The governance of a school network and implications for initial teacher education

(Article begins on next page)

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The governance of a school network and implications for Pre-Service Teacher Education

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Abstract

This paper presents a case study of a local school network in England that is well-established as a provider of pre-service teacher education. School networks are now the favoured providers of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in England in a 'school-led' system. Our evidence comes from participant observation and interviews conducted over a five-month period (more than 400 hours of data collection). We present evidence of the strategic intent and enactment of this programme. The policy of 'school-led' ITE has been directed by statements suggesting that governance will operate through local networks. However, we also observe the impact of hierarchical and market governance. We review this evidence in terms of interactions between hierarchies, markets and networks and use this review to reflect on the discourse that has driven policy and the discourse that has resisted this policy direction in England.

Biographical notes

Monica Mincu is associate professor of comparative education at the University of Turin and affiliated to University of Bordeaux. Her work on teacher quality and school improvement looking into the role of research was a commissioned background paper for a key document on the teaching profession in England: *Research and the Teaching Profession* (BERA & RSA, 2014). Peter Davies is emeritus professor of education policy research at the University of Birmingham and affiliated professor at Stockholm University. His most recent book is *Paying for Education: debating the price of progress* published by Routledge.

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Abstract

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ITE Introduction

Since 2010, education policy in England shifted Initial Teacher Education (IITE) towards a 'school-led' system with an emphasis on an apprenticeship model. The term 'school-led' draws attention to the locus of decision-making in schools rather than higher education (HE). An HE-led ITE system may involve substantial 'school-based' experience (or 'practicum') for pre-service teachers (PSTs). What has changed in this school-led system is the way that the ITE is governed: who has control of how it is provided and how this control is exercised. The post-2010 system has favoured governance through networks of schools and this study offers an in-depth case study of one school network. The paper offers an analysis of this change in the context of what may be expected of the operation of hierarchies, markets and networks in the provision

of ITE. Debate over education policy sometimes treats these governance systems as simple alternatives. But in practice, policy simply changes the scope for each system (Davies, 2018) and that is the perspective followed in our analysis. Using an in-depth case study of one school network, we aim to contribute to theoretical debate that can inform the future of policy on ITE.

The paper begins with a brief summary of the narratives of recent policy change towards ITE. This commentary concentrates on England, but notes points of comparison with trends elsewhere in the world. The following section provides a detailed descriptive account which sets the development of one school network in the context of changing policy towards ITE in England. This is followed by a method section that explains the rationale for this study and describes data collection and analysis. The results section is divided into two parts. The first of these focuses on the strategic intent of the ITE programme in this case study. The second focuses on the operation of the programme. The discussion section considers how the study adds to the literature on the roles of schools and HEIs in the provision of ITE. It does so through setting the case study in the context of *interactions* between modes of governance. Ball & Junemann (2012) suggested that education should be analysed in terms of the mix of governance through hierarchy, markets and networks. A focus on interactions also aims to capture dynamic processes by which each mode of governance changes the way in which other modes operate. The conclusion comments on some implications for the design of policy on ITE and, in particular, on the development of school-led ITE.

Networks for the provision of Pre-Service Teacher Education
This section outlines the changing roles of hierarchies, markets and networks in the provision of ITE in England. As in other countries (Sachs, 2001), these changes have

4

been portrayed by two opposing narratives which make contrasting assumptions about the motivations of teacher educators and the locus of powerful knowledge.

The narrative that directed policy change drew heavily on the 'new public management'(NPM) (Brignall and Modell, 2000) which assumed that HEIs and teacher educators would tend to act in their own interests rather than the interests of pupils and society. Therefore, these institutions and professionals had to be constrained by regulation and competition to make them more cost-efficient (Christensen and Laegreid, 2001). This narrative justified regulation on the grounds that outcomes needed to be clearly defined and comparable, whilst presuming that government had the capacity to undertake this task in the best interest of society. This theme in the narrative promotes hierarchical governance exercised by central government and it has been prominent in the direction of policy towards teacher education around the globe (see for example, Storey, 2006; Department for Education, 2011; Rowe and Skourdoumbis, 2019). Whilst the apparatus of hierarchical control has remained, the focus of the narrative in England since 2010 has shifted to giving control to local networks of schools (Mutton, Burn and Menter, 2017). This policy change was justified by a claim that schools rather than HE held the powerful knowledge necessary for PSTs (Gove, 2010).

