An investigation into the teacher and pupil perceptions of the effectiveness of the reward and sanction programme to encourage focused learning and improve behaviour within the classroom in a secondary school.

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“A dedicated educational professional who continues to identify strategies to empower students to a successful conclusion through reflection in my own and other practitioners works.”
Abstract

‘Only when students value the rewards, perceive that academic achievement will lead to them, and believe that their own hard work will result in academic achievement, would we expect student engagement to increase’ (Newmann, 1992, p29).

An insightful collaboration of views regarding the effectiveness of the current reward programme that School X promotes to enhance effort and achievement for their students. In this paper the scheme is examined to establish how effective it is by identifying how knowledgeable the students and teachers who participate in it are, how it is promoted and what areas are exposed to suggest recommendations. This research involves identifying how consistency in giving rewards, clarity on how to achieve rewards and what rewards lead to are perceived to be the priority for students. The research has been contained to a secondary mainstream school based in a socially deprived area. The participants included three teachers and 26 Year 9 students based in the Resistant Materials department. A case study approach was adopted and a combination of research methods used including interviews and questionnaires.

The study finds the current scheme in this school is not performing according to the students and teachers that took part. This is not a general view and is limited to those that took part, within School X. It appears that due to the absence of several key elements that are required for it to be successful the scheme has become ineffective. The implications for this research are to be able to offer recommendations to School X to achieve a whole school programme that is successful and meaningful.
1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Over the past five years I have been working within the Design and Technology department in a mainstream secondary school that will be known as School X within this dissertation. I am increasingly focused on what motivates students to achieve the best possible outcome for their future. It has been identified that School X has trialled a series of programmes that incorporated extrinsic motivators to raise attainment with all students. The programme that is currently in use has been adopted for the past three years and is still in existence today. In this dissertation the programme will be referred to as ‘rewards programme’ however during the research it has been identified as ‘REAP’ to avoid confusion when collating data from students and teachers.

1.2 Topic Focus

The reward programme (REAP) that is current in School X is designed to offer students recognition and reward for hard work, effort and achievement in lessons and for participation in extra-curricular activities by awarding ‘points’. These points accumulate over the academic year and the students with the highest amount of points from each year group are invited to an awards ceremony at the end of the year to celebrate their achievements, with staff and parents. The students are then presented with prizes that have been allocated for them. Points are also linked to attendance, progress and attitude. Additionally, merits collected by the individuals are added onto their total at the end of the year. This programme has been designed to encourage higher levels of effort and motivation in students resulting in raising achievement across the school. This also links into the behaviour and attitude that students display.
1.3 Rationale

I have chosen this topic for my research as my professional career development is increasingly evolving towards working with students that are disengaging from education for a variety of reasons. Having worked with students in small groups over the past five years I have identified lack of motivation is a key factor to disengagement and after discussions with students it is clear that they believe the school does not always encourage rewards for effort over achievement. Having had experience of the effects of the reward scheme and seen the positive results it has had on students in previous years, it has been observed how the scheme has slowly diminished due to lack of interest and promotion. I felt it was important to explore why this is happening and how the students and staff at School X perceive the importance of this scheme. The research should address how and why the focus has slowly transferred away from its original objective. I will also be identifying if the scheme has been perceived as successful in the past to ascertain if it would be viable to continue with it.

More than ever, effort and achievement are still the key focus for the government and Ofsted, who commissioned a report to identify what influences achievement in schools. Allen (2013) identified that engaging students for effective learning is a ‘powerful ingredient in raising achievement’ (p14). To understand why this scheme is an important focus for the school it requires an investigation into what the scheme once achieved and how would it need to be developed to ensure a successful re-launch to re-ignite interest in order to continue to achieve its objective.

1.4 Benefits to School X, Students and Parents

At the end of the research I would like to be able to offer realistic recommendations to School X regarding this scheme by highlighting the real issues that, once addressed, could ensure this scheme can continue and be effective.
The benefits of a successful rewards programme for School X is the engagement it creates with the students and the whole school ethos to promote attainment and behaviour, two key challenges for the majority of schools. Education achievement is affected by the input from school, parents and the individuals themselves (Fraja et al., 2005) and increased effort equals an improved academic performance (p27).

For parents and students it is an opportunity to excel in education and be rewarded for effort and achievement, rather than ability which allows every student to participate. By including parents in the scheme they can identify how their child is progressing and can see the link between effort and achievement, thus hopefully promoting continued support from home. Harris and Goodall (2007) highlight the importance of parental engagement stating that it can ‘positively influence a child’s level of attainment’ (p5) and that it demonstrates to the child that they (the parents) value their child’s education (p53).

1.5 Research Questions

I will be using the three research questions below to provide answers that will identify how this scheme is viewed by the students and staff in School X.

How knowledgeable are teachers and students regarding this scheme within School X? This question is important to gain an understanding as to how the scheme is perceived and what level of knowledge is required for the teachers and students to engage with the programme. The research for this question will involve interviewing teachers and students and distributing questionnaires to students.

Does the scheme influence effort and achievement for students? This question requires an answer to identify if the scheme fulfils its overall objective. The views of students and teachers will be collated using interviews and questionnaires.
What are the perceptions of teachers and students regarding how this scheme is applied? This question will highlight how teachers and students engage with the scheme and identify how it is promoted in School X. These views will be gathered using interviews and questionnaires.

1.6 Context of Research

I will be undertaking all the research in School X, based around the Resistant Material classes with a cohort of Year 9 students and the teachers that currently teach these groups. This year group have been selected based on studies that show one of the elements ensuring children at Year 9 have a better social-behavioural outcome is the ‘behaviour climate’ of the school (Sammons et al., 2012, p2). There are three teachers involved in teaching lessons with these students and interviews will be carried out with each one. I will be distributing a questionnaire to 20 students to gain their views on the reward scheme and interviews will be carried out with 6 additional students to gain a deeper insight into their perceptions. The research will have the characteristics of a case study due to time restrictions and because all of the research will take place in one establishment regarding one issue.

1.7 Foreword

The following chapters will include a literature review which will highlight the controversy behind educational institutes offering reward programmes. This will also support the theories behind the success of such programmes and how they have to contain key features to be successful.

This will be followed by the approach and techniques behind the research methods chosen to conduct this study and my findings. An analysis and discussion of the findings will feature before a final conclusion submitted.
2. Literature Review

2.1 Background

Reward and sanction schemes have been evident in the educational system before 1952 (Highfield and Pinset, 1952, p2) to promote motivation and attainment amongst students. These schemes can be used to reinforce good behaviour and identify effort for all children, thus moving away from punishment-style sanctions that are in today’s society perceived as a negative way to reinforce unwanted behaviour. Schemes that promote rewards and sanctions are increasingly common in schools across the U.K. (Merrett and Merrett, 2013, p1). They are designed to improve effort and achievement through rewarding good behaviour, effort and outstanding work, with definitive consequences (sanctions) where appropriate. The focus on schools offering reward/sanction schemes, and their effectiveness, is part of an on-going debate. There has been conflicting views as to whether these schemes do more harm than good when comparing extrinsic and intrinsic rewards and their achievements within education.

2.2 Whole School

For these schemes to optimize effort and achievement it is increasingly apparent that they need to be whole-school led. These schemes can help define behavioural expectations and create a school community ethos to ensure that everyone involved is working towards the same outcomes, to create a universal programme intended to address behavioural interventions (The Sutton Trust, 2013, p10). The Steer Report (2005) that was intentionally addressing ways to target support in schools that required additional help to raise behavioural standards strongly advocates reward and sanction programmes.

