The pastoral academic divide: Impacts and implications for pastoral care

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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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Abstract

Secondary schools in Australia routinely develop organisational constructs to fulfil their dual obligations of academic teaching and the pastoral care of students. Although these obligations are closely interrelated, school organisational structures are frequently dichotomous, differentiating between the academic roles of teachers and their pastoral responsibilities and can result in a functional divide between the two sides of the school. Teachers find themselves wearing ‘two hats’; a subject teacher and a pastoral carer and thus are required to work in two separate domains, the academic and the pastoral, each with distinct and different tasks, expectations and line management. The limited amounts of research available suggest that such an organisational divide can hinder the work of teachers and lead to some organisational confusion within the school. This research took the form of a qualitative case study, based in an independent secondary school in Western Australia. It investigated the impacts and implications of the notional division between the pastoral and academic dimensions of the school. The thesis begins with a review of the understanding and development of pastoral care in schools. The construct of an enabling bureaucracy is then explored and adopted as a theoretical lens with which to examine the pastoral care system from the perspective of teachers, students and senior managers. Narratives are used to present the data. The research findings indicate that alignment of the pastoral and academic structures, both functionally and culturally, can be achieved if an enabling approach is employed. Such alignment allows the pastoral care system to support the primary function of a school which is learning, whilst retaining its fundamental duty of student care. The study concludes with a consideration of how an enabling school culture may improve the provision of pastoral care in schools.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Step into almost any secondary school in Australia and you will most likely find an organisation structured on classic bureaucratic lines. Despite schools pioneering new pedagogies and curricula, working with evolving technologies and preparing students for a rapidly changing world, schools appear to persist with organisational arrangements which have their origins in the factory model of the 1800s (Watkins, 1999a). There is no doubt that some schools are adapting their practices and structures to meet new challenges, but the ‘old traditions’ persist. Early in their careers, teachers are exposed to two sides of the school: the pastoral side, providing a caring, nurturing environment in which students are meant to grow as individuals; and the academic dimension which handles students as units for examination and assessment. It is this structural divide which is the focus of this research.

The majority of secondary schools are bureaucratic organisations and demonstrate the classic characteristics of hierarchical authority, rules and regulations, the use of written documents to determine activities and a division of labour (Hoy, 2003). Such rational bureaucracies were described and characterised by Weber (1947), who, writing in the 1920s to 1940s, believed that they were the most efficient means of administering an organisation. Schools in Australia and Britain, amongst other countries, use a bureaucratic model to organise the teaching staff body, routinely creating sets of teams, one set with an academic focus, such as subject departments or learning areas, and a separate set to administer the duties of pastoral care.

In my experience, this creates a dichotomous structure. One side of the management structure of the school focuses on pastoral responsibilities while the
other is concerned with the delivery of curriculum content to students. This division is perpetuated almost without question, despite concerns that such a split could be divisive and produce tensions (Best, 2002; Watkins, 1999a, 1999b). Yet little empirical evidence exists to confirm or allay those fears (Best, 2002). This case study research is based in an independent girls’ school in a city in Western Australia, and examines how the organisational structures conventionally deployed in schools and the roles and responsibilities associated with those structures impact upon the pastoral care given to students. The impacts and implications of the pastoral academic divide are a primary focus of the work.

**Thesis structure**

The thesis begins with an introductory chapter, which opens with a section of personal reflection, describing my own personal journey which led to the research questions. The significance of the study is then discussed. Chapter 1 concludes with an introduction to the school on which the research is based.

Chapter 2 considers the wider perspective, beginning with a review of the body of existing literature which relates to the study. It takes the reader on a journey through the development of pastoral care in schools of various countries of the world, predominantly Britain and Australia and considers the understandings ascribed to the term pastoral care. (The education systems of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are encompassed within the name Britain, which in some literature is variously referred to as the United Kingdom or UK. In this thesis the term Britain will be used.) A history of the ‘pastoral academic divide’ helps to explain the development of this phenomenon in schools. The chapter then presents the more recent movements in the field of pastoral care as educators attempt to reconcile it with the press for
greater improvements in students’ academic achievement. Chapter 2 ends with a discussion of the theoretical frameworks which have been adopted in the study.

The methods and methodological considerations used in the study are described in Chapter 3, and the data are presented in Chapter 4. Narratives have been used in Chapter 4 to exemplify some of the themes which emerged from the data analysis. Finally, Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the data, referencing that data to the original research questions, generating some findings, relating the findings to relevant literature and proposing some revised questions. Implications for the refinement of pastoral care provision in schools are discussed as well as some suggestions for potential areas for future study.

A personal perspective

At a recent interview for a leadership role in middle management I was asked to express my professional allegiance to either the pastoral or academic side of the school. I had worked intermittently as a Head of House, looking after the pastoral care of 200 students from Years 8 to 12 for three years, and was now applying for the position as Head of Science. I found the question impossible to answer, partly due to my personal understanding of teaching and partly due to the experience I brought to the situation after nearly 20 years in the profession. Such rigid demarcation between the pastoral and academic sides of the school is common in my experience, having taught in five different schools in Australia and Britain since 1987. The division between the academic and the pastoral can be seen in the way school management structures are organised, in the career paths followed by teachers and in the way students are organised on a daily basis. My review of academic writing in this area reveals that this perceived division is a source of unsubstantiated disquiet. Anecdotal
evidence somehow leads teachers to feel that this division is a bad thing, unhelpful in schools and certainly of concern when considering professional development and career structure, yet there is little research evidence or exploration of the issues involved.

I consider myself to have been fortunate in my early years as a teacher. With just two years experience I was appointed Head of Biology in a medium sized comprehensive school in Oxfordshire, England. Once I arrived at the school, however, the responsibilities I was subsequently given proved far wider than such a narrow title would suggest. The Head teacher passionately believed that teachers should have a broad and all-encompassing view of students, not limited by the labels and accompanying job descriptions normally found associated with curriculum or pastoral titles. He employed a policy which married responsibilities of both an academic and pastoral nature, encouraging teachers to become conversant with the pastoral and academic aspects of the students. I was expected to oversee the Biology components of the Science teaching in the school and also take responsibility for pastoral issues of a specific Year group. Such a dual role involved writing curriculum materials and organising learning programs in conjunction with the Head of Science and liaising with parents and students from my allotted Year group, dealing with students who displayed behavioural problems and organising annual camps and parents evenings, under the guidance of a senior tutor.

Such was my training in my formative years which, it could be said, shape a young teacher for the future. It certainly informed my understanding of the scope of the educative process. I was therefore unusual to some degree as I did not have the opportunity to become more firmly associated with either side of the ‘pastoral academic divide’. Subsequent promotion led me to become Head of Science in a
more traditional comprehensive school in the same county in England and from there I emigrated to Western Australia where my career began again as a classroom practitioner. With my previous experience I was soon asked to cover Long Service Leave vacancies in the pastoral side of the school. I then applied for the position of Head of Science, which led to the interview question: “What do you really enjoy doing? Where does your heart lie, in pastoral or curriculum work?” It was an ‘either-or’ situation: either I was most concerned with academic matters or I preferred to work in a pastoral capacity.

The frame for my study was being set. What are the consequences of this division? Who does it affect? Is it as divisive as it might be thought? Should it exist? How is it perpetuated? How does the structural organisation of the institution link with the stated policy? How does it manifest itself in practice? How do students perceive it? How does it impact the care that students receive? What implications does it have for the school? Are there other ways of organising schools? What do we mean by pastoral care? What relationship does it have to the spiritual side of a student’s experience? Does the structural divide have an impact on what we do to ensure the best care for students as they move through our school? These thoughts were distilled and overarching research questions emerged. They were constructed under four headings and are given below:

**Policy as philosophy**

- What are the underlying assumptions or premises that determine the way this organisation is structured?
Policy as text

- How does the school assert to organise itself to maximise its aims to develop the full academic potential of students and to manage their welfare and pastoral well being?

Policy in practice

- What are the explicit structures which organise students and teachers in their daily work?
- What informal networks are in operation?
- To what extent do current practices allow policy to be enacted?
- Are structures adapted by cultural practices?

Practice perceived

- How do teachers perceive their roles and responsibilities as individuals and within the wider network of the school management structure?
- To what extent do the structures which are in place enhance or hinder the agency of teachers to build meaningful relationships with students?

Significance of the study

Much school literature is published documenting the goals and objectives of the organisation. It is difficult to find a school that does not list, amongst its aims, both the need to develop the ‘whole person’ within a caring environment and the desire to develop fully the academic potential of the student (Chittenden, 2004). The school at the centre of this study asserts that “The well being of students and their
positive emotional and social development are key factors to ensuring educational progress” (School handbook, 2007).

These two dimensions, pastoral care and academic success, are fundamental to the aims of most educational institutions and are, in my experience, commonly the basis on which organisational structures are created. However, the rhetoric of the development of the whole student seems at odds with the traditional designs for organisational management and leadership, which create a clear and often bureaucratic dichotomy between the two areas (Watkins, 1999b). The student appears to be viewed as either a recipient of a curriculum with the need for academic teaching or as a person requiring pastoral care, rather than an individual with integrated needs.

Schools create learning teams, subject departments or curriculum areas. These departments often share an office and a designated area within the school building. Departments have team meetings and are identified as a unit within the school. A second and often distinct set of groups, the pastoral teams, is independently created. They may be formed around a horizontal year group or a vertical house group or a mixture of both.

The organisational constructs used to design school structures appear to acknowledge the integrated needs of students but in reality they often create sub hierarchies and distinct boundaries (Watkins, 1999a). Teachers find themselves members of two separate teams: one pastoral and the other academic. Separate teams, meeting structures, expectations, and responsibilities pull teachers in two ways. In schools this is often thought of as wearing two hats. That is the root of the divide between the academic and the pastoral domains of the school.

Recent trends in educational thinking about school organisation in some sectors have led to the development of a movement towards middle schooling, with
students from Years 7 to 9 grouped into smaller sub schools with a timetable that promotes more regular and frequent contact with fewer teachers during a timetable cycle (Hill & Russell, 1999; Meece, 2003). Such changes would suggest that school administrators are altering the management structures to reflect and promote the joint aims of pastoral care and academic excellence. Martin (1994) indicates that some changes have occurred within a number of independent schools he surveyed within Australia, but this is contradicted by Best (1999b) who suggests that the existing limited amount of research data indicates that that is not the case in Britain.

The existence of an organisational arrangement which separates the hierarchy and teaching staff into pastoral and academic domains is not in itself necessarily detrimental to the aims of the school. My personal experience, however, is echoed by Watkins (1999a) who suggests that it is less common for a teacher’s subject teaching and tutoring roles to be brought together constructively. Teachers are reported as needing to “juggle both responsibilities as though they compete with each other, and understandably many staff make trade-off decisions about which to prioritise” (Watkins, 1999a, p. 4). This description will resonate with teachers who sense implicitly that the division is problematic; it is often a ‘gut feeling’ backed up by anecdotal evidence, but there appears to be little research evidence to inform, confirm or disprove the assertion (Best, 2002). As Marland has noted “the relationship between pastoral care and the curriculum has very seriously been under-analysed” (2001, p. 27).

This study has two main purposes. The first is to provide empirical qualitative data from a small scale case study to examine the impacts and implications of the pastoral academic divide. Secondly this study contributes to the theoretical understanding of organisational structures in schools. The study links the
organisational structures conventionally deployed in schools with the pastoral care experienced in the school.

School structure is regularly reported as being a fundamental element which contributes to the success of a school (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Hoy & Miskel, 2001; Tarter & Hoy, 2004). It is also a variable which can be manipulated to improve the school as an organisation (Sinden, Hoy, & Sweetland, 2004). Yet teachers do not always agree on the nature of a school as an organisation, with some perceiving themselves working as ‘individual artisans’ in a ‘collective context’ (Watkins, 1999a, p. 3). Ingersoll (1994) identified and summarised three basic views of schools as organisations. Schools are perceived as either decentralized systems with limited bureaucracy, offering teachers a high level of autonomy; loosely organised systems which leads to their becoming ineffective; or highly formalised systems which are bureaucratic in nature.

Schools in Australia, Britain, Canada, the USA and elsewhere frequently display highly organised bureaucratic systems with complex sets of rules, procedures, curriculum guidelines and processes which are designed to manage the education process effectively (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000; McGuigan & Hoy, 2006). The term bureaucracy has a pejorative connotation, suggesting rigidity (Adler & Borys, 1996), yet such systems persist in schools. Recent research by Hoy, Sweetland and others has led to the development of a new construct, ‘the enabling school structure’ (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000). Following earlier work in this area by Mintzberg (1979) and Adler and Borys (1996), Hoy and Sweetland developed the concept of an enabling bureaucracy within the school context.

The second aim of this study is to contribute to the research literature concerning effective organisational structures in schools. By using the theoretical
framework established by Hoy, Sweetland and others, this research builds upon earlier works, both qualitative and quantitative, which explore the impact of enabling characteristics on schools’ outcomes (Sinden et al., 2004; Tarter & Hoy, 2004). Geist and Hoy (2004, p. 5) commented that “the effectiveness of enabling structure is an empirical question that awaits more evidence and further refinement”. This study provides a small piece to fit into that jigsaw, providing a small scale qualitative study using the theoretical lens of the enabling structure to examine how a particular aspect of school structure, the pastoral academic divide, impacts upon pastoral care.

The school

The school in the study is an independent, day and boarding school for girls, situated in a city in Western Australia. The school is non selective. A high fee school, it attracts students from both the city and the wider rural community and prides itself on offering high quality education and excellence in teaching and student care. The school regularly features in the list of top achieving schools based on academic results in the university entrance examinations sat by students at the end of Year 12, the final year of schooling in Western Australia. The school caters for students from age 4 to age seventeen, that is, from Kindergarten to Year 12 and has an annual enrolment of around 900 students. Year 7 students are integrated with the high school. The school is well resourced and keenly supported by the parent body.

The school is led by the Principal, who is assisted by two deputies. They are referred to as the Dean of Students and the Dean of Curriculum. Beyond this core two additional members, the Business Manager and Head of the Junior School, comprise the senior management team. The middle management of the school is comprised of the Heads of Year and Heads of Curriculum Departments. Mainstream teachers have
a subject responsibility and belong to a specific Department. Additionally teachers have a Year and House affiliation in their role as a form tutor. A Head of Year has overall responsibility for the tutor groups in that particular Year. There are eight tutor groups in each Year, two from each of the four Houses. The Houses are organised in a vertical fashion; students belong to the same house as they progress from Year 8 through to Year 12. The house is organised by a ‘Head of House’. Tutors meet their form group every morning.

The school has created an area in one of the classroom blocks which is known as ‘Student Services’. This houses the offices of the Counsellors, the Dean of Students and some of the Heads of Year. Student issues such as lost property, absentee notes and early departure from school are administered from this area. A health centre for students also operates at the school. This is in a separate building and is run by a school nurse. Heads of Department share office space with other members of their departments throughout the school.

This chapter has set the scene for the study. Chapter 2 now describes a wider perspective, examining the extant literature and theoretical perspectives of the study.
Chapter 2: The Wider Context

A review of the literature

The study explores the impacts and implications of the organisational arrangements made by schools on the pastoral care of students. Specifically it investigates the divide between the academic and pastoral provision in schools and the possible effects on students. This literature review addresses the current body of research about pastoral care and the organisational systems found in schools. The focus of the published literature in pastoral care is very varied. The purpose of this review is to establish a general understanding of the wider field and the historical context of the study before focussing on recent research about the structural organisation of schools in relation to the provision of academic teaching and pastoral care.

The review describes the development of the pastoral care movement over recent decades and shows how the concept of pastoral care has evolved. The etymology of the term provides a theoretical basis for this aspect of the study. Work about the structural development of schools will be reviewed along with the most recent research which describes new models for school organisation, changes of emphasis in pastoral care and considerations of the pastoral academic split. The study also uses the concept of the enabling bureaucracy, developed by Hoy (2003) and Hoy and Sweetland (2000, 2001), to shape the theoretical framework with respect to the structural arrangements in schools. The development of this concept and the theoretical framework are examined later in the chapter.
The main body of research in this area comes from Britain and Australia and to a lesser extent from other countries. In Britain, Marland, Hamblin and Best published formative, influential studies in the 1970s and early 1980s. Whilst a comprehensive range of writing can be found encompassing all the aspects of students’ well being in school, relatively few studies examine the divide that exists between academic and the pastoral roles within institutions, although the literature commonly reflects concern that this division is an unhelpful one. Best (2002) addresses the dilemma, stating:

the potentially divisive effect of institutionalizing pastoral care systems as separate from the structure of academic or curricular responsibilities (the pastoral-academic split) has been a concern to those writing about pastoral care for many years, though not often from a research-based perspective (p. 31).

This review will appraise the research undertaken in this specific area, highlighting the most recent work about the divide between the pastoral and academic sides of schools and identifying apparent gaps in the literature.

**A definition of terms**

The term pastoral care has become widely used in educational language for a number of decades (Best, Jarvis, & Ribbins, 1977). With connotations of sheep, shepherds and religion (Haigh, 1975; Marland, 1974), the phrase has remained open to a range of often unhelpful definitions (Best et al., 1977; Clemett & Pearce, 1986). Those definitions have lacked detail and been too generic to be useful. The idea of a pastor is grounded in Christianity and refers to a minister of a church, with the origin of the term relating to the story of the Good Shepherd in the New Testament. From the root word *pascere*, meaning to feed, a pastor shows care for the flock (Dooley,
Therefore from an etymological perspective the expression pastoral care suggests the idea of nurturing or feeding people (Dooley, 1980).

