THE REPORT
The participation of volunteer citizens in school governance.

I Objectives
1. The research assessed the extent to which the experiment of school governors as volunteer citizens has enhanced democratic participation and public accountability, and whether it has made a difference to policy, practice and performance of public institutions (schools, authorities and governments). The existence of distinctive education systems in the UK offered the opportunity to engage in comparative analysis of volunteer citizenship and school governance. Until July 1999 policy formation took place within the context of a unitary state. Since then legislative devolution (Northern Ireland and Scotland) and executive devolution (Wales) have increased the potential for policy variation across the UK. The research aimed to explore through comparative UK analysis the extent to which different traditions of social and cultural capital of volunteer citizens translated into institutional capability of school governing bodies/school boards.

2. The particular objectives were to examine whether:
   • democratic volunteer participation had been successful?
   • governance made a difference to institutional performance?

Investigating these questions would allow assessment of the extent to which active citizenship contributes to the effective governance of public institutions, the creation of learning communities and a just civil society. The research explored the role of social capital and cultural variation in school governance, hypothesising that the social capital of community active schools would establish the agreements that underlie institutional effectiveness.1

II Methods
1. One local authority (two in England) was chosen in each nation of the UK selected for the emergent development of civic active characteristics (partnership, participation, performance review). A survey was administered to all school governors/board members in these authorities.2 Four schools were identified to us by in each authority: two community-active and two non community active (see Figure 1). Interviews were obtained with all the appropriate stakeholders in school governance in each school and appropriate documents collected.3 In a second phase of case work schools were selected for their developing qualities of school governance and its connectedness or not to the community and, in addition to interviewing, governing body and school board meetings were observed. The identified schools were:

![Figure 1. Case study schools](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>England</th>
<th>N. Ireland</th>
<th>Wales</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upborough</td>
<td>Smithstown</td>
<td>Rampton</td>
<td>Inverburn</td>
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<td>Midshire</td>
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<td>Community Active</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandpiper (p)</td>
<td>Rockswood (s)</td>
<td>St Kilian’s (p)</td>
<td>Seagull High(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>St Josephs (p)</td>
<td>Cavendish (s)</td>
<td>Tatton (p)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Restricted Community Active</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meadows (p)</td>
<td>Summerfd (p)</td>
<td>StNiamh’s (s)</td>
<td>Yellowham (p)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skipworth (s)</td>
<td>Brocksley (s)</td>
<td>Ballyfree (p)</td>
<td>Raven High (s)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brook (p)</td>
<td>Ptarmigan (p)</td>
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(nb: p= primary school; s= secondary. Schools in bold are second stage case studies.
As described later in the report, this initial labelling of schools was modified in the light of our research)
2. Most comparative studies of nations focus upon the individual nation. A methodology that compares nations across the same conceptual characteristics is, argues Green (2002), an improvement. Our study has sought to develop an approach to comparative study that both respects the unique characteristics of national cultural difference and develops comparative analysis and explanation of patterns of relationships within and between nations.

III Results
Democratic renewal and modernisation: policy contradictions and the state
1. The creation of over 400,000 volunteer citizens between 1986-88, in England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, to occupy reformed school governing bodies and school boards across the UK, has been the largest democratic experiment in voluntary public participation. These public spaces of ‘intermediary association’ exemplify the potential for reconstituting civil society in its local and cultural variety. Yet the state has also perceived school governance as a space to regulate universal improvement of educational standards and thus steer the modernisation of a key public service. Would volunteers in school governance become ‘conscripts’ of the state or citizens responding to local needs? (Deem et al, 1995) Has citizenship in this space expressed imposed duty or cultural diversity?

2. School governance has granted different forms and remits across the UK. The 1998 School Standards and Framework Act defined governing bodies in England and Wales as possessing ‘overarching responsibility for the conduct of schools’ with duties to: set the schools strategic direction; secure accountability; and to support and challenge the school as its ‘critical friend’, by monitoring and evaluating its progress. In Northern Ireland, the 1986 and 1989 Orders identified a range of financial, curricular and staffing responsibilities for governing bodies, similar to those of English governors under the 1988 Act. In Scotland, however, the school board was given more limited responsibilities to advise the head and to communicate with parents.