The report stated ‘all schools should have a wide range of appropriate rewards and sanctions ... applied fairly and consistently’ (p18).
The underlying theory is through the implementation of programmes it will have an impact on pupil’s taking responsibility for their own behaviour management. This was also a previous recommendation from the Elton Report (1989) who conducted an enquiry into discipline in schools, stating a ‘healthy balance between rewards and sanctions’ (p25) was to be a high priority for schools with the aim to increase motivation and decrease dis-engagement. The report highlighted that to achieve the healthy balance rewards should be given on a ratio of 5:1 to sanctions. Promotion of rewards programmes also came from Ofsted (2008a) who released a report on engaging reluctant and disengaged pupils by suggesting ‘rewards, such as opportunities to go on trips or to gain awards, were a powerful incentive for students who struggled with school’ (p17).

2.3 Legislation

It is a statutory requirement that all schools have a behavioural policy that promotes the school rules to ensure that everyone involved in the school understands the behavioural expectations which include the definitions of good behaviour and the discipline actions that can be taken (DfE, 2013, p3). School X Behavioural Policy (School X, 2012, p2) dedicates a third of their policy to the current reward and sanction programme that it advocates, which does include other schemes that underpin this programme to reward students for exceptional effort and continually improving behaviour. This programme is closely linked to the behavioural policy to ensure the aim is clear to all involved and to clarify its objectives. It is important to define ‘whole-school’ to establish whose responsibility it is to maintain the programmes written within the behavioural policy, if they are to be successful.

This definition from Wearmouth et al., (2004) expresses that whole-school ‘involves all those who have to operate or are affected by a policy … to take responsibility for the maintaining of it to create and improve the school ethos’ (p6) for it to be successful.
It is evident that this should include all school staff, governors, students and parents to provide an inclusive consistent stance. Ofsted suggests that providing additional support with specialist training, advice, disciplinary powers and reinforcement of parental responsibility, will underpin and strengthen the behavioural policy and programmes that are implemented by the school (Ofsted, 2008a, p66/67).

It has been suggested that these programmes work well when seeking ways to re-engage pupils (Ofsted, 2008a, p17) and improve behaviour through the clear expectations of how rewards are given and clarity on what behaviour will be considered to initiate a sanction. For many schools these schemes have been implemented and are an integral part of the whole school development policy. Some educational departments believe that by implementing these programmes as an early intervention helps to sustain long-term positive behaviour (DENI, 1998, p8). This view is supported by the Department of Education (2012) who, in recognising the importance of promoting good behaviour within schools, sets out statutory guidance that all schools have to implement a policy that explains behavioural expectations and how this will be achieved.

Radical reform in the guise of the White Paper (Department for Education, 2010) highlights that an important factor to be addressed to increase attainment is in managing behaviour for every student. Clearly issues relating to behaviour management within schools is still evident with teachers citing this as a main reason for leaving the profession (p9), resulting in Ofsted targeting behaviour and safety in schools as part of their inspection framework (Ofsted, 2014, p18). The White Paper promotes rewards and sanction schemes as effective measures (p37) however for a scheme to be successful it must be consistently applied.

Rutherford and Nickerson (n.d) apply the theory that consistency needs to be evident to ensure a reward/sanction becomes embedded and respected within the school community.
This helps towards forming a ‘habit’ that becomes consistent and automatic resulting in the understanding behind the subsequent reward or consequence for behaviour. By applying this philosophy it can lead to a child feeling ‘secure, safe and stable’ (line 32). This links in with Maslow’s Hierarchy that constitutes that these needs are met before a person can move forward to access their full potential (Maslow, 1970: cited in Hjelle and Ziegler, 1981, p368).

2.4 Critics and Supporters

Reward and sanction systems have come under scrutiny from researchers with mixed reviews. Many prominent educators report that although there is some evidence that this system does motivate children, rewarding children for things that are not genuine achievements inhibits their ability to identify their own personal goals, depriving children of experiences of deeper learning. This suggests these schemes are only suitable for a short-term solution (Paton, 2009, line 57).

Kohn (1999) is a prolific researcher into the damaging effects that offering rewards (in any form) has on children simply as he theorises that one should not be doing something because of the promise of a reward. He feels the offering of rewards is counter-productive as it diminishes the interest in a task when taken away (or forgotten to be offered) and the more extrinsic the reward, the less intrinsic motivation occurs, resulting in long-term damage (p261).

Maehr and Archer (1985) agree that extrinsic motivation can detract from intrinsic independent motivation however they agree that extrinsic reward does increase achievement (p28).

It is placed amongst the four elements that are the top motivators for humans alongside task, ego and social approval. Merrett and Merrett (2013a) are clear that the range of rewards offered in the scheme need to be meaningful to the recipient and will be directly related to personal choice. This is integral to a successful rewards programme to increase motivation and ‘reinforce an individual’s underlying values’ (p2) whilst meeting their intrinsic motivation.
The views support that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can be beneficial to all learners as one can stimulate the other for internalising motivation when required (Ormrod, 2008, p386). Therefore there should be appropriate levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation available within classrooms to support this belief.

Rogers (2009, p131) discusses that some students will only make the minimum effort required to achieve when extrinsic rewards are offered. He also highlights that unless it is clear what the student has to do to achieve the reward, and what sanctions apply if they do not comply, then the framework can easily fall apart, rendering the scheme useless. A study into the effects of parental involvement regarding intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (Gottfried et al., 1994) culminated in findings suggesting ‘extrinsic consequences have been found to have a deleterious effect on children’s intrinsic motivation and learning’ (p110) and the support offered by the parent encourages ‘mastery’ of subjects is more important to sustain intrinsic motivation for learning for life. However, Gherasim et al., (2011) identified through their study which examined the performance of intrinsic motivation against achievement goals that achievement levels did not correspond directly to intrinsic motivation (p359).

Their conclusion suggested the part the teacher played in encouraging engagement and participation and ‘mastery’ of a subject was a significant contributor as to how these students performed.

This could suggest that a healthy balance of support offered in school and at home could help to heighten the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation required for a student to progress. This theory is sustained by Miller et al.,(1998) who deemed the most effective reward or sanction is supported through contact with home, as recognised by the students in their study, however it was identified that this was not seen as a high priority for the teachers especially when it came to offering positive feedback (p56).
Despite the disagreements between researchers and theorists, School X have adopted the approach to implement a whole-school reward programme to promote raising effort and attainment and clearly support the idea that it can achieve a positive impact on student’s work and effort. School X identify this support through the inclusion of the programme in the schools behavioural policy (School X, 2013, p3) and dedicates a third of the policy to discussion on the current programme which is accessible to staff, students and parents.

2.5 How rewards work

There are some researchers who advocate the use of these schemes to increase motivation within classrooms (Bentham and Hutchins, 2012, p94; Rogers, 2009, p59) and have identified that raising motivational levels with children leads to an increase in effort and achievement. This is supported by the government’s departmental report (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009) that highlights the need to reduce behavioural issues and exclusions by targeting behaviour management in schools which should lead to raising educational achievement for everyone.

Currently 98% of secondary schools subscribe to behaviour and attendance partnerships which include introducing programmes that help to manage behaviour within schools (p123) through increasing motivation.

Promoting motivation as a way to inspire pupils to learn is beneficial as without it this could ‘significantly affect their academic progress’ (p9) as Hobby and Smith (2002, p29) identified through their research.

