority. Burnitt (2016) suggests that the shift in accountability was accompanied, as Perryman et al. (2011) also comments, by a constant stream of criticism which has:

> led to public and political acceptance of the idea that teachers [were in] need of reform…and this reform needs to be monitored by increased surveillance and performance reporting (Perryman et al., 2011: 181).

The criticism led to the acceptance of the need for greater accountability even in the 1980s. Chitty (1989) quotes Lord Donoghue:

> What had become one of the great weaknesses of our system was its non-accountability. …you could no longer depend on the total dedication of the teaching force, it therefore needed more accountability (Donoghue, 1986 interview quoted in Chitty, 1989: 67).

The 1997 Labour government retained the frameworks of curriculum assessment and accountability which had been introduced through the 1980s and 1990s. In addition, the Government introduced ideas for further reforms of the teaching profession including linking teacher 'performance' to promotion through a national threshold. Targets were set annually once over the threshold with a focus on pupils' performance. This was performance management. Tomlinson (2001) commented that teachers were:

> more heavily policed, with management of their performance based on private sector models (Tomlinson, 2001: 93).

State accountability of the school and the teacher is based on inspection, formal audits of pupil performance, lesson observation and personal statements. Teacher accountability is characterised by a focus on standards of attainment. In the case of writing, the accountability includes both the teacher assessment and the test results although only the teacher assessment is included in the Performance Tables. Burnitt (2016) suggests that accountability for senior leaders and headteachers has a personal character, especially

prior to 1988, which he calls 'professional accountability' (2016: 212). This reflects a concern less with attainment standards and more with pupil needs. The focus, however, in this section is on accountability to the state. Perryman et al. (2011) draw attention to the impact of the accountability emphasis on raising standards by drawing attention to the classroom experience of the NC (DfE, 2013) construct of writing:

> Teaching is framed and driven by the National Curriculum and a performance framework that is backed up by performance management, pay and target setting (Perryman et al., 2011: 182).

Accountability is applicable to elements that contribute to raising the standards of the NC (DfE, 2013) construct of writing and encompasses the school, the headteacher and the teacher. Accountability's focus on raising standards and effectiveness entails data collection and analysis.

Data collection and its analysis are essential characteristics of the drive to raise standards through the NC (DfE, 2013). Indeed, Burnitt (2016: 258) describes the data collection and analysis as 'a data dictatorship'. Perryman et al. (2018) see schools controlled and 'maintained through monitoring and supervision and the constant gathering of knowledge and about its 'effectiveness' (Perryman et al., 2018: 147). Perryman et al. (2018) maintain that the accountability environment 'educates' the teachers and school management through the:

> data dictatorship...into accepted modes of successful practice (Perryman et al., 2018: 148).

Perryman also comments on the internalisation of educational surveillance and the normalisation of the accountability values as 'capillary effects of surveillance' (Perryman et al., 2017: 740). The importance of data derived from the NC construct of writing and its analysis has high significance, especially for senior management, as the data is used by OFSTED to guide their pre-inspection assessment of a school's effectiveness. Perryman (2008) comments that expectations of pupil attainment are influential in the teaching and learning experience where there is a likelihood of transmission teaching as:

> teaching and learning are determined in accordance with learning outcomes and objectives [and]…teaching is theorised as the application of fixed recipes (Perryman, 2008: 6).

Perryman uses the term panoptic performativity (Perryman, 2006) to describe the way teachers might experience monitoring and inspection:

> as if they are constantly being observed, subjected to seemingly relentless gaze, and perform accordingly to be successful (Perryman et al., 2018: 147).

Accountability, Perryman argues, is influential in the collection and analysis of school data but also in influencing teaching decisions. Thus, accountability has important consequences for the school, the headteacher and senior management.

The consequences of the accountability regime are serious for the headteacher and senior management, and, in turn, for the Year Six teacher. Burnitt (2106: 112) offers a description of the positive and negative outcomes of the consequences of the accountability strategies of testing and inspection. The positives of the accountability strategies are pupil progress in the 'standards areas', a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' inspection judgement, pay progression, career enhancement and meeting the pupils' needs. The negative consequences of 'Requires Improvement' or worse are removal from post, falling rolls and parental exits. These influences make the decisions about the NC (DfE, 2013) construct of writing significant. There may be a tension as while the headteacher may be concerned with the performance data relating to writing, the KS2 teachers may have wider concerns related to widening the writing experiences beyond the NC construct. The emphasis on the NC (DfE, 2013) construct of writing as the metric, in the sense of a system or standard of measurement, for raising standards makes the writing construct of higher status than other writing discourses.

2.6.2 Discourse

Discourse may be viewed, as Gee (1989) understands it, as 'forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes and social identities' (Gee, 1989a: 6) While identity for teachers is:

> a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a meaningful group or social network (Gee, 1989b: 18).

In such a sense, discourse may be used to describe both the educational experience and the teacher's experience. The concept of discourse was used by Foucault to be:

> the set of conditions in accordance with which a practice is exercised, and in accordance with which it can be modified (Foucault, 1972: 208-209).

Clark and Ivanic (1997:13 and 159) suggest that discourse and writer identity are linked and interdependent. Although teachers may view their identity in terms of their professional expertise, as Gee (1989) suggests, Maguire et al. (2011) suggest that teachers' occupational discourse is confronted by the discursive practices in central government policies which are:

> worked into/act against every practice of school life and become set over and against, or integrated into existing discourses (Maguire et al., 2011: 598).

The central government policies, in this sense, are an organisational discourse derived from state policy, and national evaluative measures of school, pupil and teacher performance. The application of Maguire's (2011) interpretation of Foucault might be applied to how the pre, and post national curriculums were interpreted in primary schools. Using Foucault's (1972) emphasis, discursive practice might be understood as:

> a place in which a tangled plurality – at once superposed and incomplete – of objects is formed and deformed, appears and disappears (Foucault,1972: 48).

Applied to this research, it involves a consideration of teacher's perceptions of their writing experiences, the roles that they ascribe to themselves and those roles they are given through central government policies. This combination of discourses is described by Ivanic (2004: 224) as being interrelated.

The tangled plurality or the interrelationship of discourses is used by Ivanic (2004) in her typology of six writing discourses. Ivanic's (2004: 224) describes a writing discourse as:

> constellations of beliefs about writing, beliefs about learning to write, ways of talking about writing, and the sorts of approaches to teaching and assessment which are likely to be associated with these beliefs (Ivanic, 2004: 224).

Importantly she suggests that the discourses may overlap and mutate. Moore and Clarke's (2016) work also says that teachers' perceptions may experience a complexity of discourses involving 'an entanglement of (past) occupational and (present) organisational discourses' (Moore and Clarke, 2016: 666). The entanglement of discourses includes organisation discourse derived from national evaluative measures of the Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs). The SATs have been nationally published in annual school Performance tables since 1992. Brown and Manktelow, (2016) comment on the accountability aspect of the Performance Tables which have 'prioritised the SAT process as a high-stakes test for schools, placing schools in direct competition with one another' (Brown and Manktelow, 2016: 71). Consequently, teachers have used teaching strategies to reflect such priorities rather than the creativity discourse in writing.

Moore and Clarke (2016) describe the origin and nature of the organisational discourse, or the culture of 'performativity', as a discourse which:

> originates with policy makers and managers, that involves hierarchical authority and accountability... [and which] attaches itself more strongly to notions and prioritisations of individual and collective success in meeting measurable educational targets (Moore and Clarke, 2016: 672).

In contrast, Moore and Clarke (2016) describe as an 'occupational discourse', based on professional expertise which are:

> based on [teachers'] practice and custom rather than being imbued with policy intent (Moore and Clarke, 2016: 672).

This research uses Moore and Clarke's (2016) understanding of the organisation and occupational discourse to consider Year Six teachers' perceptions of teaching writing. The interplay between these discursive practices may suggest something of the definition of either teachers' professional or occupational identity. This is also suggested in Braun and Maguire (2020) as they discuss primary teachers:

> Primary teaching appears caught up in conflicting discourses (Braun and Maguire, 2020: 435).

Further, the research literature suggests that there may be an interplay, overlap and mutation of the discursive practices in writing in primary schools. Tentatively, this is explored in the discursive practices grid I have used to explore my thinking about this topic. (Appendix Three). Occupational and organisation discourses are involved in the creation of teacher professional identity.

2.6.3 Teachers' perceptions of their professional identity

An understanding of teacher professional identity is offered by Holland et al. (1998) who suggests that teachers are:

> people tell others who they are, but even more important, they tell themselves and then try to act as though they are who they say they are. These self-understandings, especially those with strong emotional resonance for the teller, are what we refer to as identities (Holland et al., 1998: 3).

Akkerman and Meijer, (2011) also argue that identity is socially constructed and the exercise develops a sense of self. Akkerman and Meijer (2011) point out the influence and authority of the organisational discourse and how, consequently, it challenges how teachers 'can still act as 'unique' individuals, showing agency moving beyond the given context' (Akkerman and Meijer, 2011: 310). Hermans (2013) suggests the idea of a dialogical self where there is:

> a dynamic multiplicity of I-positions or voices in the landscape of the mind, intertwined as this mind is with the minds of other people. In this conception, the different, independent positions are related by a continuous I and brought into communication with each other via dialogical activities (Hermans, 2013: 83).

Hermans (2013) and Akkerman and Meijer (2011) employ Bakhtin's (1981) description of I-positions in language. Bakhtin's (1981) suggests the self, both in speech and writing, includes three interrelated identities: "I-for-myself", "I-for-the-other", and "other-for-me". Bakhtin argues that identity is shared and developed through the "I-for-the-other" component. According to Bakhtin (1981), individuals take on different I-positions in conversations or writing which represent the stance of an identity in a specific context. This is relevant to teacher identities especially where teachers are positioned in conflicting I-positions relating to different contexts and relationships such as in the classroom where their identity is teacher, authority on knowledge and assessor. Also, this might be related to teachers' beliefs about the nature of writing and the prescribed version in the NC (DfE,2013). According to Beijaard et al. (2004), curricular change may be a source of tension for teachers. Hermans, (2013) suggests a more complex understanding that while teachers are members of the school community, they also have I-positions from other and wider past cultural experiences related to teaching a national curriculum. Hermans (2013) argues that teachers use self-dialogue to integrate these different I-positions and further argues that this enables identification with the school community and also a sense of difference with individual agency. In a similar way, Akkerman and Meijer (2011) emphasise the 'on-going process of negotiating and interrelating' (Akkerman and Meijer, 2011: 315) through integrating the separate traits of teacher identity. Perrryman et al. (2017) too refers to this integration strategy in the context of applying what Foucault's (1988: 177) refers to as 'the technologies of self'. Perryman et al. (2017: 746) argues that teachers are involved in an integration involving 'constant engagement in self-understanding and self- invention' about their teaching practice and their relationship with different classes. This research considers how the participating teachers perceive their school definition of the organisational discourse relating to school writing and how this compares with their own occupational discourse of writing. Both are within in the context of a school system 'which emphasise accountability and measurable performance standards' (Braun and Maguire, 2018: 1). For this research, the issue is how this integration results in acceptable performances while enabling the teacher to feel that they have satisfied their own professional identity requirements in teaching writing.

Taking Akkerman and Meijers' (2011) insight about the context-specific identity about teacher identity further, Perryman (2017) suggests that Year Six teachers interpret policy through their identity. The literature identifies both the complexity and subtlety of the concept of teacher identity. This research considers how teachers might view whether the Year Six writing they teach differs from what they believe the nature of school writing is.

Perryman et al. (2017) summarises her main point by quoting from her previous work with Ball et al. (2011):

> As teachers engage with policy and …its enactment, they are also captured by it. They change it, and it changes them (Perryman et al., 2017: 745).

Perryman et al. (2017) comment that the execution of policy involves the teacher in both compliance to the policy and invention as the teacher interprets the policy for themselves and their context. The policy of raising standards while determining and being determined by teachers' policy identity is achieved through the accountability mechanisms which monitor attainment and sanction compliance. Such accountability mechanisms may be described through the metaphor of the panoptic lens.

Foucault (1977) uses the panoptic lens metaphor to describe the state's surveillance. The ideas of supervision, control and surveillance are implicit in Foucault's (1977) metaphor. For Foucault (1977), the supervision, control and surveillance of panopticism became a metaphor for a form of social discipline through a 'potential gaze' that creates self-discipline within the institutions of western society without the need for a real building. The metaphor has been applied to state supervision, control and surveillance of the education sector (Ball (2003), Perryman (2007), Courtney (2016) and Page (2018)). The origin of the panopticon metaphor is from Bentham' work on the control and surveillance of through the design and running of prisons. Bentham (1791) was a utilitarian philosopher and social reformer. The panopticon was a prison with a circle of individualised prison cells, with slats at the windows, encircling a watchtower. As Page (2017) points out, 'the discipline of the prisoners was achieved by the *potential* for surveillance' with the purpose that the inmates would 'focus inwards and regulate their own behaviours, disciplining the self and creating 'docile bodies' (Page, 2017: 1) For Foucault, the supervision, control and surveillance of panopticism became a metaphor for, what he called the surveillance - the 'potential gaze':

> It is the fact of being constantly seen, of being always able to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection (Foucault, 1977: 187).

Foucault suggests that the disciplines of supervision, control and surveillance are carried out through 'instruments that render visible, record, differentiate and compare' (Foucault, 1977: 208). The metaphor seems appropriate for an analytic framework for the research into high-stakes testing of writing and its inspection as the metaphor examines the nature of state prescription and power.

The metaphor of the panopticon for many educational researchers is a discussion about power in education. Gallagher (2010) identifies power as a central theme. Inspection is the most explicit example of power, although simulations of OFSTED inspections and forms of assessment monitoring are too. Perryman (2009) argues the panopticon metaphor's contemporary equivalent is 'the culture of performativity' (Perryman, 2009: 616). Perryman (2022) develops the culture of performativity theme by referring to 'performative accountability' as the:

> mismatch between teachers who 'enjoy in their professional lives, and the tensions of performing for inspectors…. teachers experience a loss of power and control, and [have] the sense of being permanently under a disciplinary regime (Perryman, 2022: 99).

'Performativity' is seen by Ball (2003) as 'the management of performance' (Ball, 2003: 222) through:

> a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic) (Ball, 2003: 216).

While inspection is an explicit example of power, there are subtler forms of influence and power such as the high status given to identified strategies.

Another way in which schools' performance is questioned and challenged is through the use of comparative generalisations of 'effective' strategies. Perryman (2006) describes this as 'descriptions of good practice in successful schools' (Perryman, 2006: 150). The most obvious example of this questioning and challenging of school performance is in the 'school effectiveness' research. The work of Sammons et al. (1995) and Sammons, Thomas, and Mortimore (1997) are examples of such research. Goldstein et al. (2000) describe this research as centring around a notion of 'quality of schooling'. Goldstein et al. (2000) claimed that the appeal of such research was that it implied that such change in a school could affect 'performance' and that 'educational policy was relevant to educational standards…and that schools have [responsibility] rather than government itself' (Goldstein et al., 2000: 353-4). Goldstein refers to Pring's (1995) and Hamilton's (1996) critiques suggesting that school effectiveness is limited as the:

> research pathologizes' schools by accepting that economic and other problems of society can be ascribed to failings of education and of those who work in the system, especially teachers (Goldstein et al., 2000: 354).

Wrigley (2004) explores the limits of the positivist approaches implicit in 'school effectiveness research' and comments:

> Effectiveness has indeed made the running: its language is the discourse of education as competitive exchange value which remains vague about its use value…has been read by government and by many headteachers in terms of processes for delivering greater 'effectiveness', as narrowly defined (Wrigley, 2004: 241).

Nevertheless, the school effectiveness research was used to evaluate the 'effectiveness' of schools using outcome data of results and performance table positions, as well as judgements of school performance based on inspection reports. Such a range of outcome data has implications for the evaluation of schools' effectiveness. This 'performative accountability' (Perryman, 2022: 99) is a macro political influence on primary schools.

Foucault's (1977) understanding of surveillance and control applied to primary education, frames success in terms of effective schools as those which follow established regulations, procedures and perform to the prescribed outcomes. In such a context, teachers become agents in the inspection judgements of a school's success and subjects of judgements regarding their own performance through judgements. Ball (2000) describes surveillance and control through different means and agents.

The issue of compliance to prescribed practices is a theme raised in different ways by Brindley (2013:10). Courtney (2016) considers the insights and suggests that the goal of discipline through surveillance has been achieved and that English maintained schools are in a complex 'post-panoptic' regime. Perryman et al. (2017) uses Foucault's (1982) notion of 'governmentality' to suggest that the 'panoptic gaze' has not disappeared but rather has mutated into strategies that guide and control identity leading to:

> not just...national and local political control, but [control of] ... the self, so it is also how and why the self-shapes its own conduct (Perryman et al., 2017: 746).

The important theme of compliance is supported by an encouragement to self-improvement where the improvement is seen as raising or maintaining high standards in the policy defined construct.

Teachers' professional conduct is additionally influenced by an international culture with an emphasis on self-improvement from such as the OECD. The OECD (2013) report stressed that one of the means for achieving school improvement is through more informed practice:

> a recognised and explicitly stated norm that recognises the complexity of good teaching and insists on the professional obligation of every teacher to be engaged in a career-long quest for better practice (OECD, 2013: 69).

Primary school teachers' professional conduct, defined and regulated by DfE and its agents, may also be viewed in terms of the panoptic metaphor and refinements such as post-panoptic representation of supervision, control and surveillance disciplines. Perryman et al. (2017) suggests that the panoptic metaphor might be helpful in reviewing discipline through micro and macro influences on classroom teachers in particular with regard to the discipline of self-surveillance. Perryman (2017) makes a case based on the Teaching Standards document (DfE,2012) which states:

> Appropriate self-evaluation, reflection and professional development activity is critical to improving teachers' practice (DfE, 2012: 4).

Perryman et al. (2017) suggests that teachers now joining a school as ECTs:

> will be ruled by themselves, by becoming a truly reflective practitioner under the subtle persuasion of governmentality, dominated yet free (Perryman et al., 2017: 755).

In Perryman (2022) the theme of self-surveillance is explored more fully and insightfully. The self-surveillance Perryman alludes to is implicit in the government Teaching Standards (2011). The Teaching Standards refer to reflection on practice as a quality of a 'good teacher'. At first sight, this is a taken-for-granted teacher characteristic. However, reflection in the Teaching Standards (2011) involves considering how a good school achieves its objectives. Clearly the idea of objectives may be bound up with the accountability culture of raising standards. Reflection is an often-repeated theme in initial teacher training and in on-going professional development. For example, reflection was a common element in 2011 Teaching Standards document:

> Appropriate self-evaluation, reflection and professional development activity is critical to improving teachers' practices in all career stages (DfE, 2011: 4).

Reflection had a central place in the 'Early Career Framework (DfE, 2019: 16). These standards, as Perryman notes, are 'performative' (Perryman, 2022: 56). Reflection, as Perryman (2022) points out referring to Foucault's description of the word, is 'a constant attitude that one must take towards oneself' (Foucault, 1988: 62). This self-reflection is arguably an essential part of the culture of accountability. Perryman (2022) continues by arguing that the 'discourse of the 'good teacher' is now normalised' into the phrase 'the reflective practitioner' with all the inferences implicit in this version of self-reflection. As Perryman (2022) comments, the phrase 'reflective practitioner' is now normalised within the discourse of:

> good teacher, and feeds into the notion of encouraging teachers to 'own' that which the school defines as good practice (Perryman, 2022: 57).

The significance of this is that the reflection is not necessarily about the essence of education but rather on the achievement of 'effectiveness' or 'good teacher' status within the terms identified in the 2011 Teaching Standards document rather than anything approaching a universal value. The intention of this research is to examine these ideas in the context of teachers' experience of teaching writing in Year Six.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has reviewed some of the literature relevant to the school writing in Year Six in KS2. The research question has a focus on the Year Six teachers' perception of teaching writing. The chapter has considered the literature on the nature of school writing and the teachers' use of various writing processes. This section includes a consideration of the NC (DfE, 2013) skills, genre and process construct of writing and also teachers' views about the nature of writing and writing processes which might affect their practice. The literature on the classroom practice of English was considered. Clearly a principal concern for teachers are the requirements of the NC (DfE, 2013) and its assessment. Alongside this are aspects of school writing that are not included in the statutory requirement of writing in the NC (DfE, 2013). The literature of both the high-stakes accountability culture and the assessment was also reviewed. The NC (DfE, 2013) assessment was reviewed in terms of reliability, validity and 'backwash'. The final section considered aspects of teacher agency and identity in an acknowledgement of the degree of teacher regulation through NC, Key Stage assessments and tests, Performance Tables and inspection. This chapter advances the argument that Year Six teachers experience a degree of tension as they attempt to accommodate the demands of the statutory requirements for writing while holding views about writing creativity, writer identity and voice.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The literature review in the previous chapter identifies the complex nature of writing, the various analytical perspectives on writing and the constructs of writing in NC (DfE, 2013). This chapter is about the research design, procedures and processes. The research design gives a plan for conducting research in an efficient and well-matched way. The research purpose for this study is mainly exploratory but has some descriptive elements

This research design has a number of elements. The research design used an interpretative paradigm (Cohen et al. 2018:18). The methodology used an inductive approach. The research strategies use a case study approach (Cohen et al. 2018:375-6). The research uses a mono method – a constructivist interpretivist approach. The timeframe is a once only interview. The research instrument was a semi-structured interview of 11 Year 6 primary teachers. The focus in the research question is Year Six teachers' perceptions of aspects of writing: what they are required to teach of grammar, spelling, punctuation, compositional and transcriptional writing; their perceptions of the assessment mechanisms (test and teacher assessment) in Year Six; their perceptions of the NC (DfE, 2013) documentation, and, finally, what writing they would like to teach to Year Six.

The research design is guided by Kahlke's description of Crotty's (1998) 'framework for articulating research design through a common structure and language' (Kahlke, 2014: 38). Crotty (1998: 3) suggests four elements of a well-designed research framework and claimed that congruence and interlinking of the four elements gave 'well designed research'. Kahlke (2014: 38) describes the four elements as:

> (a) epistemology, or broad assumptions about the nature of knowledge;
> (b) theoretical framework, or philosophical stance;
> (c) methodology, or the broad research strategy; and
> (d) methods, or the particular "techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data" (Crotty, 1998: 3).

The research question is the central focus for these elements.

3.2. The research question

The research question focuses on Year Six teachers' experience of teaching the National Curriculum, (DfE, 2013) and their personal conceptualization of teaching and assessing writing. The content of the National Curriculum, (DfE, 2013) for maintained schools is in the Programme of Study (2013). The Programme of Study in English (2013) conceptualized primary English writing as having two areas: transcriptional and compositional writing. Both are assessed. Testing of transcriptional writing is through formal test papers at the end of Year Six. Assessment of compositional writing is through teacher assessment in Year Six and moderated through the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) at the end of Year Six. The STA produced both the Teacher Assessment Framework (2017) and the Exemplification Materials (2017) to support assessment.

3.2.1 Teacher perception.

Teachers' perceptions of their classroom practice are very important. While some recent research has either looked at the classroom writing product (Dockrell et al., 2016) or has a focus on the pupil (Grainger et al., 2003; Lambrith, 2016), teachers' perceptions offer a more complex and fuller insight into the intricacy of classroom experience. Teachers' perceptions may offer an insight into the contrasts of educational research which stress the creative and expressive aspects of writing especially the idea of voice and identity (Cremin and Myhill, 2012) and contrasting writing research which has a focus on the knowledge, practices and skills within primary classroom practice (Dockrell et al., 2016). Further, while the insights of Argyris and Schon (1997) contrasting the differences between 'espoused theory' and 'theory in use' might provide insights about teachers' articulation about writing, the influence of the organisational context of high-stakes schools is relevant in an understanding too. Cremin and Oliver (2017: 285) comment from their writing research that teachers find the definition of good writing challenging. More recently in a UK context, Clarkson, (2019) suggests in her research that there are several different types of understandings and constructs with regard to teaching writing in primary schools (Clarkson, 2019: 304 and 306).

Acknowledging such considerations about context and actors, the research uses an interpretative method to consider the contrasting research foci of writing. That is, a consideration of the roles Year Six teachers assume in relation to types of writing, and the extent these roles are adopted. To discuss the nature of the reasons the participating teachers adopt these roles in their teaching, I have chosen to use a perception focus in this research.

As Bosacki et al., (2014) comment, a perception focus explores the topic from the class teachers' subjective perspective in order to, as Edwards, (2001: 126) says, 'get below the surfaces' and offer evaluatively evaluative observations. Bosacki et al. (2014) suggest complex factors in teachers' perceptions and thinking:

> In addition to their belief systems and attitudes, teachers also tend to rely on school- policy and curriculum standards for dealing with children's prosocial and aggressive socio-communicative habits within the school culture (Bosacki et al., 2014: 250).

For example, Westgate and Hughes' (2015) research on primary teachers' perceptions suggest positive changes in pupil learning behaviours as a result of using dialogic teaching. Such positive changes suggest that teachers' perceptions are important.

Teachers' beliefs and perceptions have become a focus of educational research. My research will consider teachers' perceptions in relation to both curriculum change and classroom practice.

Primary teachers' beliefs and consequently their teaching would appear to be multifaceted. Fisher (2011) and Bosacki et al. (2014) suggest an intricate set of beliefs including about children's character, teachers' own experience including their own childhood experiences and constructs of writing. Clearly while perceptions of externally imposed strategies are important influences on teachers, Taber (2011) notes that 'perceptions are channelled through existing conceptual frameworks.' (Taber, 2011: 56). Clarkson's (2019) recent research into primary English suggests teachers have multiple constructs of writing and teachers move between the constructs using different evaluation approaches depending on the purpose:

> The teachers... seemed to be working with multiple constructs – an assessment construct, a teaching construct and a personal construct, with what appeared to be a different understanding of 'real' writing and assessment writing (Clarkson, 2019: 362).