3. Policy deliberation about the constituting of governance has continued, principally in England and Scotland. In N. Ireland and Wales minor changes have been sought and introduced. In Scotland, however, there has been a national debate about how to increase parental involvement in education and whether to extend school boards by incorporating parent teacher associations (Banks review, 2002). While parent pressure groups (SPTC and SSBA) have largely shaped a contested debate, agreement remains to be achieved. Within Whitehall contrasting tensions surrounded whether to reduce the power of governing bodies. The Cabinet Office proposed that governing bodies might be a source of bureaucracy and constraint on school leadership while overburdening lay volunteers with excessive responsibilities (Haskins report, 2001). The DfEE, as it then was, committed to the importance of school governance and a stakeholder model of representation, responded with a Consultative paper on a reduction in the number of governors on the governing body and their responsibilities. The Education Act 2002 now enables deregulation and flexibility in the construction of governing bodies. The national governor organisations in England were instrumental in retaining the stakeholder model of governance while the National Assembly for Wales influenced the legislation to enable the ‘federation’ of currently small governing bodies in rural or inner city areas, re-establishing ‘grouped’ governing bodies.

4. The political agenda of modernisation and improving standards of achievement has helped to secure the significance of school governance. Yet this common policy has also been culturally specific in its implementation across the UK. In England and N. Ireland governors
are required to set targets and monitor the school’s performance, including that of the headteacher. While School boards in Scotland have been strengthened to assume statutory responsibility for school improvement, and governing bodies in Wales also emphasise improvement, nevertheless the conception of achievement is radically different. In Wales’ *The Learning Country* and in Scotland’s *How Good is our School* governors are encouraged to support very different conceptions of educational purpose, in life long learning for citizenship, as against the Whitehall skills agenda for economic regeneration. These nations, moreover, reject the performativity view of accountability (Ranson, 2003) as published exam results and league tables, of which there is also a wider critique across the UK.

5. The ‘hollowing out’ of the state (Rhodes, 1996) is thus culturally differentiated. Yet across the UK there is a common review of the purpose and practice of learning in search of a pedagogy of motivation that seeks to fill a policy vacuum ‘outside in’ or ‘bottom up’. Whether boards and governing bodies perceive themselves as carriers of this movement for change has also varied culturally. How has volunteering and school governance worked?

**Have citizens volunteered and participated?**

6. *The Volunteers*: The respondents to the survey, as well as the field work, suggest that volunteers are generally white, middle aged, middle class, middle income, public/community service workers. Only a small proportion of respondents indicated they were active as citizens in other spheres of civic life.

7. *Local profiles of volunteers*: There are distinctive differences of respondent profiles between local authorities. Volunteers in Smithstown were more likely to serve in the secondary sector, either as representatives of the authority or church nominees. They were more likely to be men (56%) over the age of 50 (54%), many retired. A higher proportion of volunteers worked in the private sector and were in the higher income brackets (36%). Inverburn respondents (community service workers) were parents (including 15% who are teachers) and included a higher proportion of younger female professionals working in the voluntary and public sectors, with A level equivalent as well as professional qualifications and at the lower end of salary grades. Rampton respondents (working families/mothers) were likely to be middle aged, parent governors serving in the primary sector, on low incomes (34% earning less than £15k), working part-time (31%) and in manual occupations (18%). Upborough respondents (public service professional middle classes) comprised a higher than average proportion of women and local education authority nominees as well as teacher/non teacher representatives. There was a more youthful profile of volunteers in managerial/professional, higher income positions in the public and private sectors. Midshire volunteers had an older profile (43% over age 50) of members who work in managerial/professional positions often in the private sector (31%), with professional equivalent qualifications.

8. *Reasons for volunteering*: Our questions explored the extent to which members saw participation as an opportunity to pursue their own interests (‘support my child’, 13%), or recognised more general responsibilities (‘support the school’, 54%; ‘give something back to the community, 29%). Commitment to the school was highest in Inverburn (67%), while an orientation to the community was highest in Upborough (35%) and Smithstown. Interview data suggest that many board members have been ‘encouraged’ by school heads/principals to volunteer in the first instance, but also suggest that volunteering can have an educative effect as members progress from initial preoccupation with their own child to growing understanding
of and commitment to the needs of the institution and the wider community. Often, on ceasing to be parent board members, they transfer to other categories of nominated membership.