Horner et al., (2004) conducted studies into implementing school-wide positive behaviour support with the results indicating a reduction into pupils being referred by the teacher when schools actively participated in defining behaviour expectations and maintaining rewarding appropriate behaviour (p3). It is essential for the teachers to define, teach and ‘consistently acknowledge and reward’ (p5) behaviour through positive reinforcement which creates a school culture that excels in positive behaviour ensuring safety and consistency is evident.
Through the results of a trial by Zimmerman (1989) there was a marked increase in attainment with students being offered extrinsic rewards for participation and performance rather than those offered a reward for just participating. By offering rewards based on both elements it led to an increased self-efficacy and learning by rewarding for performance (p335). He also theorises that students who use self-regulated strategies are advantaged when using this to control their behaviour (p336).

2.6 Summary

From this initial research it is clear that if these schemes are to be successful in their objective it is imperative that the children and the teachers that use the scheme understand what the school are trying to achieve and how this will ultimately benefit them. It is also supported that extrinsic rewards can raise effort and achievement levels within the classroom however it may not be suitable for all but must be accessible for everyone.

The strongest message consists of adopting a reward/sanction scheme that is whole-school led, consistently used and referred to regularly, used at every opportunity to embed the relevancy of the programme with regular reviews of the scheme. It also needs to be promoted across the whole school and be kept simple enough so students can access the scheme as a way of life in school. These key elements will be investigated to identify if they are present within the programme that School X promotes through interviews and questionnaires conducted from students and teachers who are at the heart of the success of the programme.
3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction and Research Questions

From conducting the literature review it has become apparent that there are several key elements to reward and sanction programmes that must be in evidence for them to be successful. To identify them in my research I will be conducting a case study which will identify and analyse the perceptions of teachers and students in School X. The qualitative data collated will allow analysis to be carried out to form a perspective as to whether these elements are present and to what extent, as well as to inform recommendations for School X. This is an empirical dissertation due to the nature of collating the views and opinions of the people that use this reward programme.

The information gathered from the literature review leads me to investigate three questions that underpin this dissertation and require answering to identify if the reward and sanction programme in School X is a successful scheme that meets its intended objectives or whether changes need to be implemented for it to reach its full potential. The questions that will underpin this dissertation are:

- How knowledgeable are teachers and students regarding this scheme within School X?
- Does the scheme influence effort and achievement for students?
- What are the perceptions of teachers and students regarding how this scheme is applied?
- What improvements would respondents wish to see?

I will be conducting a case study based research as this is considered to be the best way to gather the opinions and views of students and teachers.

This provides ‘an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth’ (Bell, 2010, p8; Becker, 1970, p75). This method allows me to complete the research required within a limited prescribed timeframe.
To provide an answer to the question ‘does reward encourage improved learning’ it is vital to this dissertation that the conclusions come from the staff and pupils of School X. It is their views that will identify the success (or not) of the current programme and inform any recommendations that could be presented to School X. The people that were chosen to participate in this case study are the students and teachers in School X that are currently using the scheme and have been since its inception three years ago.

3.2 Background

My role as a Teaching Assistant is based within the Design and Technology department so it seemed appropriate to target the students and teachers within this area as I have built up sound professional relationships. The students were randomly selected across two Year 9 mixed ability Resistant Materials classes (regardless of ability or special educational needs) to identify their perceptions of the programme and how it impacts on motivation within the classroom. I decided the Year 9 students are ideal candidates as the current programme came into practice as they arrived in School X and have benefitted from the full three years that the scheme has been in existence. They will have the knowledge and experience required to identify the key aspects of the scheme and offer their insight into the benefits it may have had on their learning and behaviour. It is also relevant to use this group as it has been identified that this is the year group that students move into Key Stage 4 which accelerates their learning as they prepare to work towards achieving their GCSE’s. This year group has been identified within School X as being a group with more behavioural issues than others.

This perception has been formed through a random verbal sample with staff in the weekly briefings held in School X. Other possible factors could include the move into adolescence (Sammons et al., 2012, p1).
3.3 Student Questionnaires

To obtain the views of the students a questionnaire (see Figure 1) was chosen as an appropriate method of research. It was constructed and distributed to 20 students. This number was chosen as it will generate enough manageable information that can be analysed within the timeframe allocated but still contain enough significant relevant information to form a viable view. This insight was generated from conducting a pilot study previously using a questionnaire where only 10 students participated. When analysing data it became apparent that this was not a large enough sample to form strong viewpoints therefore an increase in sampling was necessary.

To ensure that the selection of students would be a valid representation of Year 9 students stratified sampling was chosen, as discussed by Swetnam and Swetnam (2009, p43) to produce data from students that possess the same characteristics from the same general population. After gaining permission from the subject teacher, once students were seated, every third student would be given a questionnaire. There is no seating arrangements within the classes that were chosen for this research therefore the environment ensured a reduction in sampling error leading to improved overall representation (Sarnal et al., 2003, p100). As permission was sought from the parents of all the students within the two classes, indicating that each student may be asked to participate in completing a questionnaire or being invited to an interview, stratified sampling was achievable as no parent opted out of their child participating from either method of collating data.

The questionnaire would be suitable for the chronological age group, selecting carefully considered questions using language that would be familiar in context and vocabulary. The questionnaire needed to be easy to understand to ensure it could be completed in full with a minimum of effort required from the students to sustain interest to the end (Belson, 1981, p105).
A questionnaire is suitable as it allows information to be obtained from a larger group of people to form an overview within a limited timeframe (Greetham, 2009, p198). Supported with interviews from a stratified selection of students will enable richer data to be sourced and compared against the answers from the questionnaire when analysing the results (p198). The questionnaires are intended to identify how knowledgeable the students are regarding the current programme within School X, if they felt that it had an influence on their effort and achievement in class and if they could change elements of the programme, what they would be.

I remained in the room at all times to answer any queries that might arise and to reassure students that at any point they could withdraw from participation, as discussed in the British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2011, p11). Planning when to issue the questionnaire coincided with my timetable; an advantage as the students would be familiar with my presence and collaborating with the teacher ensures that there would be no interruptions during the task.

In order to strengthen my research I conducted a trial with a placebo group of Year 9 business students with the same questionnaire before administering it to the Year 9 students within Resistant Materials. These students were randomly selected from their class. The students appeared comfortable with the content of the questionnaire which showed that the content and language was suitable for the year group it was intended for.

When the data was collated and analysed against the results from the Year 9 Resistant Materials group there were no statistically relevant differences. This shows that the subject matter is irrelevant to the views of the students.

3.4 Prediction

My hypothesis, based on my own observations and the literature review, should show that students will have some knowledge of the reward programme however it will not be comprehensive enough to provide the motivation required to know how and why to gain rewards.
This will be due to the lack of awareness and promotion of this scheme across the whole school which has dwindled particularly over the past 12 months. I am basing this predication on anecdotal information gained from conversations and listening to students and teachers across the school. This questionnaire will help to form an answer for all the research questions that underpin this dissertation.

3.5 Student Interviews

Six students, three boys and three girls, from across these two groups have been chosen to be interviewed using the stratified selection process identified when conducting the first research method involving questionnaires. This will ensure that the data collated will continue to be valid and the sample cohort would be a fair representation of the subject group. The students selected to be informally interviewed will not contribute to completing the questionnaire. This is deliberate to allow an interview to be conducted to ascertain a deeper understanding into the perceptions of the students which would provide a richer data source to support the validity and reliability of evidence by comparing the responses with the questionnaires to identify commonalities between them (Bell, 2010, p120).