Thus, teachers' understandings and perceptions of their classroom practice are important to an understanding of the teachers' context.

These reasons are an attempt to justify the relevance of exploring teachers' perceptions. Unsurprisingly, there are different views about teachers' perceptions of their practice. Teachers' perceptions often acknowledge the complexity of the learning experience and attainment in the classroom, and these teachers' perceptions may change during teaching. In significant research by Day, Elliott, and Kington (2006) and Clarkson (2019) the complexity of teachers' beliefs and how these beliefs change during teaching and also over a teacher's career are considered. Neuman (1992) suggested a complex situation as the research participants' articulated views might be interpreted as:

> expressions of what they believe the ideal beliefs and values are, as opposed to the values and beliefs which are in fact put into practice' because individuals perceive the latter to be 'the values and expectations of the wider peer group (Neumann, 1992: 169).

However, Neuman goes on to argue that it is the wider peer group's practice that are more influential on classroom practice. Similarly, Brown and Manktelow (2016) argue that teachers' perceptions are based on their and others classroom experiences and, consequently, teachers' professional identities may change over time. In Brown and

Manktelow's (2016) research, teachers at the early stages of their careers, were more aware and compliant with government guidance and legislation. Teachers later in their careers based their practice more on their classroom experiences. Nevertheless, the teachers held across a range of issues for primary education:

> very complex perspectives, influenced by variables that produced ever-changing developments in their positions' (Brown and Manktelow, 2016: 77).

Brown and Manktelow (2016) illustrate not simply the complexity but suggest career trends based on teaching experience.

Gardner (2018) describes further complexity in teachers' views on writing. Gardner (2018) suggests a need to develop a more positive teacher writing identity and a greater understanding of the process of written composition. Gardner feels such an understanding is needed to redress teachers' negative personal experiences and National Curriculum's conceptualisation of writing (Gardner, 2018: 11). Cremin and Oliver (2017) also discuss teachers' perceptions of writing and comment that writing for some teachers in their research was challenging as they had restricted views of writing, had a degree of uncertainty about their writing competence, and negative writing histories.

Clarkson (2019) stresses that the complexity of teachers' views about writing derives their personal perspectives on writing, their professional identity and their role(s) in their school. The dynamic of teachers' views during their careers is something that the interpretative method research can consider in some depth.

3.3 Philosophies

The choice of paradigm is influenced by the researcher's understanding of the nature of the research issue. The paradigm is the way the researcher thinks about the research issue and the researcher's thinking affects the tone, research techniques and the duration of the study. Each paradigm has an underlying philosophy. Scotland (2012:14) summarises the paradigms:

> What knowledge is, and ways of discovering it, are subjective. Regarding educational research, the scientific paradigm seeks to generalize, the interpretive paradigm seeks to understand, and the critical paradigm seeks to emancipate. Each paradigm has its own ways of realizing its aims (Scotland, 2012: 14)

I discuss different paradigms before considering of the constructivist-interpretivist approach.

3.3.1 Philosophies not adopted

Approaching the research area from a positivist paradigm might lead to some of the following points. First, a positivist paradigm assumes that the research study is looking for a causal relationship. For this research topic, the relationship might be constructed to say that Year Six teachers teach in a way because they are responding to influencing factors such as their belief that their pupils are/are not innately good writers, or that some pupils may cognitively process better or differently to other pupils. To demonstrate the causal relationship there would be both a large sample and the statistical data might be used to suggest a correlation of a particular strength. Second, to investigate a causal relationship, the positivist paradigm uses statistical data from large samples for attempts at generalisations about correlation. Such positivist research might consider the results of 25 teachers' questionnaires, which might provide the basis for a causal relationship between teachers' comments about good writing and whether the writers had shown the ability to write well. Third, using a positivist paradigm assumes a belief in the scientific method using maths and logic to establish causal relationships between variables. The positivist paradigm is grounded in scientific experiments, maths or logic. From such as standpoint, knowledge and reality are objective and both aspects are measurable and quantifiable properties. The social context is not given substantial weighting. The researcher is attempting to the extent of a causal relationship or correlation between variables. For this research topic, such positivist research might consider a measurable aspect of 'good writing' - varieties sentence length, clause types and more advanced forms of punctuation – and from a given time trial note the frequency of these aspects in a pupil's writing attempts. A writing product is assessed in terms of the frequency of the qualities of 'good writing'; the writer might be considered as a 'good writer' if their writing product has high frequency of features.

These points have several consequences about the research data: in terms of the data collected, the data analysis and the presentation of the findings. The data sample needs to be relatively large. There is limited interest in the individual's context and the research instrument, such as a Likert scale, remains essentially the same for each participant. The conclusion is presented in terms of the extent of a causal relationship or correlation.

Approaching the research area from an interpretivist paradigm has a different perspective as the paradigm is attempting to understand the experience of the individual participant rather than the aggregated population of a large sample. Interpretivism holds that there are multiple realities. The participant's subjective reality is the object of the focus. The participants' subjective reality is significant as it influences their behaviour.

As a consequence of the above points, the interpretivist paradigm is not looking for one right answer. The paradigm uses subjective data. The paradigm does not attempt to understand the researched area through scientific experiment, maths or logic. Additionally, no research type in the interpretivist paradigm is superior to another because of the belief in multiple realities.

The interpretivist paradigm attempts to understand the research context and the interview is an appropriate research instrument to do this. The interview needs to have strict research protocols on data collection as well as an acknowledgement of researcher biases. There is a degree of reflexivity in place of the positivist objectivity. Finally, while it would not be possible in an interpretivist paradigm to generalise for the population, it might be possible to comment on a theory.

Such interpretivist research might consider the area of teachers' perception of school writing in primary schools. More specifically, the research might consider the context of state education, the teachers' constructs of writing and the construct of writing in the statutory requirements for writing. Each participating teacher will articulate to varying extents their personal, subjective interpretation of the context, their construct(s) of writing, the statutory constructs/requirements for writing and put forward their understanding of how these elements are accommodated in their classroom practice. Each participating teacher will articulate a different emphasis in the description for their classroom practice. Consequently, the research comments on a theoretical description of the teachers' perceptions of school writing.

Approaching the research area from a critical theory paradigm has a different focus as the aim to bring about transformation in the researched area by empowering or emancipation. Unlike the understandings that positivism or interpretivism attempts, critical theory has a commitment to change. Consequently, the data for this paradigm is over a period. There are some consequences of this. First, there would be multiple data collection and analyses before and after the change to ascertain whether it was the intended change. Second, the

focus will need to be wider. The range of aspects in this paradigm need to include more than the beliefs of participants as the range would consider the structures that gave rise to the researched area. The reality in the critical theory paradigm acknowledges that reality is the result of the people in the context as is historically constituted.

For this research topic, current school writing would be considered from two historical perspectives – as a representation of political power prescribing a specific construct of writing and writing and assessment as aspects of the neoliberal, high- stakes culture. After an analytical review reflecting teachers' concerns, the research might look at how the construct might be changed to reflect greater freedom for schools, teachers and pupils. The researched area would need an analytical review of writing after these changes to ascertain whether there was greater writing freedom for schools, teachers and pupils.

3.3.2 My interpretivist research

The interpretivist paradigm is used in this research because of the nature of the research area -an understanding of the realities constructed by teachers in the KS2 context. Lincoln and Guba (1985) claim that such realities are socially, culturally and historically constructed. My research uses a naturalistic methodology which is understood in this context to study the participating teachers in the natural environments without manipulation or control; that is, their school environment and experiences. The participants' data is essentially descriptive and then interpreted through conversations with the researcher.

Initially, I considered using a quantitative approach of a survey. However, I became dissatisfied with the quantitative approach for several reasons. The most significant would be interpreting the data to establish a causal relationship based on a statistical analysis. This approach was unlikely to acknowledge the complexity of a socially, culturally and historically constructed reality. Other important reservations included only seeing the outcomes in terms of what was taught rather than a complex justification, not giving the researcher as a research instrument prominence, and, finally, the teachers' views were not nuanced or seen as complex but were categorized.

Mertens (2015) comments on the nature of interpretivist paradigm by suggesting it does not see reality as absolute but rather is:

> socially constructed, that multiple realities exist that are time and context dependent... [which enables] an understanding of the realities constructed by people in various contexts (Mertens, 2015: 237).

Indeed, as Maxwell (2012) argues, qualitative methods enable understanding of the processes and dynamics of the elements in a causal relationship without using quantitative measurement. Mertens (2015) concludes that qualitative methods enable the

> inclusion of participants' differences in beliefs, values, intentions, and meanings, as well as social cultural, and physical contextual factors that causal relationships (Mertens, 2015: 238)

The constructivist-interpretivist approach is apposite for the research into teachers' beliefs, values and intentions in teaching writing as it permits the range of perceptions, views and intentions teachers have in teaching while acknowledging the school context.

A case study approach was seen as appropriate for research into teachers' perceptions in teaching writing. Moore et al. (2012: 243) describe case study research as offering a thorough and deeper description of complex phenomena. The approach focuses on the concept of case which may be a particular example from a group of events and how participants interact with the components of these phenomena. A case study may be based on any number of units of analysis; in this case, it is a group of Year Six teachers in west London.

Mertens (2015: 245) suggests a case approach needs data collection of certain types of information. Mertens includes the nature of the case, the historical background, other contextual information, similar case studies and participant information. For this research the first four are included in Chapter 2 while information on the participants and their schools is in Appendix Four. The data has been anonymised. A research design was used for this case research following Yin's (2009) and Mertens' (2105) guidance.

Using Mertens (2015) suggestions about the elements in a case study design, the research developed a several formulations of a research question about teachers' perceptions in teaching writing; identified propositions that teachers might give weight to regarding all forms of writing; used the teacher participant as the unit of analysis; established a logic linking teacher interview transcript data to the propositions, and created the criteria for interpretation of the interview data.

Finally, my decisions about the interpretivist approach were influenced by the position of the researcher. While quantitative research, such as the survey I first considered, might use

a printed questionnaire, in a qualitative study the researcher is the instrument for collecting data. Mertens (2015:261) describes this role:

> The qualitative researcher decides on the questions to be asked and in what order, what to observe, what to write down (Mertens (2015: 261).

Critically, the researcher brings his/her values, assumptions, beliefs and biases to their research. The researcher needs to reflect on these elements during their research. Relevant to this research was a consideration of the insider-outsider position. Darwin Holmes (2020) comments that:

> It [insider-outsider dialectic] is of relevance to all qualitative researchers (Darwin Holmes, 2020: 5).

The difference between insider-outsider is that insiders are members of a specified group with specific social statuses, whereas outsiders are non-members. The insider has a personal biography that gives them a familiarity with and a priori knowledge of the group being researched. My first consideration was that to a very limited extent I had an insider identity. However, on further reflection, I decided that I had a very limited understanding of the complex issues that the research participants experienced. Subsequently, I considered Mercer and Littleton's (2007) viewpoint was closer to my own developing experience as a researcher. Mercer and Littleton (2007) suggest that:

> The insider/outsider dichotomy is, in reality, a continuum with multiple dimensions and that all researchers constantly move back and forth along several axes, depending upon time, location, participants, and topic (Mercer and Littleton, 2007: 1)

Darwin Holmes (2020) argues that a researcher may inhabit multiple positions along the insider/outsider continuum. I found that in certain research areas I shared knowledge and familiarity with the participants but concerning other elements I had an outsider identity.

The interpretivist paradigm assumes a relativist ontology based on the view that there are multiple realities in addition to a subjectivist epistemology, where, as Denzin and Lincoln (2018) suggest, the knower and respondent co-create understandings. Punch and Oancea (2014) suggest that the researcher will construct knowledge socially drawing on their personal experiences. The following sections consider such positionality in relation to the ontology, epistemology, axiology assumptions in this research.

3.3.3 Ontological aspects

Interpretivist ontology is relativist. Guba and Lincoln (1994: 110) maintain that relativism views reality as subjective and, thus, as it differs from person to person, there are multiple realities. These realties are mediated by our senses. Crotty (1998) sees these realities developing as consciousness relates with objects which are already pregnant with meaning.

The assumption of a relativist ontology for this research means that I consider the research subject to have multiple realties and that these realties can be explored and meaning constructed through the interaction between the researcher and the participants. The interaction is essentially from the semi-structured interviews and subsequent conversations between the participants and the researcher.

Each research participants has a personal, individual and subjective understanding of writing and assessment. Based on such understanding, the participants have a wide range of classroom experiences. For example, some participants regarded writing ability at certain times as innate while at other times seeing writing as developing out of a staged writing process of an ideational stage and developing through drafting and editing. Importantly both these conceptualisations are regarded as of equal validity as they represent subjective understanding. Such conceptualization of classroom writing experience may be considered side by side as classroom practice is viewed by participants as multi-layered, and teachers may adopt different conceptualizations in different classroom contexts. This contrasts with the NC PoS (2013) view of writing characterised as a 'neutral act' (Clarkson, 2019) of measurable learnt skills and related knowledge.

Leavy (2017), when discussing ontology as a philosophical belief system about the nature of the social world, suggests ontology may be viewed in terms of whether the participants' social world is patterned and predictable or constantly re-created by humans. This research suggests that some elements might be viewed as patterned and predictable while others are the participants' recreation of elements of their experience.

The participants while teaching at different schools shared a membership of a teacher's group which teaches and assesses KS2 English. These participants' social reality was influenced by membership of the group, and this membership of the group influenced the research focus particularly of assessment. The interpretation of the findings by the researcher was also influenced by the multiple realties experienced by the participants in teaching and assessing writing.

As the researcher, I had only an imperfect understanding of what the different teachers conceptualized as the nature of writing at different times. Nevertheless, in the process of interviewing, the same participants offered different understandings of the nature of writing, their teaching practices and, to a lesser extent, their different understandings of assessment. These different realities reflecting personal, subjective understandings at different times were challenging for me as a researcher attempting to catch accurately the participants' nuanced descriptions.

3.3.4 Epistemological aspects

The interpretive epistemology is one of subjectivism which is based on real world phenomena. Grix (2004: 83) explained this as the world not existing independently of our knowledge of it (Crotty (1998: 43). Crotty (1998:43-4) explains this in terms of meaning not existing independently but rather is constructed though the interaction between consciousness and the world. Intentionality refers to the interaction between consciousness and phenomena. Regarding the same phenomenon, different people may construct meaning in different ways (Crotty, 1998: 9) but 'truth', as Pring (2004: 93 and 255) describes it, is in part a consensus formed by co-constructors. Therefore, knowledge has the trait of being culturally derived and historically situated. The interpretive paradigm does not question ideologies; it accepts them.

In this paradigm, the interaction of humans and their world construct what they understand as knowledge and meaningful reality which is then transmitted into a social context (Crotty, 1998: 42). Consequently, the social world can only be made sense on in terms of the individuals involved in this social world. Interpretivism intends to make explicit these social forces and structures.

I acknowledge that ontology and epistemology are interrelated. Both my ontology and epistemology come together, with other elements, to form the interpretivist paradigm. These elements are informed by my positionality, including my researcher identity, and the impact of identity on the research and reflexivity.

The influence of my identities on the research is significant as it may have affected how I perceived and interpreted data, and how the research participants might have reacted response. I was explicit to the participants about my experience in teaching writing to Year Six and in secondary schools. This disclosure gave some justification to my interest in the participants' views about writing. Similarly, senior management

experience gave an awareness of the pressure of accountability particularly to the significant proportion of them that were also members of their schools' senior teams.

Another aspect of positionality is how my identities may have impacted on the research question, the methodology, the data collection and its subsequent analysis. My choice of research focus in writing rather than any other aspect of primary teaching was certainly affected by my experience. From my teaching experience writing was challenging, high status and an accountability metric. The character of writing, such as types and forms, seemed important to me. Recent research (National Literacy Research on Children and Young People's writing, 2025) about the declining use of writing, also increased my interest in the significance of writing. Additionally, there has been critical research on creativity in writing as well as on contemporary writing forms. I considered the choice of research interviews as an appropriate way to explore these issues with the participants. In addition, the above considerations influenced the types of questions in the interviews, the phrasing and order of the questions and, importantly, my interpretation and analysis of the participants' responses.

Finally, during the research process I was aware of the nuanced differences about content and emphases of my and the participants' understandings about writing.

The aim of a qualitative researcher is to know and understand. My ontological and epistemological stance form the assumptions of my research, and the researcher position is incomplete without addressing the values I bring to research. This opens the door to the question of axiology.

3.3.5 Axiology

Axiology addresses the issues of ethics and values. Specifically, the ethical issues relevant to both the planning and doing research are axiological. Finnis (1980) described axiology as the philosophical approach to making decisions of value or the right decisions. This section is concerned with both these general ethical issues and positionality issues (Cohen et al., 2018: 305). The general issues include informed consent, vulnerability, participant stress, confidentiality and data ownership. These issues are in 3.4.4. The issues associated with positionality include participant- researcher relationship, the researcher impact on research knowledge and respect for participants. Some issues are in 3.4.4, some are relevant here.

My values have affected the research in, for example, the choice of topic, the decisions about whether to apply a deductive or inductive approach to the research, the research instrument choices, and the data analysis techniques. The following aspects of axiology are an attempt to create rigour in my research.

The decision to look at English in Year Six was significant to me. In addition to a belief in writing as an educational necessity and life skill, I taught Year Six for one year and was concerned at the emphases and interpretation given to spoken language, writing and multimodal/digital writing in the NC PoS (2013). I wanted to make sense of the understandings that brought about these emphases and interpretations. There was a significant negativity among colleagues at the school I taught at over the conceptualisation of writing in the NC (DfE, 2013). My primary colleagues' negativity was grounded in conflicting constructs of writing. While my colleagues complied, there was little acceptance of the NC (DfE, 2013) construct of writing. My research is an attempt at evaluation and understanding of the different constructs. I am conscious that my views differed from my primary colleagues' views mainly as I did not see a dichotomy between creativity and writing skills.

Given the narrow focus of the research, Hochschild's (2009) assessment of interviews as a mechanism to explore issues in depth, to see how and why people frame their ideas in the way that they do, how and why they make connections between ideas, values, events, opinions, and behaviours justifies the choice of interviews for this research. The qualitative nature of the research question determined the choice of interviews. Interpretivist interviews do not regard the participants as manipulatable. Rather the interview is a means of constructing knowledge between the researcher and the participant through conversation. Cohen et al. (2018) describe the interview as a 'social interpersonal encounter, not merely a data collection exercise' (Cohen et al., 2018: 506). Walford (2001: 90) remarks the interview is a social encounter where 'interviewers and interviewees co-construct the interview'. This research used interviews because interviews enable participants to discuss their interpretations of the world, and to express their person view of their experiences.

Nevertheless, the interview is a planned, constructed event distinct from a conversation and with conventions. This research on writing classroom practice falls into what Cohen et al. (2018:507) identify as an encounter necessarily sharing many of the features of every-

day life involving a trusting relationship between fellow teaching professionals, about the experiences of classroom practice and experiences, and a degree of curious naturalness on the part of the researcher in order to represent the views of the participants about their Year Six experience, unaffected as far as possible by the researcher. As a teacher of Year Six for a limited period, I had some knowledge of the NC PoS (2013), the TAF (2018) and the Exemplification Materials (2017). I believe that the participating teachers recognised my, admittedly limited, experience as a classroom teacher.

Cohen et al. (2018) comment that interviews are confronted by specific issues such as mutual trust, relative ease, holding back, clarity of meaning and personal circumstances. Personal circumstances during the interview are particularly relevant. The constraints of everyday life affected the participants as when a child interrupted an interview or a participant was upset.

My choice of interviews was influenced by considerations of fitness for purpose and my wish that the relationship between the participants and myself was of almost equal status. Both Lincoln and Guba (1985: 269) and Cohen et al. (2018: 509) maintain that fitness for purpose of interview type is important. According to these, the purpose is between structured and unstructured interviews determined by the researcher's awareness of what the researcher knows or is not aware of what s/he knows. I acknowledged the participants' experience. I wanted this research to show both the respect I had and my appreciation of the difficult, complex roles the participants had as they reconciled teachers of writing, assessors and significant persons in a primary school. The interviews enabled this aim. (Appendix Nineteen)

The framing of the interview questions was guided by several factors. While I recognised that there were areas of writing and teaching content knowledge areas I interested in, I wanted to avoid any intimations about my conceptualization of writing constructs, or implying that the Year Six experience was onerous, or that I had privileged knowledge. I wanted to leave everything open to discussion. Cohen et al. (2018: 507) and Baker and Johnson (1998) regard the interview as a medium for explaining knowledge in a cultural form, as

> questions far from being neutral are couched in the cultural repertoires of all participants indicating how people make sense of their social world and of each other (Baker and Johnson, 1998: 230).

For instance, I was aware that the semi-structured interview questions might be interpreted by the participants in many different ways. The semi-structured questions offered

opportunities to comment on themes, constructs or issues. There was a distinct concern with the NC PoS (2013) and TAF (2018) elements. These two documents have different focuses, are not highly aligned (Clarkson, 2019) and the participants had a very thorough knowledge of the TAF (2018) criteria. Two participants asked for clarification about the meaning of the questions on text types and the central government policy. (Appendix Five). Clarkson (2019) research suggests that that teachers' construct(s) of writing might be conceptualised in significantly different ways to the school writing construct, and I wanted the research to allow for consideration of such a finding.

3.4 Research protocols and Methodological procedures

The research was carried out while trying to follow consistent research protocols about data collection. These protocols were in a range of areas: sampling issues, recruitment, piloting, ethical issues, data collection, time horizons, interviews, data analysis.

3.4.1 Sampling

While the sampling characteristics of quantitative and qualitative research methods are different, Cohen et al. (2018: 203) adds the point that the character of different research methods is different and, consequently, as Ragin, (2004) says the sampling decisions are different (Ragin, 2004: 109). The character of the methods is determined, in part, by the purpose, as Cohen et al. (2018: 203) explain. In qualitative research with the focus on a smaller sample the intention is to create a purposive sample. The purposive sample is selected to meet the specific needs of the research question. Cohen et al. (2018) describes it as a process where the sample is 'handpicked … on the basis of the judgement of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought'. Cohen et al. (2018: 218). Silverman (2020) adds to this by suggesting that the purposive sample not only includes a feature but also the 'parameters of the population' in order to identify where the features/processes are most likely to occur:

> purposive sampling allows us to choose a case because it illustrates some feature or process in which we are interested…. [it]demands we think critically about the parameters of the population we are interested in and choose our sample carefully on this basis (Silverman, 2020: 63).

The aim of my qualitative research is to attempt to understand the situations experienced by Year Six teachers. As Ragin (2004: 100) explains the focus determine the sample decisions. Patton (2002) suggests different ways for purposive sampling in qualitative research.

The emphasis of this study is Year Six teachers' perceptions of the role of writing in their pedagogy and teaching practice, and as a result it is the Year Six teachers who make up the research sample. All of the participants had knowledge and experience of the STA assessment whether through the GPS test arrangements or teacher assessment of writing. While many of the teachers had recent experience of Ofsted inspections and they were conscious of Ofsted's use of attainment data for inspections. From discussions about the interviews, I am aware that the participants have had a variety of experiences. Nevertheless, all the participating teachers considered the focus of this study significant.

Many of the Year Six participants had a great deal of experience in teaching Year Six. While there were some teachers who had been teaching Year Six for between two to four years, five of the 11 participants had taught Year Six for 5 years or more. Additionally, the Year Six teachers had other positions of responsibility. Out of the Year Six participants five had subject responsibilities for their schools while six were members of the Senior leadership team with five of these either assistant headteachers or deputy headteachers. Perhaps such roles of responsibility might suggest that Year Six teachers were those who, in addition to teaching the Year Six pupils successfully, identify strongly with the school and the identify with the OFSTED description of the school as a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' school. Of course, the two might be interpreted as the same characteristic. This might influence their perception of the accountability mechanisms that the school is subject to. Ragin (2004: 114) points out that one of the qualitative foci in a sample is that the participants share common characteristic(s). This would seem to be the case with those willing to participate in the study from the interviews. Thus, the issue of positions of responsibility may be significant for some, as it may be argued that these teachers might both identify with and support the school's character.

For this research study, the purposive sample was to be determined by the involvement in the local authority STA moderation process. Almost all the participants were within a local authority, in maintained primary schools, and attended the 'Year Six Effective Practice Network' meetings and all are Year Six teachers. The group - 'Year Six Effective Practice Network' - was chosen in recognition that a similar Year Six experience was common to all the participants in these maintained schools. The local authority agency/ 'Year Six Effective Practice Network' is responsible for the STA moderation of teacher assessed writing. This group was also chosen to identify participation and reduce variation caused by differences in school status such as academization. The Year Six teachers

therefore have a common background of and experience of teaching in the Year Six practice.

3.4.2 Recruitment and interview schedule.

The Covid pandemic, the lockdown over 2020 and its aftereffects in 2021 impacted on the recruitment and interviewing of participating teachers.

The time horizons for the recruitment and interviewing of participating teachers were affected by the Covid pandemic and the subsequent lockdown over 2020 and its aftereffects in 2021. I was fortunate that so many teachers supported my research. All interested teachers were given an information sheet. (Appendix Nine). The recruitment took place between November 2021 to November 2022. The interviews took place between November 2021 to June 2023.