9. **Extent of participation: core and peripheral volunteers:** The data suggest the boards are composed of a (large) core of committed and long serving members, while others are more detached and transient in their commitment. 42% had more than six years tenure (19 per cent of these for over 10 years). The most stable core was in Smithstown (26% over ten years), while in Upborough, with 19% with less than one year’s experience, there was a degree of short term turnover. The case work reinforces this picture of differential participation. Boards have a large core group of members who attend meetings regularly, give extensive hours to the board’s work (33% more than 21 hours a term) and who take responsibilities of chairing committees. Typically, chairs, vice-chairs and chairs of sub-committees were male.

10. **Coping with the demands of participation:** Those who believe that the burdens are onerous are relatively small: that the volume of work (15% of respondents), the workload complexity (18%), the responsibilities (17%) and powers (19%) are all unreasonable. Yet members disagreed about the distribution of the burden: on the one hand believing that the workloads are shared (88%; though in Inverburn, 26% disagree), yet on the other hand 59% agreeing that the head and chair do most of the work (65%, Smithstown and Rampton). Nevertheless, there was little support for strengthening the powers of heads or authorities at the expense of boards.

11. **Sustainability of volunteering:** The data are complex, suggesting serious concerns about recruiting new members (67% of respondents) and in retaining existing members (45%). These concerns were highest in Upborough and lowest in Smithstown and Rampton. On the other hand the commitment amongst present volunteers to continuing as board members remained buoyant, 71% reporting they will volunteer again. (This commitment was highest in Smithstown, 77%, and most uncertain in Inverburn, 54%). The traditional principle of (unpaid) volunteering, moreover, also remained strong at 67% (92% in Inverburn) although the greatest reservations existed in Upborough and interestingly amongst women (highest in Rampton). Nevertheless, the level of 30% doubters about continuing to volunteer reinforces the narrative of a vulnerable tail.

12. **Concluding discussion of volunteering:** Volunteering has been a considerable though not complete success. The under representation of women, ethnic minorities and disadvantaged classes is of continuing concern. The largest democratic volunteer force has survived and is beginning to flourish. It has been a fifteen year period of social change, illustrating Braudel’s ‘long duree’. Our various sources of data suggest that volunteering may enlarge the perspective of these citizens, helping them to progress from particular to general interests in civil society. It has created a generation of participants in civil society, independent of though connected to the polity. Our sample suggests, however, that the making of this volunteer force has been sustained by a generation of those who were socialised into the public sphere either through the polity or employment in professional public service.

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**Plurality in the structuration of governance**

13. Very different forms of structuration of governance have developed within as well as between the national regions of the UK. We have developed a typology of **forums, consultations, boards and bodies** to capture the different conceptions of function, structure and practice of school governance across the UK. (Especially significant in the classification is the extent to which the members believe they are part of and act as a corporate entity).
(a) **Governance as a deliberative forum:** (Yellowhammer Primary; Tatton) this model is formally constitutive of school governance in Scotland, but it is also witnessed in the practice of some schools in other parts of the UK. Here governance constitutes largely a gathering of parents at which discussions of the school are determined and led by the headteacher as professional leader. Parents will not feel they can question the authority of the head though they may inquire about aspects of the schools progress. In Tatton, in Rampton, an inspection identified the governing body as weak and the head’s ambition has been to tutor its members in the practice of governance. While he is making progress practice emphasises deliberation of policy and development in the school. At Yellowhammer, in Inverburn, no more than six members attend and the meetings are held in the school’s staff room with a relatively informal format to avoid intimidating parents. The conversations were relatively unstructured with agendas typically focusing on how parents can contribute to improve their children’s learning. Over time there has been change. A new board has begun to develop an emphasis on accountability. It has formalised meetings, for example allocating responsibility for items to be discussed at the meetings, requiring the head to circulate a written report with other agenda information in advance of the meetings, and asking more questions.

(b) **Governance as a consultative sounding board:** (Seagull High; Rockswood; Brook; St Joseph’s). Here the board defines its role as providing a sounding board for the strategies and policies provided by the principal professional. The Head brings policies to the board for their consent and authorisation. At Rockswood, the meetings are held in the formal setting of the library, are led by the head with the Chair formalising the decisions arrived at after discussion. Seagull High holds its board meetings in the conference room. An ‘established’ seating arrangement prevails.