The interviews were conducted during their Resistant Material lesson time, with consent from the subject teacher and the voluntary consent of the students. The interviews were deliberately kept to a short timeframe to encourage participation and to keep interruption to a minimum in the lesson. The interview questions were of a similar nature to the questionnaire to maintain consistency required for the analysis of the answers (see Figure 2). A structured interview was chosen to reduce the time taken to conduct the interview and to develop a deeper insight into the perceptions of the students on the subject chosen only (Gillman, 2000, p11).
Interviews were chosen rather than a focus group to allow for each individual to comfortably express their views within a controlled environment whereas focus groups often expand and develop further away from the initial subject matter (Brewis and Leith, 2014, line 45) which was not suitable for the research I required. The interviews would enable me to acknowledge and encourage expansion on answers given to identify the perceptions of the students in relation to the rewards and sanctions programme they were participating in.

3.6 Prediction

My hypothesis initially predicts that the students will discuss having very similar experiences based on the results from the questionnaires where perception of the scheme appear to have many commonalities. Through deeper questioning it will become apparent to how the students have formed these views which will be analysed alongside the answers from the questionnaires conducted.

3.7 Teacher Interviews

The three subject teachers have been chosen to be interviewed as they teach the same cohort of students the same work in the same subject and therefore are able to identify what impact the programme has on their student’s progress, motivation and behaviour.

This will also generate knowledge to ascertain the level of participation with the programme that the teachers have and to what extent dependent on their knowledge of how the scheme works and if they were familiar with the objectives behind the programme. The method of interviewing was considered to be the best form of collating views as extended time for their interviews allowed for the questioning and responses to more complex to gather an in-depth understanding which would aid the analysis to answer the research questions. The interviews will be semi-structured with open questions to allow for opinions to be expressed (See Figure 3).
As their time is not as limited as the students who were interviewed, using open questions could extend the interview time and this will be addressed in the voluntary consent form, given one week before the interview is scheduled to allow for the teacher to allocate an hour for the interview to be conducted. A list of the questions to be asked will be given in advance to prepare the teachers as to the subject content and to ask questions beforehand if necessary (see Figure 3). This will ensure that the teachers feel informed about the subject content and to ‘reduce the sense of intrusion and to put them at their ease’ (BERA, 2011, p7), important when personal views are to be expressed.

The three teachers were interviewed to allow for further in-depth data to be collated to identify what their perceptions of the programme were and how these views were formed, completing the triangulation of data. Triangulation of data is an important tool which helps to check for validity when conducting studies through the process of analysing a research question from multiple perspectives (Cohen et al., 2007, p112). Using three methods of research allowed for information to be checked for accuracy and interpreted within the context it was delivered.

3.8 Prediction

I hypothesise that the teachers’ perceptions of the scheme will mirror those of the students and answer how knowledge of the scheme impacts on their participation in the current programme.

3.9 Summary of Methods

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<td>Interview</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Interview</td>
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This summary of data collection shows how many interviews were conducted and questionnaires distributed.
The amount of individuals chosen is in proportion to attaining a well balanced view of opinions to support and analyse to reach a conclusion.

Figure 1 - Questionnaire for Year 9 Students

THE QUESTIONS BELOW ARE LINKED TO THE SCHOOLS’ REWARD AND SANCTIONS SCHEMES. PLEASE READ EACH QUESTION CAREFULLY. HONEST ANSWERS WILL HELP US TO GATHER USEFUL INFORMATION. ALL QUESTIONNAIRES REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL AND ANONYMOUS.

Q1. What schemes do you know of in this school that offer you rewards? (Please tick as many of the ones that you know of).

- REAP Rewards
- Stamp System
- Merits
- PLTS Stickers
- None

Q2. Which scheme do you feel gives you rewards for your effort within lessons? (Please tick ANY that are relevant).

- REAP Rewards
- Stamp System
- Merits
- PLTS Stickers
- None

Q3. Which scheme do you feel gives you rewards for your achievement within lessons? (Please tick ANY that are relevant).

- REAP Rewards
- Stamp System
- Merits
- PLTS Stickers
- None
Q4. Are there any schemes that you think encourage you to take part in extra-curricular activities (e.g. homework clubs, sports fixtures, after school clubs in a variety of subjects, etc.)

☐ Yes

☐ No

Which ones:

……………………………………………………………………………………

Q5. Which reward scheme within this school are you most familiar with?

☐ REAP Rewards

☐ Stamp System

☐ Merits

☐ PLTS Stickers

☐ None

Q6. Which reward scheme within this school are you least familiar with?

☐ REAP Rewards

☐ Stamp System

☐ Merits

☐ PLTS Stickers

☐ None

Q7. How much do you know about the REAP reward system? (Please tick only one)

☐ Quite a lot

☐ Some knowledge

☐ Very little

☐ Nothing at all

Q8. Have you received enough information about REAP rewards to know how to collect them? (Please tick only one)

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure
Q9. How often do you talk about the REAP reward scheme to teachers?
- Daily
- Weekly
- Termly
- Never

Q10. How often do you talk about the REAP reward scheme to other students?
- Daily
- Weekly
- Termly
- Never

Q11. On a scale of 1 – 10, how confident are you of how the REAP rewards system works? (Please circle the one closest to how you feel)

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<th>Not Confident</th>
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Q12. Would you agree that the REAP rewards scheme encourages you to increase your efforts within class?
- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

Q13. Would you say that the REAP reward scheme encourages you to think about your achievements within class?
- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

Q14. Would you be interested to know more about the REAP reward system?
- Yes
- No
Q15. How do you think the scheme could be changed to show students that it does reward effort and achievement within class?

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. YOUR OPINIONS ARE VALUED.

Figure 2 - Extracts from Student Interviews

With Student B, C, D, E and F

What schemes do you know of in this school that offer you rewards?

Student B – “merits and stamps”.
Student C – “stamp system, merits and REAP rewards”.
Student D – “merits I think”.
Student E – “merits and PLTS stickers”.
Student F – “none that I would say offer rewards”.

Which scheme do you feel gives you rewards for your effort and achievement within lessons?

Student B – “merits are the only ones I think”.
Student C – “merits and REAP rewards but you just don’t see REAP anymore so not sure”.
Student D – “merits and REAP but no one talks about that much but they used to”.
Student E – “merits and PLTS stickers if you have done well”.
Student F – “none”.

Are there any schemes that you think encourage you to take part in extra-curricular activities?

Student B – “we get merits in the language club I go to after school which is always good”.
Student C – “we get caps for playing football for the school and that is my aim to get my tie”.
Student D – “No”.
Student E – “I don’t think so, can’t think of any”.

23
Student F – “None but I do a lot of clubs after school but don’t get anything offered to me, I just to them because I enjoy the things I do”.

Have you received enough information about REAP rewards to know how to collect them?

Student B – “I don’t think any of my teachers talk about REAP in any of my lessons anymore so we don’t even think about it”.

Student C – “it seems so long ago I can’t really remember”.

Student D – “we did at one time but it’s not something I would remember”.

Student E – “not sure. I think my friends would know if I wanted to ask them”.

Student F – “I don’t think so”.

How often do you talk about the REAP reward scheme to teachers and other students?

Student B – “what would we talk about? Don’t really know much about it anymore nor does any of my friends and teachers never mention it!”.

Student C – “I don’t think I can remember the last time I heard anything about it from friends or teachers”.

Student D – “No, don’t ever discuss it”.

Student E – “I don’t”.

Student F – “my friends occasionally talk about it but never the teachers”.

Would you agree that the REAP rewards scheme encouraged you to increase your efforts and think about your achievements within class?