The narrative trusts that governments can use contracting to reconcile a desire to exert hierarchical control with a devolution of governance to local school networks. In a contracting model the government delegates responsibility for provision to 'for-profit' or 'not-for-profit' organisations that are required to deliver contractual outcomes in return for payments from government (Pugh, Davies and Adnett, 2009; Lodge and Hood, 2012). The English government concluded that it was not able to make the ITE system work through contracts with HEIs, but does believe it can work with schools. This is consistent with a simple transfer of market thinking to teacher education:

powerful knowledge about teaching is generated by competing providers (of school education) in pursuit of advantage over others (Kirzner, 1997). It also chimed with the arguments of academics (e.g. Hargreaves, 1999; Lieberman, 2000) and headteachers (e.g. Berwick, 2004) who located powerful knowledge in schools and school networks. This belief is questioned by those (e.g. McNamara et al., 2017, Mincu, 2015) who doubt the capacity of schools and school networks to match the powerful knowledge they believe is located in HEIs

Since 2010, policy has pursued a contracting narrative through a dramatic increase in the proportion of schools designated as 'academies'. These schools are free from local authority control and operate as autonomous organisations or networks of organisations, though largely dependent on government contracts for their income. Advocacy of school networks in England (e.g. Hill, 2011; Matthews and Berwick, 2013) has claimed that these networks will be motivated by a 'moral imperative' in the public interest. This belief directly contradicts the assumption of self-interest that has driven NPM and the contracting model. It also overlooks the way in which the contracting model has opened the provision of schooling and teacher education to individuals, organisations and networks whose experience, beliefs and practices are rooted in fields beyond education (Ball and Junemann, 2012; Zeichner and Pena-Sandoval, 2015; Ellis et al., 2019). The narrative also discounts unintended consequences by assuming that all desirable outcomes can be measured and that contracts will be sufficiently closed to keep providers acting in the public interest (Hood and Peters, 2004). For example, Hood and Dixon (2013) reported that expectations that NPM would result in cost reductions across the public sector were not fulfilled. This general result is mirrored in the case of ITE. The NAO (2016) found that HE-led ITE provided the cheapest alternative.

An opposing narrative regards teacher educators in HEIs as representatives of the teaching profession, committed to act in the best interests of pupils and the societies to which these pupils belong. This narrative presumes that HEIs inducted PSTs into a shared set of values and prepared them to act independently in the complex situations they would encounter as teachers. It also presumes that HEIs are best placed to give PSTs access to powerful knowledge that will empower them to act as independent professionals (Brown et al., 2016). This view of a professional network was labelled 'democratic professionalism' by Sachs (2001) and elsewhere has been described as 'occupational professionalism' (Hoyle, 1974; Matthews, 1991; Bullough, 2011; Evans, 2011). The narrative of democratic professionalism regrets the erosion of governance through HE professional networks resulting from government encouragement of competition between providers, increasing the scope for market forces (Brown, 2018). The narrative concludes that NPM has replaced democratic professionalism serving the public interest by managerial or organisational professionalism serving the interests of organisations (Evetts, 2009).

An important variant of this second narrative (e.g. Zeichner, 2012; Mutton et al., 2018) accepts the assumption of teacher educators' public service motivation but rejects any claim that HEIs have privileged access to powerful knowledge. This hybrid narrative desires a reconfiguration of networks of teacher educators and teachers which recognise, value and build complementary powerful knowledge through collaborations between HEIs and schools. A focus on relationships between networks tends to abstract from ways in which these networks interact with pressures from hierarchies and markets.

The development of policy and the development of this case of school-led Pre-Service Teacher Education

Excellent guides to the development of ITE policy in England are available elsewhere (e.g. Brown, 2018; McNamara et al., 2017; Whiting et al., 2019). This section aims to position the network of schools in this case study within the complex web of provision for teacher education which evolved. It also aims to highlight ways in which interactions between hierarchy, networks and markets shaped this case.

Opportunities for groups of schools to form a partnership for teacher training in England were created in the early 1990s (DfE, 1992, 1993). These partnerships provided 'School Centred Initial Teacher Training' and were referred to as 'SCITTs'. The schools in this case study formed a SCITT was formed in 1993, placing them in the vanguard of this new initiative. By 2000, only 1.5% of teacher training places were provided by SCITTs (Bailey and Robson, 2002). By the time that primary data were collected for this case study (2013-14), SCITTs accounted for 6-7% of training places and this rose to 13% in 2017 (DfE, 2017).

