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Calibrating Fundamental British Values: how Head Teachers are approaching appraisal in the light of the Teachers' Standards 2012, Prevent and the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, 2015

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Abstract

In requiring teachers to “not undermine fundamental British values” (DfE, 2012, p. 14), a phrase originally articulated in the Home Office counter-terrorism document, Prevent (Home Office, 2011), the Teachers' Standards has brought into focus the nature of teacher professionalism. Teachers are now required to promote fundamental British values within and outside school, and, since the publication of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act of 2015 and the White Paper ‘Educational Excellence Everywhere’ (DfE, 2016), are required to prevent pupils from being drawn towards radicalisation. School practices in relation to the promotion of British values are now subject to OfSTED inspection under the Common Inspection Framework of 2015. This research considers the policy and purpose of appraisal in such new times, and engages with 48 school leaders from across the education sector to reveal issues in emerging appraisal practices. We use Zygmunt Bauman’s concept of Liquid Modernity to more fully understand the issues and dilemmas that are emerging in new times and argue that fear and ‘impermeance’ are key characteristics of the way school leaders engage with fundamental British values.

Keywords: Fundamental British values; appraisal; head teachers; Prevent, Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

Introduction

The Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2012) introduced educators to the professional requirement to “not undermine fundamental British values” (FBV). Until the publication of these new Standards, teachers had been required to simply “hold positive values” (TDA, 2007, 7). The statutory requirement to promote not only British values, but *fundamental* British values needs to be understood in relation to The Equality Act 2010 (GEO, 2010) which bans discrimination in schools. The requirement to promote fundamental British values is a new facet of professional practice and, perforce, a new dimension to teacher appraisal.

A proliferation of documentation has been produced since 2012: by November 2014 the DfE published ‘Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC (social, moral, spiritual and cultural development) in school’. Whilst non-statutory, this advice for maintained schools supports Head Teachers in “meeting the requirements of section 78 of the Education Act 2002, in their provision of SMSC” (DfE, 2014, p. 5). The Common Inspection Framework: education, skills and early years, published in August 2015, sets out how OfSTED inspects maintained schools, academies, non-association independent schools, further education and registered early years settings in England. Section 28, ‘Effectiveness of Leadership and management’ states that inspectors will

evaluate the extent to which leaders, managers and governors “actively promote British values” and, in a separate bullet point, “make sure that safeguarding arrangements to protect children, young people and learners meet all statutory and other government requirements, promote their welfare and prevent radicalisation and extremism” (DfE 2015, Section 28).

In addition to the policy documents published by the Department for Education, Local Education Authorities, teacher unions, early years support groups and governing body support groups have published materials to share ideas for practice in relation to British values. In July 2015, however, the Counter Terrorism and Security Act was published, requiring teachers to prevent pupils from being drawn into radicalisation or terrorist activity, and this, we argue, coupled with the requirement to promote fundamental British values, significantly alters the professional identity of the teacher, and, for the purposes of this research, changes the nature of appraisal which is in itself a statutory requirement.

Originally proposed by the Home Secretary Theresa May in November 2014, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 received Royal Assent on 12th February 2015 and came into force on 1st July 2015. On the same day Royal Assent was received the Home Secretary announced that Prime Minister David Cameron had pledged £130m to support the development of programmes designed to prevent radicalisation: this was just one month after the attack on the Paris office of the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 has a particular focus upon provision of communications data, air, sea and rail travel and the work of the Special Immigration Appeals Commission. It empowers police to seize passports-temporarily- at borders, introduces a Temporary Exclusion Order that disrupts the return of a British citizen suspected of terrorist activity abroad and amends the Terrorism Act 2000 relating to the prevention of payment to terrorist organisations and examination of goods at or near ports. It gives statutory status to Channel, the formerly voluntary programme designed to support vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorist activity. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 also mandates change to Prevent, which is one of four strands comprising the overarching strategy, Contest. Developed by government as part of the post-9/11 strategy, the third version of Contest, published in July 2011, includes:

Pursue: to stop terrorist attacks

Prevent: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism

Protect: to strengthen our protection against a new terrorist attack

Prepare: to mitigate the impact of a new attack

Of particular relevance to this research is the requirement within the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 for schools to prevent pupils from being drawn into terrorist activity. Within the Act, the requirement for specified authorities (there are two specified authorities - one in England and Wales – and one in Scotland) to endeavour to prevent people from taking part in terrorist activity is known as ‘Prevent duty’. Since the publication of Contest and Prevent government has identified the role that schools might, and increasingly, are, required to play. The significant inclusion of schools as organisations and teachers as key players is unprecedented in British counter-terrorist policy (Miller, 2010). Unprecedented too is the way in which the counter terrorist strategy Prevent has informed education policy: the Teachers’ Standards of 2012

required teachers to ‘not undermine fundamental British values’ (DfE, 2012, p.14) terminology published originally in Prevent. Since the publication on 1st July 2015 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, teachers are currently undergoing training to enable them to identify young people at risk of radicalisation. Teachers are now required, in their daily working lives, to both promote fundamental British values inside and outside of school and hold expertise in terms of identifying young people at risk of radicalisation. As a statutory requirement, this dimension to teacher work is a new facet of professionalism. It is also a dimension that must now be examined as part of the annual appraisal process in schools.

This research considers the requirement upon Head Teachers to appraise teachers in terms of ‘not undermining’ and ‘promoting’ fundamental British values in the context of the new counter-terrorism role assigned to teachers in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and Prevent.

Appraisal: threat, incompetence and payment by results

With its lineage in the Education Act 2000, the Education (School Teachers’ Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012 was published on 1st September 2012, replacing the Education (School Teacher Performance Management) (England) Regulations 2006. The new national appraisal system is designed to align with the Teachers’ Standards (DfE, 2012) which came into force on 1st September 2012. As a couplet of policy initiatives there is now a requirement for teachers to demonstrate that they have met the teaching requirements in Part One, and the personal and professional requirements in Part Two of the Teachers’ Standards (DfE, 2012) in order to comply with the appraisal regulations for all teachers in maintained schools. Overseen by their respective governing bodies, schools are legally required to have in place appraisal and capability processes for all staff. Furthermore, inspections carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) require schools to provide evidence of appraisals and to focus the appraisal process, targets and outcomes on school improvement. If such evidence is unavailable, the leadership grading for the school in the inspection process may be compromised.

Such clear alignment to school improvement arguably has its genesis in the 1988 Education Reform Act. Writing just months after the Education Reform Act was published, Day (1989) pondered on the future development of appraisal systems in the light of the new National Curriculum, suggesting that twin purposes of appraisal had emerged, namely “accountability (to governing bodies, Head Teachers, Local Education Authorities and parents) and professional development” (Day, 1989, p. 3). Day highlights the change in ‘contract’ between teachers and the State during this time referring to the sense of “suspicion and scepticism of teachers who live in a climate of legislated not negotiated change” (Day, 1989, p.3). In fact, ‘Pay and Conditions of Employment’ (DES, 1987), published just months before the Education Reform Act had introduced the potential for appraisal in schools. Whilst appraisal as a process had been employed for many years, Bell (1988) notes that there was fundamental change post Education Reform Act in the “nature of the process and the criteria used” (Bell, 1988, p. 2). The Education (School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions of Employment) Order 1987 required, for the first time, “(8a) Supervising and participating in any arrangements within an agreed national framework, for the appraisal of the performance of teachers who teach in the school” (Schedule 1, DES, 1987). Bell suggests that schools were approaching appraisal from differing perspectives, indicating that school