Student B – “I think it might have done but it’s been a while so not sure”.

Student C – “I think it is the teachers’ attitude and mine that makes me want to do well in the lesson rather than what I might get”.

Student D – “Possibly but don’t really remember”.

Student E – “No, definitely not”.

Student F – “No, I don’t think it did”.
If the REAP rewards system was re-launched and more focus was put into recognising the effort that students put in, do you think this would make a difference to the effort that you put into lessons?

Student B – “yeah, I think so”.

Student C – “definitely as I would feel that my hard work is being recognised”.

Student D – “yes, it would feel that the teacher knows how much effort is going into my work”.

Student E – “I think so, possibly”.

Student F – “Not sure, maybe”.

How was the rewards system promoted across the school when it was first introduced to you?

Student B – “I can’t remember the last time I saw anything about it in school. There used to be assemblies about it all the time”.

Student C – “we used to have regular assemblies where we would hear about REAP and who had the most. It was good to see who we needed to beat!”.

Student D – “there were posters and assemblies and everyone talked about it, but not now”.

Student E – “Assemblies and form tutors used to talk about it at least once a week”.

Student F – “in assembly they used to tell us who was doing well and it was embarrassing if you were at the bottom! I don’t miss those ones”.

Have you seen the large boards that explain how to gain REAP rewards that are based in each curriculum area?

Student B – “no”.

Student C – “don’t think so”.

Student D – “no”.

Student E – “not sure, no”.

Student F – “no”.

If the scheme was promoted well across the school again with regular assemblies and teachers encouraged to talk about it with you, do you think this would make a difference to how you view the system?

Student B – “yes, I might learn more about it and then want to get more reward points”.

25
Student C – “I think that would be good to know more about it, getting everyone talking about it again”.

Student D – “it would be nice to think you are getting something that shows people know how much work you put in to actually doing the work”.

Student E – “I would think so”.

Student F – “yes, possibly. Be good to have something to aim for”.

If the scheme was re-launched and you had the option to choose what prizes you could achieve at the end of the year, would this be better than having prizes chosen for you?

Student B – “oh yes! That would be worth getting points for. What kind of prizes could we choose?”.

Student C – “I think so. You could choose something that lots of people want and then it would help those people to get more rewards than the other people”.

Student D – “it would definitely help everyone in the class and might even keep students on track instead of mucking around if they had something to gain at the end of the year”.

Student E – “Yes, that would be an excellent idea”.

Student F – “Wow, that would be really good. It would make me look at the scheme differently”.

If teachers were to be retrained to ensure consistency in awarding points across the school and it was made very clear how to achieve the points would you think the scheme would be a worthwhile project?

Student B – “Yes, I think that would work, sounds good”.

Student C – “sounds like an excellent idea”.

Student D – “I am still not sure whether that would be enough. Maybe the school should look at something else, a new thing”.

Student E – “that would be much better as we would all know precisely where we all stand”.

Student F – “Yes, it would be good for everyone I am sure”.

What changes would you like to see happen to the REAP rewards scheme?

Student B – “be nice if you could choose your own prizes, think that would make a huge difference”.

Student C – “for everyone to be clear how to get points and teachers remember to give them to you”.

26
Student D – “Maybe gain more points if they (the teachers) see how much extra work you are putting in to get the top marks”.

Student E – “choose own prizes and maybe get them more than once a year”.

Student F – “I think if everyone knew more and what they could get it would make things clearer and get people to want to achieve more to get cool prizes”.

Figure 3 - Interview Questions for Teacher Interviews

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How familiar are you with the REAP reward scheme?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>In your opinion, have you received enough information and training on this scheme to feel confident to use it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Would you say that the REAP reward system has been given enough awareness within the school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Would you agree that the students that you teach have an understanding of how the REAP system works?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>How often do you refer to REAP within lessons?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Do you think the schemes objective is clear and understood by students? Do you think the objectives are clear and understood by other teachers within the school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>How do you feel the scheme could be altered to achieve its objective of raising and rewarding effort and achievement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>In your opinion, do you think that the REAP rewards scheme is a factor in engaging students to increase effort and achievement in lessons/across the school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Are you an advocate for the current scheme?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Within this school are you aware of other schemes that are currently used which could achieve the same objective of raising and rewarding effort and achievement?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These questions will form the framework for the interview however there will be opportunities to expand the conversation to obtain your opinions and perceptions. If you have any questions before the interview takes place please do not hesitate to contact me.

Ethical Considerations

When conducting research it is vital to consult and adhere to the guidelines for educational research as discussed by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) and with the University of Northampton Ethics Code and Procedures Handbook (n.d.).
This ensures that I will be following recommended guidance to ensure an ethical professional approach is taken when conducting all forms of research. For the purposes of this dissertation the school that this case study takes place in will be protected and will be known as School X throughout.

As this case study involves students and teachers from School X all data was gathered over a period of time within the school day. Permission was granted by the Head Teacher of School X and my dissertation tutor who both agreed that this research could be undertaken in accordance with the ethical strategy that was set out in the Ethics Approval form.

The interview sessions with the teachers were scheduled in with voluntary written consent obtained prior to the interview as required by the British Educational Research Association guidelines (BERA, 2011, p5). Also included was the list of questions that were to be asked to help the teacher to prepare for the session to allow for the opportunity for any questions to be asked.

The questionnaires and interviews conducted with the students was only undertaken once permission had been granted from the parents and carers of the students across the two classes which was designed for parents to opt-out by contacting me if they chose not to give permission to limit the response time the option was given.

There were dates given on the letter to parents that informed them of when the questionnaire and interviews would be conducted to ensure they had sufficient time to contact me if they required any further information. The interviews with the students were scheduled across their next two lessons, allowing 15 minutes per interview.

All data was strictly anonymous and confidential and once data had been collected, it was kept in a secure storage unit until required. This is in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998).
The agreement with all parties involved is their interviews and questionnaires will be destroyed once confirmation of results from this dissertation are received. The teachers will be known as Teacher A, Teacher B and Teacher C to protect their identity and maintain anonymity. The students that were interviewed are to be known as Student A, Student B, Student C, Student D, Student E and Student F.
4. Results and Data Presentation

4.1 Results from questionnaires with students.

Q1.

This question allowed for students to select as many of the schemes that they were familiar with. The students appeared more familiar with the REAP reward system and the merits system in place within School X.

Q2.

This question allowed for students to tick more than one option. The majority of students chose ‘merits’ for the scheme they perceived to offer them rewards for showing effort within the classroom.

Q3.

This question allowed for students to choose more than one option dependent on their opinion. The results show that the majority of students selected ‘merits’ as the scheme that offered them rewards for showing achievement within the classroom.
Q4. Are there any schemes that you think encourage you to take part in extra-curricular activities?

This question identifies that for the majority of students they perceive that no scheme encourages them to participate in extra-curricular activities. A quarter of students did agree that there were schemes that encouraged participation however did not specify which ones. Four students did not give an answer either way.

Q5. Which reward scheme within this school are you most familiar with?

This question allowed for students to choose more than one option. Over half of the students chose ‘merits’ as the most familiar reward system within School X. The REAP and Stamp systems were the second choice to be chosen.

Q6. Which reward scheme within this school are you least familiar with?

Although this question could have been answered more than once students chose to answer only once. This helped to identify that the REAP rewards scheme is not the least familiar compared to other schemes.
Q7. How much do you know about the REAP reward system? 
- Quite a lot: 4
- Some knowledge: 4
- Very little: 8
- Nothing at all: 4

This question starts to specifically target the REAP reward programme. Over half of the students knew very little or nothing at all about the scheme.