This case study focuses on secondary schools in a suburban area of a large city. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the locality was close to the national average and there was no difference between the proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the SCITT schools in this case study and in other schools in the locality. This network was also an early adopter of a school-based 'employed route' to qualified teacher status (the Graduate Teachers' Programme or GTP) introduced in 1998. Individuals recruited on this route received a salary from the school (heavily subsidised by government) during their training, prior to 'certification'. This scheme grew more rapidly than the SCITT programme and by 2005, employment-based routes into teaching accounted for roughly a fifth of all ITT places in England and Wales (Smith and McLay, 2007).

8

A pivotal moment in England arrived with the election of a coalition government in 2010 and a Secretary of State for Education who was committed to school networks and an apprenticeship model for ITT (Gove, 2010). The idea of 'Teaching schools' as beacons of good practice' located the apprenticeship model in institutions rather than individual mentors. Teaching schools would act as leaders of school networks, which became known as 'Teaching School Alliances' (TSAs). Within the case study SCITT, one school (TS) became a Teaching School. At the time of the primary data collection for the case study, the TSA only included secondary schools within the SCITT. By 2017 the TSA also included 4 primary schools and a private teacher development company that was originally set up as a spin-off from the work of one of the SCITT schools. There was, therefore, huge overlap between the SCITT and the TSA although the organisation of these two networks was led by different schools.

An evaluation of the early years of TSAs (Gu et al., 2014) reported that the quality of ITT provided by these networks was regarded by schools as an important incentive to join the TSA. Within two years of the start of the programme, 1 in every 10 schools had joined a TSA (Matthews and Berwick, 2013). These TSAs were connected through a national network, encouraging a sense that knowledge about teachers' professional development could, and should, be shared between them. Matthews and Berwick (2013) also reported that more than two thirds of TSAs were using a teacher development programme that had been developed by and marketed from a school that was a long-standing member of a SCITT.

In 2012/13 the government introduced a new route into teaching referred to as 'School Direct'. This programme intended to shift the leadership of ITT from universities to schools to a much greater extent than had been achieved through the SCITT schemes. The establishment and growth of TSAs provided a realistic platform

for achieving this objective and within two years School Direct accounted for 30% of all ITT recruitment (Davies et al., 2016). School Direct took two forms. Some trainees were recruited on a 'salaried route'. This option was only available to applicants with at least 3 years' employment experience and replaced the earlier GTP. Starters on this route began the year as 'non-certified teachers' receiving a salary determined by the school and gained certification on successful completion. Schools providing this route received a government grant which covered a substantial proportion of the trainee's salary. Other School Direct trainees followed a 'tuition fees' route. In 2013/14 the SCITT was allocated 36 secondary ITT places and led by school SC2. In the same year School TS was awarded 26 School Direct salaried and 16 School Direct tuition fee places.

The SCITT in this case study has had a stable membership of 8-9 secondary schools, providing a context in which trust between network members had space in which to grow. School SC2 has acted as the nominated lead for the SCITT for the last 10 years. Governance was vested in a consortium board comprised of the headteachers of participating schools. Seven of the schools were located in one local education authority within a 5-mile radius of school SC2. In total there were 55 secondary schools in this locality, of which 20% were private schools. The network of schools which formed the SCITT was competing with many other schools: to attract teachers as well as to attract pupils. An inspection report in 2006 on the quality of ITT provided by the SCITT asserted that the SCITT had been created 'in response to teacher shortages'. Later inspections in 2009 and 2015 rated the quality of ITT provided by the SCITT as 'outstanding'. This network was mature, stable and judged as high performing.

The SCITT and TSA may be described as a 'loose-knit' network (Bauman, 2001; Davies, 2018): focused on one aspect of the life of the participating schools each

of which had its separate governing board. Other school networks that have been fostered by recent policy have been more 'tight-knit': sharing a governance structure and in some cases developing a common 'brand' (Chapman, 2015). Within the locality of the SCITT (within 5 miles of School SC2), there were schools belonging to three 'Multi-academy trusts' which were sponsored by organisations responsible for running a chain of schools. This case study aims to capture a picture of the work of a network of schools at a particular point in time in a journey that is continuing. The structure of the school partnership is portrayed in Figure 1.