(c) **Governance as an executive board:** (Cavendish; Meadows; Brocksley). In these schools a partnership has developed between the governors and the school and, in particular, between the head and the chair with the former leading ‘primus inter pares’. The board will define its overall role as legal responsibility and accountability for the school together with a strong commitment to assist in the strategic development of the school. The Board defines its role as scrutinising policies, rules and resources to ensure that a coherent administrative and financial infrastructure of support is provided for the professional activities of the head and his or her staff and the continuing development of the school. There is a strong emphasis in this model on efficient stewardship of the school’s resources, though this may entail providing support for strategic decisions about securing capital for development of the school, or legitimating budget redistribution for new staffing. Businessmen, strong in social capital, are heavily represented amongst volunteers and are likely to be elected chair of the board. There is likely to be a strong structure of sub committees with considerable delegation of responsibility to take decisions that will typically be ratified, or ‘given an edge’ by the full board.

(d) **Governance as a governing body:** (Sycamore; Skipworth; Summerfield) In these schools the governing body takes overarching responsibility for the conduct and direction of the school. The head will be a strong professional leader but a member rather than leader of the governing body that acts as a corporate entity. The agenda and the meeting will be led by the Chair. The language of the head will communicate a different relationship: ‘would the governors like to consider such and such’ rather than ‘I strongly propose the policy should be.’ The strategy of the school will be set by the governing body, for example, Skipworth governors deciding, against the heads advice, that improvement depended upon placing the school at the centre of the community and seeking a PFI and grants to enable regeneration.
Has governance been a vehicle for school improvement?

14. Characteristics of school improvement typically emphasise professional leadership and practice to the exclusion of lay participation. A research literature (cf. Scanlon et al, 1998) and official studies have begun to recognise the contribution of school governance to improving school performance. Our study reinforces this work, developing a framework to analyse ‘the value chain’ of improvement (Cara and Ranson, 1998) that governance can generate.

15. Our research findings propose that governance fulfils a fundamentally constitutive role in the formation of schools as effective public institutions: first in constituting the infrastructure of effective institutional practice and, secondly, in constituting the social-cultural conditions for effective learning communities.

**Figure 2: The value chain of governance and improvement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practices</th>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Representing Diversity Scrutiny/questions Deliberation</td>
<td>Recognition/ Meaning</td>
<td>Inclusion/ motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice</td>
<td></td>
<td>Strategy/targets Monitoring, review</td>
<td>Policy analysis</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge; Cultural capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Development plans</td>
<td>Trust</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Structures |   | Resource/knowledg generation | Partnership | Civic capital |
| Network   |   | | | |
| Social capital | | | | |

| Codes |   | Reflexivity; Communicative Action | Co-configuration | Authority; Legitimacy |
| Connectedness | | | | |

16. Governance as constituting the infrastructure of good institutional practice

(a) From failure to improvement: governance as scrutiny: The cases included four schools which had been failing (Skipworth; Summerfield, Tatton and Brook). In each case neglected failure – of professional leadership, lay governance, and authority stewardship - was revealed by external inspection. Local authorities then intervened to superimpose experienced professional leaders who with local advice began to reconstruct governing bodies with the ‘social capital’ of experienced, class advantaged volunteers, from the public services but also local commerce. These reconstituted governing bodies began to fulfil functions that were vital to the recovery of each institution and are indispensable to any effective public service. Practice was brought under scrutiny: questions began to be asked. The new chair of Brook regretted his silence under ‘the old hole in a corner’ regime of head and councillor chair: ‘I knew things were not right but nobody was asking questions to inquire’. When asked what role governors play in supporting schools their reply invariably referred to the significance of questions in scrutinising practice. Questions reach behind what is said in search of understanding, and beyond what is said to alternative possibilities (Gadamer, 1975). The new governors imposed regimes of standard setting, targetting and monitoring, and they used their networks (social capital) to lever decisions and resources from the Authority. At Skipworth, for example, governors used their influence to reduce the standard number of pupils thus preventing the LEA using the school for casual admissions, and to ensure the budget allocation accurately reflected pupil mobility. In each case governance made a profound contribution to regenerating the schools (see Appendix 5). As governing bodies Summerfield and Skipworth...
developed a more vigorous *strategic role* of leadership improvement. As forums and consultative boards, at Tatton and Brook, governors and headteachers together worked to fulfil these functions of governance.