In his seminal work on the topic of pastoral care in schools, Marland (1974) suggests that “the phrase covers all aspects of work with pupils in a school other than pure teaching” (p. 8). Such a broad definition clearly requires greater clarification. Marland expands his discussion, describing six aims of a pastoral care system:

- to assist the individual to enrich his personal life;
- to help prepare the young person for educational choice;
- to offer guidance or counselling, helping young people to make their own decisions – by question and focus, and by information where appropriate;
- to support the subject teaching;
- to assist the individual to develop his or her own life-style and to respect that of others and to maintain an orderly atmosphere in which all this is possible (Marland, 1974, p. 10).

That definition satisfied many writers throughout the 1970s (Clemett & Pearce, 1986).

Best et al. (1977) called for greater clarification, commenting both on the lack of precision in the various definitions being used at the time and also the apparent unproblematic acceptance of such definitions. Of particular concern was the failure of writers to distinguish between pastoral care and other terms such as ‘counselling’ and ‘guidance’ which were the domain of specialized and trained individuals, not necessarily members of the teaching force. In response to those concerns, Best and colleagues (Best et al., 1977) initiated the notion of pastoral care as “the non-instructional aspects of the roles of teachers and others in schools” (p. 126) and summarised, “‘pastoral care’ is the umbrella word under which the activities of the school counsellor, careers advisor, house tutor, etc., are subsumed” (p. 127). Thus the idea of ‘teacher-carer’ became distinct from the specialist who took the formal role of a counsellor, welfare officer or social worker.
Writers in the late 1970s and 1980s began to develop a clearer idea of the scope and nature of the work which was being placed under the umbrella of pastoral care (Best, 1999b), although some argued that there was still an absence of agreed definition or theoretical construct (Lang, 1994). A more comprehensive definition of pastoral care was issued in 1989 in a report from Her Majesty’s Inspectorate in Britain (Best & Lang, 1995). The report described pastoral care as being:

concerned with promoting pupils’ personal and social development and fostering positive attitudes: through the quality of teaching and learning; through the nature of relationships amongst pupils, teachers and adults other than teachers; through arrangements for monitoring pupils’ overall progress, academic, personal and social; through specific pastoral structures and support systems; and through extracurricular activities and the school ethos.

It identified the aims of pastoral care in schools, suggesting it:

should help a school to articulate its values, involve all teachers and help pupils achieve success… offer support for the learning, behaviour and welfare of all pupils, and address the particular difficulties some individual children may be experiencing (Best & Lang, 1995, p. 6).

Many teachers, reading such a statement today, would recognise the major elements of the definition and, I suspect, relate it to their own experiences of pastoral care systems. In describing her journey as a proponent of pastoral care in Ireland, Collins notes as significant the “multitude of perceptions about the term pastoral care” (Collins & McNiff, 1999, p. 8). Her summary, a more general one than those cited previously, describes pastoral care as “that which the student experiences in their school life. It is the spirit, the culture, the heart of the school” (Collins & McNiff, 1999, p. 8).

Hellwig (1989) comments on her experiences and observations of pastoral care systems in operation in Britain, from an Australian viewpoint. She highlights the
lack of a “basic philosophical stance to underpin policy making” (p. 7) in both countries, suggesting that policy statements tend to be made out of expediency or to address problems, and questions whether a pastoral care approach centred on individuals is possible if a school community has not arrived at a collective definition.

Little has been written about the advancement of thinking or historical development of the term pastoral care in the Australian context. In 1984, a report commissioned by the Education Department of Western Australia included a section under the heading ‘pastoral care’ which indicated that the term encompassed the promotion of students’ self-esteem and relied upon schools providing caring environments. The report also noted that pastoral care had been in evidence in the Western Australian schools surveyed for a significant number of years (Beazley, 1984).

Pastoral care is a term more familiar in some countries than others. It is commonly used in Britain as well as in Australia and Singapore, which have modelled their organisation for pastoral care on British lines. It is not used extensively in other countries, where other labels and vocabulary can be found (Best & Lang, 1995; Hui, 2002). The terms ‘guidance’ and ‘counselling’ are used widely in Scotland, Canada, USA, Hong Kong and New Zealand amongst other countries. In the USA and Hong Kong the term guidance tends to refer to the activities which are directed at the development of students’ personal, social and vocational development, that is, the development of the whole person (Hui, 2002). In New Zealand the term ‘guidance’ includes the elements of pastoral care as understood in Britain and also includes vocational assistance and specialist individual counselling (Arnott, 1994). The use of alternative terminology and approach in different countries is noteworthy.
although it appears that the activities which occur under those headings are similar (Best & Lang, 1995).

Despite varying labels, three objectives have become accepted which, according to Best (1999b), help to make the definition of pastoral care more precise. These he refers to as “reactive, proactive and developmental care” (p. 18). He uses the concept of reactive pastoral care to describe the attempts of the teacher or school “to respond to children who present problems of a personal, social, emotional or behavioural kind” (p. 19). Such care, he suggests, occurs when a form tutor gets to know students well, making them feel comfortable in bringing their concerns to the teacher. If the problem is outside the expertise of the staff member, the tutor may hand the problem on to a higher level or to outside expert help. Best (1999b) uses the concept of proactive pastoral care to refer to the development of tutorial programs which aim to provide skills and support to students, helping them to respond appropriately to challenges which regularly occur in the life of a student. These programs would provide “practical knowledge and coping skills which would allow children to make wise choices” (p. 19). Best (1999b) acknowledges that the concept of developmental pastoral care derives from the work of Marland (1980). A developmental pastoral curriculum includes values, skills, concepts and attitudes that should be taught rather than simply addressing incidents which could be predicted. Such work was also recommended by Backburn (1980), who argued that a pastoral or tutorial curriculum would assist students with relationships and therefore contribute to the “learning program of the school” (p. 67).

In addition to these three objectives, two further elements of pastoral care in schools have been added by Best in his more recent writing (Best, 2002): the promotion and maintenance of an orderly and supportive environment and the
management and administration of pastoral care. He has integrated the five generic pastoral care elements into a theoretical model to assist with professional discourse. These five elements distinguish the varying facets of provision “for the development and support of the students as a person and as a social being” (p. 3). The five overarching elements are listed as:

- Reactive pastoral casework;
- Proactive preventative pastoral care;
- Developmental pastoral curricula;
- The promotion and maintenance of an orderly and supportive environment;
- The management and administration of pastoral care.

The varying topics found in the literature under the banner of pastoral care reflect this wide ranging understanding of the meaning of the term. In a review of the literature published in Britain, Best (2002) identifies the range of issues which have been examined. They include extensive work on bullying in school, the transition from primary to secondary school, career guidance, citizenship, control and discipline and the promotion of good behaviour. Student perspectives have been sought in much of the work described, including discussion of spiritual and moral development, general attitudes towards schooling and the creation of a positive ethos. Sharp and Thompson (1992) examined student stress from the viewpoint of the student and the teacher. Featuring extensively in the literature is the provision of personal support described by Best (2002, p. 13) as “reactive work” for students who present with a specific problem requiring individual help. Issues include counselling, self-esteem, and support for students through parental illness or bereavement, examination pressures and varying forms of abuse.

In addition to the literature already described, writing has included ‘how to’ descriptions and evaluations of personal and social education (PSE), initiatives such
as ‘Active Tutorial Work’ (Marland, 2002) and ‘Quality Circle Time’ (Tew, 1998). International comparisons and perspectives are regularly reported and are becoming increasingly seen in literature from the USA, where ‘caring’ has become a curricular element in schools more recently (Halstead, 1998). The diversity of issues reported on and subsumed within pastoral care highlight the difficulties of establishing a comprehensive yet succinct definition.

An historical perspective

Whilst it is not the purpose of this section to provide an exhaustive account of the historical development of pastoral care in schools, a brief overview will help to contextualise the study. Most of the developmental and historical literature originates in Britain. Adoption of the term in the Australian context appears to have occurred early in the history of schooling, with independent schools fashioning themselves on their counterparts in Britain. Therefore a brief description of the development of pastoral care in Britain will be given before considering the Western Australian context.

The role of a school in providing both academic learning and support for the social development of students has been recognised for almost a century. However, the development of ‘non- academic’ provision is more difficult to trace. Unlike academic subjects, where the emergence of formal assessment procedures assists to date their beginnings, there are no “benchmarks” to locate precisely the appearance of pastoral care (Power, 1996, p. 15). These difficulties have been raised by others trying to produce an historical perspective. Hughes (1980) comments on the lack of facts, pointing out that official publications on education in Britain make no mention of the term until 1974.
A number of researchers have attempted to document the history of pastoral care. Lang (1984) suggests that in the nineteenth century student interests and well-being became a recognised responsibility of public schools. These schools were private, single sex schools often for the more able student. Government secondary schools adopted and adapted their model of care in the early twentieth century. The concept was then further modified following the movement to comprehensive schools in the 1960s and 70s (Best, 1999b). Marland, writing in 2002, produced an authoritative account of the emergence of pastoral care in the post-war era. As the author of the book ‘Pastoral Care’ (1974), he pioneered developments within the field, promoting the active consideration of organisational structures in schools to enhance and encourage the pastoral care of students. His account is not only based on the available literature but also on personal experience over many years.

House systems had been a prominent feature in British boarding schools for many years. In the 1940s and 1950s the house system had a powerful influence over government school organisation (Marland, 2002). The terms tutor and tutor group became established in government schools in the 1950s (Blackburn, 1980). Schools were increasing in size and with the introduction of co-educational comprehensive schools in the 1960s and early 1970s, where students of all abilities and aptitudes and both sexes were taught, often in mixed ability groups, the need for individuals to have an identity and to be made to feel a sense of belonging increased. House systems appeared to offer that. The ‘Home Room’ gave students a base and the notion of the class teacher or tutor became fashionable. Positions of responsibility that attracted differential pay, such as Head of House or Housemaster, were routinely included in school organisational structures.
In the 1980s the role of the tutor and the advancement of the ‘pastoral curriculum’ became more evident. Tutorial programs aimed at assisting the students’ personal development were published and home grown schemes were widely in operation (Best, 1999b; Marland, 2002). Thus the notion of pastoral care had begun to be seen as a curricular element to be taught rather than simply a general caring or administrative function.

The reasons for the burgeoning interest in this area of school life at this stage in history are debatable (Power, 1996). Marland (2002) argues that it was a reaction to the size and diversity of the new comprehensive school, which educated university bound alongside vocationally-oriented students. Previously students had sat an examination at 11 years of age, the results of which identified the academically talented students. The top 20 percent of the student population were schooled in grammar schools, whilst the remaining 80 percent attended secondary modern schools which had a less academic curriculum, preparing students for a job or trade which did not require a university education. Teachers began to feel that students “frequently lacked a sense of belonging” within these larger comprehensive schools (Dooley, 1980, p. 17). This is supported in Western Australia, where a 1984 report indicates a finding that the “secondary schools are large and complex organizations where many students feel ‘lost’ and anonymous” (Beazley, 1984, p. 150).

Best et al. (1977, p. 10) argue against the “conventional wisdom” which, they suggest, is informed by educationalists and academics, preferring to base their accounts on the direct experience of teachers involved with pastoral care. They suggest that the formation of pastoral care structures were there to “facilitate social control”, thereby allowing the teacher to be able to manage potentially difficult situations and stay in control, rather than to create “positive, functional, convivial
institutions” (Best et al., 1977, p. 11). Williamson (1980, p. 179) proposed that the pastoral system was there to “pastoralize” students who did not fit the mould that the school was expecting. He argued that greater attention to teaching paradigms rather than development of a pastoral system to co-opt the student to conform would lead to improved outcomes for the personal growth of students.

In a less critical approach, Hughes (1980) argues that the development of pastoral care was a response to the spread of the child-centred education movement. Craft (1980) proposes that the increasing need of society for skilled labour and an “ideological commitment to individual fulfilment” led to a greater emphasis on developmental aspects of education and placed upon teachers “a more diffuse range of tasks” (p. 46). Specifically he notes that teachers needed to take on tasks related to social welfare as “general practitioners” (p. 46).

All of the former reasons were, most likely, contributory, and the evolution of pastoral care in schools was in response to a number of factors that co-existed at that time. In Western Australia, the equivalent needs of young people were being recognised and the response resulted in a similarly extensive growth of pastoral systems.

A 1984 survey of 77 independent secondary schools in Australia indicated that pastoral care structures were firmly in place and in some cases had been so for up to 100 years, with significant changes to those structures being made in many of these schools in the preceding ten years (Martin, 1994). In 1982, a program to put chaplains into West Australian government schools was initiated (Berlach, 1994). With an open-ended job description, chaplains worked alongside Youth Education Officers (YEO) in secondary schools to assist teachers with the pastoral needs of students. Chaplains brought a Christian, spiritual dimension to this care, which extended to
students, teachers, parents and others working at the school. The presence of chaplains in independent, non-government schools had “long been a feature” (Beazley, 1984, p. 157). Today, chaplains remain a feature of both government and non-government secondary schools in Western Australia.

Pastoral care and the promotion of self-esteem were already key responsibilities of government schools in Western Australia in 1984. A report commissioned by the Minister for Education in the state described the findings of an extensive inquiry and included a detailed section on pastoral care. The committee based its understandings on work published by the Education Department two years earlier in a discussion paper which described the need for “caring environments in secondary schools” (Beazley, 1984, p. 149). The Education Department defined ‘caring’ in the school context as:

the provision of an environment in which it is possible for each person associated with the school (student, parent, staff member) to fulfil their basic personal needs and expectations, as defined in experiences of self-worth, adequacy, security and warmth of relationships (Beazley, 1984, p. 149).

The report suggests that schools demonstrated varying organisational structures for the delivery of pastoral care including the use of form teachers, houses, year groups and combinations of these.

Whilst recognising that many schools had excellent and appropriate structures in place, the report also commented that it had found some schools where “existing arrangements for pastoral care were ineffective” (Beazley, 1984, p. 149). Concern regarding the ability of teaching staff to carry out the required duties of a caring nature was also expressed. Three recommendations were put forward to address those concerns and those regarding the structural dimension of schools and included:
That all schools be able to describe clearly the structure chosen for the administration of pastoral care.

That provision be made in the time table for a time and place for the pastoral groups to meet, thus allowing those responsible for the group to have a means of access to the individuals.

That pastoral care groups be small enough to allow individual students to be known well by the member of staff who has responsibility for the group.

(Beazley, 1984, p. 153)

It was additionally recommended that a senior member of staff be responsible for pastoral care co-ordination, that pre-service teacher training courses include pastoral care and that in-service training in the area be made available to all teachers. The Beazley Report can therefore be credited with formally recognising the role of pastoral care in schools in Western Australia, its importance, the specialist skills needed by those responsible for it and the need for an organisational structure for pastoral care.

**Structural arrangements in schools**

Evidence collected in 1984 (Martin, 1994) suggests that independent secondary schools in Australia have been organised along the lines seen in equivalent institutions in Britain for many years although influences from the USA can also be seen. Martin’s survey indicates that pastoral care was either based on some system of vertical or horizontal division of students, or a combination of both. This confirmed the findings of the 1984 Beazley Report discussed previously. More recently Chittenden (1999) suggests that the House system is also extensively used in independent schools to divide the school into sub units. The base unit of the system may be referred to as a class, tutor group or home group and varies in size depending upon the way it is created.
In the academic domain, subject teachers are routinely grouped into subject specific departments or learning areas, usually with a hierarchical structure. A ‘head of subject’, a ‘learning area manager’, a ‘head of faculty’, or ‘senior master’ is responsible for the activities and teachers within that subject group. Again the title may change, but the overall responsibilities are similar. Such organisational design has been described as that of a “Victorian factory, where separated departments independently contribute to the final product, which is shipped in its formative stages from one to another for disconnected processing” (Watkins, 1999a, p. 3). This type of structural arrangement fits the classic description of a bureaucracy as described by Weber (1947) and has persisted into the twenty-first century almost unchanged. The organisational structures which dominate in British and Australian schools today have led to teachers ‘wearing two hats’, one as a subject teacher and a second as a pastoral carer. Those bureaucratic structures produce a divide between the two areas, the pastoral and the academic, rather than integrating the responsibilities (Watkins, 1999a).

The ‘Pastoral Academic Divide’

The history of this issue helps to clarify why the divide between the pastoral and academic domains in schools, which is so regularly seen today, evolved and has been perpetuated during the last 30 years. As early as 1980, scholars have perceived the divide as a negative phenomenon, yet little research has explored this perception. Buckley (1980) describes how schools, in their desire to organise themselves to provide additional support and care for students beyond the confines of the normal curriculum lessons, had divided students into “creatures to be ‘taught’ and creatures to be ‘cared for’” (p. 182). Teachers are also split into “teaching teachers and caring
teachers”, even dividing an individual teacher in half within the two areas (p. 182). One cause of the problem, he suggests, may be the mixed and unclear aims of schools. With no “inert product” society has a range of expectations of schools as institutions which cause divergent activities (Buckley, 1980, p. 183).

Buckley proposed structural modifications to bring the two areas closer together. These included the development of ‘learning teams’, a cross-disciplinary team of teachers who would be responsible for the “whole development of a group of learners” (Buckley, 1980, p. 187). Thus a group of, for example, 110 students would have a team of five teachers working with them throughout the year. Buckley argues this organisational structure would remove the need for separate pastoral care staff. He asserts that the team would engage in constant dialogue with each other and the student body to enable the students to make better progress. Such a team would know the students sufficiently well to provide a caring environment for them where all their needs would be met. Today, readers may recognise the descriptions as similar to those espoused in the formation of middle schools in Western Australia (Barratt, 1998; Chadbourne, 2003).