Insert figure 1 about here.

This section ends with a summary of how policy has placed schools in England at the heart of two related and unresolved tensions arising from interactions between hierarchical, market and network governance. The first tension for teaching has been created through advocacy of school accountability *and* autonomy (Evans, 2011). In common with other countries such as Australia (Tatto and Menter, 2019), successive governments have assumed that they can improve initial teacher education by setting and monitoring common standards for the process and outcomes of ITE (West, Mattei and Roberts, 2011). However, promotion of school-led ITE has been justified in the last decade by an appeal to the value of local school, practical, knowledge (Gove, 2010; Childs, 2013). This implies approval of a localised conceptions of 'the good teacher' which became internal to particular school networks (Maandag et al., 2007, Hordern, 2014), that depart from national inspection of a standards in ITE. There is, therefore, a tension between contrasting models of mentoring in ITE: competence or apprenticeship (Furlong et al., 2000; Beauchamp et al., 2015; Mutton et al., 2018). Mentoring competence assumes the generality of standards whilst mentoring apprentices declares

the primacy of acquiring local practical knowledge.

A second tension has been created by policy expectations regarding the benefits of competition in markets and collaboration in school networks (Furlong, 2005). Policy emphasis on the importance of school accountability has been justified by belief that competition between schools will incentivise them to improve in relation to common standards. In the context of ITE, competitive pressures have been described as 'an existential threat' to the participation of HEIs in ITE (Maguire & George, 2017; Brown, 2018). Whilst schools also compete to recruit PSTs, they are more concerned with using ITE as a means of competing with other schools to recruit teachers (White, Dickerson and Weston., 2015; Davies et al., 2016; McNamara, Murray & Phillips, 2017). However, policy in England (e.g. DfE, 2010) began to place increasing reliance on school networks to secure improvements in teacher quality and pupil attainment. Schools have also reported benefits for staff development of providing ITE (McNamara, Murray & Phillips, 2017). Insofar as this is carried out through networks it exemplifies collaboration whilst conflicting with competition. As schools have grappled with these tensions they have developed practices and ideas that have influenced the direction of policy: shaping what is deemed possible and desirable.

Method

Research questions

In the light of our review of literature we designed a study to address the following questions:

1. What can we discern about motivation and approach to powerful knowledge in one well-established school network providing ITE

- through the design and intent of the programme?

- through the enactment of the programme?

2. To what extent can we discern interactions between governance through hierarchy, markets and networks in the design and operation of this programme?

Rationale for the case study

This school network was chosen for the case study because it was a well-established school network providing ITT which was graded as outstanding by inspectors. It should exemplify mature provision that shows what this form of organisation is capable of offering. The ethnographic approach and the timescale (5 months) were designed to allow trust to be developed so that the data collection could probe participants and processes and offer a fair account of operations and the thinking behind those operations.

The scope of the case study

This case study focuses on the School Direct (SD) route into teaching as it was enacted within this network of schools. This scheme shared a central programme (of sessions run by teachers within the scheme) with the pre-service teachers (PSTs) following other routes into teaching within the SCITT. These sessions are referred to as 'training sessions'. The data collection focused on the TS as this school was directly responsible for SD scheme. Data were also collected from other schools in the TSA/SCITT network which shared the responsibility for mentoring trainees. Some interview data were also collected from PSTs following the 'tuition fee' route within School Direct.

Data collection

Data were collected over a 5-month period during which one of the authors visited network schools three or four days of every week (more than 400 hours overall). Two methods were used: participant observation and interviews with key informants. Participants were observed on numerous occasions in meetings to plan the provision, mentor training, formal sessions conducted with groups of PSTs, one-to-one mentoring and shadowing individual PSTs. The interview schedules were informed by the observations and associated field notes. Overall, 21 interviews were conducted: SCITT operational management (scheme manager and programme co-ordinator); 2 senior managers of the TS; 6 mentors (all based at the TS); department head at the TS; senior manager at one other school in the scheme; 3 SDS trainees; 5 trainees on other routes within the SCITT; newly qualified teacher at the TS who was on the SDS in the previous year. Each of these semi-structured interviews was transcribed and manually coded: themes emerged through a grounded theory approach, in which research questions informed the fieldwork.