(b) *From improvement to achievement: governance as development/direction:* (Sycamore, Cavendish, Seagull High). At Cavendish: the board exert considerable influence through budgetary and staffing decisions. The head and the board sought to lobby against the Burns proposals to restructure post-primary education to encourage all parents to respond individually to the consultation. In a further initiative the Board has played a leading role in enabling and legitimating the strategic initiative to develop the whole campus that includes a primary and secondary modern school. It has led the initiative to win a major capital investment through PPP. The Board is central to codifying and embodying the ethos of the school. Seagull High: The head mobilises the role of the board to legitimate decisions; to develop networks with local church; to persuade other parents about changes to approach to learning and teaching, to engage with parents through the church; Support of board in struggle with archdiocese in RE teaching etc. The head uses the board to (a) lobby on behalf of the school especially for resources from the authority (b) to claim authority/legitimacy for the developments/initiatives in the wider community – teaching of RE, introduction of school uniform, health and safety; though the PPP to rebuild, rather than refurbish, the school has been led by the head, he uses the board to mobilise support with parents , with the Authority, and at public meetings of the parents forum. The chair refers to growing partnership and frank and open dialogue.

17. What these cases point to is the role which governing bodies and school boards can play in reinforcing the quality of institutional leadership and practice: enabling strategy, providing scrutiny of direction, policy and practice, offering guidance and support, and ensuring accountability. These qualities secure the authority and trust of schools as public institutions. By helping to improve the working of the institution the governing body will make more effective the environment of learning and teaching and thus the possibility of enhanced standards of educational achievement. Better governance establishes processes which generate better results.

![Figure 3: Layers of Improvement practice and types of governance](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limits of Practice</th>
<th>Forum</th>
<th>Board</th>
<th>Body</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scrutiny</td>
<td>Scrutiny</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Development</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Co-configuration</td>
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Applying the typology of governance to this process of institutional improvement suggests that there are limits to the institutional development of schools which different forms of governance can play.

18. *Governance constitutes the social and cultural conditions of learning*
A number of schools have identified the potential of governance to make a further contribution to school improvement. While they acknowledge the role in improvement of the dominant ‘performativity regime’ of external targets and monitoring (Summerfield receiving a letter from the Secretary of State for its success) nevertheless they have come to regard this approach as fundamentally limited, unlikely to extend or sustain the improvement they are making.
19. In figure 4, all the five schools in the improving column have made progress, some considerable progress. Some of them now judge that further improvement will only be realised by developing strategies that are more like to motivate pupils and sustain their interest in learning. This requires, they assert, different approaches not only to learning and teaching but also to encouraging parental participation in the life of the school as well as on the school board or governing body. Yet Tatton has to succeed in embedding itself as a community primary, even though recognising that as a vital goal, while Yellowhammer, Meadows, Skipworth and Summerfield all remain detached from their disadvantaged estates’ schemes and their governing boards and bodies are unrepresentative of these excluded class disadvantaged and black and ethnic minority communities. Failure to recognise and value the excluded estates is acknowledged as central to underachievement in school. Two African Caribbean parent governors in Upborough – one at Skipworth, another at Meadows – argue that their governors bodies are unrepresentative of the black communities with serious consequences for the process of learning. These parents describe the failure of their schools to connect with the cultures of children and their communities and associate their children’s disenchantment with school to this failure.

20. Our data suggest achievement in the end is engendered and sustained by motivation and this derives from: recognising and valuing pupils, and connecting learning and teaching to the webs of meaning in their lifeworlds while drawing them towards the public worlds of living and working. Schools mediate between worlds. It presupposes a cultural change for many schools to transform their approach to learning and teaching as well as to including parent communities in the life and work of the school. Skipworth is learning that they cannot sustain ‘educational’ improvement within the school independently of the communities within which they are embedded. They recognise the inescapable interconnection of school and community regeneration that requires inter-agency collaboration at every level.8

21. We argue this configuring of learning and living is a constitutive task for the governance of the school, rather than of specialist knowledge alone. Public administration traditionally focuses upon the distributive and regulatory functions that define roles, responsibilities and resource allocation. A socio-cultural approach is also needed to grasp how institutions by embodying particular bodies of knowledge and cultural capital at the expense of others, also recognise and motivate some communities at the expense of others. Governance can itself learn how its activities can be more inclusive of the communities it is intended to serve and represent.

Does social capital work to support the agreements that underlie achieving schools?