Because of the emphasis on Year Six teachers' perceptions of the pedagogy of writing, I needed to ensure that the interview sample was composed on teachers who currently teach Year Six had knowledge and, perhaps, had experience of the STA KS2 teacher assessment moderation process for the reasons explained in the previous section. While I might have wanted to have had many teachers from one school, as Breen (2006) suggests, to have

> [selected] participants who have been exposed to similar experiences (Breen, 2006: 466).

This was not possible. However, I considered that involvement in the strictly monitored STA assessment process as well as the shared views of the assessment process within the local authority 'Year Six Effective Practice Network' may have created some uniformity of views about writing. Indeed, involvement in the highly scripted, regimented and monitored STA assessment process may have reinforced a conceptualisation of writing. Further reinforcement of a particular understanding might come from the general catchment area, the membership of the same local authority, the personnel within the authority and the local authority culture. I considered that the sample should reflect the range of experiences of maintained schools and their teachers.

Such a range of experiences suggested a degree of consensus and shared understandings about Upper Key Stage 2 writing composition. Certainly, consensus and shared understandings about writing transcription and composition was highly valued by the Year Six participants. From the conversations, the participants valued assessment meetings

which offered opportunities to sharing and develop ideas about teaching and assessing writing. These meetings might co-construct a more collective approach to writing composition. Planning and teaching strategies seem to reflect the size of the school. Class teachers in two or three form entry primary schools tended to plan across the Key Stage or even just for Year Six. In these situations, the work of Kitzinger (2005) on group 'synergy' may be relevant as factors such as school size may colour experience and thinking. In contrast, teachers in one form entry primary schools might plan writing composition as a whole school issue.

Another consideration about the nature of the sample schools might be the effect of social class on pupil attainment in the maintained school primary schools. The work of Brice Heath (1983), Perry (2012), Reay (2013), Lambrith (2003) and Allen and Sims (2018) suggest that social class may be an influence on pupil attainment in maintained schools. From a number of viewpoints, including Cushing's (2020) analysis, it may be that pupils' social class may influence primary class teachers' perceptions of the nature of language, including the use of Standard English/dialect, and grammar. The perception of the nature of language is integral to writing. The local authority from which the majority of the sample of teachers was taken included several primary schools in relatively high socio-economic status and at least one primary school in an area of comparatively low socio-economic deprivation. The DfE published results show that the local authority and the maintained primary schools were all high achieving in tests and assessment reflecting writing. Almost all the Year Six teachers would have experienced the same local authority support, KS2 moderation preparation and training.

'Faith schools' were included in the sample to ensure a representative sample for 'panoptic gaze' of the school's accountability mechanism. There were faith schools in the sample: there were 3 Roman Catholic schools, 1 Church of England and 5 maintained state schools. Faith schools are subject to inspection from their respective diocesan authority inspectorate under Section 48 of the Education Act (DfES, 2005). Section 48 Inspections are in addition to those carried out by Ofsted. The composition of schools of the 11 interviewed teachers was varied: 6 were from faith schools and 5 were from maintained state schools. The sample decisions were an attempt to give the widest scope to the 'panoptic gaze' of an organisational discourse. Four schools had experience of Section 48 inspections. The sample schools had different Ofsted experiences: 4 schools had received the "Outstanding' category, 5 schools had received 'Good'. These decisions about a selection of 'faith' schools were not intended to create a comparative study, rather

following the comments in Brown and Manktelow (2016), to investigate the Year Six teachers' perspectives on writing composition through a varied selection of mainstream primary schools.

The sample of primary schools used was a 'convenience sample'. As Cohen et al. (2018) stress this is an opportunistic strategy, with limited value and no 'generalizability' and would contrast significantly with a purposive sample. (Cohen et al., 2017) makes several important points about this the 'convenience sample':

> [the convenience sample] does not represent any group apart from itself…[and] does not seek to generalise to a wider population (Cohen et al., 2017: 217).

Nevertheless, this convenience sample gave what Cohen et al. (2018:203) 'participant typicality'. In order to have a varied selection of mainstream schools, I went for a minimum number of 10 Year Six teachers. The 11 participants gave a varied selection of schools within the local authority.

The composition of the primary schools by size varied. There were 8 schools represented by the interviewed teachers. 1 of the 9 schools was a 4-form entry, 3 were 3-form entry, 1 was 2-form entry and 4 were 1-form entry.

The recruitment strategy involved gatekeepers. These gatekeepers might have been in a position to control access to certain aspects of the sample. The first level of gatekeepers was those in the local authority agency, 'Achieving for children'. Gatekeepers in this group are 'those individuals in an organization that have the power to grant or withhold access to people or situations for the purposes of research' (Burgess, 1984: 48). Although the members of 'Achieving for children' received full information about the research prior to giving their approval for access, they did not limit access. Indeed, they were very helpful. The second level of gatekeepers were the headteachers in the primary schools in the local authority. The headteachers were given information on the purposes and methodological procedures of the research study and were asked to give written consent for the research. (Appendix Ten). The headteachers often consulted with the deputy and assistant headteachers about involvement in the research. For Barbour and Kitzinger (1999), this means ensuring that this gatekeeper is very well briefed and supplied with any additional information that was sought. While I was not conscious of anything other than help and cooperation from headteachers who responded, there was the potential of teachers being encouraged/discouraged from involvement. While written consent to participate in the research was signed off by all headteachers and participating teachers, the motives of the

teachers are likely to be, as Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, suggest, varied. Morgan (1997) suggests that the appropriateness of interviewees is

> to ask how actively and easily the participants would discuss the topic of interest' (Morgan, 1997: 17).

The consent documents are in the appendices (Appendices Eleven and Twelve)

3.4.3 Piloting

I piloted aspects of the research to develop greater accuracy in this research. The benefit of using a pilot has been advocated by a number of researchers such as Ritchie and Lewis (2003), Barbour, 2005, Breen (2006), Belzile and Oberg (2012), Kreuger and Casey (2015). Cohen et al. (2018) advises that the benefits of a pilot are tangible at a general and specific level. Cohen et al. (2018: 496) suggests that the general benefits of a pilot are increase in suitability, reliability, validity and predictability. More specifically, a pilot may in addition identify ambiguities, differences of interpretation, cultural biases and remoteness from participants' experience (Cohen et al., 2018: 491 and 583). Barbour (2005) suggests that a pilot is a chance to develop an interview schedule which has 'a few questions and probes that stimulate discussion about the key research topics' (Barbour, 2005: 45). and Oberg (2012) suggest the pilot might help scope out the concepts used by the participants:

> what kinds of concepts the participants are bringing to the discussion and on what level(s) they are engaging with the material (Belzile and Oberg, 2012: 465).

I found this with the interviewees' references to aspects of the STA's TAF (2018) and the moderation process. Breen (2006) suggests that a pilot may help the researcher become more reflexive about the interviewing process (Breen, 2006: 472). This was my experience with the north London pilot.

Another area where the pilot helped me with was the interviewing process. I did become more effective as an interviewer as I did more interviews. As Kreuger and Casey (2015) pointed out a pilot study can also be a means of understanding a researcher's effectiveness as an interviewer. This was my experience. Additionally, a pilot study may enable familiarity with the mechanics of recording; this was my experience as I had no experience of recording and transcribing interviews. My choice of recording was initially a voice recorder, but subsequently, I have used the commercial package, 'Zoom'. I was helped by my tutors in these areas.

The pilot study identified issues about the conceptualization of writing, especially the roles of grammar, spelling and of the GPS test in the Year Six teachers' experience. This was invaluable to me.

3.4.4 Ethical issues

The relevant ethical issues to this research are those identified by me with helpful guidance from my tutor, together with the measures that I took on these issues. These issues have been informed by the BERA, 2011 Ethical Guidelines for Educational research. I submitted my application for Ethical Consideration to the St Mary's University Ethics Sub-Committee on 02 August, 2019. The application is in the appendices. The Committee accepted the measures I put forward to diminish any potential harmful consequences to the research participants. (Appendix Seven and Eight) The guidelines from BERA, 2011, and St Mary's Ethics Committee have been referred to and used in this research.

The relevant ethical issues to this research relate to five areas. Firstly, there are issues of confidentiality, anonymity and privacy. Secondly, there are issues about the treatment of participants such as coercion or incentives to involvement. Thirdly, there are issues about the acknowledgement of professional behaviours and issues. Fourthly, there is a consciousness of the power issues between those involved. Finally, there is the intrusive nature of the semi-structured interviews. I review these five areas of ethical issues in turn within the context of qualitative research which involved semi-structured interviews with the Year Six teachers involved in the local authority support meetings for maintained schools.

The participants' anonymity and privacy within the data collected were assured. The details of participants and schools were anonymised (Cohen et al., 2017: 129). Most participants were invited to participate during a Year Six teachers' moderation meeting. The invitations were for the interviews. This process also ensured confidentiality (Cohen et al., 2018: 130).

The interviews transcripts were anonymised. My intention was not to include the names on any of the interview transcripts, and while the substance of the conversations was shared with my supervisors, the names and identities were not linked to any individual responses either at this stage or later in the research process. There was no coercion or

incentive to participate. The invitation was in two parts. The first part was an email with the details of the research, a participant information sheet with an invitation to contact me with any comments and a sheet outlining the implications of the participation. The second part was a short personal invitation from me to each participant. All local authority headteachers had previously been sent an email from the local authority 'Lead school Improvement Adviser' giving details of the research and asking for permission to approach their Year Six teachers about participating. The participants were given a participant consent form with a further invitation to make comments or ask questions before signing the consent form. This consent form made it clear that the participants might withdraw at any time from the research if they wished to for any reason. The need for confidentiality in the responses in the interviews is difficult, as Parker and Tritter (2006) identify. The importance of confidentiality was emphasised during the interview and especially in the interview preamble. No teachers withdrew from the research.

The semi structured interview questions related to Year Six teachers' understanding of the construct of writing, current Year Six practice with reference to the implementation of the construct(s) of writing, identification of the influences on the Year Six teacher regarding writing, changes that might enhance the role of writing in Year Six, and any additional observations. The issue of implicit power in the school context and the roles that the participants might play were acknowledged both to the participants and in the research. The issue of school identity and power relations was referred to earlier in this chapter. While the questions centred on policy and practice common to most maintained primary schools, I was aware that the participating teachers were being asked to articulate personal and sensitive insights into their thinking and classroom practice. The interview process might have been seen as unsettlingly intrusive, and, as a result, teachers were made aware that they could withdraw from the research study at any time. (Appendix Six)

3.4.5 Data collection

Data was derived from 11 interviews. The participants were from two groups: those involved in the Achieving for Children moderation meeting and those who personally responded to my invitational emails. There were 5 out of the final 11 from the moderation meetings and 6 from email responses and other contacts. Cohen et al. (2018: 220) describes such a process as 'chain-referral method' or 'snowballing'. I decided on the use of the context of the 'Year Six Effective Practice Network' for several reasons. Membership and participation in the STA assessment was a statutory requirement and was administered by

the ‘Lead School Improvement Adviser’. Additionally, the adviser had access to current Year Six teachers across a range of schools but also had a knowledge of the teachers in the ‘Year Six Effective Practice Network’. As Patton suggests, such knowledge might

> more thoroughly describe the variation in the group and to understand variations in experiences while also investigating core elements and shared outcomes (Patton, 1990: 172).

I contacted others in the local authority in order to increase the numbers involved because of the low numbers who responded at the moderation meetings. In part, the limited response was due to the impact of the 2020 Covid 19 lockdown.

As the focus in this research is an exploration of teachers’ perceptions on one aspect of their multi-faceted role, I considered that interviews offered the opportunities for greater engagement with the participating teachers and richer data for the research.

3.4.6 Interviews

I would argue that, in the context of the interviews, from an interpretative viewpoint and in line with that put forward by Kitzinger (2005), the participants in this research study’s interviews were regarded as ‘social beings co-constructing meaning’ (Belzile and Oberg, 2012: 461).

The context of the interview was a concern, and it may be argued might influence the expression of participants’ views. The interview venue and its timing are significant. Winlow et al. (2013) identify the need for the venue to be a familiar environment, whilst avoiding one with specific links for any of the participants, which might reflect power relationships within either the schools or the local authority. In addition, timing can be problematic, since any additional calls on teachers’ time may limit their participation or affect their expression of ideas or views. Adding the interview onto another meeting has also met with the criticism that this might compromise authentic informed consent (Morgan, 2010; Somekh and Lewin, 2005). To address these concerns, the interviews were carried out over Zoom. Zoom allowed the participating teachers to make choices that they were comfortable with.

The choice of a ‘Zoom meeting’ was in part affected by the Covid 19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown. Initially, the ‘Lead school Improvement Adviser’ asked that none of the schools or teachers were to be contacted during and after the 2020 lockdown. The

justification was that teachers had worked really hard to offer a worthwhile educational experience for their pupils. Thus, an additional demand on teachers was unfair. I agreed with this. When I was permitted to contact schools and teachers, understandably there was a degree of fatigue about an additional demand from some schools. In contrast, teachers were helpful. I think the nature of Zoom made the interview experience more acceptable.

The invitation to a Zoom interview was made very flexible. The timing of the interview was left to the interviewee regarding the choice of day and the time. I was prepared for any day or time. This meant that the interviewee teacher was able to make decisions about a venue that they felt comfortable in and at a time that was suited to them. Out of the 11 interviewees, 3 teachers chose to be interviewed in their schools, and the rest chose their homes. One teacher had arranged a school context interview and then emailed to say that family circumstances meant he would do the interview from a home context. These Zoom arrangements minimised the imposition of any particular context.

In interviewing, I had to ensure that the participants were able to express themselves freely and that the interview structure was supportive of the participants. My experience of organising staff discussions as a school headteacher proved helpful in this role. Cohen et al. (2018: 513) remark on the interconnectedness of the interview schedule of questions and the question types. Cohen et al. (2018:513) suggest carefully formulating open-ended, semi-structured questions to allow both flexibility, as well as offering an opportunity to explore their perceptions. I used a 'funnel strategy' of broad questions which might be narrowed down to more specific or particular points. I started to develop this skill during the interviews. This is an area that I might have developed more.

The interviews and the questions followed a structure. Morgan (2012), talking of interviews, recommends that there is an unambiguous awareness by interviewer and participants of the 'desired degree of structure in the discussion' (Morgan, 2012: 168). I designed the interview structure to allow a loosely arranged conversation to support the research topic exploration. Initially, after stating the research question, a statement of the ground rules was outlined including an invitation for the participating teacher to withdraw at any time as well as asking the participating teacher whether they were happy to continue. The semi-structured questions then followed. The interview concluded with my expressing my thanks for their involvement, giving up their time and for their insights. The intention is to allow the interviews to take between 45 mins to 1 hour each.

For the purpose of an accurate record of the interview, I chose to use Zoom and the transcription facility it offers. My tutors suggested this facility on Zoom. While the transcripts needed some editing, the automatic recording allowed more concentration on the interviewee's comments. Other researchers have identified concerns with using written notes (Breen, 2006; Parker and Tritter, 2006) as the process of transcription does not allow for a fuller engagement in the interview. In addition, the process of writing while listening to a commentary may lead to a misunderstanding or a failure to notice nuances of meanings. Subsequently, after editing the transcript, I sent it to the interviewee to ask for a judgement about the faithfulness of the transcript to what had been said. The recordings and transcriptions of the participants' comments have been altered in an attempt to give anonymity and confidentiality to the participating teachers.

The methods of recording interviews and maintaining anonymity and confidentiality are areas where both my previous experience of organising staff discussions in school, and the trial interviews held in north London may have helped the data-gathering opportunities (Breen, 2006). I was conscious of my inexperience in structuring a research interview and so Breen's (2006: 467) guidance was helpful.

3.4.7 Data analysis

The purpose of the research and the data's nature are central aspects of data analysis. However, the character of qualitative data analysis is complex. Cohen et al. (2018) comment:

> qualitative data analysis is not straightforward [as there is] no simple formula or recipe for this (Cohen et al., 2018:643).

Silverman (2020: 336) comments on the difference in character in the types of data. Data derived from

> observation, or the analysis of written texts, or visual images deals with data which seem to exist independently of the researcher (Silverman, 2020: 336).

Silverman identifies such as 'naturalistic data'. Data collected through the activity of a researcher which would 'not exist apart from the researcher's intervention' (Silverman, 2020: 336) he called 'researcher-provoked data'. The importance of this division of data types is that is 'researcher-provoked data' has, according to Silverman (2020: 337), two advantages: authenticity and implicitly an understanding of the behaviour. Additionally, it allows for speed and easy access. Silverman does suggest limitations. The most significant

are the simplistic imputation of 'meaning' to behaviour (Silverman, 2020: 337), and the limited assumptions about human actors including the notions of an individual's 'deep interior' accessed through in-depth interviews (Silverman, 2017: 149 and 152). These ideas stress the need for a considered and sensitive approach to the human actors in the research and an awareness of the nature of interview data. This qualitative study uses semi-structured interviews. While there are a variety of data analysis processes, I consider two that are relevant to this study as they offer some understanding the teachers' perceptions of their experience. First, there is an analytic approach with emphasis on language. Second, there is an interpretative approach used to understand the perceptions and culture of the participants. Both are applicable to this research study.

Barbour (2005) suggests that the interpretative approach causes the researcher to change perspective as they move from a descriptive to an analytic perspective in order to recognise, explore and construct patterns in the data. Cohen et al. (2018) references Gibbs and suggest that this change of perspective is an essential part of qualitative research:

> qualitative data analysis is often heavy on interpretation…. distinguished by its merging of analysis and interpretation and often by the simultaneity of data collection with data analysis (Gibbs, 2007: 3).

Silverman (2020) also stresses the importance of such an approach. I was conscious of this change of perspective in many of the interviews.

Qualitative data analysis involves a complex understanding of data. Cohen et al. (2018) describes the complexity of the analysis involving a range of comparative and evaluative strategies. These strategies include some of the following:

> organizing and categorizing the data into key concepts…coding…identifying key points; identifying linkages and relationships between the data; …and thematic analysis (Cohen et al., 2018: 644).

Additionally, data analysis involves a complex of interpretation, reinterpretation and reflexivity. Cohen et al. (2018: 644) describe it as:

> recursive, non-linear, messy and reflexive, moving backwards and forwards between data, analysis and interpretation (Cohen et al., 2018: 644).

My experience of data analysis reflected such a process of going back over the data recursively to develop a better understanding of what was being referred to and what I thought was being said.

As the interview data is the basis for data analysis, I transcribed the recordings in their entirety. The recordings were helpful in catching the words and, depending on the type of

recording, the paralinguistic features of the conversation. Cohen et al. (2018: 646) points out the value of transcription as providing important detail and 'an accurate verbatim record of the interview'. Cohen et al. (2018) make the point of stressing the good practice of following the 'transcription conventions'. Nevertheless, the other non-verbal aspects are omitted such as the contextual features of the interview. Nonetheless, following Morgan's (2012) guidance, after each interview I sent the participant a transcription to record confirm what was said and how it was said.

After the interview transcription, I used initial codes to categorize specific features of the data by organising it into 'meaningful groups' (Tuckett, 2005). This was as a result of using an inductive approach to this data. Such an approach was a form of reflexive thematic analysis, which Braun and Clarke (2006) comment is:

> a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 78).

The units of 'meaningful groups' (Tuckett, 2005) were the word, phrase or paragraph containing one idea. These related to the research question. Through this inductive approach, the codes were used to categorise the participants' perceptions of writing composition in Year Six. In order to be meticulous, I followed Saldana's (2021: 41) guidance on using code lists. The exercise of code lists enabled the identification of themes between the participants' views by combining the different codes into clusters having an apparent theoretical basis (Winlow et al., 2013). The clusters may be identified through recurring patterns which were put into groups using 'internal homogeneity' and 'external homogeneity'. The idea of homogeneity is from Patton's (1990) work. Estabrooks et al. (2004) explain:

> internal homogeneity assumes that the data in the categories hold together because of their similarities. External homogeneity assumes that the categories are distinct from one another (Estabrooks et al., 2004: 237).

Such categories generate the main overarching themes, together with any sub-themes within them. This process enables what Braun and Clarke (2006) define as 'coherent candidate themes' to be generated to reflect 'the meanings evident in the data set as a whole' (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 91). Following the ideas of Morgan (2010), the data collection from the participating teachers gives the opportunity to articulate their views about writing composition in Year Six. Morgan (2010) suggests the data analysis may provide the researcher with the opportunity to explore a range of responses on the research topic as the researcher moves recursively through the data. As a result of this, Morgan's (2006) suggests that this:

> not only provide data on what the participants think but also explicit insights into why they think the way they do (Morgan, 2006: 123).

While the transcription was coded about what the participating teachers consider *what* the role of their teaching of compositional writing was and issues about assessment, the themes from such coding might be seen as suggesting *why* this is the case. (Appendices Thirteen-Eighteen). The following chapter describes the participating teachers' comments on these areas.

Chapter 4 Research findings

Chapter 4 presents the findings from this study and considers the three themes derived from coding the interview data. The coding analysis used Saldana's (2021:17) suggestion of data, code, category and theme. The interview data was codified several times to create a 'systematic order' (Saldana 2021:13). The systematic order from codifying enabled the creation of categories that share some characteristic suggesting a pattern. These categories represent, using Saldana's (2021:13) phrase, 'consolidated meaning'. As a result of the coding and categorization, I created themes of a word or phrase to describe the process of school writing (Saldana, 2021:19). A fuller table is in Appendix Sixteen; below is an extract.

The three themes that emerged from the analysis of this data are:

1. the concept of writing;
2. the classroom practice; and,
3. assessment and surveillance.

The themes are the key aspects of the Year Six teachers' perceptions.

The process of analysis from data to codes, categories and themes is shown in Figure 2 and further details are in Appendices Fourteen, Seventeen and Eighteen. This chapter while discussing the three themes also refers to Ivanic's (2004:22) six discourses about teaching writing.

Figure 2. Extract diagram illustrating part of coding from data to themes. Based on Saldana (2021:17)

	Code	Category	Themes
1	**Skills discourse** (Such as sentence accuracy, grammar)	Skills	Writing s
	Text forms (Such as digital forms, multimodal texts Social Practices discourses)	Communication	
	Process discourse/Stages of writing Such as ideational, drafting, writing)	Writing processes: Knowledge	Writing Discourses
	Creativity discourse (Such as voice, writer identity)	Expressive creativity	Writing Discourses
	Skills discourse, Genre discourse Process discourse.	NC writing construct for composition	Writing Discourses Writing Discourses
2	**Planning content for TAF/ GPS** (Such as termly plans, boosters)	Planning writing	Classroom practice
	Writing models and exemplars (Such as TAF report or persuasive genres)	Assessment shaped teaching. [Washback]	
	Non contextualised grammar. (Such as analysis of phrase or clause)	Grammar: prescriptive and declarative	

	Teacher as writer (Such as writing in class, class critique of teacher writing)	Teacher writing	
	School polices (Such as freewriting, word gap, drama)	School policy impact	
	HT performance conversations (Such as targets, attainment)	Professional experience	
	Lockdown impact (Such as extended writing, writing attainment)	Covid Lockdown	
3	TAF application in class (Such as teaching to assessed criteria)	TAF compliance	Assessment and surveillance
	TAF washback (Such as mastery of assessed criteria)	TAF washback	
	Creativity and TAF criteria. (Such as viewing writing as wider than TAF)	TAF and creativity: teacher view	
	Moderation: behaviour and performance. (Such as focus on behaviours during scrutiny)	Moderation: scrutiny Teacher behaviours	
	Moderation: pressure on teacher. (Such as nature of teacher judgement)	Moderation: Judgement of teacher	
	Accountability impact teaching. (Such as Performance Tables)	Internal surveillance	
	OFSTED has high stakes, (Such as inspection judgements)	OFSTED surveillance	

4.1 Writing discourses

The first of the themes from the coding process is writing discourses. The term 'writing discourses' is taken to mean beliefs about writing, learning to write, and ways of teaching and assessing writing. Ivanic's (2004:226) typology of discourses includes writing as a skill, as creativity, as a process, as genre, as a social practice or as a socio-political act. All the participants referred to the three statutory discourses of the NC (DfE, 2013) construct: writing as a skill, as a staged process, and as text type. The participants' references to writing as a skill and a text type were more explicit than references to the process stage discourse. For example, the participants referred to writing as a skill and specific genres in contrast to generally referring to the stages of writing such as drafting and editing. The writing discourses' five categories are constructed from the codes identifying writing features. These may overlap with each other such as writing skills being part of a drafting or editing process. The skills discourse was emphasized by all participants and is the first category in the participants' data and the codes.

4.1.1 The skills discourse

Clarkson (2019) notes that the skills discourse was frequently referenced in both the PoS (DfE, 2013) and the TAF (STA. 2018) and all the participants referred to the TAF's skills focus either as a whole or to what were considered salient aspects. Lisa commented on the

need for spelling and punctuation accuracy and the 'effectiveness of pupil writing' (TAF, 2018:5). Whilst Angela and Robert referred to effectiveness in the use of apostrophes and capitals, David saw the effectiveness in terms of the integration of dialogue and clauses into text. Sarah, for example, identified the skill elements that she felt were relevant to effectiveness:

> Sentence accuracy, spelling accuracy, punctuation accuracy. Gosh these things are so important as well (SPQ1:SS1 03.10.2022).

Skill in the accurate use of grammar was important for the participants. Joanne felt that the requirement for consistent and correct use of tenses had to be approached through word order, sentence structure and use of clauses. Robert commented on the specific grammar features that he considered important for effective writing:

> [The children need to show] an understanding of what the passive and active voices, and being able to use them correctly, being able to talk about the subjunctive mood (RCQ1:SS1 07.02.2023).