self-evaluation initiatives were the “least threatening and most distantly related to appraisal” (Bell, 1988, p. 7). The notion of threat is significant here: in the eight years preceding the Education Reform Act Local Authorities (LEAs), politicians and civil servants had engaged in public debate over the form and function of appraisal. By 1980, two thirds of Local Education Authorities in England had begun to engage with self-evaluation and this period saw the publication of the earliest guidelines (Elliott, 1981). Some argued that the self-evaluations that followed largely focused upon institutional issues with “scant attention (given) to the outcomes of learners making virtually no reference to standards, for example, ILEA, 1977” (Clift, 1982). It was during this time that some LEAs established staff appraisal systems, developed from DES pilot projects: the Suffolk Scheme and the Croydon Scheme focussed upon evaluation and accountability (Sidewell, 1987), whilst the Solihull Scheme emphasised professional development and evaluation in equal measure and situated appraisal within the wider school evaluation process (Bell, 1988). It is clear that whilst many LEAs devised appraisal schemes in the period preceding the Education Reform Act (Nuttall, 1986), the schemes were largely developmental rather than summative (James and Newman, 1985). Indeed, a consideration of the variety of names given to appraisal and self evaluation processes highlights the variety of emphases: ‘work review’, ‘career planning’, ‘career review’, ‘person review’, ‘review’ (Bell, 1988, p.9). Of course, the terms given to each approach reflect the underlying purpose of the review. This in turn should be understood in the light of Sir Keith Joseph’s speech at the North of England Education Conference in January 1984, when he stated that ‘incompetent’ teachers should be removed from practice, “such teachers from a profession where they can do disproportionate harm” (Times Education Supplement, 1984). The notion of the ‘incompetent teacher’, introduced by the Secretary of State, raised alarm bells in relation to appraisal. In ‘Better Schools’ (DES, 1985a) and Quality in Schools: Evaluation and Appraisal (DES, 1985b) Sir Keith Joseph continued to emphasise his intolerance of incompetent teachers, arguing that the LEA must know the skills and competences of individual teachers.

To counter the view from Joseph, David Hancock, Permanent Secretary at the DES challenged the notion that appraisal was designed to identify incompetence, instead advancing the idea that appraisal might lead to promotion or an increase in salary. Hancock was keen to stress that appraisal should not be experienced as a threat but also that ‘payment by results’ would not emerge from this form of appraisal. That said, Sir Keith Joseph and Angela Rumbold, whilst a junior minister at the DES in 1987, promoted the notion of higher pay for higher performance. This can be detected in Better Schools (DES, 1985a), where Bell’s (1988) commentary is of its time, “How far such appraisal needs to be based on classroom visiting and upon an appraisal of both pupils’ work and of the teacher’s contribution to the life of the school as suggested in Teaching Quality (DES 1983) is open to doubt” (Bell, 1988, p. 14).

Performance Related pay (PRP) was introduced into the education system in September 2013. Pay and appraisal policies in all state schools were revised in order to link them to teacher performance, with a starting date of 1st September, 2014 (DfE, 2013). Vociferously opposed by the National Union of Teachers (NUT, 2014) PRP shapes and frames teacher appraisal in relation to measurable performance. Whilst there was much opposition to this initiative, the Sutton Trust ran a poll that found some 53% of teachers were in support of PRP (NFER, 2014).

The purpose of teacher appraisal has long been debated, and is a “contentious and divisive issue regardless of the context within which it operates” (Dimmock and Walker, 2005). From the earliest calls from Secretary of State Joseph for appraisal to be utilised to identify ‘incompetent’ teachers, the Conservative Party - and government - instigated compulsory appraisal in order to monitor teaching activity (Bartlett, 2000) but “unable to elicit the type of data required, the process became marginalised” (Bartlett, 2000). Bartlett goes on to suggest that the Labour Party utilised appraisal rather differently: the emphasis shifted under a Labour government to a focus upon raising standards. That is, a shift in gaze from close monitoring of the teacher to pupil outcomes. Whilst pupil outcomes remain at the forefront of government education policy today –particularly in the light of PRP - the Teachers’ Standards, in requiring the teacher to promote fundamental British values both inside and outside of school sets the gaze, in addition to the pupil, upon the teacher. The influence of Prevent upon the Teachers’ Standards and the alignment of teachers’ practice with the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 situates the purpose and practice of appraisal within a new arena.

Conceptual Framework: Liquid Modernity and the consequences of ‘impermeance’

Zygmunt Baumann, in his thesis on Liquid Modernity, offers a vision of a new phase of modernity. Developed through his works on globalisation, ‘the human consequences’ and ‘in search of politics’, Bauman sums up the defining features of the human condition through Liquid Modernity, arguing that there has been a shift from a “solid to liquid phase of modernity” (Bauman, p. 303, 2005). The rewards of using Liquid Modernity as a lens through which to view the links between the requirement ‘not to undermine FBVs’ and appraisal lie in its attention to the plastic and dialectical nature of relationships in late modernity (Lee: 2006).

The observation that school leaders are often cowed and limited by the OfSTED inspection framework and compliant to policy and government dictates is nothing new (Ball, 2006). Compliance is usually associated with a dread of consequences (Lam, 2007) and sometimes with an inability to conceive of alternatives (Ground-water Smith, 2007) but the focus on fear and responses to fear provided by a Liquid Modernity framework suggests that the relationship between teachers, the standards and appraisal is more complex.