The non-UK researcher who gathered the data was based in a UK university on secondment. The use of substantial range of the observation data as well as interviews was designed to reduce the risk of data being limited by the perspective of the data collector. The research followed the ethical guidelines set out by BERA (2011). Actors were informed about the purposes of the study and participated voluntarily. They were informed of how research findings would be used and also their right to withdraw. Each school and participant was allocated a codename and files were stored securely using these codes. Field notes and interview transcripts were not disclosed to school leaders. A diary was kept during fieldwork with detailed daily notes. Two years after the study, the researcher provided oral and written feedback to school.

Results

These results focus on the Teaching School which led the School Direct provision. We divide the results into two main sections: those that relate to the strategic intent behind the design of the programme and those pertaining to the enactment or operation of the programme

The strategic intent in the design of the programme

Policy in England has expected school-led ITE to operate on the basis that the government commissions schools to provide training that conforms to set standards that are monitored by government inspectors (OfSTED). The standard arrangement is that one school has the contract with the government and this school then commissions other schools to provide classroom experience for PSTs. In this case, there is an intervening layer: the school (TS) with the contract commissions the SCITT (and its central team) to direct and manage the whole scheme. Any contracting scheme poses a problem for commissioners: how to avoid the provider (agent) pursuing its own agenda whilst providing a service that falls short of what the commissioner was expecting (quality-shading).

Since the outcomes from ITE are complex and hard to define it is not possible for government to prepare a 'closed' contract with schools that specifies exactly what they are being contracted to achieve. Hence, the reliance on inspection. A key problem here is that providers have strong incentives to do what they can to make it appear to inspectors that they achieving what the government wants even when the reality is somewhat different. The inspection system required that an outstanding provider must not have any low performing (grade 3) trainees. One senior mentor (School SC1) reported "not [being] allowed now [by the provider] to have any grade 3 trainees" in

order to keep the outstanding provider status. The implication was that PSTs were being graded higher than the mentor's professional judgement. Each of the interviewed PSTs also expressed strongly negative views about being denied the freedom to be critical in evaluation forms on the grounds that the provider was due an inspection. Preparation for this inspection was clearly effective as the partnership was judged 'an outstanding provider' in the following year.

A commissioning model relies on competition between providers to foster efficiency. Senior managers at the TS did perceive themselves as being able to choose between alternative providers according to the terms that were offered.

> *'You see at the moment we have the [SCITT] … we could go to X [a university provider]… we could go to Y [another university provider] …We can do the training ourselves …sometimes when we get a bit frustrated with the [provider], we do have some plans' (Senior Mentor SC1)*

The SCITT provider was also strongly aware of acting in a commissioning role in the allocation of training responsibilities. The SCITT programme co-ordinator spoke extensively about the effort that was demanded in securing provision in each partner school and endeavouring to make sure that the quality and type of provision conformed to their expectations.

> *'Effectively, building that network […] is the same as if you break into a new market and if you're a company […] and [you have] to do a lot of phone calls, a lot of speaking to people one-to-one […] coaxing, coercive at certain stages and […] bringing people round to the way we work, because we work differently to how universities work'.*

> *'Almost like being a […] contract manager […] with a big company, we're going out and looking at customer relations, and spend quite a bit of time working with head teachers and senior mentors and mentors to make sure they understand the values and ethos of the programme.'*

Although the programme manager explicitly compared the SCITT to a private business they also spoke of managing network rather than hierarchical relationships: other schools within the partnership had to be persuaded rather than dictated to. Some resistance to the SCITT team's efforts to impose a particular way of working is suggested in remarks from a school senior mentor:

'The [Provider] used to sort of dict[ate] […] saying "This is how you do it. We are the Provider, we are the awarding body, we are the ones [who] give you the qualified teacher status, [so] this is how you do it."' (Senior Mentor 2, TS)

Schools participating in the scheme also had to balance the demand on their resources (see Table 1). As noted in an inspection report in 2006, securing an adequate supply of new teachers was a key motivator for schools' participation in the SCITT. A subsequent inspection referred to the schools' intention to 'grow their own' (teachers)[i]. Recruits to the salaried route, in particular, are expected to be ready to fulfil the demands of 'being a teacher' from the beginning of the year. In the words of the programme co-ordinator, PSTs will 'experience what it means to be a teacher from day one'. The scheme also provided opportunities for professional development (through acting as mentors). Experienced teachers could gain promotion through demonstrating capacity to lead and develop others and through signalling their readiness to take on more responsibility and a higher workload. In the words of a government inspection report, the year after this study, 'involvement in teacher training is built into the performance management of key staff in partnership schools and mentoring is seen as a career development opportunity'. There was a strong association within the partnership between senior positions in schools and past or present responsibilities in the SCITT.