Rochelle, while acknowledging the focus on grammar, questioned whether specific elements were important for insisting their inclusion in the framework:

> Year Six teachers…there's a heavy focus on grammar…I don't know we should be insisting that we all have a modal verb…or a child has not used a modal verb or we need an example of the passive (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

These quotations show the participants' awareness of the skill discourse elements in the Teacher Assessment Framework that their pupils needed to both know of and use accurately and consistently. Specifically, they referenced the ability to accurately and consistently use punctuation, spelling, coherence/cohesion in text structure and the correct use of syntax. The participants identified areas that pupils found difficult: the use of the apostrophe, verb tenses, moods and voices and use of clauses. Genre, another aspect of the construct with the stage process discourse, is now considered within the coding category of communication.

4.1.2 Writing as communication

The second category is communication. This category includes two writing discourses: the genre and the social practice discourses. The participants identified an intermingling of specific text types associated with reporting and contemporary forms of writing such as digital forms, and both discourses were significant for all the participants. The participants noted that while communication is emphasized in the PoS (DfE, 2013), there are limited references in the TAF (STA, 2018). In contrast, they noted the genre discourse is significantly represented in both the PoS (DfE, 2013) and the TAF (STA, 2018). The

participants noted that aspects of the social practices discourse intermingled with communication and autobiographical writing in both the PoS (DfE, 2013) and the TAF (STA, 2018).

The communication category includes the participants' narrow consideration of digital, multimodal and blog writing. Lisa considered contemporary writing forms as important, and Stuart did some work on blogs. Overall, the participants did not regard these writing forms as of central importance; these forms are not assessed. In contrast, genre forms were important to the participants as they were frequently mentioned and assessed in the TAF (STA, 2018).

The participants described how the genre discourse is perceived by them. There are four genre forms identified in the TAF (STA, 2018): narrative, commentary, report, and persuasion. All the participants refer to genre and some refer to specific genres. Anna described the requirement as:

> By the end of primary school children need to have that skill to be able to write across all six different genres (AFQ1: SSI 02.06.2022).

Robert described a number of genre forms and, while acknowledging that the pupils need to know the four genres, considered familiarity with each genre and its grammar as being important. Charlotte also referred to different genres in her description whilst giving details of the grammar conventions of specific genres:

> You have different genres of writing…fictional narratives, persuasive… newspaper reports. Each one has a different style of writing, and we have to teach those styles….and we'd teach the grammar that goes with that. We teach the children which grammatical structures they should use with that piece of writing (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

Whilst all participants were positive about the inclusion of genre forms as a means of 'writing effectively for a range of audiences and purposes' (TAF, 2018:5), only Alan identified an issue in teaching these forms. Alan stated how the report genre in NC (DfE, 2013) requires factual rather than figurative language:

> the GDS writers…get confused... because so used to using… narrative... 'This is what I'm writing.' 'So …change the tone of your writing say to a newspaper [report]'…they're having to constantly be reminded... because they want to use expressive words, they [say] 'I want to use this simile'... [I say] 'That's not a newspaper report'..., it's very difficult for the children to switch between the two (AHQ1: SSI 07.06.2022).

These quotations illustrate the participants' appreciation and knowledge of writing effectively for a range of audiences and purposes. The participants were knowledgeable

about the wider implications of genres. The participants were positive about the genre aspect of writing effectively and felt, despite several reservations, positive about these aspects of the NC construct of writing.

These responses about the communication category show the participants' knowledge of wider writing forms and the rule-based nature elements in the NC construct. All the participants were aware of the need for accuracy in the text product in order to meet the assessment criteria in the TAF.

4.1.3 The process stage writing discourse

The third category is the process stage discourse. This was an important if often implicit aspect of writing for all the participants. While, the process stage discourse has a strong emphasis in the PoS (DfE, 2013), there are very limited references to it in the TAF (STA, 2018). This was a concern for several participants.

For Anna the process stage discourse was of central importance as she stressed that writing was a developmental process of the writer and the written text. Anna comments on the practice:

> Nobody writes first time perfectly and it's a process...ideas, write, then think... have another go and improve it (AFQ1: SSI 02.06.2022).

For Rochelle the process stage discourse is understood from a metaphor of stepping stones in communication which simplify the production of a text. For Rochelle, knowledge of the writing stages was essential:

> But I think that, you know, it's important to get those stepping stones in. You've got to prepare them for the writing task you want to do (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

The stages for Rochelle were important as they offered signposts to the pupils about the text development:

> if you don't do those stepping stones, they'll [pupils] get quite lost (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

Lisa suggests using the process stage discourse with paired/shared writing strategies:

> you can have two people sitting next to each other, writing texts to each other [that]they can edit and revise (LBQ1:SS1 07.01.2022).

For Angela the editing stage appeared significant:

> they plan it, write it...we encourage them to go through and edit (AKQ1:SS1 19.06.2023).

David felt that meeting the framework's requirements for *working at* was helped by the process stage discourse:

> In Year Six, I think ...there is a sharpening of 'can they do this'.... I think drafting and editing helps (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023).

For Sarah the pupils' editing process might involve steering the pupil to particular framework features:

> I shouldn't say this... it probably does happen a lot... when children are editing you…. will particularly be saying "That's really good. But perhaps you should go back and add this in" (SPQ1:SS1 03.10.2022).

For several participants, the absence of the process stage discourse in the framework was regretted as including it would have been an opportunity to acknowledge good pupil practice. Not including it, Charlotte felt, did not acknowledge its importance.

> we need to teach them to edit. The TAFs don't talk about teaching them to edit their work...that's how they make improvements (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

The participants' experiences in the above sections are concerned with the statutory NC (DfE,2013) writing construct. The participants also emphasized their experiences of the non-statutory creativity discourse which is the focus of the next section.

4.1.4 The creativity discourse

The fourth category is the creativity discourse. This discourse was important for most of the participants. The creativity discourse is not referenced in either the PoS (2013) nor the TAF (2018) which seriously concerned several participants.

The majority of the participants refer to self-expression or expressive writing which is a feature of creativity discourse. This discourse is about the writer's identity, writer's voice, self-expression, reader interest, and the use of descriptive and adventurous vocabulary. Indeed, in this discourse writing is less about the text than the writer. The participants described activities in this discourse within a reading context where the discourse is often a narrative.

For a number of participants, the creativity discourse is part of the essence of writing. Lisa and David suggest that creativity is bound up with the expression of thoughts and ideas. Similarly, Rochelle describes the essence of writing as personal expression. For Angela writing encourages creativity and is related to both writer identity and voice:

> writing encourages children to be creative. It ...gives them an outlet for their expression of their thoughts and their opinions. And... also allows the development of their personality (AKQ1:SS1 19.06.2023).

For some participants the exclusion of creativity was related to the skills and genre dominated assessment criteria. For Allan the high stakes assessment generated an emphasis on attainment performance above many other considerations. Allan said:

> In Year 6 there's got less creativity as their writing because the teacher is trying to drive them towards the ARE piece of writing (AHQ1: SSI 07.06.2022).

Angela described the Year Six experience as limiting opportunities for self-expression. Consequently, she wants to encourage self-expression in her Year Six pupils. Joanne similarly felt that the Year Six experience limited opportunities for creativity in writing. Joanne, therefore, decided to move from Year Six to Year Five where she had greater creative freedom. Stuart similarly emphasized the importance of creativity and the need for his pupils to use language to engage the reader's interest. Stuart described the contradictory pressures on teachers of support for creativity in writing while satisfying the requirements of the NC construct of writing:

> Teachers are under such pressure to make sure that this piece of writing has fronted adverbials or in this piece of writing they have used the rule of three or rhetorical questions so that could limit [pupil] creativity (SDQ1:SS1 04.06.2023).

Stuart emphasized the writer's expression of aspects of themselves and contextualized such expression in the context of the pupils' reading experiences:

> Writing is one of the most creative outlets children have…they learn to express themselves in different ways…being creative, … expressing themselves…writing ties all the things together from reading if you are able to write it down and apply those things and digest what you are reading through analysis of the author's work, the authorial intent…and apply it in your own writing (SDQ1:SS1 04.06.2023).

Charlotte offered a longer-term view of the changing emphases in the national curriculums relating to creativity. She felt that creativity and the associated personalized 'spark' had been demoted in importance:

> Creativity has been relegated…in old days, you look a child's book and say, 'Yep that's Greater Depth because they have that spark'…now it's very much 'Well they may not be [creative] but they tick all boxes [in the TAF]' (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

Rochelle's felt a wider concern about the status of expressive writing:

> insisting on [grammar] features takes it away from what English is about (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

One of the more obvious points about these quotations is that the participants described a discourse that is not in the NC (DfE, 2013). The omission of the creativity discourse is because of its focus on the writer's voice rather than syntactical and punctuation accuracy. Significantly, nine participants talked about this non-statutory discourse as being an important aspect of Year Six writing. Whilst the participants discussed creativity positively, the participants' comments reveal different emphases about creativity how self-expression is represented. Five participants referred specifically to the creativity discourse rather than referred to self-expression. This may have been a consequence of an intermingling of the creative with the genre discourses. In contrast, for four participants the strong emphasis was exclusively on the writer. Finally, only one participant commented on creativity in working at *greater depth* writing as having a 'spark'.

Figure 3: Extract showing the participants' references to discourses, the Teacher Assessment Framework and moderator experience.
Full version in Appendix Thirteen

References to Skills writing: text focus on accuracy of sentence construction and grammar in all texts	References to Genre writing: the features of different genres and appropriate to use …an emphasis on structure and organisation of a text.	References to Process writing: Focus on mental process of writing stages from ideational to publishing.	References to Expressive writing: the writer as an individual. Includes strong writer's voice, self-expression, description and the use of adventurous vocabulary.	References to Creativity explicitly: self-expression and individuality.	Reference to the TAF (STA, 2018)	Recent moderator experience in assessing teacher assessed writing through the Teacher Assessment Framework.
11/11 participants	11/11 participants	11/11 participants	9/11 participants	7/11 participants	11/11 participants	5/11 Participants

Figure 3 shows all the participants are represented in the columns for Skills, the Genre, Process Stage Writing and the TAF (STA, 2018) which reflects the personal and professional commitment of the participants who expressed their concern that their pupils did as well as they could. The numbers of participants commenting on the expressive writing approach (in Column 4) is significantly high but not as high as in the other columns. The Expressive writing discourse is a non-statutory discourse. The Moderator Experience column is included to show that moderation experience, using the skills/process/genre construct, did not limit these participants' understanding of writing being wider than the skills/process/genre construct. Only Joanne did not refer to Expressive writing perhaps because of her school context of 'Requires Improvement'. Overall, for me, these participants' perceptions illustrated the participants' professional commitment about what they considered to be a good writing experience. In particular, the participants stressed that the creativity discourse was part of a good experience of writing.

The final discussion area is focused on the NC skills/process/genre writing construct.

4.1.5 The NC construct

The fifth category is the NC (DfE,2013) construct. This category includes three writing discourses: the skills, process stage and the genre discourses. These were highly significant for all the participants. Many of the aspects of the three discourses are referred to in Table 4.1 columns 1-3. While the skills and genre discourses are mentioned in the framework, as they are assessed, the process stage discourse is not assessed and several participants noted that it figured strongly only in the PoS (DfE, 2013).

The NC construct focuses on the written text especially on the grammar, spelling and punctuation accuracy and rules of genre writing. Whilst the statutory construct is outlined in the PoS (DfE, 2013), only one participant mentioned this document in their interviews; their focus was on the assessment criteria in the framework. All the participants empathised that the statutory construct is detailed in the TAF (STA, 2018). As expected, all the participants referred to the statutory skills and genre discourses.

The participants describe how writing accuracy and grammar in the skill discourse in the NC (DfE, 2013) are perceived by them. They suggested that pupils needed to both recognise the grammar or spelling feature and be able to use them correctly. Rochelle describes the amount and status given to declarative grammar:

> For Year Six teachers... there's a big focus suddenly on grammar, a really heavy focus on the teaching of grammar (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

However, Rochelle distinguishes, as did several other participants, between declarative and contextualised grammar learning:

> The grammar is really kind of bizarre...if you're not going to show them how they can use it in their writing, I never really saw the purpose of it (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

Angela sees the grammar focus on the skills discourse as derived from the test requirements:

> I think in Year Six there's definitely a heavier grammar focus and that's obviously because they have to do the grammar and spelling tests (AKQ1:SS1 19.06.2023).

The more advanced punctuation features were identified as the colon and semi-colon, while in grammar the features were the passive and active voices, and the subjunctive mood. Robert describes this graphically:

> The expectations of the understanding of grammar as well is massive...being able to understand what passive and active voices and being able to use it correctly (RCQ1:SS1 07.02.2023).

The participants stressed the ability to recognise and use spelling and grammar features was a skill that had to be taught and learned ready for a test.

> There's a grammar paper and a spelling which they do …and if you do lots and lots of those papers and they know which boxes to tick and they know the drill (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

Grammar was also linked to the teaching of text types. Charlotte stressed the need to teach grammar to go with particular genres:

> You have different genres of writing…fictional narratives, persuasive… newspaper reports. Each one has a different style of writing, and we have to teach those styles….and we'd teach the grammar that goes with that. We teach the children which grammatical structures they should use with that piece of writing (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

Some participants questioned the strong focus of grammar to be learnt and commented on the consequent additional class and instrumental teaching that followed. For instance, Sarah describes the increased focus on grammar and the impact on her class:

> Yes, definitely a grammar focus. One hundred percent. In Year 6 it becomes a really major focus and it's interesting because obviously we have to teach them for the grammar test, and then that filters through into the writing. What we try and do in my school is that we will have sort of discrete grammar lessons aimed more, as you know, the kind of questions they'd have on the test (SPQ1:SS1 03.10.2022).

The NC construct's focus is, as David comments, a stress on writing effectiveness through the accuracy of grammar use and the application of the genre conventions. David views the construct as an aspect of school surveillance:

> That's part of the surveillance: looking at NC English in terms of the effectiveness of language and the standards of attainment (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023).

All the participants identify the accuracy in the skills discourse. Nevertheless, two participants draw attention to the narrow understanding of writing in the construct by independently using a similar expression; Stuart commented that

> There's more to writing than the TAF (SDQ1:SS1 04.06.2023).

Rochelle noted similarly:

> we would spend a year working on... writing the national curriculum, but essentially the teaching of the assessment framework [TAF] isn't the entire writing curriculum (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

The ways in which the participants taught writing while incorporating the statutory NC construct with their views about expressive writing in the creative discourse is discussed in the following section on classroom practice.

4.2 Classroom practice

The second of the themes from the coding is the participants' classroom practice. The seven categories for classroom practice are planning writing, assessment shaped teaching, grammar, teacher writing, school policy, professional experience and Covid lockdown. All the participants referred to these elements although only one participant referred to all seven.

As noted in the previous section, writing foci in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) and the Teacher Assessment Framework (TAF) (2018) are on writing accuracy, grammar and genre types. The focus of the NC (DfE, 2013) is on the rules of writing. In the Programme of Study, the frequently mentioned rules are on spelling, grammar and handwriting whilst in the TAF (2018) the frequently mentioned rules are the genre convention. All of the participants referred to genre and its conventions. Indeed, some participants characterized their classroom practice as focused on writing rules. The interviews reflected these classroom concerns, and the participants describe prioritising these elements while considering their own personal understanding of writing. The following section concerns the planning to address these concerns.

4.2.1 Planning

The first category from the coding of classroom practice is planning. The participants considered how their teaching incorporated the criteria and learning prescribed by the framework and the tests mediated by their personal conceptions of writing. The planning was over two terms. The participants considered planning demanding and stressful.

Lisa acknowledges the importance of planning, but it is in the context of other competing demands:

> Planning is absolutely central to everything, but even so, everything only gets an allocated amount of time (LBQ1:SS1 07.01.2022).

Several participants commented on the broad planning focus of each term for both the framework assessment through moderation and the test assessment. Rochelle describes the termly emphasis for the framework:

> Curriculum planning in first term was working on writing skills and preparing them for that. In second term looking at pieces of writing which enables each child to show the aspects of the TAF they have been taught (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

GPS planning preparation was different with a focus on transmission teaching and doing test papers. For some participants the GPS planning involved focused lessons. Sarah describes her school experience:

> In my school, we have discrete grammar lessons aimed at the kind of questions they'd have on the test (SPQ1:SS1 03.10.2022).

Robert, like Rochelle, described a focus on completing test papers during the Autumn term onwards:

> [We do] GPS practise papers from Autumn term (RCQ1:SS1 07.02.2023).

For all participants planning extended beyond the experience in the school day. In discussions about the accuracy and clarification of the transcripts, the participants described how pupils may have additional sessions for the teacher assessment and the tests. Six participants describe these booster sessions as taking place before or after school. In addition, two participants described setting up and running mock SATs for their pupils. One participant said that a mock SATs took place every half term. The participants saw these boosters and Mock SATs as a way of addressing any anxieties the pupils may have had about the assessment occasions. It is the use of these strategies that show the participants' concerns to ensure high levels of attainment and the high importance the participants attached to these assessments.

For Robert planning was stressful as it was inextricably linked to moderation and assessment:

> Planning all of those areas are being covered and ensuring they are... if ...we had ... moderation ... we could say, 'Right. We've got this' (RCQ1:SS1 07.02.2023).

Rochelle describes the dominating power of the framework over Year Six teachers' planning and teaching and suggests that it does not naturally fit the teaching experience:

> Year 6 teachers today will still be shoehorning that framework [TAF] into their delivery (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

Rochelle continues by describing how the planned experience reflects the assessment preoccupation during teaching. Such a situation has implications for teacher and pupil agency:

> you'll set up a writing task and you'll know that that task has to include a dialogue that the child is going to have to use dialogue in that task, even though naturally

> they may not have chosen to do that. So, you're kind of dictating to them what they need to include in their writing (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

Angela makes a similar point in as she suggests she recommends shoehorning assessment features into her pupils' writing. Joanne emphatically stresses the connection between planning, teaching and assessment.

> Planning for assessment does influence the way you teach whether even if you say it doesn't it does influence (JGQ1:SS1 10.01.2023).

Planning may reflect teacher confidence and self-esteem about aspects of writing. Over half of the participants explained that their personal beliefs influenced their planning and teaching of writing. The range of beliefs included an opinion about their own writing ability, their estimation of their own subject and pedagogical knowledge of grammar, the value of KS2 grammar and the correlation between reading ability and writing attainment.

Planning may also incorporate school writing policies. Anna describes a 'word gap' strategy which was focused on the spelling element in the GPS tests. Angela enthusiastically described a school policy of free-writing school:

> Our English lead introduced freewriting because of what Year 6 entails... now pupils write creatively. I've seen a massive improvement [in pupils' writing] (AKQ1:SS1 19.06.2023).

The concern with assessment criteria from either the framework or the GPS might have made it difficult for pupils to view writing in any other terms. However, several did. They echoed Rochelle's pointed comment:

> essentially the teaching of the assessment framework isn't the entire writing curriculum (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

Nevertheless, the participants identified with many of the points in Lisa's conclusion about planning and assessment as:

> dire and desperate…and onerous (LBQ1:SS1 07.01.2022).

Planning for the participants provided the framework for their teaching experience. The following section considers the participants' experiences in teaching writing.

4.2.2 Assessment shaped teaching

The second category from the coding of classroom practice is teaching the prescribed writing construct alongside other understandings of writing. The participants more frequently referred to the framework in the context of teaching than the GPS test. This section considers how teaching and teaching content are influenced by assessment, the teaching strategies responding to this influence and the nature of the pupil learning.

Compositional writing is the focus of teacher assessed writing and is assessed criteria from the TAF (2018). All the participants referred to the TAF (2018) and offer a variety of perspectives about the framework's impact on their teaching. All the participants commented about having to meet all the framework criteria and suggests it influences their decisions about teaching. David suggested a strict correlation:

> ...the way that we were asked to assess writing completing shapes the way that we teach it or has to shape the way we teach it (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023).

Charlotte is equally emphatic:

> Every Year Six teacher you speak to says same thing.... you have got to teach to the TAF (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

Robert also understood the TAF's impact in the same way:

> The TAF defines pedagogy (RCQ1:SS1 07.02.2023).

Robert hints at both the content and the teaching strategies. Genre forms are the most frequently mentioned elements in the TAF (2018). The participants regarded genre as a central concern in their classroom practice as a result. The narrative genre is the most frequently mentioned genre in both the Programme of Study and the TAF (2018:5). The other genres specifically mentioned are diary/autobiographical, instruct/analyse and persuade/advise. The participating teachers often mentioned the narrative genre to illustrate their teaching of writing. In part this was as a result of the greater emphasis in the TAF (2018). The participants drew attention to the strict application of the assessment criteria for genre.

The participants used exemplars or modelling in their teaching of genre use. The research subjects described a product approach of transmission teaching as a suitable teaching approach for the rule-governed nature of the genre conventions. This product approach of transmission teaching enabled the teaching of a specific skill or concept through illustrating the features in an example. Nine of the 11 participants referred to exemplar use in their teaching of writing. Four of these nine specifically referred to the narrative genre as the focus of the strategy. Several suggested that the narrative genre was particularly suited to this strategy partly because of being able to focus on accuracy in relation to the rules. The teacher researchers suggested that the exemplar strategy might be used for the grammar features in genres such as imperatives or 'fronted-adverbials'. The participants described using the strategy with whole, class, group or shared writing and used the

exemplar strategies with genre work and the associated grammar in a range of different ways.

The participants gave a description and a commentary on their teaching. David described using a model of descriptive writing to teach report writing. Rochelle used a model to teach a persuasive letter, describing the strategies of copying the stages of the model writing as 'stepping-stones'. This may be viewed as a characteristic of the process stage discourse. Joanne described using the strategy for the associated grammar to vary the sentence length and structure of the sentence in her genre teaching. She acknowledged that she found using the strategy challenging at first because she lacked confidence in her writing ability. Stuart commented that using the exemplar strategy was not 'spoon feeding' his pupils as their writing remained independent. Lisa commented that an additional bonus of the exemplar strategy was its social aspect as the pupils and teacher worked together. Charlotte described how exemplar strategy was used for the report genre including elements of shared writing and then independent writing:

> we do shared-whole class [teaching] and we teach a model…we take a newspaper report, and we'd writing our own about something…and we'd write as a class. … we do one introduction…and then you plan together what they are going to write…then they go off using the modelled example. …I think collaborative writing is important (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

These responses show the participants' positive use of the exemplar strategy with many aspects of genre writing. The teachers identified the flexibility of the strategy with regard to teaching genres and to the associated grammar. While the strategy is flexible and the participants used the strategy resourcefully, there remains the significant point that the participants were required to teach the statutory genres. Teacher agency is part of the issue here as the participants, while deciding on the strategy that they use in their teaching, do not have any choices about the statutory content. Only one participant suggested that she initially had limited success with this teaching strategy, another participant identified difficulties he found some of his pupils experienced.

Alan described the exemplar strategy and identified issues for the pupils and the teachers. While he described this strategy, he identified a confusion some of more confident writers had with a genre and its conventions. The more able writers attempted to put features from the describe genre into the report genre. Whilst Cremin and Myhill (2012) might have considered this as imaginatively subverting the genre, for Alan the report genre in NC (DfE, 2013) would be correct with factual rather than figurative language. Alan described

a conversation with a working *at greater depth* pupil where the pupils tried to use the features of the narrative genre in a report genre. He described what he said to a pupil:

> …change the tone of your writing say to a newspaper [report]'... because they [the pupils] want to use expressive words… they [the pupil says] 'I want to use this simile or metaphor' ...it's very difficult for the children to switch between the two [different genres] (AHQ1: SSI 07.06.2022).

This quotation shows Alan is conscious of the creativity of the working at *greater depth* pupil and their wish to be inventive and playful. He was aware of the conflict between the statutory assessment requirements which stress factual language and the creativity discourse which stresses self-expression and writer identity.

Alan offered an explanation to the pupils' thinking when genre writing. He felt that they were 'used to be told to use the best vocabulary'. (AHQ1: 07.06.2022). His pupils had not fully grasped the report genre convention of using the passive voice and reported speech. Alan explained the importance of using the genre conventions appropriately in order to avoid being held 'back from being a *at greater depth* writer'. (AHQ1: SSI 07.06.2022).

Alan's response shows that the fixed nature of genre convention assessment criteria has priority over what some researchers have identified as a more important playfulness with language. Indeed, as he explained to the pupil, one of the consequences of not strictly following the genre convention assessment criteria would be failing to achieve the working at *greater depth* assessment category. This limits teacher latitude in the interpretation of writing language as the teacher is implementing the framework criteria.

Alan identified the entanglement of discourses at play in this example by calling it a 'strange thing'. He developed this apparent conflict in the writing experience of working *at expected* standard and working at *greater depth* pupils:

> strange thing, the Expected children are more likely to listen to the teacher and produce the better non-fiction piece of tasks, compared to the ones that you're…hoping to push to a *at greater depth* (AHQ1: SSI 07.06.2022).

The participants commented on the positive value of being able to write in different genres even beyond the identified four genres in the TAF. All the researched teachers' comments focused on the skill of writing across different genre types, the knowledge of the grammar of different genres, and the need for pupils to have a wide genre experience. Angela commented that the pupils need to have a range of experiences and skills to support their

learning in other areas and specifically mentioned diary writing as being important in other areas other than English.

Two participants described writing to include multimodal and digital writing. These writing forms might be considered as autobiographical genres. These writing discourses are not referred to by other participants. Neither of these forms are mentioned in the NC (DfE, 2013) Programme of Study or in the Teacher Assessment Framework. Stuart regarded these as genre forms because these writing forms are associated with the NC (DfE, 2013) diary and autobiographical genres.