The thesis of Liquid Modernity, with its emphasis upon change, fluidity and constantly shifting structures (impermeance) is helpful to us conceptually in terms of interrogating education policy documents, and in particular policy documents relating to standards and values. Further, nested within Liquid Modernity are Bauman’s metaphors of the gardener and the hunter, which we use to focus our analysis of the ways in which our participating school leaders are navigating the appraisal process.

Since the publication of *Liquid Modernity* in 2000 Bauman has developed his thesis to seemingly encompass every aspect of personal and public life from education to emotions, terrorism and spirituality. His critique centers on a reappraisal of the forms of modernity but a recurring theme in all his writing is of the pervasiveness of fear (Bauman: 2006.) Fear is both a product of Liquid Modernity as well as a defining feature of the way individuals and their relationships with each other and institutions are defined within it. Bauman specifically locates this fear in the qualities of liquidity, the absence of permanence, the failure of stable forms, the loss of certainties. Fear is

generated not merely by absence but by the speed with which structures take form only to disperse into nothingness again. All life, personal and public becomes nothing more than as a series of 'short-term projects and episodes that do not combine into the logically consistent and cohesive (Bauman: 2006)

For Bauman, fluidity and liquidity indicate that we have never been further from conceptualising a new social order (Bauman, 2000, p. 5). He suggests the reason we have never been further away from such progress is because in fluidity "are the bonds which interlock individual choices in collective projects and actions - the patterns of communication and coordination between individually conducted life policies on the one hand and political actions of human collectivities on the other" (Bauman, 2000, p. 6). So, institutions are fluid, relationships are fluid, connectivity is fluid. Because all these forms of communication are fluid, we experience life both in its 'impermeance' (Bauman, 2000) and in its individualised nature. For Bauman, educators are facing unprecedented challenges as "social forms melt faster than new ones can be cast" (2005, p. 303): new social forms have no time to solidify. Indeed, this is now the expectation. As such, Bauman argues, flexibility becomes an essential predisposition and 'impermanence' (Bauman, 2000) characterises existence.

If impermanence is a defining feature of Liquid Modernity it is fear that is the most common response to impermanence. Our lives are characterized not by commitments to values and beliefs that we seek to define ourselves by but by the ever increasingly frantic grasping of meaning where ever we can find it, we are fearful because there is no permanence and fearful because we know that even when we identify some structures or beliefs experience has taught us they will swiftly melt into air (Bauman: 2005).

Bauman uses the metaphor of the hunter and the gardener to contrast our relationships to the world. The gardener, in a traditional modernist world could plan, grow her crops, decide which flowers to grow and the shape of her garden. She has a vision and she works to ensure its success. In a Liquid Modernity the hunter has no vision except to survive, she is suspicious of everything that is different from herself and fearful of everything that cannot be hunted. The consequence is fear of the outsider and a withdrawal from the public sphere. It is the metaphor of the hunter coupled with the concepts of impermanence and fear that informs the analysis of the conceptualising of appraisal within the context of FBV in this article.

Methodology

The study is part of a larger project focused upon the way teachers perceive the relationship between the Teachers' Standards of 2012 and their understanding of professionalism: the interviews in this paper focus on school leaders. This article presents qualitative data from schools across three neighbouring counties in the South of England, of which two counties operate a selective system of education. In structural terms, qualitative data were generated from school leaders of both secondary and primary schools. Academies, schools in Multi Academy Trusts and church schools are represented in this research. In socioeconomic terms, participating schools are situated in rural locations, post - industrial towns and coastal towns; schools were situated in both affluent areas and socially deprived areas. The location of the research is purposeful: the researchers work(ed) in the region and wished to glean an

understanding of practices in relation to the Teachers' Standards and appraisal across the South of England.

Forty - eight Head Teachers and twelve Assistant Head Teachers and/or Deputy Head Teachers participated in the research, providing a total of 60 participating senior school leaders. This sample was diverse in terms of years in post. Dialogic interviews were employed to explore emerging practices in relation to values, British values and appraisal and interviews were conducted in schools, within the architecture of the school leaders' professional lives in order to facilitate reflexivity, a flow of conversation and an interplay of ideas around values and leadership appraisal practices. This contextual backdrop was important in terms of gaining a deeper understanding of the situated values and practices of the school leaders.