Table 1 about here

The schools from the larger alliance provided mentors with formally specified responsibilities and teachers who supported PSTs on a more ad hoc basis. Since the PSTs on the salaried route were included in the school's overall staffing, in principle, the school could increase its capacity to accept additional students (in which case there would be no offsetting reduction in workload as PSTs took responsibility for classes otherwise taught by experienced teachers). In practice, mentors generally believed they had experienced an increase in workload. One commented

> *'with the [Provider] they're basically asking the school almost to provide the University's support as well as the school support, so we're doing two jobs" (Senior Mentor 3).*

The schools have to balance the gains they make by securing recruitment of new teachers with the capabilities and skills they are seeking against additional demands on current staff. If current staff regard these demands as enhancing their career prospects they are more likely to stay, if they perceive their job circumstances as getting worse they are more likely to leave. At the time of this study the network appeared to have been successful in developing a culture in which the additional work had become an established norm which was associated with career progression.

> *'I am on site probably for 12 hour a day five days a week and then I go home and do quite a lot of work and prep. on top of that …so …but is just built in it, just used to work but that's the expectation and what's you …..teachers coming into the profession is what they say, is modelled to them so they don't know any different.'(Subject Mentor TS, interview)*

The enactment of the ITT programme

The accounts from scheme managers, mentors and PSTs were consistent in suggesting a concerted and coherent effort to promote particular practices in teaching and in training new teachers. The team employed by the SCITT to manage the scheme try to secure adherence within the scheme to their (SCITT) interpretation of the generalised criteria set out by govern inspectors. This involved working with mentors to move from an initial variation of opinion to an acceptance of a common view.

> *what newly qualified teachers need to know when they get into their schools, not just about the knowledge, but the skills, the understanding, and the changes that are occurring in education quite rapidly […] so [we] sit down and really plan that out and everybody has an opinion and now there seem to be more and more senior mentors attending, it does become difficult: you have different opinions from different schools (Senior Mentor SC1, interview)*

The training programme was designed to address the full range of issues identified by inspectors as necessary for outstanding practice. For example, teaching pupils with English as a second language was given a prominent place in the central training programme, although PSTs regarded this as unnecessary since most of them believed they had not encountered pupils with English as a second language in their teaching.

> *'like EA, we had 3 or 4 sessions on that.. then we had a day we had to go to another school quite far away …which was just pointless…and then think throughout this year I haven't encountered one of EAL child'. (SCITT trainee, focus group)*

According to national data at the time of the study, the average proportion of secondary school pupils with English as a second language was about 14% (DfE, 2014).

There was a tension between the generalised view of knowledge for teaching that was promoted in the central programme and the specific and localised nature of PSTs' classroom experience. Teaching practices were promoted on the basis that these would be approved by inspectors (DfE, 2011): e.g. beginning with a 'starter activity'; using a variety of resources; differentiating between the needs of students by providing different tasks for different abilities; not leaping in with the right answer when students did not immediately understand).

The focus of the preparation provided by the scheme was on practice rather than principle. For example, one PST referred to the justification they believed had been offered for 'personalised teaching':

> *'I don't think it's justified by theory, I think it's more by OFSTED they just say, this is what they are looking for, you know the teaching standards, like standard 6.' (NQT, former SDS in the same school, interview)*

Other PSTs reported a similar emphasis on practice.

> *'we were often told, for example, … do this. There is no ……we want to hear some more justification for that, 'cause we might disagree pedagogically with what they [are] saying or think that there is no evidence.' (NQT, former SDS in the same school, interview)*

PSTs recalled that when theory had been invoked, evidence for the theory and alternatives to the theory were not considered. One PST claimed there had been an

> *'overemphasis of Bloom's taxonomy, as to be an end of absolutely everything ... and nobody ever questions the limits or different approaches or different methods …in one training session someone asked a question and there was*

Monitoring of progress focused on adherence to specific practice rather than finding out how PSTs justified what they were doing and what they expected the impact of their practice to be. This was observed through mentors checking that the teacher was following practice required in the scheme that learning objectives were shown on the front cover of pupils' books and that pupils' books had been marked at least once during the last two weeks.