Multimodal and digital writing are for Lisa personal forms of contemporary writing. Lisa considered that KS2 writing should reflect contemporary culture and include a wide range of modern forms including digital, text and social media writing:

> in teaching writing, we include all the different aspects…including social media texts ...I think we've got to use it (LBQ1:SS1 07.01.2022).

One participant acknowledged an attempt to address these writing forms and described it as 'digital literacy'. However, Stuart explained that Year Six classes did create blogs, and he and his pupils valued the different writing experience. Stuart commented that he thought that 'there was a real place for it'. Stuart significantly commented that it's a 'completely different style of writing'. However, Stuart noted that his pupils had problems with keyboarding skills and the different demands of what he called 'digital literacy'. Perhaps the fact that these forms of writing are neither statutory nor assessed cause Year Six teachers to give them a low priority while acknowledging that the pupils benefitted and enjoyed a modern form of writing. Stuart described his class's experiences.

> We've done a bit of work on blogging…I think it is difficult because it's a completely different style of writing…the pupils get a great deal out of writing such extended pieces …. but…there are limitations with digital literacy as their typing skills aren't often good enough (SDQ1:SS1 04.06.2023).

These responses show that while several participants acknowledge the benefits of forms of writing that reflect contemporary experience, they do not have the weight or status of the statutory forms of writing. The research teachers suggested the difficulty of accommodating these non-statutory writing forms. Stuart, for example, while describing the digital experience returned to the need for accuracy in structure, punctuation and spelling in order to meet the demands of the statutory requirements for writing. The importance of the theme of modern, contemporary forms of writing appears in academic literature. However, given the demands of a prescriptive curriculum, the research

participants show some of acknowledgment of theme but are able to offer limited opportunities to teach it.

The participants described the nature of the GPS test content and described how the teaching strategies used in teaching the GPS content differed from the approaches for the teacher assessment. The grammar test has a focus on knowledge of terms, awareness ability to define and the analysis of small pieces of text. Several of the participants commented on the definitional knowledge the test required and suggested teaching strategies to address the knowledge and understanding required by the test. The participants stressed the greater emphasis on the TAF (STA, 2018) rather than the PoS (DfE, 2013). Both the participants' comments and an analysis of the grammar papers suggests that the main focus of the tests were grammatical terms, word classes and punctuation. The participants' focus on the framework enabled coverage of the grammar in both the framework and the test. Several participants had reservations about the grammar tests.

Several of these Year Six teachers described their teaching strategies with regard to the test. For these teachers the main issue in teaching was to address the knowledge examined in the test. The participants intended that the before or after booster classes and Mock SATs were intended not only to familiarise the pupils with the experience of tests and test papers but to provide the pupils with the type of short answer questions that characterised the tests. Several of participants referred to teaching the grammar with a product approach teaching. David described the teaching for these short answer questions as "back to basics lessons" (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023). Sarah referred to a series of:

> discrete grammar lessons aimed more…the kind of question that they'd have in the test (SPQ1:SS1 03.10.2022).

Some participants expressed reservations about the grammar tests and the surface learning it required. The grammar lessons for some of the teachers involved in the 'discrete grammar lessons' used past question papers to prepare the pupils for the knowledge required and the format of the questions. The grammar knowledge was being able to identify features such as a command, question, pronoun or clause-types. The format of the question was to underline, circle or tick a grammar feature in a phrase, clause or sentence. Rochelle satirises the limitations of the product-approach as 'drumming grammar into children' (RDQ1: SS17/03/2022). Rochelle implied the learning was surface learning:

> Very easy to teach, very boring …and it's very easy to train somebody up – like train a monkey…pages of grammar exercises and practising grammar papers (RDQ1: SS17/03/2022).

These quotations suggest that for these participants the tests dominated their thinking about this form of grammar rather than the intrinsic value of knowing the relevant grammar. In addition, the pupil learning is declarative grammar characterised with surface learning.

Alan drew attention to some of these learning experiences being context dependent as a result of the nature of the learning for the text. He described the situation he faced about the pupils' association between the study of KS2 grammar for the GPS test and the grammar for their compositional writing. Alan described how his pupils' attainment in grammar tests was really high and yet there were elementary errors in the same pupil's compositional writing.

> the pupils see writing as writing and grammar…as grammar….I look at their writing and think 'I don't know?'… [but in] their grammar and punctuation [paper], they're like knocking it out of the park (AHQ1: SSI 07.06.2022).

Some participants suggested that the test focus might result in limited learning leading to memorisation of terms or definitions and the use of bite-size text units. This might help understanding Alan's experience. Alan's comments suggest that the separation for assessment purposes at KS2 of writing, grammar and punctuation does not always support an integrated approach to learning grammar.

Whilst most of the participants' comments are focused on the statutory writing construct, all the participants also acknowledge the importance of the non-statutory creativity writing discourse in their teaching. The creativity discourse has a focus on the writer and writer identity and is concerned with expressing these through voice and ownership. Only one participant outlined how she addressed this text type and the impact it had on her pupils. Angela described using free writing in Year Six. Free writing would not have had the same emphasis on forms and language rules. Angela's experience with this discourse is important because it is not only successful in terms of attainment, but it would also appear to improve writing quality of pupils who had not enjoyed writing. This experience was not referred to by other participants. Angela was very positive about free-writing as it involved increased pupil motivation, attainment and, through editing, concerns about the accuracy of the text.

> Our English lead has introduced free-writing…and those children who didn't have the freedom to extend their writing because of what Year Six entails and write creatively now have the opportunity to do so…I have seen a massive improvement from…those…who at the start of the year did not like writing (AKQ4:SS1 19.06.2023).

Whilst Angela described the pupils' enjoyment of self-expression, and writing with their distinct voices and identity, she acknowledged the TAF's prescription of accuracy as the pupils were required to edit their work at a later date for punctuation. Angela continued:

> They actually want to write…because…no one is looking at them and going 'You haven't put your apostrophe…full stop…capital letter'. They have time to develop that skill and put it in their writing (AKQ4:SS1 19.06.2023).

Angela's experience suggests that whole school strategy of free writing illustrated the limitations in Year Six of the statutory construct's concern with accuracy, conventions and grammar. Her identification of a group of pupils who found that the previous writing opportunities did not offer them freedom or the incentive to write creatively is significant. Angela suggested the pupils had increased motivation and attainment because of free writing. Her description of her freewriting experience suggests that the concern with teaching to the test has a negative consequence for some pupils in terms of motivation and attainment. This strategy suggests that pupil benefit from the involvement in classroom talk decisions.

For some of the participants dialogue was a critical aspect of the classroom experience. Although the research did not observe any of the participants' lessons, several participants talked about the oral exchanges in their classrooms. The participants who talked of their classroom exchanges stressed that classroom dialogue was teacher-controlled to address external knowledge of the framework often using IRF questioning. Two participants stressed the value of dialogue in the learning process. For example, David contrasts his Year Six classroom dialogue to the nature of the dialogue he experienced in other year groups. While the dialogue in Year Six is focused on the correct application of external knowledge from the framework or test, discussion in other year groups might have concerned the pupil construction of knowledge. He describes it as having a dialogic nature as:

> the teacher and the pupil are working together to construct their knowledge about what they understand writing is (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023).

Dialogue such as this requires a degree of teacher confidence in writing discussions. Another area the participants identified as dependent on knowledge and confidence was grammar.

4.2.3 Teaching grammar

Teacher subject knowledge of grammar was identified by a number of participants as relevant to the confidence of teaching grammar. Charlotte described how her grammar teaching developed from a difficult beginning. Like other participants, Charlotte described the need for teachers to have grammar subject knowledge and Anna explains how she sees grammar as having significance:

> it's all about grammar, punctuation and spelling ...that's where our kind of intervention lie, rather than actually how creative they've been...grammar and punctuation and spelling are definitely more emphasized and more important (AFQ1: SSI 02.06.2022).

Four of the participants commented about their subject and pedagogical knowledge of grammar and all implied that their self-confidence about grammar knowledge affected their planning and teaching. Robert's class dialogue illustrates his self confidence in class:

> You'd be walking around and say 'Where's your embedded clause within that sentence? Why isn't that a relative clause? It needs to have a relative pronoun in it' (RCQ1:SS1 07.02.2023).

Two participants were so confident about their knowledge that they were able to advise other Year Six teachers about aspects of grammar. Rochelle commented about a conversation with colleagues where they said:

> 'You know about that grammar, because I don't have a clue about it'. But quite a lot of teachers don't (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

The other two described the strategies they used to ensure that their grammar knowledge was appropriate for their teaching. Charlotte, for instance, described her strategy to support her declarative and procedural knowledge was to keep a copy of Trask (2013), a grammar compendium, on her desk while teaching. For Charlotte the grammar demands were challenging and distressing:

> I think I stopped crying in the January of my first year as a Year Six teacher. I thought I am going to get this grammar…there would still be the study guide ['Grammar Guide'] …all the time for a lesson (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

Three of the participants felt that the KS2 grammar emphasis did not have continuity with the secondary experience. Rochelle commented that the consequence was that KS2 grammar teaching was test focused. David refocused the issue by commenting on the nature of teaching the NC prescribed and its impact on pupil learning:

> Learning for the Year Six pupil is passive in the sense that it is following or absorbing the teacher led knowledge which is the framework. And then that for me that's a slight negative (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023).

The participants' writing self-confidence may be dependent on their grammar knowledge.

4.2.4 Teacher writing

The participants' confidence extended into their writing practices in their classrooms. Research by Cremin (2006) and Cremin and Oliver (2017) referenced in Chapter 2, suggests that this is a significant issue. On one hand, limited self-confidence may inhibit teacher writing in class while, on the other, greater self confidence in writing gives 'an insider informed perspective' (Cremin, 2006:418).

Only about half of the participants described having the confidence to write in front of their class rather than pre-composed piece. Rochelle describes how she is given a cover class to teach a genre and her confident strategies:

> I find myself with this big paper doing this model with them in the class trying to show them we're making it up off the top of our heads, because they needed to see that (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

Joanne described the impact of her limited writing confidence:

> For me to have understand the role of writing [is difficult as] I am not a strong writing teacher...I'm not naturally a writer...it's actually something I always found difficult to teach, really difficult... you're told to model writing ... but I found that really difficult (JGQ1:SS1 10.01.2023).

Joanne refers to being instructed to follow a policy of model writing for genres. School context, especially school policies, were very influential for all the participants.

4.2.5 School policy impact

School policies were significant for the participants who pointed out how school context sometimes affected teaching decisions. Sarah linked the attainment pressure and policies:

> I understand that the current policy [and school policies] ...all intended to raise standards for everyone...I do question whether all of those things are necessarily appropriate or relevant for the age group .... whether we set ridiculous expectations for children (SPQ1:SS1 03.10.2022).

Several participants explained that Year Six teachers had to acknowledge the school context. Alan described how in a previous school, which had an OFSTED judgement of 'Requires Improvement', the headteacher said to him that all the decisions about content and 'delivery' had already been made for him. All he was required to do was teach what had been prepared for Year Six. Joanne makes a similar point about the school context and 'conversations' with a headteacher about what and how to teach writing. For Joanne, she felt that she was 'pressured' to teach to the framework. She suggests most of the 'pressure' was from the expectations of pupil attainment associated with an OFSTED judgement about 'Requires Improvement'. The participants also commented on the successful impact

of school policies. Anna felt that the work on vocabulary for the GPS spelling test addressed the 'word gap'. Finally, Angela described the successful school policy on free writing which increased pupil motivation, attainment and, through editing, concerns about the accuracy of the text. Angela's positivity about the free writing policy was, I feel, a reflection of her own professional belief in the value of expressive writing. Such professional belief is linked in some way to professional experiences.

4.2.6 Professional experience

The participants made several observations about their professional experience in teaching writing. Alan while commenting on the school context and the following of particular policies as a result of a 'Requires Improvement' judgement, commented that:

> I value the freedom to teach my own way (AHQ1: SSI 07.06.2022).

Similarly, David describes other schools required to follow particular policies as a result of judgements of 'Requires Improvement' - a top-down approach - and feels it detracts from the nature of teaching. David said:

> Head teachers are saying use this scheme of work... I know that sometimes teachers are just told how to teach it... I can absolutely see the reasons behind that. I am glad I don't have to teach like that...it takes away an element of personalization and creativity in teaching (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023).

Angela described teacher experience as:

> Teachers get told to do this and that (AKQ1:SS1 19.06.2023).

However, Stuart viewed his teaching of writing experience reflectively by considering his professional progression as a teacher of writing and asking:

> How do we move from that tick box TAF I used…to actually teaching them about the purpose of writing and what [language] they are using? (SDQ1: SS1 04.06.2023)

Stuart articulated here a concern about the professionals' concern about their teaching role which was shared by over half of the participants. Participants' teaching roles were affected by the Covid Lockdown, 2020.

4.2.7 Covid lockdown, 2020

Several participants commented on the 2020 Covid Lockdown's impact on writing. Robert describes the impact on extended writing in particular and writing stamina:

> [Compositional] writing massively took a hit - writing stamina affected and extended writing. They do not have that stamina (RCQ1:SS1 07.02.2023).

Charlotte identified the considerable amount of unacknowledged work that primary teachers did:

> Teachers got a raw deal [over writing] (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

Charlotte also drew attention to parental expectations about the school's role in making up for the impact of the lockdown:

> we have parents that want to know 'What are you doing to bridge the gap in my child's social, emotional well-being and writing from Covid? (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

This section has looked at the participants' understanding of their classroom experience particularly during the Covid Lockdown. While some participants acknowledged an impact on pupil experience, the participants did not identify any enduring impact on the teaching of writing. The following section considers the participants' experience of the assessment of writing.

Section 4.3

The third theme from coding is assessment and surveillance. The categories for this theme are TAF compliance, TAF washback, TAF and creativity: teacher view, moderation scrutiny, teacher behaviours, moderation judgement of teacher, internal surveillance and OFSTED surveillance. All the participants referred to the TAF and moderation elements, while only six referred to internal surveillance and seven referred to OFSTED.

KS2 assessment is demanding process involving teacher assessment through the TAF and GPS tests. Participants described the teacher assessment as a complex of interrelated factors: expectations of pupil performance from progress data, knowledge of the framework, planning writing throughout the year, teaching the framework features and collecting an assessment portfolio of each pupil's work. The test assessment is less complex showing knowledge of mainly word classes, punctuation and verbs and knowledge of the test format. The participants were aware and anxious that the assessment results were used as accountability measures. These results were regarded as an indicator of school 'effectiveness' and, by implication, their success in teaching writing. Lisa captured the negativity evoked by the assessment processes in her comment about assessment being:

> dire and desperate…and onerous (LBQ1:SS1 07.01.2022).

The participants' remarks suggest that assessment had a significant role in the teachers' thinking. The extent of the framework and test influence on classroom practice and assessment supports the observation that the assessment is compromised. The assessment is compromised because the teachers are teaching to the test, and the assessment is in many instances identifying mastery at a surface level. The framework's construct of writing is considered in the following section.

4.3.1 TAF compliance

All the participants acknowledged their full compliance and commented that the TAF governs the teaching content and the summative assessment in Year Six. For several participants the teaching strategies are determined by the framework. For several participants the TAF was overcomplicated and required a degree of interpretation. Nevertheless, two distinct evaluative participants' comments on of the framework comment on the NC construct of writing and its impact on the pupils' writing are critical.

All the participants commented on their full compliance with the framework and agreed with Rochelle's comment that there was no alternative. David commented

> the TAF completely shapes how we teach writing (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023).

David's comment about the influence of the framework on teaching introduces the issues about the understanding of the NC construct and discourses in writing. As Charlotte noted from an exchange at a moderation meeting after the lead moderator had said:

> "Do not teach to the TAF". And we all go. "No, we do not teach to the TAF". But every Year Six teacher teaches to the TAF (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

Angela described the compliance in terms of an assessed feature:

> TAF criteria are class practice. Even when pupils would not usually use the feature (AKQ1:SS1 19.06.2023).

Robert described his compliance in terms of ensuring he had covered all the assessed features:

> all of those [assessed] areas are covered and ensuring they are (RCQ1:SS1 07.02.2023).

Several participants suggested that the teaching strategies used to teach the NC writing construct were product approaches. These participants explained product approaches as they focused on mastery of a feature. David characterised his teaching using this teaching approach as 'back to basics lessons' (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023).

Rochelle described the product approach with regard to teaching dialogue:

> You'll set up a writing task and you'll know that that task has to include a dialogue that the child is going to have to use dialogue in that task, even though naturally they may not have chosen to do that (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

For David the serious consequence of a product approach was the pupils' learning passive experience:

> Learning for the Year 6 pupil is passive in the sense that it is following or absorbing the teacher led knowledge which is the framework...that's a slight negative (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023).

For several participants the TAF was overcomplex and required teacher interpretation. For Rochelle the TAF required an explicit number of features which made the TAF too rigid:

> I didn't have a formulaic tick box looking for three semi colons or where they've shown me they've used two colons... with a framework which was too rigid...No option [for interpretation] (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

However, for Charlotte the issue was about the consequences of teacher interpretation affecting reliability and felt there was a need for training:

> I think the actual TAF is very over complicated for teachers...um... massively over complicated... teacher interpretation varied... I think there is a need for...more training (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

While the participants all stress their compliance with the TAF, they draw attention to the consequences of the framework's use and make two distinct evaluative participants' comments. The TAF is a strong influence on teaching content and teaching strategies. The TAF reinforces the NC construct of writing. While the TAF is highly prescriptive, for the participants, it requires teacher interpretation. Finally, several participants noted that there is more to writing than the NC construct of writing. Additionally, Joanne felt that the TAF was limited in its impact:

> The TAF does not make stronger writers (JGQ1:SS1 10.01.2023).

The TAF is used to assess teacher assessed writing and consequently influences the teaching of writing.

4.3.2 TAF washback

Almost half of the participants refer to mastery of the teacher assessment criteria as a major influence on the taught content and teaching strategy. Mastery means using the

prescribed feature in the TAF defined way. While several participants describe delivering the TAF, Joanne described the impact unambiguously:

> Assessment does influence the way you teach whether even if you say it doesn't it does influence (JGQ1:SS1 10.01.2023).

Rochelle and Charlotte describe the washback acknowledging the TAF's prescriptive status. Rochelle commented:

> I think people are left with no option. I think that they do have to make sure that they deliver the TAF (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

Charlotte said:

> But every Year 6 teacher teaches to the TAF. Because...you have to have everything ...ticked off the list (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

David felt the washback effect was in the TAF detail and its strict interpretation:

> so specific and so comprehensive and so unforgiving of any errors... we have to sometimes go back to basics with children, and that's a negative in sense that we're asking Year 6 to be nearly perfect and ... there's little room for errors... [pupils are] following or absorbing the teacher led knowledge which is the framework (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023).

David gave an example of teaching dialogue where the exacting nature of the TAF did not allow his pupils to achieve *working at expected:*

> when fresher to TAF [I] did not give children many opportunities to show [mastery of feature] (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023).

The washback effect was modified by teachers using either a 'best fit' rather than 'secure fit' assessment or by applying the discretionary 'particular weakness'. David and Charlotte felt that there should be a return to a 'best fit' assessment as this was more supportive of their pupils' attainment Charlotte commented:

> 'Secure fit' should be replaced by 'best fit' TAF (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

The 'secure fit' character of the TAF meant that only the NC writing construct was assessed meaning that expressive writing was not assessed.

4.3.3 TAF and creativity

Several participants make specific comments about creativity or creative writing. Other participants refer indirectly to the value of expressive writing which illustrates the writer's identify, voice or personality. Expressive writing is not assessed.

The indirect comments are those made by Rochelle and Stuart that there are aspects of writing which are not addressed in the NC construct of writing or in the TAF. These aspects are not assessed. Stuart felt that the TAF understanding of writing was narrow, while Rochelle commented that:

> The framework [TAF] isn't the entire writing curriculum (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

Robert contrasted the TAF and expressive writing and felt that the TAF represented an old-fashioned understanding of writing:

> [the TAF has an] outdated... focus on technical accuracy rather than creativity (RCQ1:SS1 07.02.2023).

David also contrasted the TAF and expressive writing as experienced in different year groups and suggested it affected his teaching:

> When I was in other year groups in KS2 .... I certainly felt more able to kind of inspire children and.... I opened things up. I think that I saw positive results in that, in terms of being creative and immersing the children in ideas. In Year Six, I think... I think the role is slightly different because there is a sharpening of 'can they do this.... can they do that' (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023).

Interestingly, Charlotte commented on her limited use of the Exemplification Materials which she used selectively as the standard of the greater depth examples was so high. The example is of expressive writing. She referred to example script using voice and identity.

> [These are] the best example, [which] is for me, even as a teacher, is so overwhelming. So that... that is a big influence [on my expectations] (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

Charlotte continued about the status of creativity in the NC (DfE,2103):

> I think creativity has been relegated...we're focusing...in Year Six [on] the TAF in their books...they know...that they need to hit (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

Charlotte's comment said that the creativity discourse received less attention than the assessed framework; the phrasing suggests that the focus was on meeting the technical features and language structure of the TAF.

Nevertheless, some participants successfully addressed aspects of creativity in their classes as it developed some writers and increased pupil motivation. Angela described her experience with free writing:

> our English lead has introduced freewriting.... And those children who didn't have the freedom to extend their writing because of what Year 6 entails and write creatively now have that opportunity to do so.

Angela continued:

> I've seen a massive improvement not from my high attainers if you like but also from those who at the start of the year didn't like writing.... They actually want to write, and they don't struggle so much (AKQ1:SS1 19.06.2023).

Expressive writing for the participants was clearly important and, where it was used, had a positive impact. Pupil creativity is not mentioned in the PoS (DfE, 2013) nor in the TAF (STA, 2018) and is not assessed in moderation.

In contrast the GPS assessment was less ambiguous and more straightforward. The test assessment was prepared for with lessons where the focus was simply the format of the test questions, and, for the grammar paper, a concentration on word classes, punctuation and verbs. The assessment for these was a binary of right or wrong. Sarah described the teaching for the tests as:

> targeted spellings lessons, targeted grammar lessons on individual features (SPQ1:SS1 03.10.2022).

Except for David and Rochelle's concern about surface learning, the participants made little reference to the test.

Alan pointed out the limitations of the test for pupil understanding. Alan comments on the association for the pupils between the study of KS2 GPS grammar and the grammar in compositional writing, and the extent to which one supports the other:

> the pupils see writing as writing and grammar…as grammar... don't see that the two of them go together…I look at their writing and think 'I don't know [that it is very good] … and their grammar and punctuation [tests], they're like kicking it out of the park (AHQ1: SSI 07.06.2022).

The pupils' separation of grammar for tests and procedural grammar in compositional writing suggests a particular understanding of grammar. Rochelle's comment about grammar seem to apply to the tested grammar rather than the grammar in compositional writing:

> writing pages and pages of grammar exercises and practicing grammar papers… the grammar is very easy to teach and it's very easy to...like train a monkey… that's what it's like and it's very boring...for the children, boring for the teacher (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

Rochelle's comment implies grammar is a set of rules which are relatively easily taught with the pupil recognising the grammar feature. This quotation suggests that the separation for assessment purposes at KS2 does not support an integrated, coherent approach to grammar. While the teachers did not see the test as complex as the teacher assessed writing, they regarded the teacher assessed writing as more significant. The following section considers the teachers' views on the monitoring and surveillance of their teaching of writing.

4.3.4 Moderation scrutiny and teachers' behaviours

For the participants, the moderation process created pressure and anxiety. The teachers considered the moderation as both the biggest influence on their experience and a source of pressure and anxiety. The pressure came from moderation scrutiny of the application of the framework. The additional anxiety felt by the participants came in part from the scrutiny by colleagues of the assessment of their pupils' work. The scrutiny process by colleagues involved both the presentation and the justification of the assessment decisions. Some teachers saw this as involving personal and a professional judgement. In this sense the experience was not of 'machine operatives' (Richmond, 2017:3) following a set of instructions about writing. Although as some teachers noted, there is limited teacher agency in the moderation because of the 'secure fit' assessment. Indeed, moderation is not a common experience in the primary sector.

For several participants, the trial marking and moderation experience was the dominant influence and experience in Year Six. For example, Joanne's commented:

> One of the biggest influences in Year Six is …the writing moderation, and as much as you try to push it to the side, it is such a huge part of you (JGQ1:SS1 10.01.2023).

Charlotte described the moderation meeting experience as a source of pressure for teachers, and she developed strategies to deal with what she considered negative influences:

> It can be quite tough.... the moderation and trial agreements in in the borough, some of them are lovely. It depends on table you're on. I always used to look for someone that I knew, because some of the schools are they're looking to find fault (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

Several participants commented on the teacher dynamics at the trial agreements. In some instances, particular behaviours may have been the result of different interpretations. Charlotte commented:

> Professionals, majority of them do work [together]...But...some teachers are a bit "Look! There's not enough evidence', and they're calling Moderator over (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

During the trail agreement meetings moderator at times gave well intentioned advice. Charlotte theatrically described the advice about teaching to the TAF. Joanne while attending a moderation meeting, was given guidance about teaching using the progress data.

4.3.5 Moderation judgement of teacher

Moderation requirements are to ensure assessment reliability, specifically a consistent application and interpretation of the assessment criteria. The moderation experience involved organisation. Lisa described the planning: organising all the pupils' scripts, ensuring the framework's features were illustrated and identifying the assessment category awarded for each piece. Lisa described this as 'onerous'. Sarah resignedly accepted moderation:

> The sad reality of it is that when you have moderation ...you have this tick-box don't you? It has to be evidenced. X, Y. and Z (SPQ1:SS1 03.10.2022).