In the 25 years since Buckley’s study, evidence suggests that few changes have been made to the structural organisation of schools. In a large-scale study in Britain, Best (2002) surveyed 159 institutions, all of which were members of the National Association for Pastoral Care in Education in Britain. A raft of educational reforms occurred during the 1980s and 1990s in Britain, which brought far reaching changes including the introduction of a National Curriculum and the subsequent bureaucracy, paperwork and external accountability systems. In this survey Best investigated the impact of those changes on the various elements of pastoral care. Earlier work had confirmed that schools were generally organised on the horizontal
Year or vertical House system and that “these took the classic pyramidal form of Weberian bureaucracy and were frequently separated from parallel academic or curricular structures in unhelpful ways (the ‘pastoral-academic split’)” (Best, 1999a, p. 4). His quantitative study predicted that the advent of the National Curriculum would have led to new management structures facilitating pastoral care in schools. Results of the study indicated “there was little evidence to support the hypothesis that pastoral structures have been significantly affected by post 1988 developments” (Best, 1999a, p. 6).

Evidence of the lack of research in this area is provided by Best (2002) when he writes that Power’s 1996 book, *The Pastoral and the academic. Conflict and contradiction in the curriculum*, focusing on the pastoral academic split, is the first since Best’s own publication in 1983, “which can be categorised as a report of substantial empirical research on pastoral systems” (Best, 2002, p. 33). The book uses data collected from ethnographic case studies of two comprehensive schools, using Bernstein’s theoretical framework. Specifically Power draws on Bernstein’s work which highlights the “arbitrariness of curricular organisation, the importance of the relations between elements, the structure of pedagogic discourse and the way in which power and control are inscribed within such relations” (Power, 1996, p. 9). Power uses the notion that school knowledge is structured not on subject matter but from a social context to examine the issues of the pastoral and academic divide.

The teachers of the schools offer some different perspectives on the pastoral academic split, noting varied degree of success in breaking down the boundaries which exist between the two areas. In her analysis, Power draws similar conclusions which compare with the much earlier work of Williamson (1980) and Best et al. (1977), proposing that the pastoral system was more a means of social control than an
agent to empower students. Whilst Power examines the issue in detail, the book has been criticised for its reliance on Bernstein’s theoretical position and on the unclear definition and exposition of the term pastoral care (Halstead, 1998). More recently the literature in this area has considered the role of pastoral care within a framework of increased societal impetus towards improving learning outcomes for students.

**Current trends**

Schools in Britain and Australia exist in increasingly competitive market places. In both countries, ‘league tables’ are now regularly published to inform parents and the wider community about the indicators of a ‘successful school’ as determined by the press and government authorities. Such data may include the results of national or state wide tests. Parental choice has become a dominant factor in educational provision. League tables are reviewed by the general public, who may use them to make choices about schools. Despite arguments about the relative merits of such systems, schools are forced to adapt and re-examine their procedures and processes to ensure that they are competitive.

In Britain, a major emphasis has been placed on target setting for teachers and students as a tool for raising achievement (Jarvis, 2002). This drive for an increase in test scores has affected all those involved in schools: teachers, students, parents and administrators (Lodge, 2006). Interestingly these trends have begun to encourage schools to review the role of the form or group tutor and have begun to facilitate the re-alignment of pastoral systems alongside the academic (Lodge, 2006). These co-operative systems have been extensively described in the British, and to a lesser extent in the Australian, literature (Jarvis, 2002; Lodge, 2000; Reading, 1999).
The focus of this new movement in Britain is on learning. Schools, it is reasoned, need a more “holistic vision of the school’s impact and a more explicit focus on pupils’ learning” (Watkins, 1999b, p. 1). The attention of the pastoral care systems seems to be shifting in the schools reported in more recent literature. In her account of the position of a tutor, Lodge (2000) argues that the key role of a tutor is to support the students’ learning by developing a relationship which allows a tutor to best understand how individual students learn and to assist students to review their progress to help them achieve their targets. In some schools, tutors are being renamed “learning mentors” (Lodge, 2006, p. 4) and traditional “Head of Year” or “Head of House” positions are being re-assigned duties as “Cross Curriculum Managers” with a responsibility to lead a team of tutors and to monitor “all areas of relevance to the learning process” (Reading, 1999, p. 24). As such, pastoral care is seen as a factor which supports learning, and academic achievement and progress are seen as the primary purpose of the school experience. Thus pastoral and curriculum areas of responsibility are working together in a flatter organisational structure, with positions such as the Cross Curricular Manager marrying “the pastoral and academic components of the students’ experience” (Reading, 1999, p. 27).

Not all schools have followed such a path. Head of Year positions still routinely exist, but it is also generally acknowledged that teachers in such positions need to monitor the progress of their student body alongside tutors to ensure that adequate academic progression is made. Thus the academic and pastoral elements of a school are becoming intermeshed, where the sense of knowing the whole child as a person is linked to following that child’s academic achievement (Lodge, 2006; Watkins, 1999a).
These recent studies may leave the reader with the sense of the student being a product of a factory (Watkins, 1999a) and the feeling that the original aims of pastoral care which included assisting the young person to develop through adolescence, the development of self esteem and enabling students to make sensible life choices, have been diminished. Research has indicated that whilst such systems as academic tutoring do “promote increased achievement in terms of examination performance, they do not necessarily help students to learn effectively and become independent learners” (Jarvis, 2002, p. 27). Almost 30 years ago, Williamson (1980) expressed concern that the pastoral care system of that time simply moulded the child to conform to their educational institution. Although the recent emphasis on the individual student rather than the group has minimized such social control and coping aspects of the pastoral care process, it could be argued that the student is now the artefact of the system to be measured and refined.

A recent report from schools in New South Wales illustrates another approach. Whilst aiming to realign the pastoral and academic domains of the school, Nadge (2005) explores the way a group of independent sector schools have created “learning teams” to help to develop the schools’ “pastoral capacity” (p. 28). This aims not only to improve the learning of students but also to “enhance the protective processes, particularly resilience”. Central to this is the understanding that all teachers have relationships with students and “through the learning experience they construct, have the power to enhance or compromise the well-being of students through attention to protective factors” (Nadge, 2005, p. 29). Early results indicate that once teachers have greater awareness of the links between teaching and learning experiences and resilience, they are more able to promote academic care.
Recent literature (Lodge, 2006; Reading, 1999) indicates that bridges are being built between the areas of the academic and the pastoral with movement away from the more traditional bureaucratic forms of organisation in schools. Concern, however, could be raised at the extent to which the recent literature and research appear to focus on goal setting and raising standards as measured by examination and test results. Such an emphasis could result in a shift away from the holistic development of the whole child as promoted by early workers in the field of pastoral care.

Watkins (1999a) advances the argument that schools need to rethink the relationship between the pastoral and academic. He questions whether schools can achieve pastoral goals without a separate pastoral hierarchy and suggests that the hierarchies of the two areas need either to be effectively coordinated or more fundamentally changed. Quoting research from the USA, Watkins highlights the academic achievements made by schools which “operate in a communally organised and collaborative fashion” (Watkins, 1999a, p. 5). Evidence presented by Watkins suggests that schools demonstrating such restructuring showed at least a 20 percent gain in academic performance compared with traditional schools. Schools with communal styles of organisation have teachers who tend to work more collaboratively, who take collective responsibility for the success or failure of students, and who feel more connected to the institution. They have a greater input into decision making and therefore a higher level of co-operation (Lee, Smith, & Croninger, 1995). Watkins suggests that schools can be more effective by changing rigid departmentalized structures to more interconnected and holistic ones (Watkins, 1999a).
This section of the chapter has presented a review of the range of literature which relates to the study. Having examined the history of pastoral care, issues of the divide between pastoral and academic dimensions of schools and current trends, the conceptual framework for the study is now presented.

**A conceptual framework: Enabling bureaucracy and pastoral care**

The study aims to investigate the efficacy of pastoral care in relation to the organisational structures embedded in schools. Therefore the conceptual framework combines theory on pastoral care with theoretical work on school structures and was derived from two significant studies. The framework was used to guide the research design and data analysis. The concept of pastoral care is discussed first. This is followed by a consideration of the theoretical constructs relating to organisational structures.

The review of the literature has established that the term pastoral care has multiple definitions. This study uses Best’s generic definition of pastoral care (1999b).

The five elements of Best’s framework are:

- Reactive pastoral casework;
- Proactive preventative pastoral care;
- Developmental pastoral curricula;
- The promotion and maintenance of an orderly and supportive environment;
- The management and administration of pastoral care.

The study is concerned with the notion of pastoral care as a fundamental dimension of the organisation through which the school ensures that children are
recognised, understood and valued as individuals, and meaningful relationships between students and teachers are formed. Thus it focuses on the first, fourth and fifth elements of Best’s descriptors. Through these relationships students can feel cared for and supported in their journey through school. Problems can be addressed as they arise, students can be adequately informed, and day to day arrangements can be managed.

Pastoral care is enacted mainly through the teaching staff of the school. Their work in turn is determined by the school’s organisational structures, used to direct the daily work of teachers and students. These structures are significant. They are the basis of timetables, pay structures and student groupings and dictate much of the way a school operates at its most basic level. Such structures can be described as ‘bureaucratic’, because they display the classical characteristics depicted by Weber (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000; 2001; McGuigan & Hoy, 2006).

At the heart of this study is the question: how do the school structures impact the pastoral care which students receive? To examine the efficacy of the structures in place, a conceptual or theoretical construct was adopted from the work of Hoy and Sweetland (2000; 2001). Their work in turn drew heavily on earlier work by Adler and Borys (1996), who conceptualised enabling and coercive bureaucracies within the business context. In their seminal research, Adler and Borys (1996) reviewed the conflicting opinions of bureaucratic organisation, recognising that the term bureaucracy tended to be pejorative, implying that controlling and coercive methods are employed and innovation stifled. However, they also acknowledged that bureaucratic structures promote efficiency, for example by reducing role ambiguity and conflict. Their new model attempted to reconcile the positive and negative attributes of bureaucracies.
Hoy and Sweetland (2000) proposed a new construct, ‘the enabling bureaucracy’, which recognises that bureaucracies can be constructive or destructive. The negative viewpoint argues that bureaucracy “alienates, fosters dissatisfaction, stifles creativity and demotivates employees” while the positive viewpoint claims that bureaucracy provides necessary guidance, “clarifies responsibility, reduces role stress and helps individuals feel and be more effective” (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000, p. 526). Their conceptual model was applied in the context of schools, using an earlier framework established by Adler and Borys (1996). Their findings fit most appropriately with this study.

Their research was based on the two central dimensions of bureaucratic organisations, “formalisation (formal rules and procedures) and centralisation (hierarchy of authority)” (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000, p. 526). They examined the two dimensions and established the positive characteristics of each of them which improved outcomes for an organisation. Hoy and Sweetland conducted a theoretical analysis of two types of formalisation, enabling and coercive, using the earlier work of Adler and Borys. Hoy and Sweetland also explored the hierarchy of authority under the heading of centralisation, and subsequently established a typology of school bureaucracy.

Hoy and Sweetland conceptualised both formalisation and centralisation along a continuum. They suggested that both dimensions could help or hinder the organisation, and results from their quantitative study indicated that the two dimensions were not independent of each other but correlated closely. An enabling school structure could be described as “a unitary, bi-polar construct” (McGuigan & Hoy, 2006, p. 211). Thus a bureaucracy could be described as either enabling or hindering (Hoy, 2003; Hoy & Sweetland, 2000). An enabling bureaucracy “is a
hierarchical authority structure that helps rather than hinders as well as a system of rules and regulations that guides problem solving” (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000, p. 538).

In such systems teachers and principals “work cooperatively across recognized authority boundaries while retaining their distinctive roles” (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000, p. 538). The rules and procedures in place “are flexible guides to help solve problems rather than constraints that create them” (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000, p. 538). A hindering bureaucracy is antonymous. The rules and regulations are coercive and teachers’ behaviour and actions are highly controlled. A summary table from their work, showing the contrasting characteristics of enabling and hindering structures, is shown below.

Table 1    Characteristics of enabling and hindering structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of enabling structures</th>
<th>Characteristics of hindering structures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>View problems as opportunities</td>
<td>View problems as obstacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster trust</td>
<td>Produce mistrust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value differences</td>
<td>Demand consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn from mistakes</td>
<td>Punish mistakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipate the unexpected</td>
<td>Fear the unexpected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate problem solving</td>
<td>Frustrate problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable cooperation</td>
<td>Promote control and compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage innovation</td>
<td>Bound to the status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Rigid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Hoy, 2003, p. 92)

The theoretical works of Best (1999b), Hoy (2003) and Hoy and Sweetland (2000, 2001) have jointly informed the study. Their work provided the theoretical basis for the interview questions and the constructs have been used throughout the
data analysis to establish patterns, interpret meaning and generate theory. The interview questions, whilst not directly examining the constructs, or pre determining the responses, offered participants the opportunity to reflect on elements of enabling and hindering structures at an organisational level in the school. The interview questions probed the concept of pastoral care. This approach was congruent with the methodological considerations discussed in Chapter 3.

This chapter has presented the wider context of the study. The research literature has been explored from an historical perspective, and the evolution of the term pastoral care and most recent developments in the field have been considered. Recent research suggests that the academic and pastoral sides of schools are being drawn closer together as a result of external pressures on schools to improve the academic performance of students, and it is this environment which provides the social context for the study. The theoretical basis of the study, and the conceptual framework have also been considered. In the next chapter, the methodological considerations are described along with an account of the data collection methods and procedures.
Chapter 3: The research approach

This chapter outlines the methodological considerations which underpin the design of the study. I then express my position as a researcher, because such expression gives credibility to the research. The conceptual framework is then reviewed, followed by the research questions. The methods and techniques are considered next along with issues of data credibility and quality. Finally the techniques used to examine the data are discussed.

Methodology

This work takes the form of a case study and uses qualitative methodology. It is naturalistic and seeks to explore complex interactions of teachers and students in everyday school situations. The study focuses on one school and explores how the organisational structures deployed in the school, and the roles and responsibilities associated with those structures, impact upon the pastoral care given to students. The study aims to produce a clear and detailed analysis of this specific case.

The research addresses the issue of the possible tensions between the pastoral and the academic sides of a school and the impacts and implications of the organisational structures from a perspective which acknowledges subjectivism; that is, that individuals create and interpret the world in which they live (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005). Subjectivism developed from a constructivist philosophy and asserts that knowledge is constructed by people in response to their interaction with their world. Subjectivism therefore recognises that there are multiple realities (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Such an approach requires the researcher to be involved directly in the research setting, enabling the situation to be examined from an internal rather than external standpoint (Cohen et al., 2005; Denzin
& Lincoln, 2000). It takes the position of the researcher in the field of study as “an explicit part of the knowledge production instead of excluding it as far as possible as an intervening variable” (Flick, 2002, p. 6). Using this approach, the development of theory from the study will emerge from the data gathered, rather than from initial hypotheses (Cohen et al., 2005).

Techniques for gathering data were used which were congruent with the methodological considerations described previously. Data were collected from those who experience the phenomenon being studied, namely teachers, students and school leaders. Interviews formed the main data collection method. These were conducted using an interview schedule, which provided a framework for the interview while allowing participants the freedom to introduce different perspectives or viewpoints on the topic. Pre-determined theories or constructs were not imposed on the participants, allowing a grounded, inductive approach to be used in the work (Patrick & Middleton, 2002). This gave equal weight to individuals who may hold differing perceptions and enabled rich description of the phenomena to be related.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling techniques. Purposeful sampling is more typical in qualitative studies than the larger random sampling strategies of quantitative methods. It is a strength of such work, providing information-rich cases which can yield in-depth insights and understandings (Cohen et al., 2005; Patton, 2002).

Narratives were then used to illustrate the data and convey the meaning ascribed to different accounts. Narratives allowed a “multiplicity of perspectives” to be portrayed (Jalongo, Isenberg, & Gerbracht, 1995, p. 14). Narrative accounts are becoming increasingly used in educational research (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). They can be used as a means of representing data and a vehicle through which
theorising can occur (Tripp, 1993). Humans are natural story tellers (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), and teachers often communicate with each other about their work by using stories. Indeed it is often through shared stories that the culture of a school is passed on (Hogan, 2005). Narrative accounts in research encourage the reader to engage with the text rather than viewing it in the abstract, thus connecting the reader’s lived experiences with the research findings (Stake, 1995). The creation of narratives allows the story teller to be reflective and can help teachers unlock their perceptions, beliefs and experiences, the narrative acting “as a mirror and a window” (Jalongo et al., 1995, p. 7). Creating narratives therefore allowed me to interpret and present the data with rich descriptive writing, creating a vivid image and allowing the various voices to be heard through the text. The aim is to create a resonance between the reader and the data through the use of narrative.

**Self as researcher**

It is an inescapable truth that practitioner research, where the researcher cannot be viewed as an impartial and uninvolved observer but a research instrument, is driven, influenced and affected in every sense by the positioning of the researcher (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). From the selection of participants, the selective use of transcribed data, and the creation of subsequent narratives, the researcher brings a personal perspective to the study. Whilst it is vital to reveal explicitly the issues of positionality, it is equally important to acknowledge that the personal involvement of the researcher and a lack of detachment is also a strength of such work (Patton, 2002). Qualitative studies require the researcher to have “empathy and sympathetic introspection” (Patton, 2002, p. 49) with the participants of the study rather than the distant detachment assumed in scientific research. This allows the researcher to
understand more fully the human interactions from the view points of the participants. However, for the research to be credible there also must be a neutral stance adopted towards the work. The issues of credibility of data are considered later in this chapter.