Q8. Have you received enough information about REAP rewards to know how to collect them?
- Yes: 3
- No: 8
- Unsure: 9

This question was designed to prompt recollection of when this scheme has been marketed and if the information was sustained. Only three students felt secure in the knowledge of how to gain REAP rewards.

Q9. How often do you talk about the REAP reward scheme to teachers?
- Daily: 0
- Weekly: 0
- Termly: 6
- Never: 14

All students answered this question which highlighted that the REAP reward scheme was only discussed with teachers on a termly basis, and from a higher percentage, never discussed with teachers at any time.
Q10.

All students answered this question and it portrayed the exact same results, with students talking to one another about the scheme on a termly basis, with the majority never discussing it all with one another.

Q11.

The confidence levels of the students regarding how the REAP system works range significantly however the mean average is 4.25.

Q12.

This question was asked to identify if the REAP rewards scheme actively encourages students to increase their effort in lessons. The results showed that for the majority of students it did not and a very small percentage admitted it did sometimes.
Q13. Would you say that the REAP reward scheme encourages you to think about your achievements within class?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question identified that for 8 students the REAP reward scheme did not encourage thinking about achievements in class, with 8 students saying that sometimes it did make them think and 4 students saying the system was responsible for them thinking about their achievements.

Q14. Would you be interested to know more about the REAP reward system?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question identified that over two thirds of students would like to know more about the REAP reward system.

Q15. How do you think the scheme could be changed to show students that it does reward effort and achievement within class?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Amount of students who agreed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easier to gain</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller prizes more often</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should get more for trying (in class)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give better rewards</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster and emails for information</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain more for going to clubs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50p on lunch card for each REAP reward</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students were able to answer this question with no limitations therefore their responses have been grouped dependent on what they suggested, and placed in ranking order. The most popular suggestions included having rewards that were easier to obtain, having smaller prizes on offer on a regular basis, being offered rewards more regularly when a student has tried harder in class and for the scheme to be advertised through visual displays and electronically.

Student Interview Results

The first question was to establish how much knowledge the six students had about the schemes that offered rewards in school and which ones rewarded specifically for effort. Most indicated that only the merit scheme achieved this however 2 out of the 6 students did acknowledge the REAP rewards programme, with one student stating “The REAP rewards did do it to for a year but not anymore. I haven’t seen it for a while” (Student A, see Figure 2). When asked why REAP rewards have not been identified as a programme that rewards effort and achievement comments included “you just don’t see it anymore” (Student C, see Figure 2) and “no one talks about it much but they used to” (Student D, see Figure 2). From a couple of comments made by these students it is understood that the merit scheme is perceived to be for ‘younger students’, mainly Year 7’s and 8’s rather than their year group. It was also established that merits are not given out as easily when in Year 9.

Continuing onto what schemes in School X encourages taking part in extra-curricular activities 3 out of the 6 students said that there were none. 2 students commented that they have high levels of involvement in sports already which result in attaining ‘caps’ (recognition of achievement) but they are offered nothing else. 1 of the students mentioned “I do a lot of clubs after school but don’t get anything offered to me, I just do them because I enjoy the things I do” (Student F, see Figure 2).
The question ‘Have you received enough information about REAP rewards to know how to collect them?’ prompted students to move into discussions that indicated that none of the six students interviewed were confident about how to gain rewards. Comments included “I don’t think any of my teachers talk about REAP in lessons anymore so we don’t even think about it” (Student B, see Figure 2) and “It seems so long ago I can’t really remember” (Student C, see Figure 2).

However, Student A recognises that she did know how to achieve points, mainly in Maths and only because teachers constantly addressed the rewards programme at the start of the lessons but this has slowly disappeared. She says “I know how to get them but I don’t think from my knowledge, I don’t think they are doing them anymore” and “I thought it had died out”.

The following two questions pertained to if these 6 students spoke to their peers and teachers regarding the REAP scheme and all six students gave the exact same answer that they did not talk about it with other students or teachers. Student B phrased his response as “what would we talk about? Don’t really know much about it anymore nor does any of my friends and teachers never mention it!”.

When asked whether the students increased their effort and achievement levels when REAP rewards were being offered (at the height of the scheme) none of the students believed that this made any difference to the effort they put into the work. Student A did however comment that she did try harder in Maths but only when rewards were promoted at the time. In other lessons she did not have the same motivation.

This prompted further questioning which included asking the 6 students that if they were guaranteed REAP rewards in every lesson they attended should effort and achievement be evident, would they then think more about the effort they put in.
Surprisingly, 5 out of 6 students said that yes this would make a difference to them thinking more about effort. Student A adds “you would do more work and try harder, I think” and she believes this view would be the same within her peer group.

When asked about promotion of the scheme across the school including assemblies, the students comments were virtually identical stating ”we don’t have assemblies about it anymore” and ”I can’t remember the last time I saw anything about it in school”. This led onto asking the students if any of them had seen the large posters that are displayed in each curriculum area that indicates how to gain REAP rewards and the response was negative from all 6 students. All of the 6 students interviewed did think that if the scheme was promoted well that it would make a difference to how they viewed the scheme.

2 out of the 6 students had been invited to the REAP evening ceremony to celebrate their achievements however both students could not recall how they had achieved the amount of points. Both students commented that the prizes were allocated to them and neither were impressed, with Student A saying “they gave me a Wii (computer console), I already had one!”. When asked if it would have been more rewarding to be able to choose their own prizes both said that would have been a better option.

Each student was asked if they thought by re-launching the scheme with prizes that would interest them, would they be interested again in the scheme. 5 out of the 6 students said yes commenting ”if you encourage them (students) enough I think that would increase their learning abilities” (Student A) and ”it would definitely help everyone in the class and might even keep students on track instead of mucking around” (Student D).
This prompted a hypothetical question that if teachers were to be retrained to ensure consistency in awarding points and made it clear to students how to gain points, would they then believe the scheme would be worthwhile. All students were positive about this scenario commenting that “sounds like an excellent idea” (Student C) and “oh yes!” (Student A) and “that would be much better” (Student E).