Moderation, she continued, had consequences for teaching:

> And that does put pressure on you to make sure that those things are dropped in frequently into their writing (SPQ1:SS1 03.10.2022).

The 'things' Sarah referenced is the NC construct of writing. At another level the moderation was personal and professional.

The participants described the application of the framework to pupil's work as both 'rigorous' and 'unforgiving'. David describes the moderation as 'so specific, so comprehensive and so unforgiving of any errors' (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023). Several participants felt that there was no latitude for teacher discretionary judgements or a 'best fit' approach to assessment. The moderation assessment is 'secure fit' meaning that all aspects of a judgement about a feature had to be demonstrated. The participants were concerned about both the strictness of 'secure fit' and working *at expected* standard. Both Charlotte and Sarah commented that, in their opinion, these 'standards are ridiculous' (SPQ1:SS1 03.10.2022). Many of the respondents were anxious about the 'secure fit'

application during the moderation. Only Charlotte referred to the discretionary 'particular-weakness'. While some respondents described what seemed like limited control over the assessment, others suggested that they would professionally argue their point of view.

For some respondents the moderation was onerous and stressful in relating to other colleagues' judgments. Sarah said moderation created pressure for her. She described it as 'looming over you... [creating] a much higher level of scrutiny for us' (SPQ1:SS1 03.10.2022). Sarah described moderation as changing 'her role' and making her aware of her accountability. Angela felt that moderation was upsetting and said, 'I feel it[moderation] does make you sick' (AKQ1:SS1 19.06.2023). Joanne felt pressure due to viewing moderation in terms of being 'judged' on the pupil's attainment. Robert expressed his anxiety by expressing the consequences of not meeting the standard:

> if you are being moderated and you have to make sure that everything is perfect, and if it isn't .... they will dock you down for it (RCQ1:SS1 07.02.2023).

The feelings were more complex for other participants. Rochelle described the moderation as 'ridiculous' and questioned the process. Her anxiety involved doing something she did not fully agree with and, simultaneously, applying this to a fellow professional without revealing her reservations about the process. Rochelle concluded that continuing to be a moderator and relating to colleagues in such a professional capacity was for her 'quite hypocritical' (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

David, drawing on his moderator experience, commented that moderation might reveal the status of the Year Six teacher. He felt that the school context might mean that some headteachers required their Year Six teacher to teach to a particular scheme:

> I've been moderator... it checks on the correct processes in applying the framework...from experience that sometimes ...that the heads are saying use this scheme of work (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023).

The participants commented how moderation caused anxiety through the selection of moderators, the moderation meetings and challenging comments. The Standards and Testing Agency's selection of moderators is rigorous. The selection is intended to reassure the Year Six teachers in an accurate interpretation of the framework. For Robert the reassurance was hollow as while the moderator dialogue says the object is to reach 'a well-rounded assessment on the child's work', the object for him was to 'scrutinise your work...how you've marked it and assessed it' (RCQ1: SS 07.02.2023). He concluded that the process was 'so negative' (RCQ1:SS1 07.02.2023) as a result of the focus on teacher

competence. Robert's strong feelings arise as a result of recognising the focus of moderation was scrutiny of the professional competence of the teacher rather than a focus on pupil writing attainment. He felt that moderation followed a script, and approach this way led some respondents to view moderation as scripted performance. Charlotte questioned whether some of the behaviours and comments at moderation were appropriate professionally and in the moderation process. Sarah felt that moderation did not give an authentic view of the pupils' work or of the school. Rather, for Sarah, moderation offered a performance to show that the framework had been applied appropriately, and successful moderation reflected the teacher's professional competence.

Some of the research participants were anxious about the interpretation of aspects the framework. The anxiety was both about their professional competence and the accuracy of assessment. The three areas of concern of the research respondents were independent authorship, the nature of shifting register and advice about using data. Joanne and Alan felt that the framework was not clear about the nature of independence. This was an authentic concern as if a moderator felt the pupils' work showed too heavy a reliance on teacher's guidance, there might be a challenge to the teacher's assessment. Alan was pragmatic and summed up his position as his pupils might 'independently choose to use my scaffold' (AHQ1: 07.06.2022). In contrast, Joanne's anxieties about independent writing ambiguity were not resolved despite the experience of being a moderator. Joanne's professional concern was not only with her position as a Year Six teacher but also assessing colleagues' work during a moderation. Joanne felt that the independent writing issue involved a degree of teacher understanding that was not acknowledged in a 'secure fit' assessment scheme. Several respondents commented on the issue of the pupils change of register in writing. Charlotte and Stuart were concerned about whether they could identify a 'shift in formality' if the pupil used verbal contractions to demonstrate register. Neither teacher had been able to get guidance from moderators about whether contractions meant a control over formality and Charlotte rhetorically asked, 'What does that actually look like in a piece of writing?' (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023). Finally, Joanne while attending a moderation meeting, was given guidance about teaching using the progress data. Joanne was told not to use the data to guide her teaching. Joanne considered such guidance did not acknowledge the accountability context of primary schools - such as an OFSTED 'Requires Improvement' category. Joanne described her perplexed response to the moderator's guidance:

> What else are you going to do. You know your school is going to be judged on that [results from the assessment] … your headteacher will be talking to you…I hate to admit it, I've been that teacher that's got a child that's *working towards* …at Key

> Stage 1 and I know that I don't need to push them to be at 'Expected' standard (JGQ1:SS1 10.01.2023).

Joanne's description of the experience and her perplexed response show the uneasiness that she felt given the 'secure fit' nature of the framework. The dilemma for Joanne was the challenge of following professional guidance from the moderator in the use of the progress data or considering her loyalty to her pupils and her school. This was a difficult position to be in.

Moderation, despite the STA monitoring, requires not only the exercise of professional judgement about the interpretation and application of criteria but also professional behaviours. The teacher's areas of concern suggest that these are very practically grounded anxieties. There are issues of the clarity of the guidance given to the respondents. Significantly, the participants voiced concerns about the conflicting forces of teacher agency and the inflexibility of the assessment scheme of the framework. The framework was seen as unyielding and had removed teacher agency. However, to make the assessment manageable, the respondents had to make pragmatic decisions. These concerns were important for the respondents because the framework and moderation are such significant elements of the teacher experience. Another aspect the participants identified was their collegial relationships. They acknowledged colleagues' identity and accorded them consideration. In contrast to the teacher assessed writing, the grammar test was dependent on specific grammar but, while the test was seen demanding, it was not seen by the teachers as complex. The respondents' views on the grammar test are considered in the following section.

4.3.6 Internal surveillance

The research participants were extremely conscious of monitoring and surveillance of their teaching of writing in Year Six. The monitoring and surveillance may be seen has having slightly different objects although the subjects are the same. The participants felt that the subject of the monitoring was Year Six pupil writing as a measure of pupil and school attainment. In contrast, the participants saw OFSTED as the predominant surveillance agency with the surveillance object of teacher effectiveness in the whole school.

The participants felt that the subject of the monitoring was Year Six pupil writing as a measure of pupil and school attainment. The assessment was through the STA's TAF through trial marking and moderation. For all the participants all of aspects of the

moderation process were very influential and evoked a range of strong emotions. The respondents suggested that compliance to this process and the pressure in following it were their dominant thoughts and feelings. I consider monitoring in terms of the impact of STA moderation, headteacher supervision and parental responses.

All the participants said that monitoring through moderation was influential in ensuring compliance with the framework's construct. Compliance for some of the participants did reflect the absence of teacher agency. The respondent's understandings were determined by their teaching having to meet the 'secure fit' requirements while ensuring pupils met the working *at expected* standard. Charlotte and Lisa felt all teachers complied with the framework to prepare for moderation. Anna compliance was a driving force towards ensuring attainment. Rochelle saw the compliance as a 'no option' in terms of pupil attainment and also noted the lack of teacher agency. Sarah also considered compliance in terms of teacher agency. Both participants emotionally described the lack of agency. Seven of the respondents suggested that compliance created pressure on teachers. Angela felt that the compliance pressure was, in part, a strong force with overtones of judgement within it. Angela suggested the judgement implied that following the framework and the moderation implied professional and personal competence. Robert also emotionally described his view that there were professional judgements involved in the moderation process. Indeed, Angela described a sense of apprehension about professional judgement at moderation meetings which made her feel sick with anxiety. Sarah considered the pressure as teachers under pressure to perform within the moderation process. Sarah said teachers were 'told to do this and that' and felt there was limited teacher agency. Stuart described compliance as

> intense pressure to have evidence to [counter] the threat of moderation (SDQ1:SS1 04.06.2023).

Over half of the respondents justified their compliance to the framework in terms of ensuring that their pupils attained 'expectations'. Alan stressed that school context was relevant as age related expectations were extremely important for OFSTED's school's effectiveness judgement.

Moderation for some participants moderation compliance was influential in affirming their sense of themselves as teachers. Moderation was more than evaluating teacher application of the TAF (2018). Joanne considered compliance and the associated pressure caused her to move away from her beliefs about what teacher identity was. Joanne felt this strongly and cited it as the motive force behind her moving out of Year Six and into Year Five.

Even so, Joanne remained as the writing lead in her school. Several Year Six teachers considered the moderation pressures as justification for moving out of Year Six.

All participants acknowledged the monitoring through moderation was very influential. The respondents described the monitoring in emotional terms as a stressful form of compliance. Moderation was described as rigorously applying secure fit assessment. Three of the respondents commented on the absence of teacher agency. All the participants justified their compliance in terms of pupils' attainment. Several participants saw moderation as being a judgement on their professional competence. For some Year Six teachers the anxiety and pressure over such monitoring led them to consider moving to teach different year groups.

Joanne mentioned conversations with her headteacher concerning data. She was alluding to both the informal conversations and the target agendas of performance management. Joanne summed this up as:

> It's all of the data driven side of the year six (JGQ1:SS1 10.01.2023).

Several participants commented on supervisory conversations that they had with their headteacher concerning class writing progress and attainment. Joanne described the checking up:

> You know your school's going to be judged...in the league tables? Your head teacher will be in talking to you about policies and attainment (JGQ1:SS1 10.01.2023).

Alan described conversations about aspects of attainment that were significant for Performance Tables and those that were not:

> the results come back and the Headteacher's like 'Yeah, we... we've got an 81% pass the grammar and punctuation...that's not what we're interested in. It's about what their writing score was and none of that is contributes to the league tables'. And it's about that combined score of those three subjects and grammar and punctuation isn't part of it' (AHQ1: SSI 07.06.2022).

Robert describes a conversation with his headteacher that similarly was concerned with the data in the Performance Tables:

> we did well with our writing, but the first thing that HT said... was 'Oh our 'Greater Depth' writers has dropped (RCQ1:SS1 07.02.2023).

Parents also monitor the school's performance in key areas. Charlotte drew attention to parental comments and drew attention to the parents' interpretation of Performance Tables. Charlotte was concerned about the parents' assessment literacy.

> we're gonna be ranked in ...top one hundred schools ... in January...they [parents] compare to other schools, and parents say. 'Oh, you're gone down in your writing this year' ...because parents don't understand, do they? And they don't understand the National Data (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

Parents' data interpretation was a concern to some participants as parents' views about school performance was canvassed by OFSTED before an inspection began. OFSTED inspections were significant for the participants.

4.3.7 OFSTED surveillance

The participants saw OFSTED as the predominant surveillance agency and the OFSTED inspection and preparations for an inspection as influential in their schools not just in Year Six. The focus of OFSTED inspection is usually all the teaching within a school compared to attainment data. The participants' main themes were the presence of OFSTED, OFSTED's understanding of primary schools, OFSTED inspections, OFSTED's attainment data focus and the consequences of inspections.

For six of the participants their concern was not simply the actual inspection but rather the continual reference to inspection and the elements of the inspection. Participants saw OFSTED as government policy of ensuring that writing standards were improved. Lisa and Rochelle felt that OFSTED was constantly in the minds of all Year Six teachers. Several participants regarded the continual reference to OFSTED as a negative influence on them and their teaching. Rochelle caught this sentiment with a comment that working in school you will know OFSTED as it 'has such high stakes' (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

Rochelle introduced here the idea of consequences of an OFSTED inspection by referring to high stakes. Rochelle gave examples of the disturbing impact of a downgrading change in inspection judgement on three schools. Several participants referred to 'mocksteds' where the school carried out an inspection of itself using the OFSTED criteria and methods. For the participants 'mocksteds' increased pressure through a continual emphasis on inspection.

For several participants the concern with OFSTED was with its lack of understanding about primary teachers. For example, Rochelle there was an expectation about primary teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge:

> OFSTED do not understand primary teachers; you're in a primary school; you're supposed to be an expert on History or Geography like you've done a history [degree] (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

Several participants commented about aspects of an actual inspection. Rochelle's negative concerns about the imposed inspections were about three areas: the focus on some inspected features, the authority OFSTED and its use of power, and OFSTED's understanding of education. Regarding writing, Rochelle felt that OFSTED was too concerned with the minutiae of school rather than seeing and valuing the richness in writing experiences. Rochelle was concerned that there was a fixed agenda in OFSTED inspections which she characterised as the 'OFSTED tick-box' (RDQ1: SS17.03.2022) of inspection features. The 'OFSTED tick-box' was enforced by 'the OFSTED big stick' of compliance. Rochelle challenged OFSTED's understanding of education with its focus on outcomes rather than on a rich learning experience. Sarah's negative concerns focused on the notions of personal and professional judgement and the experience of the triangulation in lesson observations. The experience was upsetting but there is no suggestion that the observation questioned the quality or attainment in writing. Her description of the inspection process highlights the imposed nature of the inspection. Sarah described the inspection as 'a horrible process', and 'a tick box, is performance' (SPQ3:SS1 03.10.2022). She used very emotive phrases to describe her experience and became visibly upset describing the experience. Anticipating an OFSTED inspection was 'a looming fear' (SPQ3:SS1 03.10.2022). The inspection was associated with 'fear' and Sarah commented that:

> OFSTED always puts the fear of God in me (SPQ3:SS1 03.10.2022).

Sarah found the triangulation of her lesson plans, the observation and looking at the work in pupils' books disturbing. She wondered about whether the inspection saw education as they looked at these outcomes. Finally, for Sarah the inspection was a judgement on her. While one aspect of the judgement was of her professional competence, Sarah suggests it had a personal dimension.

Six of the respondents saw a link between OFSTED and the publication of performance data in Performance Tables. These participants felt that the Performance Tables were significant forms of data surveillance. Such views are very understandable given OFSTED's Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR). Robert saw OFSTED, SATs and Performance Tables as a force together and felt that the three were the basis of surveillance. Alan and Angela stressed that surveillance was all about results and cited the league tables as an example. Joanne claimed that an aspect of her Year Six experience was

the ‘data side of Year Six’ and felt that the Performance Tables were part of this. For Joanne such data meant:

> that your school is going to be judged on that [performance] in the league tables (JGQ1:SS1 10.01.2023).

Alan questioned OFSTED’s understanding of the nature of schools:

> I don’t think that…OFSTED also recognise the broad range of pupils and schools. OFSTED is mainly concerned with attainment… (AHQ1: SSI 07.06.2022).

Rochelle’s focus was on the respect for the professionalism of the teachers involved in inspection:

> they've got their framework, she/he's got the tick box, but there's no respect for teachers... [and schools need to be] obedient enough to tick an Ofsted tick box (RDQ1:SS1 17.03.2022).

Allan was concerned about the consequences of poor attainment:

> the consequences for a school are really grave if they are unable to show age-related attainment for all … (AHQ1: SSI 07.06.2022).

Allan emphasised a concern about the need for the data to be valid, contextualised and comprehensive. The participants’ concerns are significant given the serious consequences of negative inspection judgements.

Monitoring and surveillance had a slightly different focus for the participants. Both used the framework’s construct of writing and focussed on attainment outcomes. Monitoring evoked strong emotions from the majority of the participants. The participants’ main theme was their compliance with the moderation processes. Surveillance was also seen by all the respondents as influential. Two of the participants gave details of aspects of OFSTED inspections. Both were negative.

Summary

This chapter describes the findings of the research. Ivanic’s (2004) typology of writing and assessment structured the discussion about writing discourses. Three themes from the coding process (the writing discourses, classroom practice and assessment/surveillance) are used to frame the findings about Year Six teachers’ perceptions of teaching writing.

The Year Six participants held a range of, often overlapping, concepts of writing or discourses. The statutory NC construct of writing is composed of skills, process and genre discourses and is included in these discourses. Several participants noted the differences between the construct of writing in the TAF (STA, 2018), the PoS (DfE, 2013) and their

own personal concept of writing. The creative discourse for all the participants was important as involved aspects of being an author such as emotional connection, authorial intention and authentic voice. The creativity discourse is not included in NC (DfE, 2013). Thus, the participants saw writing in wider terms than the NC (DfE, 2013) to include expressive writing and contemporary forms such as digital and multimodal writing.

The participants stated that classroom practice was heavily influenced by the prescribed writing requirements although some taught some non-statutory forms. They suggested that there was limited teacher agency as a result. Planning the classroom writing experience concentrated on the statutory requirements. Several participants independently used the phrase 'there's more to writing than the Teacher Assessment Framework' and taught expressive writing and freewriting alongside the statutory requirement. All the participants used a product approach in teaching writing to address the statutory criteria and often used writing models for the assessed criteria. Several participants talked of their teacher writing in class. For some participants whole school policies ('free writing' and 'word gap') supported their experience. Teaching the Grammar Test was not seen as challenging as compositional writing despite participants' comments of limited teacher knowledge of grammar. For many participants teaching and assessing writing created stress and class progress was discussed with their headteachers informally or in Performance Management meetings. The Covid Lockdown particularly impacted on extended writing attainment.

The assessment of writing was mainly through the statutory TAF and the GPS tests. The Year Six teachers viewed the statutory TAF and the GPS Tests as defined their teaching and assessment in their classrooms and all were compliant. Nevertheless, some participants widened their teaching to non-statutory areas; these areas were not assessed. The writing construct's narrow focus, the strictness of the 'secure fit' assessment and the collection of evidence were issues for the respondents. Many of the participants described moderation as stressful with elements of professional and personal judgement. The participants described internal monitoring and external surveillance. One participant commented negatively on the assessment processes by describing them as 'dire and desperate…and onerous (LBQ1:SS1 07.01.2022)'.

The next chapter discusses these findings in relation to the literature review summary of the research and themes.

Chapter 5. Discussion of findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of my research on primary school writing. This study sought to research aspects of some Year Six teachers' perceptions of their teaching and assessment of writing within context of the KS2 National Curriculum (DfE, 2013). The research explores whether the participant teachers considered aspects of teaching and assessing writing within the terms of the NC (DfE, 2013) and beyond these terms. Additionally, if they did, what and to what extent was it taught and assessed.

The research considers teachers' perceptions of what they think of as important in the teaching and assessment of writing. Regarding the teaching of writing, the teachers identified writing which was prescribed in the NC (DfE, 2013) and other non-statutory writing which they considered important. For most of the participants there was an entanglement of the discourses of writing; an entanglement between an occupational discourse relating to their professional identity and an organisational discourse relating to the 'gaze' of government-led evaluative measures. Specifically with regard to the assessment of writing, the teachers stressed the importance of the TAF (2018) criteria and the GPS criteria. All the participants, while acknowledging that the nature of writing was contemporary, complex and diverse, regarded the criteria of the framework and the grammar test as the dominant focus of their teaching and assessment. The majority of the participants, while acknowledging the importance of expressive writing, saw such writing as a lower priority in their teaching. The creativity and socio-political discourses are not addressed in the NC (DfE, 2013). The participants acknowledged and stressed the importance of high attainment which was used for school accountability The participants acknowledged their compliance with national evaluative measures was to contribute to an 'effective' school, termed 'panoptic performativity' by Perryman (2018). The most important assessment for the participants was the summative teacher assessed writing at the end of the year. The GPS results were of lesser importance as these were not used for accountability purposes.

The research evidence for these findings were the NC (DfE, 2013) documentation and the participants' interviews. The interviews focused on understandings of writing, classroom practices including the assessment processes, and monitoring and surveillance processes. The major finding was that, although the participating teachers viewed writing as complex and multifaceted, the NC (DfE, 2013) construct dominated teachers' planning, teaching

and assessment. Most of the participants held the creativity discourse as important but acknowledged it received limited time and attention in class-time. This reflected limited teacher agency. The participants viewed grammar teaching as determined by the nature of the assessment process. Planning of classroom practice was focused on addressing the assessment criteria. Classroom practice was mainly characterized by transmission teaching. Transmission teaching was viewed as a dependable way to address the statutory requirements. There was little reference to contemporary writing forms such as multimodal or digital writing. The TAF and the moderation process dominated the secure fit assessment process. For the participants Performance Tables and OFSTED surveillance were significant accountability mechanisms.

The chapter reconsiders the personal and professional views that teachers have of the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) and how these views address the skills and constructs within writing including creativity and writer voice.

5.2 Writing discourses

All the participants emphasised the Year Six experience of writing focuses on the skills, process and genre discourses in the prescribed KS2 writing. Nevertheless, for the participants, as Cremin et al. (2012) and Bearne (2016: 9) noted, there were tensions around the issues of teacher and pupil agency, writer identity, authentic voice and authorial intention. Bearne (2016) saw these elements as important aspects in the development of the 'writer's choices and control over their writing'. The complexity of the situation the participants faced in terms of their accommodating a range of influences is suggested in the model in Figure 4 (p.160). The participants' accommodation to the range of influences may involve dealing with several competing influences within one lesson as well as teaching multiple discourses. Clarkson's (2019:307) research describes the teacher using multiple and overlapping discourses which may be used differently in different contexts. Pupil agency was significant to most of the participants as expressed by Lisa for whom pupils' writing gave them an opportunity to express their writing identity, thoughts and creativity. In addition, the participants commented on the range of contemporary writing forms such as multimodal writing, digital texts and blogs. Lisa, following Kress (2015: 51) on the fluidity of multimodal forms, commented that children's writing needs to acknowledge the nature of multimodal and digital texts and, indeed, 'and all sorts of social media devices' (LBQ1:SS1 07.01.2022). Here Lisa draws on her school library experiences. Similarly, the participants stressed their views of the social nature of writing

which seems to resonate with Vygotsky (1978: 116-7) and Halliday (1975) who both emphasise the social nature of writing. For example, Halliday comments:

> [a child's writing] takes place in the context of social interaction, and there is no way it can take place except in these contexts (Halliday, 1975:139-140).

Joanne echoed this as she saw writing going beyond primary school experience and into secondary school and the social world. However, while the participants acknowledged some of the areas that are distinct from the NC construct, the NC construct dominated the experience of writing.

The NC construct is described by Dowdall (2017) as 'constructed in terms of effectiveness, control and correctness' (Dowdall: 2017: 166). For the participants the NC construct with these characteristics was followed and dominated in their thinking. Further, recent research on the nature of the NC construct of writing described it as having 'prescriptivist views of language… [which gives] primacy to rule-based learning decontextualized from communication, personal engagement and imagination' (Myhill and Clarkson, 2020: 162).

In a variety of ways, the participants addressed these educational researchers' understanding of the NC construct. Three participants focus on a contrasting understanding of the nature of written English that is distinct from the NC construct. Rochelle saw writing as having something beyond the NC (DfE, 2013):

> it takes away from what English is about (RDQ1:SS17/03/2022).

Several participants were concerned that their pupils might consider the construct of writing as being 'good writing' rather than accurate writing. Another participant identified an issue with the nature of the assessment criteria:

> it's a *greater depth* piece that ticks off the criteria…but it's not a *greater depth* piece! (AHQ1: 07.06.2022).

Others referred to this qualitative understanding about the NC construct:

> the creativity doesn't have to be as good [in working at *greater depth* writing] ...are you sacrificing the ideas and the creativity to make sure it is accurate? So, it could be as dull as dishwater, but accurate, and that could be Greater Depth (SPQ1:SS1 03.10.2022).

For another participant the issues are wider such as an adequate preparation for secondary school and life:

> writing in Year Six ...not necessarily what you want to prepare them for in their future [school] lives (JGQ1:SS1 10.01.2023).

These participants' comments suggested limited teacher agency about writing both because of the need to ensure expectations of pupil attainment, the need to implement the statutory requirements and demonstrate teacher professionalism. While addressing all the terms of the prescribed construct, the participants attempted to offer as broad an experience of writing as possible, but this was limited. Brindley (2015: 50) suggests that teacher professional identity has been replaced by a 'policy identity' made up of 'state values' rather than individual's own personal values and beliefs. Some participants implied such an understanding. For instance, none of the participants addressed either digital writing or the socio-political discourse. In contrast, Clarkson (2023) in her research suggests that her participants covered all seven of Ivanic's discourses. However, strikingly, the participants' perceptions of grammar for the tests were markedly different and ambivalent to the grammar in compositional writing.

The participants were all aware that the NC (DfE, 2013) emphatically advises teachers:

> They [the pupils] should be taught the correct use of grammar'. (National Curriculum orders for English at Key Stages 1 to 4 (Department for Education, 2014: 11).

The NC (DfE, 2013) conceptualisation of grammar is influenced by The Bew Report (2011) where grammar in written composition is teacher assessed in contrast to 'spelling, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary' tests 'where there are clear 'right' and 'wrong' answers, which lend themselves to externally-marked testing' (Bew 2011: 60). Both educational researchers and the participants considered, while acknowledging the importance of grammar, the different approaches to grammar assessment suggest some difference in the understandings of the appropriate grammar for primary education. Many of the participants saw the function of grammar in compositional writing as supporting meaning in contrast to the grammar in the test which was the declarative and focused on the recognition of grammar features. Richmond (2014 and 2017) and Safford (2016), stress that grammar serves meaning as its central function:

> [grammar]enables meaning…as an outcome of the order in which [words] are arranged (syntax) or the way they change their form (morphology) (Richmond. 2017: 169).