22. All the schools sought to strengthen their institutions by drawing upon social capital in their communities. They drew in significant others who would become supporters of and advocates for the school. They did so in ways that reflected their conception of school governance and the regimes of local structuration of governance in which they were located.
Tatton and Yellowhammer invited mothers to support the work of the school, while Seagull High encouraged board members who would strengthen ties with the church and diocese as the local community. Schools that have developed an executive model of the board have nominated or encouraged to participate business men and women, accountants, executives in the public services as well as the private sector. At Cavendish the head and chair ‘hand-pick’ volunteers for their professional specialisms as well as their capacity to share and reinforce the ethos of the school. Schools draw in the cultural capital of specialist expertise to support their capacity to plan what is regarded inescapably in the era of devolved management (everywhere except Scotland) as in large part a business. Meadows and Cavendish have a personnel specialist to chair a staffing committee, an accountant to chair the finance committee and a former adviser to chair the curriculum committee. In the more political environments of New Labour Upborough, and Old Labour Rampton, governing bodies seek volunteers who can strengthen their ties in the party networks and hierarchies.

23. There is variety therefore in membership that reflects local social and cultural structuration of governance. Yet there is a common thread in the social capital narrative: social class. Schools sought to add to their forum, board or body volunteers who possessed the cultural capital of class advantage whose knowledge, influence and advocacy would connect the school into the key networks of the professional and public service world on which the school depended for resources and support. Schools added ‘cosmopolitans’ to complement the ‘locals’ (Gouldner). The participation of senior executives in the public and private sectors and influential public service professionals ensured that Skipworth had its standard admission numbers adjusted to prevent casual admissions, and its budget corrected to reflect the serious mobility factor, while Cavendish used influential members of the board to acquire crucial statistics from the Assembly Education Committee to use in its campaign against the Burns Report. Possessing a university lecturer and lawyer on the forum, helped Tatton through its inspection, while members of Seagull High provide important links to the Archdiocese. Schools used their social (class) capital in this way to gain access to privileged networks and resources, together with political support.

24. Social capital delivered the public goods of authority and trust. In so doing they created strong schools, institutions which enhanced the public sphere. Social capital generated civic capital. The dominant methodologically individualistic paradigm of social capital (Putnam) needs rounding out to acknowledge the significance of collective goods, which though produced by individuals are not reducible to them. When individuals strengthen a governing body, that corporate entity strengthens a public institution, the collective (civic) capital of which sustains civil society. (cf. Evers, Fine etc)

25. Figure 4, however, suggests while all schools in this study have been enhanced by class capital to become, in varying degrees, more effective institutions in the public sphere a number have failed to connect in significant ways with their disadvantaged parent communities. They have ‘bridged’ to the official world of the public sphere, but not to their own excluded estates and schemes. Some of these schools now acknowledge that until they become community active to reach out to the excluded their improvement is likely to remain blocked. They understand that they will not become effective institutions until they become civic institutions, developing the social and cultural conditions for learning as well as the organisational qualities of strategic leadership, scrutiny and accountability. Their strategic challenge is to connect their pedagogy to the life-world of the disadvantaged. We need to conceptualise this bridging to the excluded, to communities of difference as civic capital. If
social capital tends to be class capital, bridging provides the civic capital to include and mediate between worlds in the public sphere. It is a responsibility for governance.

**Cultural classification: constraints and opportunities in the remaking of community governance**

26. This study has suggested that while although school governors had adopted (modernising) perspectives of monitoring schools to improve performance they have nevertheless developed conceptions of governance which are independent of ‘the state’ and reflect local cultural traditions of governing education. In this sense governors have become active citizens. Our concluding analysis, however, proposes that school governance in many respects remains significantly unrepresentative of some of its significant parent constituencies. As such citizen participation in school governance has yet to be realised in many communities.

27. Across the UK policy development is unfolding which recognises the significance of renewing learning, of generating a pedagogy of motivation to kindle interest amongst the bored and disaffected. Policy documents in each nation reveal a shared understanding that renewing learning depends upon connecting learning in school with learning in family and community. This movement for change demonstrates cross-nation policy learning: the *new community school* initiative in Scotland influenced the *schools plus: building learning communities* in England. The collegiate college scheme developing in England influenced the Burns Report in N. Ireland. The National Assembly for Wales’ *The Learning Country*, with its emphasis on partnership with communities as the foundation for lifelong learning has been widely influential.