This qualitative study is framed by some of the assumptions embedded in the concept of Liquid Modernity. The transient nature of roles, concepts, identity and relationships posited by a Liquid Modernity framework (Bauman: 2000) implies an approach to interviews that encourages reflection and the construction of knowledge and understanding within the interview process itself (Knight and Saunter: 1999). Dialogic interviews were conducted using strategies specifically designed to facilitate reflection and questioning and these included member reflections and counterfactual prompting (Way, Kanak Zwier, Tracy: 2015).

Reflection and what Way, Kanak Zwier and Tracy call 'self talk' were encouraged through the use of mirroring, calling out and reassurance (Way, Kanak Zwier, Tracy, 2015: 3). Initial questions focused on discovery of procedures and practices in schools in relation to the standards and appraisals and then moved to discussion and a consideration of extremism, difference, values and teacher professionalism.

Counterfactual prompting was employed through the creation of two sets of questions in relation to participants understanding of 'what would constitute the undermining of FBVs as described in the standards' and the wider understanding of school leaders of the relationship between FBVs, the standards and professionalism. We asked which of the following acts would constitute a teacher undermining FBVs:

- a teacher who said they did not support the monarchy as part of a discussion in a citizenship lesson?
- a teacher who said that in some circumstances they thought political violence was justified during a class discussion?
- a teacher who said that they could understand why in some circumstances young Muslims would be attracted to extremism?

And then,

Would you consider it unprofessional if a teacher:

- attended a local rally to protest against cuts in the NHS?
- attended an anti-war march where pupils and parents could be present?
- stood in local elections as a councilor?

Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed and anonymity was protected through the

use of pseudonyms. In terms of analysis the corpus of data was mined and coded to identify the a priori themes of British values and appraisal. Further themes were identified during subsequent analysis of the data.

Findings

The overall picture was one of engagement with the Teachers' Standards as an integrated part of the appraisal. All participants were able to describe appraisal systems in their schools and all said that the Standards informed appraisals in some way. Every participant was aware of the most recent Standards and that the requirement not to undermine fundamental British values was now in Part 2 of the Standards. This conforms the findings of the NFER Teacher Voice omnibus survey in 2013 on the use of the Standards in appraisals which found that 85 per cent of leaders in schools were aware of the changes to appraisal required by the new standards and that 82 per cent had changed their performance management/appraisal policy as a result (Lamont and Pyle: 2013). However the research discussed in this paper suggests that whilst nearly all school leaders are aware of the changes to appraisal this does not necessarily translate into altered practices and behaviour.

The nature and depth of engagement varied between schools as did the interpretation of the role of the Standards in the appraisal process. In over two thirds (41) of schools the contribution of the standards to the appraisal process was described in ways that suggested that it was perfunctory, tokenistic or had made no or little difference to existing practice. All school leaders stressed that the 2012 Standards informed appraisals in their schools but many stressed that preexisting work on appraisals in relation to the previous standards was still used. School leaders also stressed that many of the standards themselves were 'common sense' or a routine part of the way teachers were expected to behave in schools. In interviews several school leaders indicated physically where the standards 'were' by bringing out folders, box files and ring binders and in two cases entire filing cabinet drawers:

Yes, they (the standards) are a part, we've mapped them, they're over there (waves in the direction of a shelf full of folders) but you know we already as school have done a great deal of work on appraisal. And really there's nothing so different in the latest ones (Standards).

Just under a third of participants were able to explain how the Standards formed a core part of appraisals. However most participants explained that the new Standards contributed nothing that was qualitatively new to appraisals because every Standard in Part One was already a significant issue within the process.

There were a wider variety of responses to questions about the relationship between Part Two of the Standards and appraisals. Two thirds of schools made no reference to Part Two of the Standards in reference to appraisals. Participants said that they expected that Part Two would only be used in cases where a teacher was to be disciplined or in some other exceptional circumstance. Three participants said that in their school 'it would never come to that' in reference to Part Two because their schools 'we're a community where everyone knows everyone' or 'it would never come to that, we would have addressed it before it ever got to that stage'. A minority of schools (9) included references to part two of the standards in their appraisal guidance but no school specifically mentioned the standard 'not to undermine fundamental British values'.