Asking what changes the students would like to see in the REAP rewards scheme the comments mainly centred on having individual choices for the prizes and the consistency of awarding points by teachers.
### 4.3 Teachers Interview Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question and Respondent ID</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Similar / Same Responses</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1. How familiar are you with the REAP reward system?</td>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>50% familiar with it</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The answers to this question show that there is some familiarity with the reward scheme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>Familiar with the scheme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher C</td>
<td>Very familiar with the scheme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2. In your opinion have you received enough information and training on this scheme to feel confident to use it?</td>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>This question identifies that none of the teachers feel that they have had enough information or training on the reward scheme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>Sort of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher C</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3. Would you say that the REAP reward system has been given enough awareness within the school?</td>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The three teachers agree that there is not enough awareness within School X about this reward scheme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher C</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4. Would you agree that the students that you teach have an understanding of how the REAP system works?</td>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>No – not anymore</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 out of the 3 teachers agreed that the students they teach do not have an understanding of the reward scheme however one suggests that students may have some knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>Maybe – vague idea possibly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher C</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Question and Respondent ID</td>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Similar / Same Responses</td>
<td>Response Code</td>
<td>Summary</td>
</tr>
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<td>-------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q5. How often do you refer to REAP within lessons?</strong></td>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>Not this year</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>Not this year</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher C</td>
<td>I don’t</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q6. Do you think the schemes objective is clear and understood by students?</strong></td>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q6a. Do you think the objectives are clear and understood by other teachers within the school?</strong></td>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher C</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To some level</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q7. How do you feel the scheme could be altered to achieve its objectives of raising and rewarding effort and achievement</strong></td>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>Simplified and clarity as too complicated</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>Be consolidated with other systems running so there is one programme to feed into</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher C</td>
<td>Be promoted more by teachers and more regular rewards for the children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Question and Respondent ID</td>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Similar / Same Responses</td>
<td>Response Code</td>
<td>Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8. In your opinion do you think that the REAP rewards scheme is a factor in engaging students to increase effort and achievement in lessons/across the school?</td>
<td>Teacher A: It would do but not enough talking about it means it gets forgotten</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The three teachers agree that although the scheme does not engage students in increasing effort and achievement currently, it did at the beginning of the scheme when it was in focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher B: At times in the early days yes but no one talks about it anymore</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher C: Yes we saw a real rise but now it has lost focus and emphasis</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9. Are you an advocate for the current scheme?</td>
<td>Teacher A: Yes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>All three teachers agreed that they were advocates of the reward scheme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher B: Yes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher C: Yes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10. Within this school, are you aware of other schemes that are currently used which could achieve the same objective of raising and rewarding effort and achievement?</td>
<td>Teacher A: Merits but it’s not the same reward – not physical and kids don’t take pride in achieving them</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Two of the teachers compared the merit scheme as offering the same objective as the reward programme however they identified that merits did not hold the same value and were more interesting to students in KS3 than KS4. One teacher said there was no other scheme that achieved the same objective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher B: General merits good for the KS3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher C: No, there are several schemes that underpin the REAP reward scheme though it is not clear that they all work in conjunction with each other</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Recap

The data was collected with the intention of identifying perceptions of teachers and students on aspects of School X’s reward programme. Interviews and questionnaires were conducted within School X and are not a generalisation but significant to this establishment. The strength of the data is trustworthy as triangulation has been conducted to ensure that reliability of data is maintained throughout by using three research methods allowing information received to be cross-referenced which validates the information.

The research questions underpinning this dissertation have been attempted to be answered.

5.2 How knowledgeable are teachers and students regarding this scheme in School X?

To answer this question data was collated and compared using the teachers’ grid, results from student questionnaires and the students’ interview responses. Analysing the teachers’ grid shows that it has been expressed through the interviews with the teachers that although they have some understanding of the school’s reward programme it is clear that they all acknowledge that they are not confident in promoting it.

They feel their knowledge is now out-dated, with 2 out of the 3 teachers expressing that they have not received enough information and training on the scheme to use it, and 1 of the teachers tentatively expressed they felt ‘sort of’ confident. The teachers felt the students they teach do not have a competent understanding of the reward programme with 2 teachers saying definitely no and one teacher suggesting that students might possibly have a ‘vague idea’.
They also agree that neither students nor teachers are clear about the programmes objectives with only one teacher mentioning that it is a possibility that teachers within the school do have an understanding ‘to some level’, though this was not expressed confidently. It is interesting to note that they are all still advocates for the current scheme even though they admit they no longer refer to the scheme in class with students.

Through the interviews and questionnaires with the students, similar views were expressed with a higher than average number of students acknowledging some familiarity with the schools reward programme. When asked in the questionnaire how much students knew about the reward programme over half said they had either very little knowledge or knew nothing at all with only 4 students out of 20 saying they knew ‘quite a lot’. This was supported by the answers supplied by the students in their interview with 6 out of 6 students all agreeing that they were not confident with what the reward programme did and what its objective was.

It is clear from these results that the answer to the research question appears that neither students or teachers feel they have enough knowledge about this scheme for it to have any major impact on their effort and achievement within class. ‘Knowledge is power’ and clearly the scheme has no power or relevance due to insufficient knowledge and understanding of the scheme or its objectives.

The knowledge that both teachers and students had of the rewards programme has diminished due to lack of awareness in the school, which if applied and promoted consistently would have been embedded into the school ethos and maintained as discussed in the literature review by Rutherford and Nickerson (n.d.).

This research question can confidently be answered. Teachers and students do not have enough knowledge regarding this scheme to participate or contribute to the success of this scheme.
This is shown in the combined results from all three research methods which supports and strengthens the reliability of the data because of the consistency of common answers that have been given.

5.3 Does the scheme influence effort and achievement for students?

This question is answered by analysis of the responses from all participants involved, students and teachers. From the interviews with the teachers they believe that the scheme did at one time factor in engaging students to increase effort and achievement in lessons. This was when the scheme was in its infancy and was regularly promoted and referred to in a whole-school manner including assemblies, posters and regularly being discussed with teachers and students. The three teachers interviewed agreed that the focus and emphasis has been lost with the programme which has resulted in students not identifying this particular scheme to reward for effort and achievement.

This is echoed by the results from the questionnaires with students when they were asked if this scheme encouraged increasing effort and achievement in lessons and 12 out of 20 students admitted that the scheme did not encourage effort, with 2 students saying that sometimes it did.

8 out of 20 students identified that the programme did not encourage them to think about achievements in class, however 8 students did agree that sometimes the scheme did make them think about achievements, with only 4 students attributing the scheme to thinking about their achievements.

5 out of 20 students did agree that there were schemes within School X that encouraged them to participate in extra-curricular activities however 4 of the students declined to give an answer. During the interviews with the 6 students it became apparent through discussion on these two questions that they did not believe that the programme in any way informed their thinking of effort or achievement within lessons.
This indicates that if all the students had the opportunity to be interviewed and their answers probed this could have formed a clearer picture that the 8 students that chose ‘sometimes’ on the questionnaire may have changed their views.

It is clear that the teachers do believe that at one time the programme did have a positive effect on effort and achievement on students within the classroom, and for one teacher, a higher attendance for after school activities. They indicate that due to this programme not being given the recognition it requires is the reason behind students failing to link this programme to the rewards that are offered when increased effort and achievement are identified.

Students’ views were similar in the interview sessions where the influence on effort and achievement was acknowledged only by the students that had benefitted from the rewards programme through being invited to the awards ceremony to collect prizes.

If students had not experienced this then I predict their answers would match to the remaining students that they cannot recall whether the scheme has had an effect on their motivation within class.

My research shows that the rewards programme did achieve its objective at some point as confirmed by the teachers who are basing their perceptions on the progression and attitude of this cohort of students that they have been teaching over the past three years.

The students however disagreed which could be attributed to the fact that the scheme has not been in evidence for a lengthy period of time and it may be difficult to recall influences that occurred in key stage 3. This is supported by Rogers (2009, p131) who recognises that these schemes only work if the rewards are tangible and clear to the student what they have to achieve to gain rewards.
5.4 What are the perceptions of teachers and students regarding how this scheme is applied?

By analysing the questions and answers from students and teachers it is evident how they perceived the appliance of the scheme from their answers.

During the interviews with the teachers, Teacher A expressed the view that the scheme is too complicated and feels there is a need to simplify it and re-clarify to teachers and students how to make it work. They felt it was too time consuming and as they are under pressure to deliver so many other things this scheme does get neglected.

Teacher B felt that with all the other schemes running in conjunction with the reward programme the system has become ‘diluted and splintered’ therefore ineffective. Teacher C agreed with the two other teachers, commenting that there are so many other initiatives within School X that this scheme has been forgotten about. Additionally, Teacher C expressed concern that the school does not positively reward students enough and it is only at the end of the year when a rewards ceremony is held to highlight those students who have accumulated reward points that the pressure is evident for teachers to re-visit the reward programme with students. This ultimately does not achieve the objective of the scheme to be consistently applied throughout the whole academic year to see steady progress in effort and achievement from students.