The study is based in an independent school in a city in Western Australia. As a teacher in a similar institution, I have understandings and prior experience that both add a richness to the research process and create issues of positionality that must be acknowledged (Paecheter, 1996; Schram, 2003). Theoretical positioning as described by Caelli et al. (2003) refers to the “researcher’s motives, presuppositions and personal history” which “subsequently shapes a particular enquiry” (p. 9). The credibility of qualitative research findings depends upon the open acknowledgement of the theoretical positioning and analytic lens of the researcher (Caelli et al., 2003; Patton, 2002). It is therefore appropriate that I make explicit my history and experiences that have brought me to this research.

In Chapter 1 I described a personal experience of the tension and the apparent lack of synchrony which appears to exist between the areas of the pastoral and academic in the school in which I work. My own teaching experiences and history were then briefly described to allow an understanding of the background that I bring to the study. The school which features in this research is not my own but is similar in a number of fundamental ways, being an independent, high fee, denominational school catering for both boarding and day students. By investigating an institution other than my own school I gained some objectivity towards the research. As someone who is familiar with such schools but is also detached from the specific institution, I had the opportunity to engage with the data with fewer preconceived ideas and understandings, but had greater difficulty in teasing out the cultural and implicit working practices which I believed may be vital for analysing the data.
The research questions and conceptual framework

The study examines the implications of organisational structure on the delivery of pastoral care. The research literature of Hoy and Sweetland provided a conceptual framework from which to work. Their theoretical constructs of enabling school structures and mindful individuals were used as basis for the development of interview schedules and to assist with the analysis of the data generated by the study. The theoretical basis of this study has been explored in Chapter 2. The research questions were developed as four concepts:

Policy as philosophy

- What are the underlying assumptions or premises that determine the way this organisation is structured?

Policy as text

- How does the school assert to organise itself to maximise its aims to develop the full academic potential of students and to manage their welfare and pastoral well being?

Policy in practice

- What are the explicit structures which organise students and teachers in their daily work?
- What informal networks are in operation?
- To what extent do current practices allow policy to be enacted?
- Are structures adapted by cultural practices?
Practice perceived.

- How do teachers perceive their roles and responsibilities as individuals and within the wider network of the school management structure?
- To what extent is the agency of teachers to build meaningful relationships with students enhanced or hindered by the structures which are in place?

From these overarching questions the detailed interview questions and techniques were established.

Methods, techniques and procedures

Selection of participants

Staff participants were selected to maximize variation in teaching experience, responsibilities, length of service at the school and personal background. These variables were identified as important as this range was thought most likely to provide a broad spread of understanding of pastoral care within the school, contributing to a richer picture of the situation. Therefore members of the senior and middle management teams were approached in addition to members of the teaching staff who were newer to teaching, or did not have responsibility for a tutor group. Year 12 students were identified as the most suitable participants to interview, as it was expected that they would have had a range of experiences within the school and would be able to provide a measured and reflective consideration of the systems with which they are familiar. Initially a letter of invitation was distributed to individuals who matched the pre-determined criteria. Staff members were identified who met one of five criteria:
• Principal, deputy principal or a nominated person responsible for whole-of-school matters;
• senior teachers with pastoral and curriculum responsibilities and members of the pastoral and curriculum middle-management teams;
• classroom teachers with no responsibility for a tutor group or other role in the formal pastoral system of the school;
• recently qualified, newly practising teachers;
• experienced classroom teachers.

Year 12 students who had at least three years experience in the school and who were considered to be thoughtful and articulate were identified by a senior staff member. These students and teachers were invited by letter to be involved in the research. Ethical considerations determined the way in which the invitation and responses were processed. Those invited were requested to place their response in an envelope which was lodged in an administration area within the student services building. This ensured that the school had no formal knowledge of the composition of the participant group, allowing anonymity for the respondents. The numbers selected initially were considered to be feasible within the constraints of a study of this scale.

Thirteen adults were interviewed. The senior staff group included the Principal, the Dean of Students and Dean of Curriculum. A counsellor, two Heads of Year and three Heads of Department, two of whom were also a Head of House, comprised the middle management group and four mainstream teachers completed the sample of teaching staff. Four Year 12 students were interviewed. Collection of the data from the school took place over a two month period during Term 1, 2007.
Interview format

Interviews provide participants the opportunity to offer stories of their experiences and understandings, but also rely on the assumption that the participants would be reflective regarding their practice or experience in the school (Walker, 1985). The interviews with staff and students were conducted in a semi-structured manner. An interview guide (appendix 1) was developed for each group of participants (senior staff, teaching staff and students). This was used to assist the researcher to conduct the interview along partially pre-determined lines, but still allowed scope for participants to shape the interview according to their concerns and understandings of the issues. To provide a secondary source of evidence, which would confirm or add to the findings, students were also asked to draw diagrammatic representations of the relationships they had with adults at the school (appendix 2) and to explain these diagrams orally to help to make sense of them to the researcher.

The interviews were mainly conducted in staff offices, with a smaller number held in empty classrooms. The teacher interviews lasted around 45 minutes, and the student interviews were scheduled to take 30 minutes. The interviews were recorded using a digital recorder, and subsequently transcribed. The use of a digital recorder reduced the possible loss of data at source due to technical issues of note taking. It also freed the interviewer to follow the interview and explore supplementary issues which were raised by the participant. The transcribed interviews were then shared with the participants, giving them the opportunity to review their comments, to add to them if they felt it necessary to do so and to clarify any inconsistencies or confused or mixed sentiments which may have been recorded.
Data credibility

The broader and more secure the foundation set of information upon which discussions and subsequent conclusions are based, the greater the credibility of the research. Therefore steps, described next, were taken to ensure that the data gathering procedures would yield trustworthy information. This requires the data to be dependable and confirmable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It requires the researcher to be reflexive and triangulate data sources to ensure a variety of view points are engaged (Patton, 2002).

Data were gathered from both textual sources and interviews with a variety of stakeholders. The use of a variety of participants and data gathering techniques in the study allowed the opportunity for a more complex understanding of the multiple issues and perspectives involved in the situation. This gives the study credibility.

The interviews were conducted using an interview guide which allowed a degree of structure but also gave the opportunity to explore responses in more detail as the interview proceeded, therefore offering a more open-ended approach. However, the use of a guide did give some structure which, it can be argued, improved the dependability of the data collected (Cohen et al., 2005). Transcribed interviews were disseminated to the participants for checking. This ensured that the responses correctly reflected their understandings and view point at the time. Additionally participants were asked to add any further information or to clarify any points that were unclear. This increased the authenticity of the data, ensuring that the data had been faithfully and accurately documented.

The analysis of the data was done from transcriptions of the original interview, and care was taken in the selection of the material presented in narrative accounts to ensure that the phenomenon was reflected as accurately as possible. This
addressed the aspects of descriptive and interpretive validity argued for by Maxwell (1992). It also required a reflexive approach. Additionally the background of the researcher and motivation for conducting this study, have been documented in earlier chapters of the thesis.

The study is, of necessity, small scale with relatively few participants and limited to one institution. The findings illustrate that particular context and are not generalizable or usable beyond the specific situation (Patton, 2002). However, the phenomenon may have broader relevance to similar institutions. Lincoln and Guba (1985) construe generalizability as comparability and transferability, suggesting that data might translate into other settings depending upon the case studied. The degree of transferability, however, is a decision for the reader.

Thick descriptions can help the reader relate to the data and the subsequent analysis (Cohen et al., 2005). Narrative accounts were therefore chosen as a vehicle for data presentation to facilitate the transfer of relevant material into the context of the reader. Further the school has been described in detail as have the methods used to determine the participants. This assists the reader to draw comparisons with other schools and enhances transferability (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982).

**Ethical considerations**

Once the Principal had given permission for the research to be conducted, possible participants were identified. Both teachers and students were approached by letter which detailed the background of the study, introduced the researcher and invited them to take part in the research (appendix 3). Their rights to withdraw and issues of anonymity were also explained. An envelope was provided for a confidential response, and these envelopes were lodged privately and handled by the
researcher. Those who had agreed to take part in the research signed a consent form, and arrangements were made directly with the individuals for a suitable interview time.

Interviews were conducted in a private room at the school. The participants were not publicly identified and their interviews were confidential. The subsequent transcriptions of the discussion were returned to the participants for them to check and verify. They were given the opportunity to add, amend or exclude any material which may have concerned them. Once they had agreed to the content of the transcription their names were removed from the written accounts. As the data were being analysed and narratives created, fictional names were added, and details which could indirectly identify the participant were altered. Interviews with the Principal and the Deans of Curriculum and Students were the only exception to this process. As senior members of the school, the Principal and Deans of Students and Curriculum gave interviews that have been reported directly.

**Data analysis**

Transcribed interviews formed the main data source, with written materials published by the school and the pictorial representations provided by student participants used as secondary sources to confirm or refine the analysis. Key ideas which emerged during the interview process were also recorded and provided a framework for cross-analysis of the material.

The interview transcripts were the initial raw data from which patterns and themes were identified. In essence the data analysis required a consideration of the “complexity of reality” which the interviews generated and “simplify and make sense out of that complexity” (Patton, 2002, p. 463). This was achieved by analysing the
content of the interviews in two main ways. First the responses of each participant were reorganised under the interview questions. An identification code was given to each participant to allow easy reference back to the original data. Thus a series of responses to each specific question were made. This approach made the primary patterns of response to specific issues accessible and identifiable. The method did, however, allow the possibility for data being lost as the interviews had taken a semi-structured format with participant and interviewer free to explore particular issues if they arose. Therefore a second sorting method, based on codes, was used.

During the interview process itself, on listening to the interviews further times and on careful reading and rereading of the transcripts, coding categories were established. These categories represented the main themes and ideas which the data revealed. For example the issue of communication was regularly discussed by participants and was one category which was identified. Systematic coding was then undertaken using these categories. Further examination of the interview data followed to reference the text against the coding typologies. Sub categories emerged during this process, giving a hierarchical pattern to the categories. Issues of communication, for example, were grouped into sub categories including email communication, verbal contact or written contact. Such a coding and sorting method is generic in its approach and espoused by key workers in the field (Patton, 2002).

Narratives were developed from specific stories related by participants. The accounts selected to be represented in this way were those which exemplified a key theme of the analysis. The data incorporated into the narratives were processed and narrative developed which told a story about a lived experience. The narrative is told from an individual’s perspective and gives a concrete example of a general issue.
Narratives were used as they resonate with the reader, grounding a theme of the analysis in a concrete example.

This chapter has described the methodological decisions and practical methods used to conduct the research. Analysis of the data produced a number of distinct themes which include the perceptions and understandings of the structural organisation, shared concepts of pastoral care, issues around the pastoral academic divide, communication and the cultural practices of the school. These are discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter 4: Data analysis

This chapter presents the data which were collected in the research. A description of the methods used during the analysis was given in the previous chapter. The findings are put forward and supported by narrative accounts that exemplify the themes and ideas being presented. Firstly, the scene of the school is set by describing the organisational structures in place and presenting teachers’ and students’ perceptions of those structures and their roles within them. The philosophical basis on which the structure was designed is also explored. Concepts of pastoral care and the network that provides it form the next section of the chapter. Issues surrounding the pastoral academic divide follow, and the diverse aspects of communication are then presented. Finally, the ways in which the cultural practices and the bureaucratic organisation of the school enable or hinder the pastoral work of teachers are explored.

The structure of the school: Perceptions and reflections

The structure of the school could be described as traditional. The School Principal heads the administration team and is assisted by two deputies, the Dean of Curriculum and the Dean of Students, formally responsible for the academic program and the pastoral care of students respectively. Alongside them, the Head of the Junior School and the Business Manager make up the Senior Staff. In interviews the teachers showed that the roles of the senior team are clearly understood. Teaching staff describe their functions with clarity and uniformly define and delineate their roles within the senior management structure. Students also identified the functions of the Senior Staff and, in general, recognised their areas of authority and responsibility.
The role of Dean of Curriculum appeared to be least clear to students, who were less certain about the types of tasks and responsibilities that were attached to the role.

The middle management of the school is comprised of Heads of subject Departments, Heads of Year and, to a lesser extent, Heads of the four Houses in the school. Differences in the size of the Department are recognised in the pay structure, with those leading the larger departments such as Science on a higher pay scale than those managing smaller ones. Although the structure implies parity between the Heads of Department and Year, many of the staff interviewed perceived the academic departmental heads as “more important” than Year Heads. The school has an academic tradition which was frequently referred to by teachers. It was suggested by the Dean of Curriculum that this has historically led to a culture of “strong departments” where “Heads of Department have a lot more power than our Year Heads.”

The structure of pastoral care at the school follows equally traditional lines, but has a tripartite structure which was described by the Dean of Students as creating a ‘net’ of care. Students are placed into one of four Houses, and the cohort of students in each Year in the house is further divided into two parallel tutor groups, led by a tutor from the teaching staff. Thus the tutor groups are made up of students from the same Year group and the same House. The Head of House works predominantly with the Year 12 student leaders of the House and has contact with all the students in that House through school activities and events. The Head of Year is responsible for the pastoral care of students within a given Year group and oversees the pastoral work of the tutors.

Further support for students and staff is provided by the Chaplain, Counsellors, School Nurse and administrative staff working particularly with the
Dean of Students. The role of the Counsellor has responsibilities in both the academic and pastoral domains. The school has three people in the role, each attached to a specific Year group or groups. One counsellor described herself as dealing with situations which cannot be dealt with by other pastoral carers, including social, emotional and behavioural issues and learning. Of particular interest was the role of the counsellors in the writing of Differentiated Learning Plans (DLP) for students with specific needs. These are developed to guide teachers and describe the optimum learning strategies that should be employed with particular students who have a special need. The DLPs are also the responsibility of the Dean of Curriculum who shares the students’ Learning Plans with Heads of Department and teachers at regular staff meetings. The School Psychologists are also instrumental in counselling students on subject selection and course organisation, which again could be considered an academic activity being undertaken by someone in a pastoral capacity. Despite this, one Counsellor was keen to point out that she was not a teacher and had found working with larger groups of students quite challenging. She perceived her role firmly within the pastoral domain of the school.

Regular pastoral care meetings, attended by the Heads of Year, Dean of Curriculum, Dean of Students, Head of Boarding, School Nurse, Chaplain and Principal, comprise the main formal arena for academic and pastoral discussion and communication. These meetings unite the pastoral academic divide, providing a forum where academic and pastoral concerns can be merged to allow a holistic response. The response to a pastoral concern may be initiated by the Dean of Curriculum, working through the Heads of Department. Correspondingly an academic concern may be resolved by a Head of Year or the Dean of Students.
The pastoral care organisation can be viewed as a layered system with the tutor acting as a pivot between the House and Year structures. This allows some stability in structure and contact for both students and teachers whilst also providing appropriate expertise at each Year level. The stability is provided by the tutor and Head of House, both of whom remain with the tutor group throughout the five years the students attend the senior school. Heads of Year do not move with a particular cohort of students but remain at a specific Year level, allowing them to specialise and gain expertise in issues relevant to that age group. Referring to the pastoral system as a net of care, the Dean of Students said, “Our main pastoral goal...is to ensure that our safety net doesn’t have holes in it and if it does... to make sure that they don’t open up again.”

She went on to illustrate how the structure, with both horizontal and vertical dimensions, created a complex web of interactions which would ensure that the system would operate most effectively. The narrative that follows illustrates the network of care as described by the Dean of Students.
Caught in the net

The Chaplain was the first to see her in the quad. She had been on the verge of tears and he ushered her into the Chapel centre for a coffee and a chat. She had come to see her daughter’s tutor. By the time he brought her over to my office she was more composed and her major concerns had been clarified. As Dean of Students I regularly get parents dropping in, often unannounced. Jessica was one of our brightest Year 10 students, but her mother had left her at home this morning after another fight about coming to school. The email to her mother from the tutor a few days earlier had not been unexpected, but she couldn’t believe that Jessica had managed to neglect so much of her work in the last couple of weeks.

It was a common problem. Jessica was very talented and had become overcommitted. She was a promising hockey player and a very good linguist. She was about to host an exchange student, had state trials approaching and was expected to get A grades in all her exams which were four weeks away. She had finally snapped. It had all become too much and her coping mechanisms failed. She had begun refusing to come to school and had failed to hand in assessments.

Friends had noticed a change and had talked to her tutor. Jessica had been in this tutor group now for three years, and her tutor began to make enquires to find out what might be the cause of the problem. Her tutor had tried to talk to Jessica but her absences were making it difficult. She had mentioned the concerns to the Head of Year who had raised the issue at the weekly pastoral care meeting and support strategies were being put in place.

We walked together to see the Head of Year. She would take it from there, liaising with the subject teachers and the Counsellor. Our Chaplain would call on the family later in the day to offer some support and to encourage Jessica to come to school the next morning with her mother. I walked back to my office and shot off an email to Jessica’s tutor, the counsellor, the Chaplain, the Dean of Curriculum and the central file to let them know what had happened and what was being done. Jessica’s mother had been throwing out help lines, and it was good to see that she had been caught in our net of care.
Documentary evidence from the school’s literature supported the assertion that pastoral care was an integral part of the makeup of the school. One such policy document stated, “All aspects of the Pastoral Care System are closely woven into the rich fabric of school life, which makes up an intrinsic part of the daily functioning of the student in her relationship with self and others.” (School Policy Statement, 2007). Such a statement emphasised the notion of pastoral care as a network.

Participants were also asked to reflect and comment upon the organisational system within the school by discussing its impacts and implications. Interview questions focused on their experiences within the system and asked them to identify strengths and weaknesses.