A common feature of many of these interviews was an ambiguity in relation to the difference between the requirement ‘not to undermine Fundamental British values’ as demanded in the Teachers Standards and the requirement to ‘promote Fundamental British values’ in the Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools. (DfE: 2014). The two documents use the same definition of FBVs but refer to two different areas, the first with the appraisal of teachers and professional conduct and the second with the delivery of SMSC in schools in relation to pupil learning. Yet in interviews school leaders persistently answered questions about the way their schools had engaged with FBVs only in the context of the SMSC document. There was an assumption amongst school leaders that engagement with FBVs was in the context of the promotion of FBVs with pupils rather than with the appraisal of teachers.

Participants spoke openly about the development of strategies in schools to negotiate the speed with which policies and initiatives were introduced.

These included setting up committees, working parties and the most common practice, mapping and developing grids and papers that demonstrated ‘evidence’ of engagement. Eight schools had developed grids and guidelines that mapped FBVs onto the existing content of lessons and the ethos of the school and a further twelve participants said that their school intended to conduct a similar exercise in the near future. Four schools had established working groups or committees to discuss the relationship between FBVs and the school including partnerships, Ofsted, school ethos and the curriculum. In interviews no participants indicated that any of the planning and discussions about FBVs outlined above involved discussions on appraisal or the ways in which as part of the Teachers Standards, FBVs might relate to the behavior of teachers. No school had used the requirement to not undermine fundamental British values in appraisals. It was made clear that these practices were a routine ‘common sense’ response to the sheer number of policies and the speed with which schools were expected to demonstrate engagement with them.

No participants discussed FBVs in ways that were wholly uncritical. The degree of criticism varied between those who made light of the impossibility of trying to define British values or of the fact that the values stated in the Standards were not exclusively British and those who thought their inclusion was part of a partisan political agenda that undermined the educational project. However no single participant indicated that they would entirely ignore them although again this was in the context of promotion amongst pupils rather than as part of the Standards.

No school leader was able to give a detailed answer to the question “Can you think of an example of teacher behaviour that would constitute undermining FBVs?” Three participants suggested ‘something to do with extremism’ or ‘something inappropriate’ and ‘Islam and extremism?’ The use of counterfactual prompting with the two sets of questions did encourage a variety of responses and there was a significant difference between participants from primary and the secondary phases. Primary school leaders were twice as likely to believe that all three scenarios constituted undermining FBVs and they were more likely to believe that all three examples of political activity would be unprofessional for teachers.

Would the following be considered undermining fundamental British values?	Primary – Yes	Primary – No	Secondary - Yes	Secondary – No
Monarchy	26	7	5	25
Violence	24	6	7	23
Extremism	28	2	14	16

Table 1: undermining FBV

Would you consider the following activities to be unprofessional for teachers?	Primary Yes	Primary No	Secondary Yes	Secondary No
NHS	13	17	2	28
Anti war	21	9	5	25
Standing in an election	14	16	3	27

Table 2: unprofessional practice

Some participants tried to resolve the tensions by suggesting that if teachers wished to be politically active they could do so in an area far away from their school. The most common reason given for believing the activities in the first set of questions could be considered as undermining FBVs was that young children are unable to distinguish between a teacher stating an opinion and a teacher expressing their own opinion. The second most common reason was that it was inappropriate and unprofessional for a teacher to express an opinion on these questions in any circumstances in school.

Participants' responses to questions that directly addressed FBVs and appraisal were also contradictory. Three quarters of school leaders in the primary phase and a quarter of secondary believed that all six scenarios could constitute undermining of FBVs or unprofessional behaviour on the part of teachers, even though the majority mentioned that they believed in 'freedom of speech' and some noted that it was a 'right' to protest or stand for election. However they also said they worried about the opinions of parents or Ofsted but most were unable to explain exactly in what ways voicing an opinion against the monarchy would constitute undermining FBVs. In terms of political violence, the majority of primary leaders were clear that this should be presented as unacceptable. Several primary leaders thought that political violence constituted breaking the rule of law whilst nearly all secondary leaders thought that it was acceptable to present political violence in positive ways in certain instances, such as apartheid or the Suffragettes. A minority of secondary school leaders thought that it was important to be able to discuss the possibility of political violence as part of the process of children developing their own viewpoints. In this there remains a liberal strand of thinking from the secondary leaders.