Observation of a planning meeting for the following year's programme provided insights into how teachers are identified as having the generalizable knowledge to lead the central sessions. The principal criterion used was whether teachers had been identified as 'outstanding' on through evaluations of their classroom practice. These individuals were expected to be able to design and conduct sessions (without further training or mentoring) on the basis of their outstanding teaching. This criterion aligns well with a belief that PSTs need to be trained by successful practitioners, but it also assumes that 'successful' practice is rooted in generalizable knowledge that the outstanding teacher is not only able to articulate but also able to help others to engage with. One senior mentor worried about being 'listed' as a speaker in a session without being informed. He felt able to handle the topic of differentiation as a teacher in his own classroom, but not as a trainer of young adults, clearly identifying a difference between these roles. He was convinced that an expert trainer, from a university, local authority or other body, would have been a better solution.

"I think it is a big ask to expect teachers and deputies to suddenly step up to be speakers for 30 graduates next year […] In theory, we are supposed to be experts in lesson planning. But it's a big ask to then think I have got to deliver

a 2 hour session on lesson planning to 30 graduates. (Senior Mentor, interview)

Discussion

This study has examined the operation of what might be described as a 'micro-network': a fairly small group of schools. This size of network is currently fairly typical of school networks in England. Networks also operate at 'meso-levels'. These may be observed in national co-ordination of 'Teaching Schools' (Matthews & Berwick, 2012) or the networks of 'policy entrepreneurs' (Ball & Junemann (2012; McNamara, Murray & Phillips, 2017; Mutton et al., 2018). Finally, there are macro-level networks operating through cultural capital which allows people to connect through language, knowledge and taken-for-granted beliefs.

Previous studies of education policy in England (e.g. Brown et al., 2016) have noted a tension between accountability (centralisation) and autonomy (de-centralisation). The framing of this study has aimed to highlight ways in which this plays out through interactions between governance by hierarchy, markets and networks. The contracting model that has shaped policy in England tries to resolve this tension through markets: such that more effective providers signal their quality through the way they use autonomy to outperform competitors.

This case study has portrayed a micro-network of schools that has achieved sustained success in the context of these struggles (as indicated by stable membership of the network, outstanding rating in government inspections of teacher education, and securing new contracts for ITE). And yet it does not seem to epitomise the vision of an empowered local school network that has been depicted by policy (Gove, 2010;

Department for Education, 2016). The network was driven by the need to adhere to government standards and to secure praise from government inspectors. The network depends on contracts from central government for its income from ITE. It directs its activity to ensure that these contracts are renewed: not least through achieving high grades in government inspections. PSTs reported that they had been discouraged from including critical comments in their evaluations. It appeared that the network's anxiety to please inspectors resulted in losing the opportunity to improve through responding to the voice of PSTs. Nonetheless, the network's concern with judgements from inspectors had encouraged them to organise experiences (e.g. in relation to teaching students with English as a second language) that prepare PSTs to teach in schools that are different from any in the network. However, this was proving insufficient to convince PSTs on the programme that these experiences were worthwhile. The network was motivated by a desire to use ITE to improve its competitiveness in the struggle to recruit the teachers it wanted. It has evolved to the extent of network managers openly referring to the network as a business seeking a larger share of the market. The appeal of school networks in the governance of ITE was fostered by a belief that these networks would be motivated by public service. But the pressures of hierarchy and markets on this network appears to have re-directed motivation. It is, therefore, not realistic to assume that autonomy will necessary be used for public good (even when actors believe that it is? what they are doing).

The appeal of network governance has been fostered by recognition of the power of local knowledge and a presumption of public service motivation. But no network operates in a vacuum. Hierarchical and market pressures have deeply affected what is accepted in this network as 'powerful knowledge' whilst also re-fashioning motivation.