Almost unanimous support for the current system and organisational structure was expressed in the interviews. Teachers who were tutors, in particular, described the advantages of carrying a particular tutor group through the five years of schooling. A comment by one teacher was echoed by the majority of staff interviewed. In response to a question about the impact of removing the tutor group system from school, Teacher 5 indicated that the key strength was in the continuity she felt by keeping the same students as they moved up the school:

In this structure I get to take the students from Year 8 to Year 12. I’ve got one (a tutor group with students) in Year 11 at the moment, so most of them know me really well, so they can come and talk to me and I can keep tabs on them and I can build a bit of a history. If I had to change each year, I would say abolish it.

Teachers regularly identified their Year group and tutor group as the cohort of students that they knew best and with whom they had a meaningful relationship. In describing her role as a tutor, Teacher 7 said “I am there as a liaison between parent, teacher and the student themselves, so I get to have a holistic view of them and all
their subjects rather than just as a subject teacher who’s zoning in on one particular area.” The main concern expressed by teachers did not involve the structural arrangements but related to the time available for them to fulfil their role as a tutor. This then was extrapolated as a possible reason for some of the ‘best’ relationships being formed between students and staff who both taught the students and had them in their tutor group. Teacher 5 remarked:

It’s usually the ones that have also had contact with me as a teacher that feel more comfortable, because the time is so limited in the morning. So it is almost a little bit contrived to try to form this relationship in such a short amount of time.

Teacher 6 echoed this view, commenting:

The time we're allocated for that position doesn't necessarily cover all of the things that are involved in being a tutor. I think that it's something that we certainly need more time to do if we're to do that job as best we can, properly.

Heads of House also felt that the House responsibilities required significantly greater time than they were allowed within the timetable. Although not involved with the academic side of students, Heads of House felt that they had a significant pastoral role particularly with the Upper School students who were members of the House Leadership group. Teacher 4 commented:

I think we probably have a bigger pastoral care role because we actually work one-on-one with those five students and the whole House. We're not called in for counselling much, but we actually see them and we see all the students in activities, whether that's sporting, everything for the House. We are involved in all that so we actually see another side.

Students also expressed support for the structure. However, they were less positive if they had experienced one or more changes in tutor during their time at the
school. They argued that the relationship between teacher and tutor group members was best formed over a number of years. In describing how the school cares for students, Student A said:

We have one main teacher for each tutor group that looks after a certain set of students, so they are like a sort of family. Then you have the Head of Year who looks after the whole Year. Different teachers take different roles.

Students also noted a disadvantage of having the same tutor if there was a personality clash between the student and teacher.

Whilst the value of a tutor was acknowledged, students particularly appreciated the friendships which were formed between the student members of the tutor group. The arrangement of tutor groups within a House structure allowed students to have a wider friendship circle beyond the teaching groups in the school, which were mostly based on academic ability. The sense of a family grouping was enhanced by the fact that the same students stayed together for five years. Students also perceived that their contact with their tutor during prescribed ‘form time’ had been reduced as they moved up the school, some reminiscing fondly about time spent on form activities when they were younger. This highlighted the importance students placed on their ‘form’ or tutor group time. Student C remarked about tutors:

They are the ones closest to you in taking care of you, but you don’t spend as much time with your tutor as you would with a normal class teacher, even though I see them every morning, but not for a long enough period of time as to build up a kind of relationship.

Such comments from students, regarding the time students spent each morning with the tutor, echoed those of teacher participants.
Students identified their peers, class teachers, counsellors and tutors as people they would consider approaching for help or to discuss a personal problem. Only one identified a Head of Year as someone to be approached with such a concern. Those teachers tended to be viewed by students as authoritarian figures with a significant role in organisational matters but who were more concerned with the dynamics of the whole Year group rather than individuals. The counsellor echoed this view, describing the role of a Year Head as “primarily administrative... and not so much one to one personal connection.” These comments were in stark contrast to the description of the role provided by senior staff and incumbents. One Head of Year described her role as involving counselling of individuals and noted that liaising with parents and providing information for them was one of the biggest parts of her job. She also remarked that a major role was to build and support the team of tutors and keep them informed.

Student D observed, “I would speak to my tutor if I had an issue, but because they stay with you from Year 8 to Year 12, so you do form quite a close bond.” Student A suggested that tutors tended to be closer in age to the students which may assist with the formation of a relationship, remarking, “I guess our tutors are good for giving advice and usually they are young tutors, so they know what we are going through.” When asked if her peers feel cared for, Student D commented:

Yes, in the end we do. Students are divided up into so many different groups … that almost every aspect is reached by one of the groups… Competition, challenge, support, spirit, and in tutors a more personal social level.

There was general consensus amongst those students interviewed that students felt cared for and understood as individuals by at least one sphere of the ‘care network.’
Whilst the majority of students’ comments regarding their pastoral care were positive, some negative views were expressed. Students often questioned the motivation of teachers and the school with respect to the care that they received. There was an underlying feeling expressed by the students interviewed that the school was primarily focused on academic results and the resultant league tables. They suspected that the pastoral care was given to ensure maximum academic success of the student body, rather than because students themselves were valued. Three of the four students reported that some students felt concern about using the counsellors. Indeed every student interviewed emphasised that they themselves would be very reluctant to go to the counsellor for any problem. Students recognised the role of the counsellor, but gave examples where they felt students had not been supported appropriately or felt that personal information had not remained confidential. A common attitude from students was that they believed themselves to be in a better position than the professional counsellors to help fellow students.

The structures in place were clearly visible to staff and students, and participants provided evidence to suggest that they understood how their role fitted within the whole management structure. The focus on academic achievement was repeatedly mentioned by students and teachers. This was explored further with members of the senior administration.

**Assumptions underlying structures**

Discussions with the Principal and other members of the senior team provided insight into the beliefs underlying the school’s structural arrangements. The primary tenet used to organise the school was that the structure must “relate directly to learning” and “improve the educational outcomes for students.” The Principal had
designed the administration teams to operate with a “flat management structure so that resources and expertise were all geared to the students” and, during her interview, she highlighted her desire to use the expertise of teachers and a belief that “teachers are your most valuable resource” in a school. In practical terms this meant including teachers in working groups to develop policy and both allowing and encouraging them to participate in strategic decision making and goal setting. Specific examples of this were the Literacy Committee and the group convened to establish a ‘Values system’ in the school. Whilst retaining overall control and leadership of the school, the Principal was willing to listen to concerns and act upon them.

A recent example of this related to the way the tutor groups were physically arranged in the school building. Whilst the Principal strongly preferred each of the Year groups to be collected together in particular areas, concerns from teachers had resulted in a rearrangement where tutor groups would be based in the tutor’s main teaching area irrespective of Year groups. As said, “I was quite wedded to the idea of tutor groups being in areas… but for some staff this was a big issue... so we listened.” Her reasoning for this decision demonstrated her commitment to both work with teaching staff to help them to function efficiently, and to have an effective pastoral system. She remarked:

We need staff to embrace being tutors very strongly. If this helps them to do that better, then the quality of their interaction might outweigh the benefits of the other (referring to the Year groups being housed together).

This willingness to listen was matched by her physical presence around the school. She was visibly accessible to teachers and students during the day, which was noted by teaching staff. This approach is examined in more detail later in the chapter.
The principles underlying the management of the school were also understood by staff and students. Every teacher interviewed initially described their role in the school in terms of their academic specialty and then referred to their pastoral role. When asked to prioritise their work, again the academic teaching was almost unanimously identified as the individual’s main function in the school. This may not appear unusual to the reader. Most teachers would identify student learning as their main function, and teachers routinely label themselves according to the subject they teach.

Notably, however, throughout the range of issues and contexts addressed during interviews, there was a consistent and almost universal focus on academic progress. All those interviewed spoke in terms of academic issues throughout the interviews. When teachers gave examples of issues of a pastoral nature, they expressed them within a context of teaching and learning. Responses which centred on issues of a personal or emotional nature were infrequent. Conversations were framed within the academic domain. However, the interrelationship between the pastoral and academic was also stressed regularly. Some teachers identified both aspects as important, while others emphasised that at different times of the day different parts of their job role took priority.

Teacher 3, who did not have a tutor group but who led a Department, commented:

I would say my major role is academic, but part of that is always pastoral because of the decisions that I am making. Part of my role is to make decisions and make them in the best interest of the student.

The situations that required her to make decisions were academic in nature, often involving assessments, but she recognized that such work required a pastoral
dimension. On one such occasion a student had fallen off her bike on the way to
school and was shaken and concerned about completing a test scheduled for that
morning. As Head of the Department, she decided to let the student sit the paper later
in the week and use the marks for feedback rather than formal assessment.

Teachers described the aims of the school in varying ways, including “to turn
out rounded individuals” and “to make sure each student achieves to the best of their
ability and does that as easily as possible with the least problems on the way”.
Teachers and students identified the wide variety of opportunities and programs
offered by the school. When the pastoral goals of the school were discussed, teachers
did not make any distinctions from the general aims of the school, again identifying
the main objective in terms such as “to make sure the students are achieving to their
full potential, are socially adjusted well with other students and are learning those
other skills like collaboration and working together.” This focus on the academic was
mirrored in the documentation issued by the school. A leaflet describing the
arrangements for pastoral care distributed to parents and students stated that “Pastoral
staff work with staff, students and parents focusing on the academic, social and
emotional needs of the students.” (School Policy Statement, 2007) This statement
appears to prioritise the function of pastoral caring within the school and supports the
interview data.

All the student participants concurred with Student D’s view that the school
was a scholarly institution whose main aim was to “specialise in academics.” Student
D asserted that, “The main priority is to challenge us to get us to our highest level.”
Student C similarly remarked, “One of the real priorities is making sure that they
teach us right and that we all understand what we’re doing… and that we learn to our
full ability.” Such comments illustrate how the priorities of the school, particularly its commitment to learning, were communicated to, and acknowledged by, students.

**Understandings of pastoral care**

When students were asked how the school was designed to care for them, most were initially hesitant and unsure. Some described the tutor and House system and others mentioned the counsellor. After further discussion most students identified their tutor and tutor group as a support network. Student B commented, “I’ve liked that familiarity of my tutor group and tutor… he knows us all really well… he knows me as a person.” The Head of Year role was perceived more as an authoritative figure who managed organisational aspects of the Year group. In contrast, questions about the relationships between staff and students were answered readily and with ease. The responses were universally positive, with students describing their relationships as good and informal. Student B remarked, “A lot of students find a teacher here that they can really get along with,” while Student C elaborated:

If we need to speak to a teacher about something, they (the teacher) will always take that time to listen to us… I think trust is a huge thing between student and teacher and I think the teachers here are quite good at building up that trust.

As described previously, students, like teaching staff, also routinely gave an academic context to a story illustrating a time when they may have needed some additional support. Student C commented, “Most of the care comes from your teachers, because they’re the ones that you are with throughout the day.” She described times when she needed to catch up with work due to sickness and to have additional help and reassurance with subject matter, and recapitulated:
It’s a great credit to the teachers that they are just so caring that I feel I can talk to them. If I need to catch up on something, I can organise to see them and they are happy to do it. They don’t do it like it’s a chore.

The interview data suggest a notion of pastoral care grounded in a framework of academic endeavour with a structure which was not an end in itself controlling activities but rather a facilitator. This was complemented by a strong culture of care embedded in both the formalised pastoral care network and the academic dimension of the institution. The sense of care for the individual permeated every dimension - academic, emotional, spiritual and physical - and was enabled by the structures in place and rooted in the culture of the school. The Dean of Students explained that through the school culture, “we encourage our staff, all staff, to be pastoral carers of the students every minute of the day, no matter what they are doing.”

A story from a student illustrates the intensity of the care. She described an incident that had happened the previous year. Her story was representative of a number that were given by students during their interviews, each of which described a situation where they had felt that there was a member of the staff who could be approached to help them with a personal problem.
Tell someone who cares

I shouldn’t have had the phone in the class. We are meant to keep them in their lockers during lessons. I was very glad I did have it on though, when I got the text. Charlotte was so down about her boyfriend dumping her. She sounded really bad and as I read it I began to wonder what she might do to herself when she got home. She had talked like this before. I showed my friend but as I was asking her, I knew exactly what I must do next. I was getting quite scared by this time. I took the phone to someone I trusted, someone who I felt sure would know what to do.

Mrs. B has been my Science teacher for three years and runs our debating team in lower school. She always has time to listen. Sometimes my friends and I just hang back after her lessons and have a chat, or we drop into her office. She’s good like that. She’ll give you that time even though we know how busy she can get. She took control. She reassured me that I had done exactly the right thing and went straight to the counsellor. I think it got sorted then. Charlotte was seen immediately by the counsellor who phoned her parents to let them know how she was feeling. It was a circle of events.

That evening Mrs. B. phoned me at home to let me know that Charlotte was fine and she suggested that I go to see the counsellor the next day and talk it through with her. It was one of those things where what you did mattered. I am not sure what might have happened otherwise. I went to someone who I knew I could trust. It’s great at this school because I have someone who I can talk to. I think we all have someone we feel comfortable with, someone who cares.

Students acknowledged that there was a range of people who had an interest in their pastoral welfare. Some of these were formally responsible for them such as tutor or a Head of Year. At times, however, the person identified by a student was a person who had no formal role in a pastoral sense. This was confirmed when students used a diagrammatic representation to assist their thinking. Students were asked to consider people at school with whom they had a significant relationship. These people were to be identified using a numerical code according to the type of role the
adult assumed when in contact with the student. For example, a person who saw the student in an academic role would be labelled 1. A person with a formal pastoral role was designated 2 and adults with other links to students such as a sports coach, staff who ran a club or society or a staff member who ran a residential camp would be labelled a 3. The diagrammatic representations are shown in appendix 4 and a summary is given below.

Table 2 Summary of student data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of teacher</th>
<th>Academic Domain (1)</th>
<th>Pastoral Domain (2)</th>
<th>Other activity (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree of relationship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closest (first circle)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next closest (second circle)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More distant (outer circle)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The diagrams illustrated how varied the relationships were and suggested that no single group was dominant. Student A had had a change of tutor during her time at school. She noted a close relationship with a number of teachers who knew her from a contact outside the classroom, but who had no current formal involvement with her in either an academic or pastoral domain. Student B indicated that she had formed particularly good relationships with teachers who were involved with her in both pastoral and academic roles. Student C suggested that teachers who had taught her in the past had retained a strong relationship with her and indicated this using a bracketed 1. She explained that she felt the relationship had formed through the teacher’s role as an academic teacher, but that the relationship had been enhanced by their contact with her in other capacities such as camps and clubs as she had moved.
through the school. Teachers with a pastoral role were emphasised by Student D. She suggested her strongest relationships were with pastoral teachers, but noted that she did have some strong secondary relationships with teachers in the academic domain. Two students expressed the desire to indicate adults with whom they felt students should have a relationship but where none existed. The Chaplain was mentioned twice in this regard.

The data indicate that teachers with a pastoral role were not the predominant carers or individuals with whom the student felt a close bond, although they were represented regularly. Academic teachers were also identified regularly as were other adults. Student C made a particular point of identifying individuals who had taught her in the past but remained informal contacts. These teachers provided relationships and support which were significant to her. The data suggest that a network of care is in operation at the school and works in subtle and varied ways for each student.

The pastoral academic distinction

The espoused structure of the school indicates a delineation of responsibilities within the academic and pastoral domains. This was confirmed by Heads of Departments in interviews who described a linear and hierarchical control of the day-to-day matters in the classroom. The delineation was also apparent in school documentation. Interviews with teachers consistently substantiated that a pastoral academic distinction was evident in the school. Teachers were conscious of having dual responsibilities and could identify which role took priority for them. They regularly described the structures found in the school as hierarchical and could easily ascribe responsibilities to roles. Few teachers commented on any formal roles where
pastoral and academic work was combined, yet this was reported in interviews as happening in practice.

There were varied views expressed regarding the impact of being both a tutor and a subject teacher. Surprisingly, only three teachers linked the possibility of improved learning outcomes in the classroom with greater pastoral understanding of students. Teacher 1 mentioned this aspect commenting:

The more pastoral time you spend with students the more accurate your academics can be in my understanding. So the more time I spend pastorally the more I understand who the students are, the more the students understand who I am and so classroom time is actually spot on.

Teacher 5 supported this viewpoint. When asked if the dual role helped her in her work she responded enthusiastically, “It's definitely assisted me greatly, I think, knowing the student in a pastoral sense and then having them in the subject. You need to know how they're thinking, how they're feeling in order to get them to perform to the best of their ability.”

Two of those interviewed indicated that, as both tutor and teacher, they would be in possession of greater knowledge regarding personal issues for students which could help them to be more understanding, but in general this was not subsequently linked to learning. Six teachers noted that relationships with students in their tutor group were improved when they had the opportunity to teach them within a curriculum area.

When asked about problems which could arise for a teacher being a tutor and a subject teacher, only Teacher 6 felt the roles conflicted. She described discipline issues which had occurred in academic lessons involving students from their tutor groups. She described her concerns saying, “They try and step over the boundary. They feel they know me a bit better and try to act a little bit less formally.” The
teacher suggested that this had arisen because students had become over-familiar with her as a tutor. The major concern expressed by teachers concerned the time given to them to complete their duties. Four staff felt the tutor time available was short for the amount of work to be done. One of the two Heads of House interviewed also commented on a lack of time. Two teachers commented on occasions where a pastoral issue with a student had impinged on their class time, requiring them to be late for lessons, because a student had needed support with a pressing pastoral issue. Despite these concerns all but one of the teachers interviewed felt that having the two roles also helped them, in a general sense, in their work.