28. Whether a wider school community partnership of school governance with and for the community develops in the different nations of the UK will reflect cultural and political traditions. The valuing of community and its connection with the school has strong cultural roots in Scotland and Wales. Yet the tradition of democratic governance has, historically, focused upon the local authority, with the professional policy community giving the lead in the school and its wider relationships. In N. Ireland with its history, until recently, of an administered public sphere, school governance has been professionally led though with a stronger tradition, than in Scotland, of lay participation. In England, an emphasis upon community participation has had an intermittent influence since Plowden in the 1960’s, encouraged recently with policy steer on *neighbourhood renewal*, and *social inclusion*.

29. The cultural traditions of education across the UK have all tended to reproduce the tradition the school as a space of professional regulation. This study of school governance concludes that although participation has developed to strengthen institutions in the official world of the public sphere, it remains incomplete. We would argue that schools will not become effective learning communities until they become truly cosmopolitan learning communities, and they will only realise that vision when democratic governance is strengthened at the level of school and community as well as the local authority.

**IV Activities**

- Professor Ranson, key note paper to Institute for School and College Governors (ISCG) annual conference, September, 2002
- Dr. Martin and Professor Ranson networks with the New Local Government Network and ISCG;
- Presentations to ESRC conferences in Birmingham (01); Manchester, (March 02) and Essex, January (03)

V Outputs
Ranson, S. Arnott, M, McKeown, P and Martin, J. ‘School governance and the constitutive conditions of improvement’, (to be submitted to *British Journal of Educational Research*)
Arnott, M., McKeown, P and Ranson, S ‘Comparing school and local governance across the UK’ (to be submitted for special edition of *local Government Studies* December 03)
McKeown, P., Arnott, M and Ranson, S. ‘Adding value: social capital and school governance across the UK’, (to be submitted to *Journal of Education Policy*)

VI Impacts
1. National policy
   - Dr. Martin’s membership of Ofsted working party to prepare guidance on school governance for the new inspection framework.
   - The programme of research has attracted further funding from the National Assembly for Wales (£50k) and significant sponsorship from the Department for Education in Northern Ireland (DENI).
   - Professor Ranson’s lecture to ESRC Conference in January 03 attracted interest from the Cabinet Office (Ruth Ingamells) and David Miliband, Minister of State for Schools at the DfEs.

2. Practitioner world
   - Dr. Martin’s has presented to a number of local authority governor associations and contributed to the IdeA improving education services model.
   - The Institute for School and College Governors has responded to Professor Ranson’s keynote address by seeking sponsorship from DfEs to support training and development of governing bodies to enable them to establish partnerships between school and community.
   - Mrs McKeown has been working with the Governor Support Officer of the Education and Library Board in the reconsideration of the governor support programme.
VII  Future Research Priorities

- Research is needed to further analyse how schools in contexts of disadvantage can develop the cultural change necessary to introduce a pedagogy of motivation and to involve excluded communities in the life and governance of schools. Professor Ranson has applied for an ESRC Professorial fellowship to further develop research and writing on this ‘pedagogy of governance’.
- Dr. Arnott and Mrs McKeown will be further developing analysis of the methodology of comparative research in the governance of education.

REPORT BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Scottish Parliament Education, Culture and Sport Committee (2003) Inquiry into the Purposes of Scottish Education (Edinburgh)

1 This research build on a previous project *The new management of schools* (ESRC project L311253003)
2 see appendix 1 and 2.
3 See appendix 3.
4 Green draws particularly on Skocpol and Somers (1981) and Shriewer and Holmes (1988)
5 In N. Ireland school governance has not been given any priority since the late 1980’s, and only minor changes have been sought. In response to child protection legislation a Department of Education order was created to take powers to remove from office all governors of a school, in exceptional circumstances. In Wales, the National Assembly has influenced the primary legislation in England to enable greater flexibility to construct federated school governing bodies where necessary in rural and inner urban areas.
6 The *learning country*, Wales; *new community schools* in Scotland; *schools plus* in England; and *curriculum review* in Northern Ireland.
7 The table below proposes a framework for assessing the relationship of governance to improvement. (It has been developed in relation to the ESRC project and the study on governance across Wales for the National Assembly for Wales). The axes of the framework are: the value chain: expresses an abstract chain of the value which each stage of practice can add to institutional performance: inputs (eg. resources, staffing, training etc.); processes: (eg. governance, management, pedagogy); product: (eg. external processes: services, networks etc); outcomes: (eg. achievement, satisfaction). Analytical components/aspects of governance: practices, structures, codes.
8 Martin and Allen (2002)