Clarkson (2019:41) stresses that the NC construct emphasizes the technical, declarative aspects of grammar. Evans and Green (2006) labelled such an understanding of grammar as a 'dictionary view of grammar' (Evans and Green, 2006: 160). Cushing (2019: 430) comments on some NC grammar content as inappropriate and, indeed, including some archaic verb moods. Some participants, like Charlotte, shared with Cushing (2019) notions

of some grammar being inappropriate and 'archaic writing' forms. Both educational researchers and the participants have described the nature of the grammar in the framework and the test as prescriptive emphasizing syntax arrangements and the morphology of form. The PoS (2013), viewed the nature grammar learning as a focus on learning the structures and rules about language and then applying these to writing. However, Richmond (2017: 191) found in his research that competence in grammar precedes analysis of grammar language and, if competence is encouraged and awareness developed, an active interest in rules will develop. Richmond (2017: 189) challenges the NC (DfE,2013: 75) assertion that rule learning translates into application. Indeed, Alan illustrated from his classroom experience that this was not his experience.

While participants' attitudes to understanding and teaching NC grammar varied, nine of the participants were critical of the NC (DfE,2013) requirements for grammar and the suggested teaching approaches. Many of the participants shared the views of the participants in Safford's (2016) research. Safford (2016) commented that many of her participants saw grammar as 'an unambiguous set of rules…easily taught and learnt for the test' (Safford, 2016: 13 and 17). Safford's (2016) research suggested that while grammar might be 'a flexible compositional/authoring skill of choosing the most effective words to convey meaning', grammar was viewed by many of her participant as a 'set of terms and definitions to memorise' (Safford, 2016: 17). Similarly, in this research, many participants considered the test grammar as a 'set of terms and definitions to memorise'. Many did not see grammar as a means of providing meaning. The requirements of the assessment processes may well have influenced such a view of grammar. For example, Sarah drew attention to the high-stakes character of the grammar and consequent importance given to dedicated grammar test lessons and the teaching of assessed writing. In addition to the impact of assessment, the participants considered the NC conceptualisation of grammar as reflecting previous prescriptive grammar teaching practice.

Two participants described their confidence about content knowledge of grammar although both described grammar practice in the classroom as drills using test papers which suggested an understanding of grammar, using Safford description, as 'privileging the memorization of terms, definitions and bite sized units of words and sentence grammar' (Safford, 2016: 17). The confidence of these two participants came from their foreign language degree experience. To support their teaching of grammar, two other participants described their use of a grammar reference text in the classroom to support

their understanding and teaching. Like Crystal's (May05 2013 blog) suggestion that the NC (DfE, 2013) approach to grammar was a return to a fictional bygone age, Charlotte critically referred to the approach to grammar in writing, as implementing 'archaic ideas about writing' (CIQ1: SS 04.01. 2023). While acknowledging the importance of grammar in compositional writing, Rochelle considered the test grammar as problematic in terms of what the pupils had to learn and the associated teaching strategies of test preparation.

While most participants' comments about KS2 grammar were critical of the grammar test, there were two participants who were positive about grammar testing the associated teaching. Anna and Lisa felt that the grammar emphasis was important as the emphasis highlighted, what they felt was, correct English. For Lisa grammar was essential as it provided a 'formal recognition of a code of how you express yourself' (LBQ1:SS1 07.01.2022). These participants' rationale was that an understanding of grammar and assimilating prescriptive grammar into speech and writing is critical for further education and employment. There seem to be several elements in these participants' positions on the status and purposes of language.

The National Curriculum (DfE, 2013:11) states that teachers have responsibility for 'the correct use of Standard English' in the classroom. Cushing (2019: 429) argues that the NC requirements embody a 'prescriptive ideology and societal stigma, with the use of evaluative adjectives such as 'correct' and 'incorrect' serving to promote Standard English and 'right ways of speaking' at the expense of non-standardised forms. In the research by Safford (2016), some participants referenced Standard English and the EAL pupils' difficulties experienced because of using non-standard forms. For the teachers, Safford (2016) commented, there was a tendency to 'to reconstruct Standard English as 'correct', 'proper' and 'right', with non-standard forms labelled with the opposite adjectives' Safford (2016: 12).

Stafford's interviewed teachers also commented on the social capital of Standard English and the difficulties EAL pupils had with recognising the different forms. In my research, both Alan and Stuart felt that EAL pupils were disadvantaged regarding their use of Standard English forms. Both participants suggested Standard English was an issue for compositional writing rather than the GPS tests. In comparison, the other participants made little or no reference to Standard English in either compositional writing or in the test. However, there were comments about the social capital of English, and two participants raised the issue of EAL pupils' difficulties with standardised forms of English

as an aspect of 'social capital'. All the participants stressed the importance of the correct use of grammar in compositional writing as well as the ability to use Standard English forms.

The understanding about the nature of grammar is important for several reasons. The nature of the writing discourses and their relationship with grammar is identified by several educational researchers as helpful to teachers in the teaching of writing. Ivanic (2004: 224) suggested that teacher awareness of the character of dominant discourses may support the teaching process. Sturk (2019: 510) takes the point a little further as the participants in her research identified the skill discourse with accuracy, correctness and cohesion. For the research participants the centrality of the skills discourse and its links to accurate syntax was a major if somewhat problematic concern. Few of the participants saw grammar as Richmond (2017) did in terms of:

> grammar enables meaning…[and] is nothing less than a fundamental language system within which words – spoken and written – are enabled to make sense (Richmond, 2017: 170-1).

Rather the participants saw grammar, using Safford's (2016) description, as the application of 'a set of unambiguous rules for language' (Safford, 2016: 13). Cushing (2019: 30) quotes the 2014 Secretary of State for Education as saying that the result of studying grammar by pupils would 'make them more literate' (Gove, 2014). As Hudson (2001 and 2016:292) and Cushing (2019) comment, Michael Gove was ignoring decades of overwhelming evidence that decontextualized grammar teaching and testing does nothing to improve reading and writing. The emphasis on and extent of grammar was a tension for some participants. Rochelle commented the prominence given to grammar was 'really kind of bizarre really' (RDQ1: SS 17.03. 2022). For some participants language reflected social status, and, thus, the correct way of communicating and using grammar was a remedy for social problems. The participants' concerns about grammar for me reflect negative concerns about the prescriptive nature of the grammar in the test, the contrast with the grammar and its teaching in the compositional writing, and significance for the pupils of a grammar test result. These concerns are against a backdrop of concerns not only about the teaching of grammar in KS3 and KS4, but also the lack of grammar progression and experience in the secondary experience.

The participants' understandings of the complex, multi-layered nature of writing existed alongside a recognition of the emphases of the NC construct in Year Six teaching. Nevertheless, the participants' comments show an awareness that the NC construct did not

address all of what they considered important areas such as contemporary forms of writing, authorial ownership, identity, and voice. The issue of criteria validity was explicitly raised by three participants with their comment that 'there is more to writing than the TAF'. The participants felt the different grammar emphases in the PoS, the framework and the tests show contrasting perspectives about the nature of writing. The participants' views about the different aspects of primary writing illustrated the limited teacher agency available to them. While the participants accepted the NC (DfE,2013) construct of writing, they also considered wider aspects of writing such as the reader-writer relationship and being an author as important. These perceptions amount to a complex, multi-layered nature of writing which to some degree guided their classroom practices even if their practice was restricted by the statutory requirements. The next section draws some conclusions on aspects of this classroom practice.

5.3 Classroom practice

The participants' classroom practices were mainly shaped by the statutory assessments. Consequently, the teaching strategies used by the participants were a balance between of transmission teaching, seen as a dependable strategy for addressing external knowledge, and the use of topic work which gave some experience of both statutory writing forms and, to a lesser extent, creative writing. These teaching strategies mainly focused on the external knowledge of the NC (DfE, 2013) construct. The participants suggested that the importance of pupil attainment led to dedicated lessons on the assessed criteria, streaming and after class support booster sessions. The participants commented that the additional classes used transmission teaching using exemplar models. Planning for Year Six was focused on covering all the areas in the prescribed assessments. However, there was a tension in the planning. While the participants claimed that they valued expressive writing, when they discussed planning, it was exclusively on planning for the statutory assessments rather than incorporating any creative or expressive writing opportunities. Most of the participants regarded teaching for the grammar test as completely distinct from compositional writing. This is significant, as Christensen (2009:271) points out, as compositional writing was a vehicle for meaning, the relationship with the reader and 'the emerging identity' of being an author which contrasts the grammar test reflecting 'a set of terms and definitions to memorise' (Safford, 2016: 17).

Classroom dialogue for many of the participants mainly appeared to be around questioning about the assessment criteria. Some participants felt that the impact of

teaching to the assessment criteria limited formative guidance for the next steps for learning, or advice about strategies that pupils might employ to improve their writing.

Several educational researchers, like the participants, commented on how the assessment impacted on classroom practices. Richmond (2017) offered a critical evaluation of the impact of limited teacher agency in Year Six teachers:

> teachers of English in primary schools in England are effectively treated as machine operators, given sets of instructions narrowly related to method, and told to follow them (Richmond, 2017: 4).

While Bearne (2017) commented that within the 'accountability/accountancy culture', the assessment concentrated on what was measurable, while the framework and the moderation ensured that teachers taught the assessment criteria:

> The assessment framework operates on a 'statement by statement' system, which is intended to check that the framework [has been followed] … [and] that teachers have followed the national curriculum (Bearne, 2017: 75).

All participants felt their teaching strategies were a response to high-stakes accountability assessment and described two ways in which assessment impacts on teaching in Year Six: what is taught and how it is taught. The participants commented on both influences on their teaching. David was emphatic about the way the framework and test criteria was both the focus of teaching and determined what was taught.

> The way we're asked to assess writing, I think, completing shapes both what we teach and the way that we teach it (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023).

David also made a series of pertinent points about the teaching and learning in Year Six which was a consequence of the transmission teaching to the tests. Several participants raised issues about the way the pupils often must learn in Year Six. The learning experience for the pupil was wholly dependent on responding to the teacher led exposition of the external knowledge:

> Learning for the Year Six pupils is passive…it is…absorbing the teacher led knowledge of the framework. For me, that's a negative (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023).

David saw the difficulties of an exclusive focus on the assessment and test criteria as leading to the pupils producing 'characterless and bland writing' (DHQ3:SS1 16.06.2023). Robert was equally emphatic that the assessment determined what is taught and how it was taught as he illustrated his class teaching:

> The TAF defines pedagogy…'Well, [addressing a pupil] you need to include this'. 'You need to have this'. You'd be walking around and say 'Where's your embedded clause within that sentence? Why isn't that a relative clause? It needs to have a relative pronoun in it' (RCQ1:SS1 07.02.2023).

Charlotte offered a practical strategy. She has the pupils put the framework in their writing books in order that the criteria might be referred to during the lesson:

> They have the TAF in their books...they know that they have certain things they have to hit (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

The impact of the assessment processes affected the participants' decisions to use transmission teaching strategies. The participants were all conscious of and acknowledged the accountability context of their primary school. Many of the participants were members of their school's senior leadership team and were conscious of the expectation of high attainment. Those who were not in the senior leadership team held positions of responsibility and were likely to share the senior leadership team's high attainment expectations. Pollard described this mindset as being 'bound by the demand for delivery of performance beyond all other considerations' (Pollard et al., 2001: 278). However, transmission teaching, while likely to achieve successful levels of attainment, may cause what David called surface learning. Keen (2017) makes this point drawing on his experiences in the National Writing Project. The participant's response to transmission teaching was ambivalent. On the one hand, some considered that such a teaching strategy limited teacher and pupil agency while at the same time putting the teacher's writing expertise in a privileged position in the classroom. On the other hand, transmission teaching made explicit the assessment features to the pupils and could be justified in terms of 'passing the test'. In part, this is what Lambrith (2016) discussed when he referred to the pupils' 'compliance discourse'. Another aspect of this is the culture of booster classes that run after school and, in some cases, even on Saturdays.

This research found the teaching strategies used by the participants mixed transmission teaching and the use of topic work to address the NC (DfE, 2013) construct. Keen (2017) in his research suggests that transmission or product approaches to teaching 'currently dominate classroom teaching in the UK' (Keen,2017: 383) and described how transmission approaches used exemplars. However, Keen suggested that such teaching approaches may limit the nature and extent of pupil learning. Keen (2017) suggested that using transmission teaching through models:

> may achieve a creditable end but at the cost of taking the struggle out of learning…written composition (Keen, 2017: 381).

For one participant, David, this was linked to his understanding of deep learning in the Year Six context. He suggested that deep learning need a collaborative relationship between teacher and pupil coupled with a degree of pupil agency in learning. David

contrasts these requirements to learning the external knowledge of the NC (DfE,2013) construct:

> Learning if it is to be deep is through the construction by the teacher and the pupil rather than by imposing external criteria or knowledge. Pupils must have agency in their writing and learning (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023).

The NLS (1988) made extensive use of exemplar teaching. In one sense, current practice draws on that experience. Other than using exemplars, the participants described other writing strategies that were based on the assessment criteria rather than a more holistic approach to compositional writing. These included mnemonics, acronyms, the framework stuck in pupil writing books. Keen (2017) also suggested that such strategies reduced pupil agency. Most of the participants commented that their exemplar teaching was complemented by topic work which gave some variety by looking at varied content while studying the assessed features. Some participants commented that this use of topic work moved away from writing with a focus on accuracy to a more personal, almost expressive, form of writing. Several participants spoke enthusiastically about their pupils' reaction to topic work. Similarly, Clarkson (2019:279) in her research suggests that the participants used topic work both as a way of addressing the framework criteria and of offering 'varied opportunities' for creative discourse writing. In this research, participants in this research also used topic work to enable pupil writing in both genre and creativity discourses. In this research, most of the participants mainly used their topic work to address the genre discourse. Some of the participants using transmission teaching were aware of the tension caused by their limited use the creativity or social practices writing discourses as they concentrated their attention on the text product of genre writing. While all the participants commented that they valued creativity, some contrasted creative writing with accurate writing. Some participants felt that accurate writing itself was not attractive. Clarkson (2019:285) called this an 'anti-skills rhetoric'. Hence, Sarah's comment about working *at greater depth* writing might be as 'dull as ditch water, but accurate…' (SPQ1:SS1 03.10.2022). However, such a view is not supported by the quality of the working *at greater depth* writing in the non-statutory Exemplification Materials.

The participants emphasised the importance of pupil attainment both for the pupils and the school. To ensure high levels of attainment, all the participants described support outside class time to help all pupils attain at *expected* standard of writing. While outside class support was available to all pupils, there were particular groups that were specifically invited to attend such sessions. Such groups included EAL pupils, FSM/disadvantaged pupils and those considered borderline in attainment. Bradbury et al. (2021) describe these

strategies as an ‘intervention culture’ involving ‘triage’ strategies. All the participants described outside class support such as streaming for some lessons, booster-classes, Saturday sessions, SATs Mocks. The outside class support was described by the participants as starting in the Spring Term as this was when it was clear which pupils might benefit from such support. Interestingly, two participants described streaming of Year Six classes. For one participant, the streamed class contained a significant number of EAL pupils. One participant suggested some ambivalence about streaming in a primary school. The frequency of these strategies varied although one participant described how in his school there were Mock SATs every half term from September onwards. This was to ‘acclimatise’ the Year Six pupils to assessment occasions. Planning the Year Six experience to include these support measures was essential to ensure ‘delivery’ of the attainment performance.

The research participants described planning the Year Six writing experience in terms of explicitly teaching the assessed criteria in the framework and the test. Richmond (2017) suggested that there is some a degree of tension in exclusively planning for the assessed criteria in the test and teacher assessed writing while conscious of wider understandings of writing. However, for the participants, their main concern in planning was ensuring pupil attainment.

Several participants described the planning focus in the Autumn term as practising writing to meet all the framework criteria. According to these participants, they made no attempt to start the build-up the teacher assessed portfolio in this term. Neither during the Autumn term was there explicit preparation for the grammar test paper. However, almost all the participants said the pupils had booster support classes after school during the Autumn term. Three participants said Mock SATs were given for all pupils in the Autumn term to ensure attainment. According to these participants, planning in the Spring term focused on writing ‘best examples’ for the framework portfolio and the organisation of discrete lessons on the elements in the grammar and spelling tests. These participants commented that creativity and other discourses were not explicitly planned for although there were opportunities in topic work based on the reading that the class was doing. For the participants, planning for compositional writing was given more attention and time than planning for the grammar test. Watson (2015: 334) suggests in her research that there may be ‘conceptual confusion’ or ‘negative views’ about grammar. Several participants spoke in these terms about grammar. However, one participant suggested that the teachers’ strong focus on compositional writing might result from the high-stakes status of such

writing as it is reported in the Performance Tables whereas the Grammar Test results are not. Such weighting of language aspects also applies to classroom dialogue.

For some of the participants dialogue was a critical aspect of the classroom experience. Although the research did not observe any of the participants' lessons, several participants talked about the oral exchanges in their classrooms. The participants who talked of their classroom exchanges stressed that classroom dialogue was teacher-controlled to address external knowledge of the framework often using Initiation- Response-Feedback questioning. Two participants stressed the value of dialogue in the learning process. Brindley (2015) contrasts this to dialogic teaching which 'values learning through discussion between teacher and student' (Brindley, 2015: 52). Interestingly, David contrasts his classroom dialogue to the nature of the dialogue he experienced in other year groups. While the dialogue in Year Six is focused on the correct application of external knowledge from the framework or test, discussion in other year groups might have concerned the pupil construction of knowledge. For David there was limited pupil agency in the pupil interaction from his experience of Year Six and this limited the pupil construction of knowledge:

> …rather than focusing on whether a child has got a full stop in all the right places, all the time. Perhaps allowing for discussion and dialogue in the classroom that allows pupils to have some say in what we are doing. After all the teacher and the pupil are working together to construct their knowledge about what they understand writing is (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023).

These points about the limited collaborative discussion are, in part, the result of the focus on the external knowledge and the need to cover it in such a way that it signals to the pupils what it is they need to know. These decisions are bound up with the necessary pace to the lessons as several participants commented on what has to be covered in Year Six to ensure appropriate attainment. Several participants linked lesson pace to the need to cover all the external knowledge of the assessment and test thoroughly. Research by Lefstein and Snell (2013) noted that lesson pace was identified by the DFEE (1998:8) and OFSTED (in 'Worlds Apart' (1996)) as associated with educational achievement. The DFEE (1998) NLS referred to 'well-paced lessons- there is a sense of urgency, driven by the need to make progress and succeed' (DFEE,1998: 8). Lefstein et al. (2013) commented that alleged poor performance in English education was linked to other countries where 'time and pace feature prominently in…. countries' success' (Lefstein et al., 2013: 75). The participants felt that there was a tension between success in covering the elements of the external knowledge and pupil development while constructing a writing portfolio and preparing for tests. For Lisa the pace of the lesson was determined by the need to cover the

framework and test areas. She commented on the idea of developing a learning point and feeling that, as a motivated teacher, there was something more to be developed in writing. Lisa suggests that the interests of the pupils were compromised by this need to cover the framework and test criteria. Perhaps this is an allusion to what two other participants refer to in their comments both on the emphasis on assessment criteria and the construct of writing - 'there is more to writing than the TAF'. Lisa commented:

> Yes…it's move on, move on where sometimes it would be good to just stay because this is potentially a really good learning point...And if we've got more time ...we will make good progress. Because you're highly inspired and motivated. You're buzzing with it. And then we have to move on, because we've got to cover the curriculum. It's time allocation. Planning is absolutely central to everything, but ... everything only gets an allocated amount of time (LBQ1:SS1 07.01.2022).

Perhaps the emphasis on pace was a cultural lag from the NLS (1998). Myhill (2006), while acknowledging the change of emphasis in policy comments (DfES, 2006) on lesson pace in the 'Primary Framework' (DfES, 2006), commented in her research that teachers:

> felt under pressure to cover the teaching objectives and to achieve pre-specified goals, they felt reluctant to hand over their tight control to the children for fear of not covering what they needed to cover in the lesson (Myhill, 2006: 29).

David's views about the relationship between pace in lesson and the demands of the assessment demands had different emphases. David contrasted the Year Six experience to the experiences in other year groups, and he suggested that in Year Six formative and summative assessment do not complement one another. The demands of the summative assessment of both the framework and the test determine what is perceived as 'effective learning' but it is, for David, 'passive learning':

> there's a bit of a disconnect between the way it's taught in other year groups and ...with the teaching and emphases in national curriculum documents you get to Year Six. Assessment is meant to help the development of the pupil. The pace of the lesson is determined by meeting the framework criteria. Lesson pace is in this sense effective learning…Learning for the Year Six pupil… is [after] following or absorbing the teacher led knowledge which is the framework (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023).

David's perceptions about the assessment are shared by other participants who also note that assessment takes place after the learning experience rather than during it. For some participants, this summative form of assessment did not positively complement the classroom experience for the pupils. For David the rationale for assessment was to support the pupil and he felt that the summative assessment did not do this. Indeed, David and Charlotte questioned how their pupils' writing was to develop because the summative assessment did not offer guidance of 'next step' pupil development. Joanne seems to

capture the assessment experience and its purpose in her comment about the impact of assessment on the classroom experience:

> You don't feel that you are doing the best for the children as you are stuck with this horrible end of year assessment and the data needed for your school (JGQ1:SS1 10.01.2023).

The summative assessment experience is compromised for many participants as they do not see how the pupils benefit in terms of identifying areas to improve their writing. These participants' feelings show an awareness of a tension between the participants' understandings of the nature and purpose of primary schools and the nature and the state's understanding of primary schools implicit in the primary school policies. Shuayh and O'Donnell, (2010: 333) refer to the apparent change in the character of primary schools where the schools have a 'hybrid status' where the focus on child centred development is coupled to policies on standards.

5.4 Assessment and accountability

Year Six writing assessment is reviewed under three sub-headings: assessment and primary school values, assessment strategies for the framework and tests and assessment, surveillance and accountability. Assessment is viewed as part of an accountability culture made up of 'Standards Driven Agenda' and 'High Stakes Testing. The 'Standards Driven Agenda (hereafter referred to as SDA) gives individual schools the responsibility for the effective delivery of the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the schools' teachers are agents for the teaching of the National Curriculum. 'High Stakes Testing' is the process whereby the results of tests and inspections are used as a means of making the school accountable for the education that they to the different stakeholders. All participants acknowledged the centrality and importance of assessment in the SDA. Ainscow et al. (2006: 295) argued that the SDA was 'the major force shaping the direction of schools.' The DfE (2013) asserted that 'statutory assessment in core subjects is crucial for robust external accountability' (DfE, 2013: 4).

5.4.1. Assessment and primary school values

Lisa and David acknowledged that the character of primary education has changed. Shuayh and O'Donnell (2010) suggest that the child-centred philosophy based on the Plowden (1967) has fused with recent standards policy initiatives. Consequently, according to Shuayh and O'Donnell (2010), the character of state primary schools is an:

> …almost contradictory hybrid of child-centred and economically- and socially motivated philosophies of education (Shuayh and O'Donnell, 2010: 333).

These philosophies contain the focus on standards measured through assessment. While the participants recognised that the assessment process was a narrow, rigorous, unforgiving and harsh examination of external knowledge, Charlotte and others showed a critical awareness that government policy required such assessment for the measurement of 'school effectiveness' in Performance Tables. The assessment of text accuracy and genre use through the NC construct, was characterised by one participant, echoing Ozga (2009:160), as the 'data side of Year Six' (JGQ1:SS1 10.01.2023). Joanne, as mentioned earlier, echoed Reay and Wiliams' (1999:352) concern about individual pupils' progress and the threat to the existence of the school because of poor pupil attainment. Sarah and Robert were concerned about the impact on their pupils of the testing regime. Nevertheless, some participants felt that the narrow set of attainment measures were assessed inflexibly given the primary school context. This may reflect the changing nature of English primary schools referred to above.

5.4.2. Assessment strategies for the framework and tests.

Participants regarded the writing assessment through teacher assessment and the STA differently. The participants regarded the teacher assessment of compositional writing and grammar test preparation as essentially separate. Teacher assessment of compositional writing was assessed and monitored through the STA moderation process. Grammar was assessed both in the framework and through the decontextualized grammar test. Some participants suggested that the assessment was really an examination of the absorption of teacher led knowledge about compositional writing and grammar with a view to being able to write accurately in contrast to other participants who felt that the assessment needed greater awareness of the wide nature of English and authorship. The assessment processes examined pupil mastery of the NC construct. Voice was not referenced in the assessment process although mentioned in the Exemplification Materials (2017). All the participants acknowledged that the assessment processes gave information for accountability and comparison purposes. According to Clarkson (2019:35) such summative assessment enables a generalisation from the test score to a wider domain of writing knowledge. Additionally, Clarkson (2019:118) pointed out that the framework does not cover all the content but rather key aspects of the national curriculum (STA, 2018:2) In addition, over half of the participants, agreeing with Clarkson's (2019) observation, raised the issue of reliability associated with the interpretation of the

framework. In contrast, the participants saw grammar test was seen as reliable assessment although its decontextualized nature of the content was an issue.