Discussion

Impermeance and fear

Two key aspects of Liquid Modernity characterize the responses of the school leaders in discussion around appraisal: impermeance and fear.

The sense of impermience, an awareness that no policy, standard, structure or practice was likely to be the same in a years' time shaped the degree of the school leaders' engagement. They were fearful of not being compliant but at the same time they were unprepared to invest too much energy and time in requirements that might be temporary. The 'erratic and essentially unpredictable nature of change' (Bauman: 2009. 159) experienced by school leaders generated a degree of skepticism about the longevity of the Standards. As such they were able to 'evidence' their compliance but only at somewhat superficial levels. Many school leaders were preoccupied with the immediacy of response to their environment. In a liquid world, long term planning and a commitment to vision may be desirable but is simply not practical, life is 'spliced' and the 'penalty of eviction from the hunting world' results in behavior that preempts turbulence (Bauman: 2006, 307).

School leaders were implementing policy that was statutory but in ways which implied the policies themselves were of little account. All the schools that had set up committees or working parties to discuss FBVs took the same approach to every policy and initiative 'just in case'.

School leaders, especially primary leaders, were fearful of the consequences of teachers in their schools being politically active or of voicing opinions in class that were radical in tone but which do not challenge any of the definitions of FBVs provided in the Standards. As hunters the school leaders are masters of their environment and they inhabit a complex world: this was apparent in their relationship with the Standards – 'it's common sense, it's what we do'...however, they also have filing cabinets of A4 ring binders with the Standards mapped in preparation for inspection. This can be read as contradictory. They were simultaneously compliant and resistant to the Standards. In an article critiquing the Primary Strategy developed in 2003, Robin Alexander mocks the list of attributes that describe good learning and teaching with the question 'How many teachers, though, will read this list, experience a Eureka flash of recognition and thank the DfES for a profound and novel insight of lasting and practical value?' (Alexander: 2010, p. 20). The answer of course is 'very few'. The tone of many interviews with school leaders about the Standards and appraisals was very much in the spirit of Alexander's attitude towards the Primary Strategy. School leaders acknowledged the importance of appraisals and the relationship between the Standards but individual Standards as they appear in Part One were considered to be self-evident and even insulting to the expertise and skills of many of the participants.

Whilst school leaders are situated within the contradictory requirement for structural standards within a time of liquidity and expected change, it is in the relationship between FBV, appraisal and professionalism that we see the fear identified by Baumann as a key aspect of Liquid Modernity (Baumann: 2006). Pupil outcomes are now a key definer of teacher effectiveness, where appraisal is a mechanism within the system. Both the nature and function of appraisals has altered in response to changing education priorities, such that appraisal now has a significant focus upon pupil outcomes. However, the Teachers' Standards and the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 shift the gaze once more upon the teacher whilst simultaneously maintaining a focus upon pupil outcomes.

Fear as a phenomenon of liquid modernity emerges as a confluence of FBV appraisal

and professionalism and this may relate to the different ways that pupil outcomes are now an essential feature of the system: this in turn may relate to OFSTED priorities. What this research has revealed is that school leaders were unable to imagine what undermining FBV would look like; they were unable to conceptualise what this might be in relation to their school and pupils – there is no discourse within which such appraisal discussions might take place. There was limited discourse in relation to FBV: the school leaders were immediately wary when answering the counter factual questions and a significant proportion of school leaders stated that many forms of political activity were unprofessional from a teacher perspective: they were fearful that such activity might undermine the professionalism of the teacher.

Conclusion

This research argues that engagement with the Standards in appraisals happens on a range of differing levels. Whilst all schools are compliant, they comply in differing ways. In relation to “not undermining FBV” the majority of schools had not engaged significantly with this requirement, either in the process of text production or the ways in which this is understood by school leaders. On the other hand, the requirement to promote FBV with pupils has been attended to with displays, posters, homework and parental engagement.

Although the school leaders we interviewed in this study were unsure of how to interpret the requirement for teachers to “not undermine fundamental British values” (DfE, 2012, p. 14) a minority were prepared to argue that in the context of Prevent and the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 many traditional forms of political activity might be considered as unprofessional in this new era. The school leaders had little in the way of discourse or sophisticated language with which to discuss the undermining of British values and as such, an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty characterised their viewpoints.

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