The Principal spoke of the notion of the two ‘sides’ in a school, the pastoral and academic. She commented that “everybody here is concerned with pastoral care” and highlighted the fact that the pastoral and academic sides overlap, because “they are the same people, not the Heads of Year and Departments, but teachers are involved in departments and work with the Heads of Year to develop the pastoral curriculum.” The meeting arrangements within the school also facilitated transfer between the two areas, emphasising that pastoral and academic issues were interchangeable. She remarked, “It’s not really two sides. The Dean of Curriculum is at pastoral care meetings and some things that come up pastorally are dealt with through curriculum avenues.”

This mutual, cooperative relationship between pastoral and academic concerns was further illustrated by the Dean of Curriculum. Whilst delineating between the roles of Dean of Students and Curriculum, she noted that they worked well together, talking about issues and solving problems together. In a hypothetical situation such as the long term absence of the Principal she felt that both Deans would work together to run the school, illustrating the collaborative culture of the institution and the flat
structure referred to by the Principal. This was supported by the Dean of Students, who also noted that “pastoral carers are Heads of Year and tutors and are subject teachers so they are the same person performing different roles at different times of the day.”

Teachers and senior administration members regularly stressed the view that the pastoral care and academic work were conducted by the same people and therefore were not split. Students, however, reported differences in teachers when they were in an academic domain compared with their work as pastoral carers. Student A commented on the boundaries which are evident in regular lessons and suggested that these were removed during form time, resulting in differing behaviour from the teacher. Student C noted the level of authority shown by a teacher changed when a teacher was in the whole class lesson:

> When they are in the class situation they aren’t themselves as much, because they have to keep control of the class. They’re teaching a whole group of people. You don’t get to know them on the same kind of personal level as you would one on one.

This sentiment was repeated by all the students interviewed. Interestingly, however, when asked to identify adults in the school with whom they considered they had a close relationship, students identified teachers who had taught them in an academic class. Often these teachers had had an additional contact with the student through a camp or sporting team. Frequently the teacher identified did not currently teach the student. The diagrammatic representations of relationship particularly emphasised these relationships, and all four students were surprised by their own charts when completed. Although not in the scope of the exercise, students also were quick to indicate adults with whom they felt they had no relationship. Further questioning helped to clarify some of these contradictory statements and confirmed
that the teacher in their role as subject teacher was often the person from whom a student would seek help and who knew them best as individuals. One student reasoned that the time spent in lessons was greater and led to this strong relationship. Another felt that the academic work created a shared basis for the relationship.

**Bridging the pastoral academic divide: Communication**

Whilst the academic domain appeared to have clear and observable channels of authority, the pastoral domain appeared more complex with a multiplicity of support for students. The bureaucratic organisation at the school existed in both the academic and pastoral domains, but initial analysis suggested that, unlike in the academic domain, the actuality of pastoral care did not always fit neatly into the stated structure. Despite the complexity, perceptions of teachers and students suggested that the pastoral care work of the school functioned effectively. Communication between staff, a shared understanding of the culture and flexibility were factors which became apparent as contributors to this success.

Teachers described contact and information sharing as “constant” between staff. Most of the teachers interviewed were confident that they were appropriately and adequately informed about the pastoral and academic issues, although it was felt by one Head of Department that some more sensitive issues were not shared frequently enough. Speaking about students in his tutor group one teacher confirmed, “If there's an academic problem then a student’s (subject) teacher will let me know.”

The main form of communication used by teachers and students was the email system, with students able to contact teachers about any matter through a school-wide intra-net. The use of the email system was regularly cited as a tool which has enhanced information sharing between teachers. Emails are also recorded on a
‘central file’ so that they can be accessed as necessary to provide a summary of communications regarding a student or an issue. Senior staff, in particular, valued this system. Teachers described the informal networks in the staffroom and staff offices as an additional way to share information. One member of the senior staff confirmed these findings when discussing her approaches to a pastoral problem: “I can do an email or a phone call or have a verbal discussion. Our staff are really good at communicating.”

The concern and commendation notes sent home by teachers were highlighted as a further avenue of information sharing between parents and teachers. These notes alert parents when academic progress is not being made, or acknowledge success. A copy is also filed onto the school’s database, which provides an ongoing picture across the curriculum and may indicate an underlying problem with a student. The note of concern is distributed to the student’s tutor, who may choose to address the issue with the student.

All teachers who were interviewed felt a strong sense of inclusion in the pastoral care given to students regardless of how the process began or the channels through which it progressed. As Teacher 6 commented:

It's not supposed to be about me. It's supposed to be about the students and what's best for them. I think that most of the people in these positions feel the same way.

The extent of communication between teachers was a salient feature at the school. This level of discourse allowed issues to be efficiently discussed in both the academic and pastoral domains of the school and encouraged the sharing of information between the two areas. Although there are strong distinctions between pastoral and curriculum roles, teachers at the school described a high level of
flexibility in dealing with problems. The school’s policy document on pastoral care
promoted this flexibility and is encapsulated in the following excerpt from the
document:

The Dean of Students is responsible for the welfare of all students and the
organisation and monitoring of the Pastoral Care System, working closely
with the Heads of Year, Tutors, House Coordinators, academic and
counselling staff, parents and students to achieve harmony within the
school environment.

This highlights the role of the Dean of Students, the Heads of Year and tutors as
primary care givers, but also lists academic teaching staff, amongst others, as
additional members of the pastoral care team.

**Issues of formalisation and centralisation**

During the interviews teachers were asked to reflect upon how the structures
helped or hindered them in their work. Questions focused on teachers’ perceptions of
their involvement and influence in policy and practice. Interview discussions also
explored how rules and procedures relating to pastoral care were enacted and
experienced. In this way discussions were framed to investigate the formalisation and
centralisation experienced in the school. At the school, formal pathways exist to guide
practice when dealing with students’ pastoral issues. The tutor is regarded as the first
point of contact for a student or parent with a concern, which should then be passed to
the Head of Year if necessary. The Counsellors also have a specific and particular
role to play within the pastoral care system. These roles were clearly understood and
readily articulated by participants.
However, alternative and varied approaches for dealing with pastoral issues were frequently reported. Teacher 2 described this flexibility clearly:

This is one of the things that we make quite clear to them in the pastoral care program, is that there are actually lots of people, so that if they don't feel comfortable going to one person, that they can always go to other people.

Wide scale acceptance and support of this open and adaptable approach were shown during interviews. One teacher said, “If they don't feel that they can speak to me, I encourage them to go and speak to other people.” Describing the varied possible avenues of support Teacher 3 commented, “I think it is good that they have a range of people and not just ‘if you've got an issue you must go here’ because I think that that doesn't allow for personality differences.”

Likewise the majority of teachers interviewed said that they felt included and valued in the decision making processes at the school. Teacher 3 commented, “In terms of the policies, you are certainly allowed and encouraged to participate.” She continued, “We have lots of committees throughout the School which are working towards enabling the students to achieve their potential.” Her comments were reflected by others who noted that the Principal was willing to listen and receive ideas. There was general consensus that change could be effected if the staff were united in an approach and agreement that the school management were approachable, willing to consider suggestions and inclusive in decision making. Phrases such as “We are all consulted,” “I can definitely be listened to,” and “We are quite able to say what we think” were heard frequently in interviews with experienced and established teachers.

Interestingly, this view point was not held by teachers who were new to the school. Teachers interviewed who had been at the school less than three years stated
their reluctance to offer opinions or suggestions to higher management and perceived that they would not be heard if they were to do so. Further exploration indicated that these members of staff had experience of teaching in other schools and were not newly qualified. They expressed an opinion that they had very little power within the system and perceived the school to be hierarchical in its structural arrangements. One newly appointed teacher commented that as an individual she felt that her voice would not be heard, but acknowledged that if enough teachers felt strongly about an issue, the senior management team would engage in discussion and attempt to resolve the problem.

A recent decision, taken at the beginning of the year, was widely quoted and applauded by teachers. Many tutors had been unhappy about the way they had to move from a tutor base to a teaching room each morning. The principal told me the story from her perspective to illustrate her desire to respond to suggestions and disquiet from her staff.
Moving Rooms

I was a strong advocate of the system, having initiated the idea some years before. I had also been pleased by the response from students, who often commented that they enjoyed the way the arrangement allowed them to mix with friends. Each Year group was given a specific area in the school, with the lockers grouped together. This gave students a gathering spot and allowed greater socialisation. The tutors would hold their morning registration with their group in these areas. The student House Captains were particularly keen. They often had to meet with particular Year groups and this made their job much easier.

The system had been working for a number of years but was less well received by teachers. Many had a tutor base which was in a different part of the school from their teaching area and moving between the two was becoming an issue. They were uncomfortable in other rooms. Complaints and concerns began being expressed, formally and in casual conversations with me, over coffee in the staff room at recess. Finally the staff association took a vote and 90 percent of the staff requested a change to the old system of tutor bases being located in the teachers’ classrooms. I raised it with my senior team. Good pastoral care was essential for students and quality interactions between tutors and students happened when staff strongly embraced the role.

This year we took the decision to change. A trial was set up for a two year period. Teachers would have their tutor group meetings in their own teaching rooms. I felt something had been lost but decided to follow a more fundamental principle, one on which I ran the school. I believe that teachers are your most valuable resource. They’re the ones who deliver in the end, so there’s not a lot of point imposing things that don’t work for them. We’ll see how it goes. It is the teachers who are on the ground. They have a perspective, they have a voice and we need to listen.

In this chapter data from interviews, document analysis and sociograms have been examined and illustrated using narratives. Four key themes emerge. They are firstly the collective understanding of pastoral care and the goals and priorities of the school, secondly issues of communication, thirdly a flexibility of approach and
mutual trust, and finally the link between structural organisation, an enabling approach and the delivery of pastoral care. These are discussed and related to relevant literature in the next chapter.
Chapter 5: A Discussion

This study began with a question: how do the organisational structures conventionally deployed in schools and the roles and responsibilities associated with these structures impact upon the pastoral care given to students? More specifically, the study was interested in the division between the pastoral and academic sides of the school. The impacts and implications of the ‘divide’ was the focus of the study.

Most schools create bureaucratic structures for line management and daily organisation (Hoy, 2003; McGuigan & Hoy, 2006). In general such arrangements initially designate staff as predominantly pastoral or academic. Classroom teachers usually have elements of both areas, being given concurrent roles of academic subject teacher and form tutor. Specific responsibilities and tasks are ascribed to their respective roles. Separate line managers oversee either curriculum or pastoral areas and in turn report to senior management, usually a Deputy Principal. This frequently creates sub hierarchies within the school (Watkins, 1999a). Responsibility, remuneration and promotion are intrinsically linked in with these hierarchical structures. Such types of organisational arrangements have existed in schools for many years, arising from the arrangements seen in the traditional private schools of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Personal experience reveals examples of schools where clear structures effect excellent pastoral care; others where the structures in place hinder the pastoral work that should be happening, and yet others where excellent pastoral care happens despite the structures in place. It might be assumed that organisational and management structures have a direct effect on the pastoral care given in a school. This research involved an exploration of these issues
with the findings giving possible insight to support the development of new models of
school organisation which would bridge the two areas.

The study school used in the research has high academic standards and a
strong reputation in the community. Beyond the basic description, the research
revealed an institution where pastoral care was more than just a facet of the teacher’s
role but one of the fundamental pillars upon which the learning process was built.

Whilst a ‘traditional’ style had been used to design the school’s structural
organisation, the data suggested that the structures did not constrain activity. Rather
they ensured that there was a formal process for administering pastoral care which
would remove ad hoc strategies of support whilst allowing flexibility. Indeed, close
inspection of the data revealed that the culture of the school was highly influential,
extensively shared by teachers and would seem to be more influential than the
organisational structures.

Whilst organisational structures were inevitably an important feature, analysis
of the data indicated that other forces were at play. The pastoral care of students was
effective not exclusively because of the specific arrangements, but rather because of
the manner in which they operated. More simply it was not what was done that made
it an effective system, but how it was done.

The school demonstrated many of the characteristics described by Hoy and
Sweetland (2000). It was the enabling characteristics of the structure rather than the
structure per se which became apparent as the major factor contributing to the success
in this area. Analysis of the data suggests that the concept of an enabling bureaucracy
could be extended to encompass a concept of an enabling culture. Such an enabling
approach has particular relevance to pastoral care as this dimension of the work of
schools is more complex, because it relies on human relationships and may involve teachers in activities which take them beyond teaching their own academic subject.

The findings also suggest that improvement in pastoral care will be limited if attempts are made to bring about change by simply altering the structures of the school. Although such organisation has a role to play, it is not the main lever of change. Improvements are likely to be effected by considering the changes at the strategy and process level and subsequently allowing these to inform the structural design of the organisation.

**The pastoral academic divide**

The data show that ‘traditional’ hierarchical arrangements are used at the school. The organisational and management structure emphasises the two areas of pastoral and academic and creates clear delineation between them. Teachers, in their interviews, routinely described the strength of the academic side of the school and rated those staff with academic roles as having greater influence and power than those with pastoral responsibilities. This concurs with Watkins’ (1999a) description of the differential status seen between pastoral and academic teams within some schools in Britain. During one interview the Dean of Curriculum drew out an overview of the structure which split the organisation into two distinct halves. She subsequently identified the pastoral side of the school and the academic. As Dean of Curriculum she felt that the pastoral side of the school was not her responsibility, although she was invited to and attended the pastoral care meetings. Whilst most teachers had a pastoral role such as tutor included in their teaching load, it was the academic tasks which were most frequently cited as the main priority.
The structure appeared to have few formal mechanisms in operation to marry the two areas together. The only two identified during the research were firstly the pastoral care meetings, attended by Heads of Year, the Dean of Curriculum, Dean of Students, Principal and Counsellors, and secondly the role of the Counsellors. The meetings were described by all the senior staff interviewed, but only mentioned by teachers occasionally and did not appear to have a high profile with the teaching staff. The extent of the impact of such meetings within the wider school community could therefore be questioned.

The counsellors were mentioned by every teacher and student and acknowledged as individuals with significant input at all levels and within both domains of the school. Within the pastoral domain, they were part of the identified student support network, involved in guidance for students with emotional, behavioural and social concerns. Additionally counsellors assisted parents and students with academic subject selection or changes. They also played a significant role in the creation of the Differentiated Learning Plans and discussed their implementation with teaching staff. Such activities allowed them to bridge the pastoral academic divide. Despite this, however, interview data revealed that their role was not perceived in an academic domain by either the Counsellors themselves or by teachers.

The tutor’s role appeared to encompass both dimensions of a student’s life at school. The tutor was reported as being concerned both with the academic progress and the emotional welfare of the student. As such the tutor notionally bridged the divide, but the extent to which the tutor was involved in academic issues appeared very limited. Tutors reported that they were kept informed about academic issues through emails and concern notes, which may result in a contact with home or an
informal chat with a student. Tutors did not appear to have a role in actively monitoring the academic progress of students. This is in contrast to current literature in the field of pastoral care, which suggests a movement away from the more traditional role of the tutor to that of an academic mentor (Lodge, 2006; Reading, 1999; Watkins, 1999b). Students confirmed this. They perceived that subject teachers alone could assist them with academic learning. There was no suggestion of a tutor helping with practical issues related to learning, for example, revision for examinations, time management or study techniques. Students also noted a difference in the behaviour of teachers depending upon whether they were acting as a subject teacher or form tutor.

The division between the academic and the pastoral domains was evident throughout the school and was similar to that which has been reported in the literature (Best, 1999a, 2002; Martin, 1994; Power, 1996; Watkins, 1999a, 1999b). However, despite the structure of the school being traditional and divided in nature, interviews with teachers and students described an institution where the pastoral care experienced was highly valued and appreciated. It formed one of the fundamental pillars upon which the operations of the school were constructed. The existence of the division did not appear, from the perspective of students and teachers, to impact either negatively or positively upon the quality of pastoral care that was achieved.

The structural design, described in Chapter 1, with Heads of Year, House and tutors involved with students care, was received positively by all those interviewed except for the Dean of Curriculum, who questioned whether the system was as effective as the previous arrangements. Her concerns focused on the reduction in the number of staff on the senior management team. This had occurred with the strengthening of the role of the Heads of Year and the reduction in the status of the Heads of House.
Pastoral care had previously been organised around the Head of House which, she perceived, gave a direct link between senior staff and pastoral issues because Heads of House were on the senior team.

The students interviewed expressed support for the system. They valued their tutor group and their affiliation with a House, one student making particular reference to the opportunities such a system offered to connect and build relationships with one or more teachers beyond the classroom. Teachers also described the system in positive terms with few criticisms. Keenly aware of the division, they regularly highlighted that they wore ‘two hats’, but appeared comfortable with the situation. Rather than a division existing, teachers perceived themselves as having multiple roles which overlapped. This was considered to be beneficial for student learning although very few staff appeared to use the information regarding students to modify or shape teaching activities. Rather the information was used to help to understand stresses, which a student may be experiencing, which might affect performance.

Analysis of the interviews also suggested that pastoral care was being given not only within the prescribed structure, but extensively beyond the system. Data from the student relationship diagrams emphasised this. There was equal representation of current academic teachers, previous academic staff, tutors, and other adults with whom the students felt the closest relationship. This indicated that there was no common scheme to the network of care, with individuals sensing relationships with a wide range of teachers rather than simply the tutors or Heads of Year who were nominated as the ‘official’ carers. Such flexibility in the support network was also reported by all members of the senior management who each expressed encouragement for it.
The level of support for the pastoral care system, from teachers and students, was high. Every student interviewed stated that she felt cared for, and there was unanimous approval of the operation of the system from teaching staff. However, that high level of approval did not appear to be solely due to the structure, although it was rated highly by the teachers interviewed, but rather due to the manner in which it operated. During interviews with teachers and students there was a significant emphasis on issues of joint responsibility, flexibility in approach and open communication. Pastoral care was not only the task of tutors, but also a requirement of all teachers, whatever their formal role in the school. Thus responsibility for the pastoral care of students was a shared one, vested in all teachers and administrators at the school.