The teacher assessment of writing meeting was led by a STA representative, used the TAF and followed a moderation process. The participants regarded these three elements as very important. Some of participants' concerns about construct validity about writing are related to aspects of the NC construct that were assessed by the TAF. Nevertheless, as Slomp (2012) argues, a writing portfolio is a good assessment model to show a wide range of writing discourses. The moderation process of the teacher assessment involved trial marking and the possibility of a moderation visit. Additionally, a teacher might be invited by the trained representative to train as school moderator. These arrangements and the framework are designed to ensure the reliability of assessment results across schools. Understandably in the context of the SDA, all the participants were apprehensive about the assessment process.

Many participants considered the moderation and assessment experiences apprehensively. The participants were very aware of the accountability context, their professional integrity and responsibilities to the pupils and their schools. For the participants the assessment data had various forms, and the participants were knowledgeable about the various data. The participants acknowledged the high status to their schools of attainment data and were conscious of which attainment data are significant for Performance Tables and the OFSTED Inspection Data Summary Report. Nevertheless, for all the participants these were aspects of the accountability context that not only measured their performance, or under-performance, but, for some, reflected the effectiveness of the school and the management team. Six participants were part of their school's management team. Participants regarded the moderation experience was almost a professional judgement on the quality of their teaching and assessment. Some of the participants expressed concern about the interpretation of some of the assessment criteria relating to writer independence and register/shift in formality. Almost all the participants expressed a concern about their pupils' work being judged accurately and positively in moderation. Clearly, for the participants their main concern was their pupils, yet they were equally anxious to present their school's performance favourably.

Although the participants were concerned for their pupils' performance, the participants were also conscious that moderation assessment is a complex and interpretive process

where agreement between assessors is often difficult. Marshall and Wiliam (2006) commented that:

> Crucial to English learning and teaching … is the development of judgement (Marshall and Wiliam, 2006: 4).

Similarly, Bew (DfE,2011) commented that:

> there is a fundamental challenge with the marking of writing composition (extended writing of prose, verse, formal letters etc.) because it requires a professional's judgement rather than being empirically 'right' or 'wrong' (DfE, 2011, June, p. 60).

Clarkson (2019: 66) suggested that there is limited understanding of teacher professional judgement and the processes teachers go through to arrive at a judgement about the quality of a piece of writing. Clarkson (2019: 69) and Lumley (2002) commented that teachers' assessment judgements involved complex considerations as they rank assessment criteria. The participants referred to the difficulties in reconciling assessment elements such as their holistic impression of the writing, specific assessment features as well as their understanding of the standard to achieve a particular assessment category. Such a judgement process was influenced additionally by their personal views on writing. Three participants referred to the assessed work in the Exemplification Materials (2017) although the STA suggest that these materials are provided for those who are not 'confident' in assessment at KS2. The KS2 teacher assessment has many elements which may have contributed to the anxiety that many participants expressed. Perhaps the rigour of the 'secure fit' assessment, which one participant called 'unforgiving', was a major contributor to this anxiety. Charlotte was the only participant who referred to the discretionary but assessed 'particular weakness' that diluted the rigour of 'secure fit' assessment. For some of the participants the moderation meetings brought many of these issues about judgement to the fore.

Several participants reflected on the moderation meeting assessment process as involving both a professional judgement of their school's writing products and, sometimes by implication, their teaching and their application of the framework. Angela described the moderation meeting as challenging and stressful because of the focus on the accuracy of her assessment judgements. Her apprehension made her feel 'sick'. In contrast, moderation for Sarah had elements of a performance as teachers had been a 'filter, frame and guide' (Fives et al., 2016:114) of the pupil's work which making the pupil's work less authentic. Robert felt that the moderation followed a 'script' which also has echoes of the idea of performance. Sarah's and Robert's observations are similar to Perryman's (2007:208/2018:159) description of a 'fabricated performance'. The moderation meetings

are an arena for interpretation as the tension between participants' desire to get the most favourable judgements about their pupils' work was countered by other Year Six teachers' different interpretation of the either the frequency of use of a feature or the understanding of the assessment feature in practice. Some of the participants illustrated the tension over interpretation. Stuart, for example, commented on the difficulties of interpretation with the use of the subjunctive and on another occasion about the issues with the shifts in formality in language. The participants also felt that there were issues of professional judgement with comments made by the moderation team about not 'teaching to the TAF'. Charlotte felt that such comments were unrealistic as she felt that all Year Six teachers taught to the framework. It is certainly true that all the teachers in this sample felt that they taught to the framework. Another participant commented on the moderator's comments about not taking account of the pupil progress data in teaching. Joanne thought that such guidance was misplaced as it ignored the reality of the line management meetings with the headteacher, performance management meetings with teacher performance targets and the 'data side of Year Six'. All of which were significant features in her school.

For some participants some of these issues carried over into the moderators' visits to the individual schools. One participant stressed that the moderation was, despite the language used, a scrutiny of his teaching and his assessment practices while another participant, in contrast, felt that the moderation visit showed that the framework had been applied correctly and affirmed the teacher's professional competence. The moderation visits, for some participants, involved discussions about pupils' independent writing and aspects of contextualised grammar, such as the use of the subjunctive or modal verbs, in the teacher assessment of writing. The decontextualized grammar in the GPS was not moderated.

The participants' attitude towards grammar tests echoed Safford's research that teachers considered grammar mainly as the application of 'a set of unambiguous rules for language' (Safford, 2016: 13) so that prescriptive grammar was right or wrong. The grammar test assessment created something of a tension in the attempt to create a reliable and assessable feature. One aspect of the tension is that the focus on decontextualized grammar takes away from writer voice and writer agency. Another aspect of the tension is, as Clarkson (2019:293) suggests, an expectation that the grammar test learning would transfer into the pupils' compositional writing. For Alan this was patently not the case, and he expressed a degree of surprise at the lack of transfer. The tension might be explored through Rochelle's implicit reference to the surface learning involved in the grammar test in contrast to the deeper learning involved in compositional writing.

Rochelle's attitude to decontextualized grammar was somewhat negative as she minimized the class time spent on this form of grammar learning. Rochelle accented the importance of contextualized grammar with an embedded approach, offering a holistic view of writing. Rochelle and other participants' stress on holistic versions of writing contrasts with the assessment focus on the need for aspects of writing which would be 'more conveniently measured' (Bearne, 2017: 74). Bearne shared with Barrs (2019: 22) the concern about such a narrow conceptualisation of writing.

Several participants were concerned about the 'more conveniently measured' (Bearne, 2017: 74) assessment of handwriting. The Teacher Assessment Framework requires pupils working *at expected* standard and above to write with cursive handwriting or 'joined handwriting' (TAF, 2018/19: 5). For some participants this was an aspect of presentation. For Sarah this was mainly 'important' as presentation rather than writing in contrast to the lesser status of cursive handwriting in lower year groups. For Joanne the assessment of cursive writing belonged to the 'checklist in this tick-box exercise… [which included] ridiculous things like handwriting' (JGQ1:SS1 10.01.2023). Joanne felt strongly as she saw contemporary writing as likely to be typed or word processed. For Charlotte, within the context of the 'secure fit', pupils had to show correct use of all the framework features to be awarded working *at expected* standard which she felt was demanding:

> you have to have everything...tick off the list. So, if you can't join your handwriting… (CIQ1:SS1 04.01.2023).

Such comments show that the participants regard the 'secure fit' assessment as inflexible.

5.4.3. Accountability and surveillance

A distinction may be made between monitoring and surveillance. This is implicit in the comments made about the moderation process and inspections in Rochelle's and Sarah's comments as they discuss the different objectives and processes. However, the two forms are complementary and form what Perryman (2017: 746) called the 'panoptic gaze'. Both monitoring and surveillance were experienced by the participants. David's experience as a moderator suggested that 'moderation checks on the correct processes being followed in applying the framework' which contrasts to his comments on OFSTED which was 'surveillance of the effectiveness and standards' (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023). Thus, monitoring was the STA's moderation of teacher assessment and the tests which focused on school and pupil attainment in Year Six. In contrast, surveillance was by OFSTED and used pupil attainment as a measure of teacher effectiveness in whole school. The

participants while following professionally the assessment processes felt a tension about the impact of the two processes. Nevertheless, the participants' compliance with both processes was fully conscious of the nature and purpose of either of the processes. The participants considered OFSTED to be the main agency of surveillance and OFSTED evoked strong negative emotions. The participants were conscious of the consequences of not being judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. As Perryman et al. (2018: 154) found in her research, the participants were aware of the role of attainment data (IDSR) in school surveillance. Nevertheless, several participants, in line with Clapham (2015), suggested that surveillance was artificial and involved performance. Perryman et al. (2018: 146) called this role 'performing to the 'good school''. Monitoring and surveillance were both seen as commenting on the participants' professional competence and personal ability.

The participants followed the two assessment processes professionally. The participants were very knowledgeable the NC construct they assessed. Also, the participants were aware that some writing discourses, such as the creativity or the socio-political discourses, were not assessed. This created what Moore and Clarke (2016: 666) identified as an 'entanglement' of the occupational discourses and organisational discourses in the teaching rather than the assessment of writing. The participants' acceptance of the selection of writing discourses assessed and the assessment fits with the description in Braun et al. (2020) of teachers' 'pragmatic compliance' (Braun and Maguire, 2018: 440). Rochelle described the situation that the Year Six teachers faced as one of 'no option' (RDQ1:SS17/03/2022). Rochelle's point is well made given the range of pressures the Year Six teachers experience from the school, colleagues, governors, parents and pupils. Such difficult tensions and pressures caused several participants to ask their headteachers if they could teach a different year group. As six of the participants were assistant or deputy headteachers, these were revealing requests as they all showed loyalty and a professional commitment to their schools but felt uneasy about their experiences of teaching and assessing writing. Alongside such monitoring moderation, the participants also experienced surveillance.

Most participants saw OFSTED as the main agency for surveillance. The consequences of a negative judgement from OFSTED were seen by the participants as grave and severe. These negative OFSTED judgements were either the 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate'[2]. The EIF (2019) has seen some 2021 primaries inspected with about 20% of

[2] Sept.2024: HM Government announced the replacement of a single headline grade with four grades for each inspection category. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/single-headline-ofsted-grades-scrapped-in-landmark-school-reform

the inspected primaries receiving negative judgements (Thompson, D. 2024). All the participants were aware that the initial stages of OFSTED surveillance involved the examination of attainment data. This is another reason for such data's importance. For six participants, the attainment data, 'the data side of Year Six' (JGQ1:SS1 10.01.2023), was partly important for the role it played in the OFSTED surveillance process. Six participants described OFSTED inspection, the threat of inspection and internal 'Mocksteds' as pressure. This is a similar finding to Braun et al. (2020:439) who described such pressure and uncertainty as creating a climate of pressure, uncertainty and a degree of teacher insecurity in their attitudes towards teacher assessed and test attainment. David identified a concern explored by Perryman et al. (2018: 156) that participants were conscious of how the focus of OFSTED inspections changed over time which added to feelings of stress and instability. David and Rochelle, for example, identified the balancing of high stakes testing and creativity as such an example. Several participants referred to the serious consequences of a negative OFSTED judgements on themselves or their colleagues: the removal of the headteacher and senior management and of any staff who might be described as 'underperforming'. Courtney and Gunter (2015: 412) referred to these severe changes resulting from negative judgements as a 'get off my bus' school response. Such draconian changes would impact on the Year Six teachers either directly or indirectly. Rochelle was one of the most vocal critics of the OFSTED surveillance process and was concerned about not only the impact on the school communities but also commented on the basis of OFSTED judgements which were made to substantiate a reading of the data through lesson observations and conversations. Rochelle's use of the metaphor of being 'beating with the big stick' over different issues agreed with Courtney's (2016) comment that the inspection is 'designed to wrong foot school-leaders and disrupt' (Courtney, 2016:624). The nature of the lesson observations and their authenticity was an issue for another participant. Interestingly, Perryman et al. (2018:152) found her research participants referring to OFSTED's 'big stick' approach.

Sarah described the recent OFSTED inspection of her English lesson in very strong terms and made a number of telling points about the OFSTED lesson observation in her OFSTED categorised 'Good' school. As Ball (2003) also commented about inspection performances, Sarah too saw the OFSTED observation as a performance which gave very limited information about the quality of the pupils' learning in the short visit to the lesson and the subsequent examination of the exercise books from the lesson. Sarah felt that the writing in the observed lesson was viewed through the lens of prior English attainment in the school. Sarah's school was categorised as 'Good' before and after the inspection.

Sarah described how prior to the inspection, OFSTED had put the 'fear of God' in her, and that how during the lesson observation, she felt terrified. Sarah was emotional as she described how her pupils' books were reviewed by the inspectors to triangulate pupil progress in the lesson:

> Is that education? You feel judged by that [observation]...quite horrible process. Really its quite terrifying (SPQ1:SS1 03.10.2022).

In addition to being a fundamental question, this is very strong emotion from a professional.

In conclusion, I argue that the organisational discourse of writing both directly defines classroom practice and, in addition, for some participants has become their understanding of and belief about writing. This has changed the occupational discourse. In other words, the accountability mechanisms have strongly influenced the beliefs and values that many of the participants held in respect to teaching writing and including expressive elements of writing.

Chapter 6 The research question and contribution of this research.

6.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the research questions and my research on primary school writing. This study sought to research aspects of Year Six teachers' perceptions of their teaching and assessment of writing of the KS2 National Curriculum (DfE, 2013). A central issue is the participants' teaching and assessment of writing not only of NC (DfE, 2013) but also of areas of writing beyond the prescribed NC.

Consequently, the research question is:

> **What do Year Six teachers perceive are the important aspects of teaching and assessing writing within maintained primary schools in England? Specifically, in relation to what they might teach versus what they have to teach and assess.**

The major finding was that, although the participating teachers viewed writing as complex and multifaceted, the NC (DfE, 2013) construct made of skills, genre and process discourses significantly dominated teachers' planning, teaching and assessment. Almost all the participants said that the creativity discourse, while it received limited attention, was important for them. At the same time, the participants acknowledged the personal, contemporaneous and social nature of writing. (Appendix Twenty)

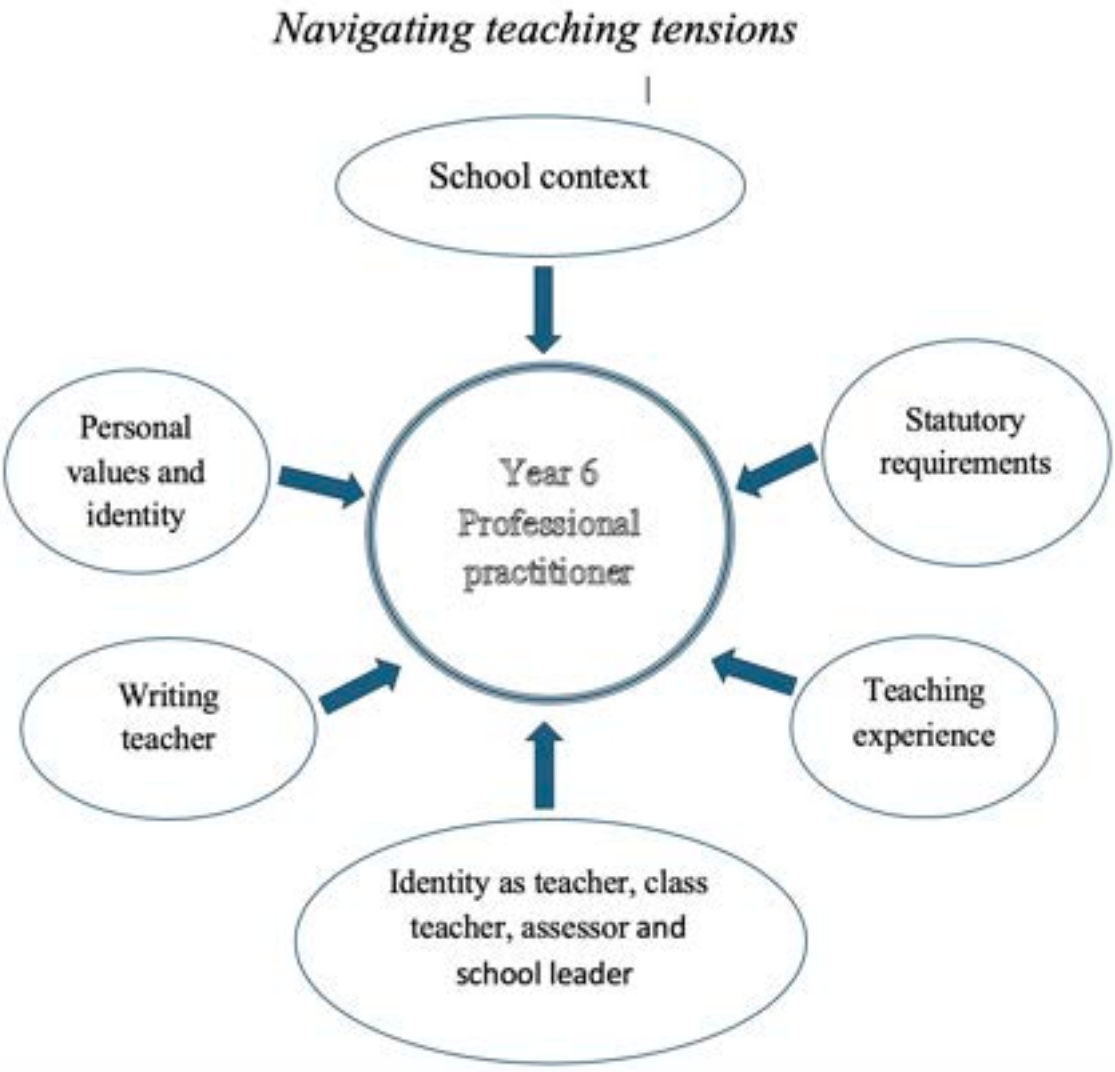
Other findings include the participants viewing grammar teaching as determined by the assessment process. Planning of classroom practice was focused on addressing the assessment criteria. Classroom practice was mainly characterized by transmission teaching through exemplars and topic teaching. Transmission teaching was viewed as a dependable way to address the statutory requirements. There was little reference to contemporary writing forms such as multimodal or digital writing. The Teacher Assessment Framework, the moderation process and the test dominated assessment mostly to the exclusion of formative assessment. The criteria validity of the NC construct is an issue for many of the participants. The participants saw Performance Tables and OFSTED surveillance as significant accountability mechanisms that restricted their choices about teaching strategies.

6.2 Contribution and limitations

Whilst all the participants in this research taught and assessed the NC (DfE, 2018) writing construct fully, a significant majority saw writing in wider and more expressive terms that went beyond the relatively narrow NC construct. This majority of participants taught this

wider understanding, which included expressive, digital and multimodal forms, when they were able to. The decisions about what and how to teach such a wider understanding of writing were influenced by their changing and developing contexts as well as their experience. The research considered both what the participants understood primary writing to be and how this understanding translated into classroom teaching. The model below, 'Navigating teaching tensions', below shows the complexity of influences that affected Year Six teachers' perceptions about teaching writing.

Figure 4, Navigation of tensions affecting Year 6 teachers of writing (Foley, 2025).



All the participants had wide and varied understandings of the nature of writing. While these understandings were broadly similar, they differed not only in emphases but also in what they regarded as important. The participants' individual understandings did not remain fixed or static but appeared to change to reflect their teaching and assessing roles, contexts, audiences and purposes. Such fluid and changeable understandings were limited and constrained in their classrooms as the participants acknowledged that they had to teach writing in terms of the NC (DfE, 2013) construct of writing (the skills, process and genre discourses). The limitations and constraints did not completely restrict the

participants in teaching aspects, such as expressive writing, that they understood to be part of an essential, although non-statutory, writing experience. At the same time, while all participant teachers were fully compliant with the prescribed NC (DfE, 2013) form of writing, they were also fully compliant with the assessment criteria, marking process and moderation.

The dominant NC construct contains many elements of the participants' wide understanding of writing. All the participants acknowledge the importance of the NC construct but the majority challenge it as a complete writing experience. Some participants regarded the statutory construct as having negative consequences for writing with the danger of being 'characterless and bland'. Some participants subscribe to Bearne's (2017: 74) comments that the construct discourses are used as 'things more conveniently measured' even if stylistic 'narrowness' is the consequence. According to most of the participants, teaching of the statutory construct involved transmission teaching; indeed, several participants suggest that the pupils' mastery learning is passive. The participants felt the assessment process, using 'secure fit', was 'so specific ...comprehensive and so unforgiving of any errors' (DHQ1:SS1 16.06.2023). Such views contrast to the participants' wider understandings of writing.

The participants' wider understandings included expressive writing and contemporary writing forms. These less easily measured elements are not given the same time, attention or status as the NC construct. Given that writing communicates ideas, thoughts and feelings, the writer's expression of their identity and voice are important aspects of communicating effectively. Indeed, many participants characterised writing in terms of such communication. Participants, while showing a thorough knowledge of the statutory construct of writing, all made references to and valued non-statutory expressive writing which includes communication of personal elements of identity, emotional connection and voice. A significant majority of participants referred to expressive or creative in their understanding of writing, and about half describe strategies to explore expressive writing. A significant majority of participants described how they linked expressive writing opportunities to the framework's assessment criteria. The participants' agency extended to using scripts for video or documentary reports or using reading materials as writing starting points for drama or poetry. One participant discussed the attempts to use digital and multimodal writing. Significantly, daily freewriting figured successfully for two participants. The participants were able to move between the statutory and non-statutory forms and types while consciously addressing the statutory construct criteria and

assessments processes. Both implicitly and explicitly participants drew attention to the attempted reconciliation of the statutory and non- statutory discourses of writing that they considered in their teaching of writing in Year Six. The participants seized opportunities, using their agency, to introduce both writing forms and types of writing into their lessons to enhance their pupils' writing experience. The participants' roles as teacher, class teacher, assessor and senior teacher were influential in their decisions about what and how to teach. In some situations, where the participants had the role as teacher and assessor of the statutory construct, they also encouraged and supported non-statutory writing to develop voice and identity. The cost of this was significant in terms of the participants' concern for their pupils' experience, pupil agency in writing or dialogue, teacher frustration with their agency and a sense of fairness concerning the application of 'unforgiving' assessment. At no stage did the participants emasculate their teaching of the NC construct. Priestley et al (2013) describe such approaches as 'strategic compliance' while in Moore and Clarke's (2016) research it is an 'entanglement of discourses'. The participants were compliant with the NC construct, accepted the accountability issues but were committed to supporting their pupils' writing development beyond what was assessed in preparation for a successful secondary experience.

The participants' teaching strategies for these activities may not be the transmission approaches used for the NC writing construct. The participants used different strategies to increase pupil motivation and confidence. There may have been little in way of defined assessment criteria as focus is on personal expression and enjoyment.

This study has indicated that limited teacher agency, as a result of multiple tensions from policy expectations, may deter some teachers from being expansive in consideration of writing discourses. The demands on Year Six teachers are considerable. Consequently, the research by Lambrith (2016: 216) that argued that pupils should be taught writing to become 'fully independent and assured writers' while laudable is unrealistic. This study raises a concern about the potential impact of this on teachers' workloads (see Appendix Twenty). So, while Priestley et al (2013: 187) argued that the policy environment could de-professionalise teachers, this study shows that Year Six teachers are committed professionals, who while aware of different discourses and the need for writing preparation at secondary school, taught a more extensive construct of writing than the statutory construct.

6.3 Further research

There seems to have been very limited research into teachers' experiences of primary writing. Specifically, the tensions that teachers have experienced in teaching the NC construct while acknowledging the significance of other writing discourses. There has been insightful work on teacher agency by Priestley and Biesta (2013). Teachers might also have a difficulty in reconciling the low alignment between the NC PoS of Study and the TAF. This is partly obscured by the fact that the framework is essentially what Year Six teachers teach to. Clarkson suggests that the teachers' constructs of writing change throughout the school year. This is an interesting consideration for further research. Clarkson (2019) and this research suggest that the moderation experience of teachers is a potential area for research. There seem to be a range of disquieting 'guidance' comments made to Year Six teachers. It would be interesting to explore the moderation experience of Year Six teachers.

6.4 Personal thread

This research suggests that my initial evaluation of teaching the NC (DfE, 2013) as a skills, process and genre construct with a stress on writing accuracy was accurate. Also, my evaluation of the construct as, using Gardner's (2018) phrase, a 'mechanical perspective on writing' was accurate. This research has identified a tension that my teaching experience illustrated. This tension was between my colleagues' interpretation of what school English is or even should be and the NC (DfE, 2013) construct. From my experience, sometimes the rhetoric in schools appeared to be about the assessment of writing in terms of attainment categories, the number and type of linguistic features, the hierarchy of sentence structure and punctuation. In contrast, other colleagues wanted to stress the affective nature of writing and the writer identity. The success of these different viewpoints varied and often acknowledged the attempt match such writing approaches with the personal development of the writer as a writer.

Leaving aside the important dimensions of writing using digital, text or multimodal writing forms, there are important considerations about the nature of English that Marshall (2003:83) discussed in her 'epistemological shift' in school English. My experience of good teachers avoiding the challenge of Year Six teaching does not now seem so unreasonable. These colleagues were apprehensive and negative about the 'tyranny of the technical' in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013). Indeed, for some participating teachers and my former colleague teachers, the statutory NC (DfE, 2013) has a narrow understanding of writing with creativity and writer identity are not given appropriate

weight. Whilst Bearne (2017: 74 and 77) found some evidence of teachers balancing 'creative, dynamic learning opportunities' with a 'technical writing curriculum', this study suggests there is an acknowledgement of the creative discourse but little evidence in Year Six of such balance in the teaching offered by these participants. As Rochelle commented, these Year Six participants had 'no option'. This study suggests there is a strong case to be made in support of a participant's claim for Year Six writing to reflect the contemporary nature of writing, especially the multimodal forms of writing, while giving greater attention and time to the creative discourse.

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