We turn now to the conflicting claims for ownership of powerful knowledge for ITE. The schools in this case study worked together in a 'loose-knit' network (Bauman, 2001) in that that each school maintained its independent governing body and they collaborated specifically in the provision of ITE. Nonetheless, there was an ongoing battle for control of the definitions of 'good teaching' and 'good ITE'. The central SCITT team sought to impose hierarchical control within the network and this was resisted by some school mentors. This kind of tension within an organisation has received considerable attention in the literature on business where 'rational strategy', imposing hierarchical order, is contrasted with emergent strategy that devolves responsibility to frontline workers (Mintzberg, 1994). The same tension is addressed in the literature on schools, not least in references to 'distributed leadership' (Spillane, Diamond and Jita., 2003). This tension hinges on claims to possession of powerful knowledge. In this case, the central SCITT team claimed ownership of the correct interpretation of the expectations of government inspectors. So Hordern's (2014) expectation that local school networks would develop distinctive views of what counts as 'good teaching' were not fulfilled. Although the rhetoric accompanying the post 2010 policy stressed the value of schools' knowledge, the practice in this case was shaped by adherence to the knowledge claims of government. The schools did adopt an apprenticeship model (Gove, 2010), but there was quite limited scope for mentors to dictate the practice that PSTs were expected to adhere to.

There appears to be an inherent contradiction in the contracting model's response to the public choice critique (Buchanan and Tullock, 1962). The public choice critique argued (i) that governments and their employees act as much out of self-interest as for-profit companies and (ii) that they are too remote from provision of goods and services to have reliable knowledge. Therefore, government should not provide services

24

through hierarchical control but should rely on market forces. The contracting model accepts the argument against government provision but claims that governments should commission services from private providers. But in order to draw up a contract with a provider a government must presume to know what should be provided and how to check whether a provider is operating in an efficient manner. Education Ministers in England since 2010 have proclaimed that schools know best and then told schools what to do (Gove, 2010; Department for Education, 2016). As noted by Mutton, Burn and Menter (2017), there are unresolved tensions in the policies being pursued on ITE.

Conclusion

This case study adds to the literature by shedding new light on the provision of ITE through networks of local schools. It concentrates on the nature and implications of network governance. The principal observation is that evaluation of policy change on ITE benefits from careful attention to interactions between hierarchical, market and network governance. Advocacy of network governance for ITE in England (e.g. Hill, 2011; Matthews and Berwick, 2013) neglected the implications of pressures from hierarchical governance (from central government) and market governance (through the supply of teachers and competition with other schools). Successive policy shifts in England have encouraged network governance within the context of market governance whilst also retaining hierarchical governance by government. Interactions between these different forms of governance are inevitable. But when policy ignores these interactions it is bound to create problems. However valiant and well-intentioned schools may be, they are being asked to deal with a contradictory set of pressures.

Research can add further to policy development and critique by attending carefully to the *interactions* between hierarchy, markets and networks. We are

25

conscious that our study has not referred to ways in which the voices of leaders of this network were formative in the development of national policy. We could not do so without compromising the anonymity of participants. Yet this is an important of the story of how interactions between hierarchies, markets and networks are dynamic. The field is not left settled.

Our case study also suggests some possible consequences of school-led ITE for the future development of new teachers. If teachers are trained to perform in particular circumstances this may create problems in the longer term, not least for the mobility of teachers between schools (and, therefore for the efficiency of future teacher supply to schools). If schools serving disadvantaged localities do not receive a fair share of school-led training places, then the difficulties these schools experience in securing teachers will be magnified.

Problems may also arise in the longer term if school-led training strengthens an apprenticeship ethos and weakens a broad professional ethos in teaching. Completion of an apprenticeship may encourage a sense of having completed learning to become a teacher. Lifelong learning in teaching is more easily associated with an occupational professionalism model (Matthews, 1991) in which teachers are expected to develop a deep understanding of processes of learning and teaching and contingency of effective practice on circumstance. The PSTs interviewed in this case study claimed they were rarely encouraged to consider the theoretical and evidence bases for the practices that they were expected to adopt. Moreover, if school-led ITE enculturates new teachers in adherence to organisational norms rather than serving society then motivation to recognise and do something about issues affecting children's education may be diminished. Both these factors would undermine hopes for 'school-led system improvement' in the longer term. Of course, if earlier reforms had ? already embedded

26

an apprenticeship model (Wright and Bottery, 1997) then it might have been too late anyway.

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