**A school that cares**

It would be hard to find a school which did not claim to care for its students. The school in this study is no exception. There were, however, a number of notable features revealed during analysis of the data which appeared to contribute to the effective way in which this care was shown. Firstly, there was a shared purpose for the school. Teachers and students readily described the aims of the institution in common terms. Their comments were independently echoed by the Principal. The quest for academic excellence and achievement or academic press (Geist & Hoy, 2004) was considered the foremost priority of the school.

Secondly, there appeared to be a shared and strong conceptual understanding of the meaning of pastoral care amongst the teachers and senior team. There was an appreciation of the contribution of sound pastoral care to the success of a school and a common awareness of the expectations of the school. Pastoral care was not an end in
itself, but was firmly embedded within the academic aims of the institution. Pastoral care was not viewed as a separate issue or additional task to the work done in school, but rather as a foundational dimension which supported the school’s primary focus, which was learning.

Defining pastoral care has been problematic for years (Best, 1999b; Collins & McNiff, 1999). Educationalists still do not share an understanding of the term, which can lead to schools using it in a wide variety of ways. Hellwig (1989) noted that a lack of definition within an individual institution can hinder the development of pastoral care provision. Similarly Chittenden (1999) reported that a lack of shared understanding of pastoral care contributed to the perceived lack of effectiveness of the pastoral care system at an independent school in Queensland.

At the school in this research the interview data suggested that there was a common understanding of the function of pastoral care of students amongst those interviewed, and this translated into a philosophy of care at every level. Teachers acknowledged how good pastoral care might improve learning by ensuring there was a positive learning environment where students felt supported. The data suggested that they acted upon this. The senior management and students of the school restated these priorities when asked, suggesting that the whole school had a collective awareness and appreciation of the role of pastoral care at the school.

The meaning of the term pastoral care, as understood by staff at the school and communicated in interviews, aligned closely with the broad definitions given by Best (2002). Staff described dealing with students with a personal or emotional difficulty. Such work falls under the heading of “proactive pastoral casework” (Best, 1999b, p. 19). They also noted the general administrative activities that they were required to perform which aligned with the fifth element in Best’s definition of
pastoral care, “the management and administration of pastoral care” (1999b, p. 19). As such it was the shared concept of care which was significant, rather than the exact nature of the pastoral care which was given.

Thirdly, there was a collective functional approach to pastoral care. In other words students and staff had a shared understanding of the practices associated with pastoral care. The values of the school were clearly communicated to new staff and appeared to be adopted and shared by the teachers and students interviewed. This was particularly evident when teachers talked about their experiences of the pastoral care network and their roles within it. Although the specific examples and stories were different, the general model of pastoral care in action at the school was repeated by almost all the participants. This included an encouragement for a student to approach any member of staff they felt comfortable with if a problem arose. It also emphasised a shared approach to solving students’ problems and a willingness of staff to listen. This was exemplified in the narrative ‘Tell someone who cares’.

Teachers spoke of ways in which they made themselves available to students and described the variety of ways they may have become involved in a pastoral issue, either as a subject teacher, a tutor or simply as a teacher whom a particular student approached. Those who were tutors valued their position and appeared to have a sound and up-to-date knowledge of the academic progress of students in their form group, although there was very limited mention made of any specific academic guidance being given by the tutor. Some described how issues may be resolved at a higher level in the organisational structure such as by involving the Head of Year, or Dean.

Whilst the approach was uniform, this did not mean that it was enacted in an identical manner by teachers, or that it was inflexible. On the contrary, the data
suggested that there was significant flexibility within the structure and that a network model was adopted to allow multiple approaches to assist students in need. This was coupled with a high degree of trust between teachers and administrators. Teachers felt empowered to work with students whatever their ‘position’ in the structure. There was only one occasion when a teacher questioned the amount of information that was shared and expressed a concern that trust in the professionalism of staff was occasionally lacking. In general teachers reported freedom to work with students to the extent they felt able, and were comfortable that further support was available when they deemed it necessary. The flexibility of approach was coupled with an effective communication system.

**Issues of communication**

Regular communication between teachers and systems which aids the sharing of information is a feature of the majority of schools. Teachers’ views regarding the regularity, quality and openness of such communication often vary, however. The high level of approval given to communication at the school in this study was noteworthy. There was almost no expression of disapproval of the communication systems and only occasional mild concern expressed regarding the time taken for particular issues to be disseminated. Communication was effective and quick. Necessary information was shared in a timely manner as illustrated in the narrative ‘Caught in the net’.

Teachers interviewed regularly gave examples of information sharing, using formal and informal mechanisms. Email was used extensively throughout the school with prescribed protocols allowing appropriate storage and access to internal and external email traffic. Pastoral care meetings and smaller group discussions, such as
within year teams, provided other avenues for the dissemination of important pastoral information. The informal approach was also strongly reported. Teachers described ad hoc conversations in offices and the staff room which allowed smaller issues to be shared. Any emotional, physical or mental concerns for a student were considered with particular respect to their learning. Teachers gained greater insight into the factors which might be affecting the performance of a student and could therefore, given this awareness, support the student appropriately. Staff were very quick to share rather than hoard information.

Such communication requires trust on the part of teachers and administrators. Personal experience suggests that information will only be shared openly if issues of confidentiality are complied with and individuals respect and value the input colleagues can offer. Trust takes time to develop and is a “multidimensional construct” (Geist & Hoy, 2004, p. 1). Although beyond the scope of this study, issues of trust may have impacted on newer members of the teaching body. Newer teachers expressed some concern that whilst they were informed, they had less of a ‘voice’ within the system. This may suggest that trust was taking time to be established.

All but one of the teachers interviewed indicated that they felt able to express opinions, offer ideas and comment on policies within the school. A number of examples were given to illustrate this. Meeting agendas were open, and staff could raise issues within such meetings with confidence. The Principal was available to be contacted by email at any time and was happy to discuss school policy. During the research period she was observed around the school site and was regularly present in the Staffroom during the morning recess. Moreover there was evidence that action matched the rhetoric. The Principal aimed to involve teachers in the development of policy and practice. All the teachers interviewed concurred with her, acknowledging
the possibility of becoming involved in policy committees and all but two commented on an individual connection with such an activity. There appeared to be a genuine sense of involvement in school policies amongst many teachers.

As the data were analysed, further key features of the school began to crystallise. Firstly, teachers felt empowered to work with students whatever ‘position’ the teacher held in the structure. A tutor could work with a student who was in need or may pass the issue on to a Head of Year. Both options were acceptable to the school. The variety of pathways which could be followed gave teachers a framework without constraining their actions. The difference in approach between teachers was appreciated. Evidence for this came from the teacher interviews where tutors each described the ways in which they assisted in developing the relationships within the form group. One teacher spoke of after-school activities which he had organised, whilst another limited her involvement to morning meetings with the students. There was no evidence of compulsion to conform to one particular method of working.

Secondly, a dynamic notion of pastoral care was shared between all parties at the school. This was seen both conceptually and operationally. Thirdly, teachers felt valued and included in the processes of pastoral care. Cooperation between teachers was promoted when dealing with pastoral issues. Teachers were informed of subsequent developments if they themselves were no longer dealing directly with the student and were included in or informed of parental contacts. There was a high degree of mutual trust at all levels of the hierarchical structure and teachers were encouraged to communicate. Fourthly teachers interviewed perceived a school leadership team which was willing to listen and indeed welcomed input.

The academic and pastoral domains of the school were not divided but rather overlaid each other; the two systems were in full alignment. This was seen in both a
structural and cultural sense. Pastoral work was a dimension of the main goal of the school which was academic excellence. This is in contrast to my own personal experience and the literature on the subject which reports non alignment and the existence of a ‘divide’ (Best, 2002; Power, 1996; Watkins, 1999b).

These findings led me to reconsider my initial thinking. It became apparent that, in fact, the initial question was flawed. It was simply the wrong question. Whilst organisational structure had a part to play and was one of the contributors to success, it was not the most important aspect of a pastoral care system and therefore not the main lever of improvement. Much more so was the way the school operates within the organisational structures. The key features described earlier, which facilitate the alignment of the pastoral and academic domains, are a subset of those described by Hoy and Sweetland in their description of an enabling bureaucracy (2000). The findings suggest that it is this culture of enabling which results in the pastoral and academic domains being closely aligned.

**An enabling bureaucracy in action**

Hoy and Sweetland (2000) developed the term ‘enabling bureaucracy’ to describe a new construct of school structures. Through research, they recognised that schools are generally organised upon bureaucratic lines and proposed that individuals can respond to such systems in different ways. At times, they suggest, people can become frustrated in bureaucracies, but in other organisations such structures can enhance satisfaction and innovation by enabling individuals to feel effectively utilised and by reducing stress (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). They propose that bureaucratic systems can be placed onto a continuum from enabling to hindering and identified two fundamental features of structure, formalisation and centralisation which define
the two extremes of the continuum (Hoy, 2003). These terms were explored in greater
detail in Chapter 2. Enabling bureaucracies have rules and procedures which assist
with problem solving, enable cooperation and structures which are flexible and
responsive. This was contrasted to hindering bureaucracies, which display “coercive
rules and procedures” and thereby “foster mistrust, frustrate two-way communication
and demand consensus” (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001, p. 299).

The categories which emerged during the analysis of the data illustrate a
school which demonstrates a significant number of the characteristics described by
Hoy and Sweetland (2000), placing it firmly towards the enabling end of the
continuum they describe. Specifically the school showed flexibility in its approach to
pastoral issues. It encouraged cooperation between teachers and valued the
differences within the teaching body. Trust was evident amongst the teaching staff.
During interviews teachers frequently described how they communicated openly with
each other about students.

Formalisation, a key feature of ‘Weberian’ bureaucracy, describes the extent
to which procedures are rule driven and action closely guided by formal procedures.
Personal experience suggests that the management and organisation of pastoral care
in schools routinely includes guidelines, policies and procedures to be used by
teachers when dealing with students and parents. However, if the prescribed systems
constrain and frustrate teachers and students, the rules can begin to have a negative
effect on the care given. Enabling formalisation is seen when rules are considered as a
best practice guide rather than rigid. A flexible response to problems is a second
feature of such formalisation along with encouragement for professional judgement.
Trust is fostered and communication invited in such systems (Hoy, 2003). Enabling
centralisation is described as “flexible, cooperative and collaborative rather than rigid, autocratic and controlling” (Hoy, 2003, p. 90).

The research data showed that clear guidance existed at the school, with form tutors given detailed roles and responsibilities. Tutors described their functions as including the registration of attendance, report checking and dissemination of administrative information. Teachers also described the highly developed data recording system for the storage and sharing of emails. This was closely regulated with instructions given for the storage of email traffic. However, during interviews teachers described the flexibility available at the school which, moreover, was not simply tolerated but encouraged.

One of the foremost reasons for formalised structures is to ensure efficiency by streamlining operations. Conversely, a potential disadvantage of flexibility is role ambiguity and conflict (Adler & Borys, 1996). It would be reasonable therefore to expect such issues to emerge within the data. Interestingly this was not the case. Analysis showed a high level of support and a notable lack of concern regarding role ambiguity. The teachers interviewed were comfortable with their responsibilities but also willing to share these with other staff members where appropriate. There was negligible mention of conflict and a high degree of appreciation of the contribution available from other teachers. Only one teacher commented on an occasional lack of communication from a counsellor. In a wider sense, teachers viewed the school as having rules and routines which guided their actions but could also be adapted to the needs of the individual rather than requiring rigid adherence. The school’s published material stresses this flexibility by explaining the roles of the key players in the process such as Heads of Year, tutors and counsellors and then expanding by describing the wider network of care which includes all teachers of the school.
Centralisation reflects the need of complex organisations to have an “official hierarchical structure in order to function smoothly and efficiently” (Geist & Hoy, 2004, p. 4). However, the “prototype of an enabling school structure has a hierarchy which helps rather than hinders” (Geist & Hoy, 2004, p. 5) by removing unnecessary controls and empowering subordinates to make decisions. Distinctive roles are a feature of such a system, but individuals may work flexibly across boundaries; enabling centralisation does not eliminate hierarchy, but changes the way it operates (Hoy, 2003).

The research data indicated that a concern for the well-being of the students underpinned structural arrangements. The hierarchical organisation and specific roles of individuals were recognised and respected at the school, but teachers were encouraged to work cooperatively across them. This concurs with the descriptions of enabling structures given in the literature (Geist & Hoy, 2004; Hoy, 2003; Hoy & Sweetland, 2000). Teachers indicated that they could assist with pastoral issues to the extent they felt able or could refer to a counsellor or Head of Year as they felt necessary.

The alignment of the pastoral and academic domains within the school was seen both in a structural and cultural sense. The structural arrangements emphasised the teachers’ dual roles as a multiplicity of responsibilities rather than two separate ones, and evidence suggested that the shared understanding of the role of all teachers as pastoral carers supported this. Thus there was no perceived divide. Beyond the structure, the integration of the two domains was effected by the way the structure operated.
An enabling culture

The characteristics described previously appeared to be deeply embedded in the school, at all levels from young or new teachers through to the senior team, suggesting that there were more than enabling structures in place, but rather an enabling culture which pervaded the institution. Thus, it could be proposed that the theoretical construct of the enabling bureaucracy could be reframed, in the school setting, to be subsumed within the more general term of an ‘enabling culture’. The term culture is one which is widely used and can be difficult to define. For the purpose of this study the definition of culture comes from Umiker (1999, p. 88):

a cornucopia of values, beliefs and norms that a group of people share. Put very simply, an organisational culture is the way things are done – especially when no-one is looking

It could be argued that the culture of a school is the product of the bureaucratic organisation, which determines the way in which people operate. Alternatively one might suggest that it is the culture of an institution which begets the bureaucratic structure. It is the latter view which leads to the proposition that the enabling bureaucracy is the expression of an enabling culture. In other words it is the dominant culture of the institution that informs the structures that are created, including the elements of centralisation and formalisation.

The culture of an institution is initially created and subsequently contributed to by the various members of the institution (Stoll & Fink, 1996). One such group is the senior management team. Their cultural norms may be in evidence throughout the middle management team and mainstream teaching body or may be compromised by other cultural norms within the school. If an enabling culture exists, it may extend
throughout the school through its articulation in an enabling bureaucracy, ensuring that the aspirations of the senior team are collectively shared amongst the whole staff.

The ‘enabling culture’ of the school in the study was one which appeared to emanate from the philosophical values espoused by the Principal. Her main priority in designing the organisational and management structures of the school was that all positions should relate directly to learning. The philosophy she espoused indicated that she valued the input of staff from all areas of the school and preferred a flatter structure whilst retaining a hierarchy for efficiency. She actively valued the expertise of teachers, insisting that working parties were formed, in the main, from the teaching body rather than being composed entirely of senior staff. As the narrative ‘Moving rooms’ describes, she was willing to listen and act upon teachers’ concerns to ensure that teachers were assisted to do the best job they were able to. Her main commitment was to students’ learning and her actions were guided by this. Her comments reflected those of the teachers interviewed; there was a shared desire to help students to achieve their best, above everything else.

Comparison between the teachers and senior staff comments indicated that the hierarchical arrangements were not authoritarian, attempting to promote compliance and to control. Rather there was strong evidence that there was a genuine degree of mutual trust both within the teaching body and between senior staff and mainstream teachers. Evidence for this came from examples of teachers’ input into policy decisions and opportunity afforded to tutors to encourage them to work with members of their tutor group as much as they felt able. This concurs with research literature findings that enabling structures positively correlate with faculty trust in the principal (Geist & Hoy, 2004). The goals of the institution, as described by the Principal, were
also accurately reported by all the teachers interviewed. This suggested a shared vision for the school which was academic press (Geist & Hoy, 2004).

**Implications for pastoral care**

Geist and Hoy (2004) postulate that “an enabling structure holds promise as an effective way to organise schools” (p. 5). However, they also note that further evidence and refinement of the construct are required. The evidence gathered in this study goes some small way to support their assertion. The research data indicate that there were a number of enabling characteristics embedded within the culture of the school and fostered by the Principal. It is argued that the presence of these characteristics facilitated the alignment of the pastoral care and academic domains within the school and promoted effective student care within a highly academic environment.

Pastoral care relies on relationships (Nadge, 2005). In an attempt to improve pastoral care within schools by facilitating such relationships, senior management often review and change the structural arrangements (Chittenden, 2004; Watkins, 1999b). This occurred when the current Principal in this study joined the school in this research. Frequently the structural unit of care is changed. This may be from the horizontal year group to a vertical house structure or some different combination, as happened in the school in this study. However, in essence the assumption appears to be that there is a ‘best’ structure which can maximise the provision of pastoral care.

The research evidence presented here suggests that the structure alone cannot account for success in this regard. Whilst structure does impact upon the daily experience of teachers and students, it does not provide the ‘magic bullet’ to improve the pastoral care for students and thereby improve educational outcomes. Rather, this
study suggests that it is the presence of an enabling approach to the school’s bureaucratic structures that can have significant impact. Therefore evidence from this study suggests that a more effective approach to improvement in pastoral care is to assess the extent to which enabling approaches are utilised, rather than initially considering how to reorganise the structural arrangements.

Such an assessment would explore the extent to which teachers were empowered to work with students. It would also evaluate the level of trust shared within the school and strategies put in place to foster greater trust. Issues of communication would need to be investigated and the degree to which formalisation was perceived as empowering or coercive. Regular and quality communication was a strong feature seen in the study school and appeared to have a notable impact upon the quality of pastoral care given. Thus schools wanting to improve their provision might consider the manner in which information is shared and consider ways to improve it. The rules and procedures may also be evaluated and assessed to ascertain their degree of flexibility or rigidity.

This study shows that enabling structures may promote excellence in pastoral care within a variety of organisational arrangements. This finding is supported by recent research on the effects of enabling structures on academic optimism within schools which suggested that enabling approaches to management lead to improved academic optimism and thereby improve the academic achievement of students (McGuigan & Hoy, 2006).

Limitations of the study

This study was confined to research in one institution and was a small scale project. The research interviews were conducted by one person over the space of two
months. Every attempt was made to ensure that they were representative of what participants believed at the time, by reference back to the participants after transcription and following the creation of narratives. There should also be an appreciation of the skill involved in interviewing (Patton, 2002). The interview data collected may have been richer with a more experience interviewer. The data analysis was also undertaken by one person, again giving the possibility of a reduction in objectivity, although this was addressed during the analysis with constant reflection.

The school in the study is a non government school and could be considered as one of only a few of its kind. It also has a unique set of circumstances which may affect it. These include being particularly well resourced, having a highly supportive parent body and the ability to attract highly qualified teachers who are willing to commit to the additional tasks expected in an independent school, such as camps and co-curricular activities. Also of note is the significant number of students who are from high socio-economic backgrounds. Although difficult to generalise the results of the study beyond the school, there are many independent schools like the study school to which readers may wish to transfer the findings.

The sample size was a further limitation to the study. Of the 18 interviews that were conducted only four were with Year 12 students. This was a result of difficulties in reaching the students. The data generated from these interviews were fairly consistent, but the student data set would have been improved if additional students had been available for interview.

Further research possibilities

The results of the study have highlighted some further avenues for future research. Firstly, a larger scale study could investigate the perceptions of a broader
range of stakeholders including younger students and parents to ascertain whether the perceived effectiveness of pastoral care is influenced by the presence or absence of an enabling school bureaucracy. This would be augmented by investigating a range of schools which demonstrate enabling approaches to school structures and use differing models of school organisation for the provision of pastoral care. Results from this research suggest that the enabling approach would be more influential on pastoral care provision than the structures within which teachers work. Questions for further research include: how does an enabling school bureaucracy support improvements in the pastoral care provision, and can pastoral care structures be improved with the adoption of a more enabling approach by senior management? Secondly there may be useful information revealed by examining whether the construct of an enabling school bureaucracy can be subsumed into the broader construct of an enabling school culture.

Conclusions

This research began as an exploration of an issue which is represented sparingly in research literature, namely the apparent division between the pastoral and academic domains of a school. Evidence presented in the study indicates that this division continues to be seen in schools and can impact teachers in their role as pastoral carers. The aim of the research was to investigate this structural divide from the viewpoint of a small sample of teachers and students in one school, allowing the impacts and implications to be examined. Using the concept of an enabling bureaucracy allowed the efficacy of the structural arrangements to be assessed.

As the data were collected and subsequently analysed, the findings began to reveal an unexpected outcome. The structural construct, with its divisions and
hierarchy, was not in itself the significant instrument which affected the provision of pastoral care. Instead the manner in which the structure operated was of greater significance. The school showed an alignment of the pastoral and academic structures, both functionally and culturally. It was the use of an enabling approach to school organisation which appeared to be the primary reason for this. Such alignment allowed the pastoral care system to support student learning whilst retaining its fundamental duty of student care.

The research journey caused me to re-evaluate the relative importance of structural constructs in schools. Restructuring to improve facets of a school’s performance is common in my experience. Evidence from this research would suggest that the adoption of an enabling approach to the school’s bureaucracy will have greater effect than a rearrangement of personnel. Improvements may be particularly evident in the area of pastoral care, which is a complex requirement involving teachers from all areas of the school. The research has shown that the structural division between pastoral and academic roles can be simply a conceptual distinction rather than a chasm, if the two systems are aligned functionally and this alignment is culturally embedded in the institution.
Appendix 1  Interview guides

Interview guide  Senior Staff

This study is looking at the implications and impacts of the way we generally structure schools into a pastoral domain and an academic dimension.

Firstly thank you (NAME) for offering to help me. I am going to interview a range of people including other senior staff, teachers and students so I will get a clear picture of the school policies. What I am interested in here are your views and opinions. To maintain appropriate ethics please try not to mention individuals by name but refer to them in another way such a Mrs. X. or student Jane.

Firstly would you please tell me about your role and responsibilities in the school?

How long have you worked in this role? And before that?

What are your primary roles or main responsibilities in the school?

Would you describe yourself then as in a pastoral or academic role?

What are the stated academic goals of the school?

and pastoral goals of the school?

How are these shared with staff and students?

Please could you describe for me how teachers are organised at the school (the structures which underpin the organisation of teachers in the school?)

Are there any over-riding beliefs or philosophical considerations which have led to this particular structural form? If so what?

What do you feel are the strengths of this organisational structure?

And what might be weaknesses?

How do you think staff feel about the way the school is organised?

How would you describe the relationships which exist between yourself and your team of year heads/ faculty leaders?

What is your role with these people?

Do the pastoral and academic sides of the school overlap?
Have you experienced times when the wearing of ‘two hats’ - pastoral and academic - has been problematic either for yourself or for another member of staff that you have worked with?

Could you describe this a little more?

Are there ways in which the academic side of the school and the pastoral side are brought together deliberately?

Are there ways in which the school facilitates transfer of knowledge between the pastoral and curriculum sides of the school?

Do you ever feel tensions between the two areas as you work, in your own case or from other teachers?

How are concerns about students’ welfare and academic progress addressed by teachers?

What avenues do parents have to express concerns about their daughter’s progress or happiness?

Who deals with these concerns and how? Please could you give me some general examples?
Interview guide Teacher

This study is looking at the implications and impacts of the way we generally structure schools into a pastoral domain and an academic dimension.

Firstly thank you (NAME) for offering to help me. I am going to interview a range of people including the principal and senior staff so I will get a clear picture of the school policies. What I am interested in here are your views and opinions. To maintain appropriate ethics please try not to mention individuals by name but refer to them in another way such a Mrs. X. or student Jane.

Firstly would you please tell me about your role and responsibilities in the school?
What is your primary role or main responsibility in the school?
Would you describe yourself then as in a pastoral or academic role?
Could you tell me a little more about what your pastoral role entails?
What do you like about the role?
What sort of difficulties about the role have you encountered that you could share with me?
What about your academic responsibilities, what do they include?
What difficulties do you have in completing these tasks?
Which, if any, takes priority?
Do these two roles, the academic and pastoral dimensions of your work, overlap at all?
   in what ways?/ why not?
   Why do you think that is?
What do you feel the main aim of this school is?
What are the pastoral goals of the school?
How does the school communicate these?
How much do you feel that you (or staff in general) are consulted in the development of policies that directly affect you (fine-tuning, monitoring, developing)?
How does the school try to make these happen?
Think about the students you come into contact with regularly (and perhaps back to last year). Which group or groups of students do you feel that you know best as individuals? Why?
From your experience, if a child encounters a personal problem or concern, what would they do in school to seek help?

To what extent do you feel you have authority to help with problems in your role?

Where does your authority end? (where does your involvement end?)

What avenues do parents have to express concerns about their daughter’s progress or happiness?

Who deals with these concerns and how? Please could you give me some general examples?

Sometimes the wearing of ‘two hats’ as a teacher and carer is of concern. Can you describe any times when you have had such a concern or conflict in your role?

Can you describe any times when the duality of role has helped you in your work?

Do you ever feel tensions between the two areas as you work, in your own case or from other teachers?

How does this school attempt to get to know students well to ensure that they receive the best care as they move through school?

Are there ways in which the school facilitates transfer of knowledge between the pastoral and curriculum sides of the school?

What do you think about the way the school structures itself? What impacts do you see or have you seen?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about this issue?
Firstly thank you (NAME) for agreeing to give up your time to help me. I am interested in your views and opinions as you have had extensive experience of the school over a number of years. To make you feel at ease can I reassure you that your comments will remain anonymous, and I will ask you to check the transcript of this interview once I have typed it up to make sure that you feel happy with what has been recorded. You may also like to add, correct or clarify points then. To keep things ethical I will try to ask you general questions. If you feel you want to mention a teacher, or other adult rather than naming them, perhaps give them a letter such as Mrs X or Dr A. Ok?

Let’s start by you telling me a little about yourself. What are you studying at the moment?

How long have you been at this school?

How would you describe the school?

What would be the best aspects of this school that students would comment on?

What would be the worst parts of being a student at this school?

What would you say are the priorities of this school? (determine as academic or pastoral and explore a little more)

How are these made clear to students?

If I had asked you that say in Year 9 or 10, what might you have said then?

Relationships are always important in schools. How would you describe the relationships between staff and students at this school?

What about between students and students?

Try not to name people, but can you tell me to what extent you feel the school cares for you and knows you as an individual?

If I had asked you that say in Year 9 or 10, what might you have said then?

Please will you describe the way in which this school is organized to make sure that every student feels cared about?

Does it work?

Are there any students who get missed in this or seem to get lots of attention?

We sometimes can view things in diagrams. I wonder if you could think for a minute about the adults at school who know you as an individual and care for you. Now
some of those people you will feel have the strongest relationship of care and concern for you, others will care but be more distant. Can you record these individual on a piece of paper for me? I have drawn out some circles with you in the middle. In each ring please write the names of the adults who you consider closest to you, who know you and care about your well being in all aspects, put those who have a more distant relationship in the outer boxes as you see appropriate. Now can you code them in the following categories and copy it onto a new sheet? You keep the original and can throw it away. If they have more than one role, can you decide as which they are most influential and underline this. (1 academic, 2 pastoral, 3 other - coach, chaplain etc)

Using this same coding can you tell me who you would ask for help from if you had a personal difficulty such as not sleeping, anxiety about friends or work issues, family problems?

Think of the teachers who are in the pastoral care system mainly. How would you describe their characteristics? What are they like?

What about teachers with a curriculum role. How would you describe their characteristics?

Are there teachers with both roles?

Do you notice any differences between teachers when they are in their ‘academic role’ and when they are acting in a pastoral role?

How valuable do you feel the year group system and system of tutors is in your school?

Which types of teachers or others in the school can really help you if you have a problem… in other words can do something about it, make a change for you if necessary or in some way really help?

Can you think of any times when you have needed some support and describe for me what happened in that situation? You don’t need to tell me too much about the problem I am most interested in how you got over it and who helped you and how. Remember to change the names of teachers for me…say a teacher of …or a tutor or give them a role…
Appendix 2  Diagrammatic chart for representation of student relationships

You
Closest relationship
Next closest
More distant
Appendix 3  Letters of invitation and consent forms.

Dear Staff Member,

**PROJECT TITLE: The pastoral academic divide: Impacts and implications for pastoral care.**

My name is Kathy Clark. I am a teacher at xxxxxxxxxxxxxx and am a part-time postgraduate student in the School of Education at Murdoch University. I am investigating the impacts and implications of the pastoral academic divide in schools under the supervision of Dr Helen Wildy (Associate Professor of Educational Leadership) for the research component of a Masters degree in Education. The purpose of the study is to explore how the academic and pastoral aspects of the school are envisaged, enacted and experienced from a pastoral perspective. This division is seen in the way we structure our schools for staff and students, with teachers often finding themselves ‘wearing two hats’. I hope to provide some research based information on the extent to which pastoral care is impacted by this division.

I am writing to request your help in this study by consenting to have an interview with me to discuss your experiences and understandings of these issues. It is anticipated that the time taken to complete the interview will be around 30 minutes. The questions in the interview will ask you to share your understandings of the way the school is organised and provides for pastoral care. You will be asked to discuss your opinions of the pastoral care system and how it relates to the academic side of the school. You can decide to withdraw your consent at any time and the information given during the interview is confidential and no names or other information which might identify you will be in any publication arising from the research. Feedback from the interview will be provided in the form of a transcribed account which can be checked and commented upon. A general summary of the findings will also be provided to the school and participants at the conclusion of the research. You will not be asked to identify specific individuals in your interview but rather to describe the sort of role they take in the school. Interviews will be held in late March or early April 2007 at a mutually convenient time.

If you are willing to participate in this study could you please complete the details on the consent form attached. If you have any questions about this project please contact either myself (Kathy Clark) on xxxxxxxx or my supervisor Dr Helen Wildy on xxxxxxxxxx. If you would be prepared to volunteer I would be very grateful. I understand how busy teachers are and appreciate you considering this request.

My supervisor and I are happy to discuss any concerns which you may have regarding this research. If you wish to talk to an independent person about your concerns you can contact Murdoch University’s Human Research Ethics committee on 9360 6677.

Once you have completed the consent form please pop it into the envelope provided and return it to the collection file in Student Services where your envelope can be lodged. This way your response is confidential. I would be grateful if you would do this as soon as possible. Thank you for considering this request. I hope you will be able to help me.

I look forward to meeting you.

Kathy Clark

12 March 2007
RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

NAME: ________________________________________________

ROLE IN SCHOOL ______________________________________
(eg. Head of Year, House Coordinator/Tutor/Subject Teacher)

I __________________________________________ (name of participant) have read
the information regarding the proposed research study entitled: The pastoral
academic divide: Impacts and implications for pastoral care. Any questions I have
asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in the study and I
know that I may change my mind and stop at any time.

I understand that all information provided will be treated as confidential and will not
be released by the investigator unless required to do so by law.

I agree for the interview to be taped.

I agree that research gathered for this study may be published provided my name or
other information which may be used to identify me is not used.

Signed participant: ________________________________

Date: ______________

Signed Investigator: ________________________________

Investigator’s name: ________________________________

Date: ______________

Please place this form in the envelope provided and lodge it in the file in Student
Services.

INTERVIEW TIMES
If you consent to take part, please indicate specific times and days which would be
convenient for you to be interviewed.

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Dear Student,

**PROJECT TITLE: The pastoral academic divide: Impacts and implications for pastoral care.**

My name is Kathy Clark. I am a Science teacher at xxxxxxxxx and a part-time student in the School of Education at Murdoch University. I am undertaking the research section of a Masters degree under the supervision of Dr Helen Wildy (Associate Professor of Educational Leadership) and am hoping to conduct some research at your school. I would like you to consider this invitation to take part in the research. I am exploring the division between the pastoral and academic ‘sides’ of schools. This division is seen in the way we structure our schools for staff and students. Students meet teachers both as subject specialists and as tutors and heads of year. I hope to provide some research based information on the extent to which pastoral care is affected by the way schools are organised.

You can help in this study by consenting to have an interview with me to discuss your experiences and understandings of these issues. It is anticipated that the time taken to complete the interview will be around 30 minutes. The interviews will take place during term 1, 2007 and will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time. The interviews would not be conducted in lesson time unless you have a study period so it should not affect your academic programme. Interviews could also happen at a lunch time or directly after school if that were more convenient for you.

The questions in the interview will request you to share your understandings of the way the school is organised and provides for pastoral care. You will be asked to discuss your opinions of the pastoral care system and how it relates to the academic side of the school. You can decide to withdraw your consent at any time and the information given during the interview is confidential and no names or other information which might identify you will be in any publication arising from the research. In other words you would not be identified in the research findings and all comments will be non-attributable. Feedback from the interview will be provided in the form of a transcribed account which can be checked and commented upon. A general summary of the findings will also be provided to the school and participants at the conclusion of the research. You will not be asked to identify specific individuals in your interview but rather to describe the sort of role individuals take in the school. You will also be asked to draw diagrams and charts to help to explain your perceptions.

If you agree to be involved, your parent or guardian will also need to consent. You have been given a consent letter with this note. Please take it home and complete it, with your parent or guardian if you are willing to take part. Please place the completed form in the envelope provided and return them to the box next to xxxxx office in Student Services. This way your response is confidential.

If you have any questions about this project please feel free to contact either myself (Kathy Clark) on xxxxxxxx or my supervisor Dr Helen Wildy on xxxxxxxxx.

My supervisor and I are happy to discuss any concerns which you may have regarding this research. If you wish to talk to an independent person about your concerns you can contact Murdoch University’s Human Research Ethics committee on 9360 6677.

If you would be prepared to volunteer I would be very grateful. I understand how busy Year 12 students are. I look forward to meeting some of you. Thank you for taking the time to consider this request.

Kathy Clark
12 March 2007
RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

NAME: ______________________________________

TUTOR GROUP: _____________________________

I __________________________________________ (name of participant) have read the information regarding the proposed research study entitled: *The pastoral academic divide: Impacts and implications for pastoral care*. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in the study and I know that I may change my mind and stop at any time.

I understand that all information provided will be treated as confidential and will not be released by the investigator unless required to do so by law.

I agree for the interview to be taped.

I agree that research gathered for this study may be published provided my name or other information which may be used to identify me is not used.

Signed participant: ___________________________

Date: __________

Signed Investigator: ___________________________

Investigator’s name: ___________________________

Date: __________

Please turn over to complete parental consent form
PARENTAL CONSENT SECTION

I __________________________________________ (name of parent or guardian) have read the information regarding the proposed research study entitled: The pastoral academic divide: Impacts and implications for pastoral care. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to allow my child to take part in the study, and I know that I may change my mind and stop at any time.

I understand that all information provided will be treated as confidential and will not be released by the investigator unless required to do so by law.

I agree for the interview to be taped.

I agree that research gathered for this study may be published provided my child’s name or other information which may be used to identify my child is not used.

Signed: __________________________________________
(participant’s parent or guardian)

Date: _________________

Signed Investigator: ______________________________

Investigator’s name: ______________________________

Date: _________________

Please place this form in the envelope provided and lodge it in the file in Student Services.
References