From the results with the students who completed the questionnaires it is identified that there is not enough evidence of the scheme being applied from the school or the teachers. In Q8 of the questionnaire when asked about receiving enough information regarding the rewards programme 8 of the 20 students said they had not received enough information, 9 were unsure if they had enough information to be actively involved in the programme and only 3 said yes to knowing how to gain rewards.
This is supported by Q9 and Q10 when identifying how often they talked to their peers or teachers regarding the scheme and both sets of results mirrored each other with 14 students admitting they never speak about it and only 6 discussing it with peers and teachers on a termly basis. When interviewing the students it is clear that they support the questionnaire results with 5 out of 6 students stating that they do not discuss this programme with their friends anymore and have not heard teachers talk about it for over a year.

My hypothesis suggested that students and teachers would have too limited knowledge of the reward programme for it to be comprehensively executed within School X. My results suggest that due to limited promotion of this scheme from teachers and the school, both teachers and students have lost all confidence and motivation in the scheme and rarely acknowledge it. Assemblies, posters and regular updates on the programme have ceased to exist which has resulted in students not linking the programme to their effort and achievement in lessons and teachers forgetting the positive motivation to students that was once in evidence when the scheme was actively promoted and consistently applied.

Therefore the perception of how the scheme is applied is almost non-existent in both the teachers and students views. Again, all three research methods correspond with one another to support the findings that the scheme is no longer applied visibly or through instruction. This identifies that the data collated and analysed is trustworthy and valid. It has been clearly identified within the literature review that these schemes rely on a consistent whole-school approach that has to be evident through acknowledgement and reward, positive reinforcement (Horner et al., 2004, p5).
6. Conclusion

6.1 Results

My research shows the reward programme that is in existence in School X is not effective according to the views of the students and teachers that participated in this study. The factors that need to be present to guarantee a successful system that rewards effort and achievement have been identified within the literature review. These points were addressed throughout the research conducted with the students and staff at School X. The key factors to an effective rewards programme include a programme that is fully embedded within the school ethos, be highly visible, be clear and consistent with tangible prizes that the students can relate to, and want. Through undertaking this research it is clear that there is a distinct discrepancy between what is in existence within School X and what is required to ensure a successful programme that is embraced by all students and staff. This study has shown that there is evidence in the literature review that supports my findings.

6.2 Perceptions of Students and Teachers

It has been recognised the inconsistent approach to using this scheme has had a detrimentally negative effect on students. The students that participated in this case study expressed views that reinforced the opinion the current scheme is not promoted and supported enough in the school which has led to an apathy amongst these students. They also offered views that supported the need for the prizes to be ‘relevant to the behaviour or performance’ to be a motivating factor. This is supported by Crow and Small (2011) who advocate that by offering relevant choices for rewards can maintain or increase autonomy, competence and connections with others (p6).

I have no doubt that this would be a view that is shared amongst the majority of students within School X due to the commonalities within their answers during interviewing and answers from the questionnaires.
The teachers that have been involved in this study also have common views on the complex nature of how the scheme is implemented and have expressed that if the scheme was simplified, consistently applied and promoted well, it could once again be the successful programme that was delivered three years ago, yielding results that have been perceived by the teachers in this study as providing a positive extrinsic motivator.

6.3 Justification to keep the scheme

These schemes across schools in the UK are an integral part of the school structure and there is strong justification as to why they should continue. A system that is focused on effort and achievement has an increased positive impact on the students’ learning by being non-judgemental of their abilities but focused more on encouragement (Hitz and Driscoll, 1989, p3), of which is the objective of the scheme at School X.

I believe that the decision to discontinue this current scheme and possibly replace it is counterproductive. This is because the scheme has had money and time already invested in it and although the students and teachers are not as knowledgeable as they once were, they can all recall important aspects of the scheme that will contribute to the re-launching of the scheme, with its minor adjustments.

These findings are extremely relevant to School X. Not only will they provide an overall insight into how the scheme is currently perceived by students and staff but by identifying aspects of the scheme that could be adapted it could be re-launched successfully once all the key elements are in place.

For School X, it will require a dedicated leader to address these issues and sustain promotion across the school, as well as monitoring how the scheme is delivered by the staff. Time and money will be required however it would prove more expensive to start over with a new scheme when the current scheme requires a fraction of the cost and time in order to become viable again.
6.4 Impact on professional practice

The impact this would have on my professional role if the changes were to be adopted would see an increase in my involvement in consistently encouraging students to actively participate in the scheme through promotion of the key elements and the highlighting of the extrinsic rewards that can be achieved. This should impact on the motivational levels of the majority of the students that I work with through the offering of tangible incentives for extra work and activities that can help students to raise their attainment. Education is often judged solely on performance and if this reward scheme helps students to achieve their performance to the best of their abilities then it should be adopted and promoted as a policy that will have value that is recognised by the whole school.

6.5 Relevance and wider implications

The relevance of this study could have a wider impact if it encouraged schools to look at what reward programmes they have in existence and allow students and staff to offer their opinions in order to adapt them (if necessary) to ensure it reaches its maximum potential through the very people who use the scheme to achieve an increase in effort and achievement.

If an opportunity arose to further this study, it would be beneficial to adopt the theories and perceptions researched in this dissertation and then conduct another study on a larger scale.

This would allow for comparisons to be made against the original views and to hopefully identify the positive changes that have had an impact on the students and teachers, in effort and achievement, as well as in attitude and behaviour across the whole school. Another aspect that would need to be addressed is the use of the scheme by teachers. Training would need to be administered to ensure that consistency is maintained regardless of teaching style to ensure students and teachers understand implicitly how one achieves the points that leads to rewards.
In hindsight, this study would have allowed for a larger number of students across each key stage to be represented, particularly as it has been suggested by senior management within School X that these schemes tend to have a larger impact amongst key stage 3 students due to the perceived ‘primary’ links to achieving rewards which is more evident in primary education. This would have allowed for a balanced overview of the rewards programme across the whole school and may have indicated areas that would need to be incorporated to ensure the majority of students would actively participate.

6.6 Recommendations for School X

Below are my recommendations for the rewards programme for School X.

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<th>Recommended changes</th>
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<th>Supported by</th>
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<tr>
<td>Re-training of staff and students on the scheme to raise awareness and maintain consistency.</td>
<td>Re-ignite interest across the whole school. Promoting the simplified version of adding reward points. Clarify how points can be attained and how many.</td>
<td>Rogers (2009, p131). Horner et al. (2004, p5).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote the scheme regularly through assemblies, tutor participation, emails and visual aids.</td>
<td>Ensures all staff are actively involved in participating in the scheme, supported by promotion opportunities around the school to maintain awareness and get students and staff talking about the</td>
<td>Rutherford and Nickerson (n.d.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunities to gain rewards.</td>
<td>Combine two of the other incentive systems into the reward programme creating one main scheme. This would create one programme whose focus that would aid</td>
<td>Teacher A, Teacher B and Teacher C (2014).</td>
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<td>Simplify the system to make it easier for staff to issue rewards and for students to access their rewards totals.</td>
<td>Students would know throughout the academic year what they can achieve with their points, motivating them to continuously strive to collect the maximum points. An input from a selection of students could raise awareness of what prizes students want to see awarded.</td>
<td>Merrett and Merrett (2013a, p2).</td>
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<td>Market the tangible prizes throughout the year to sustain interest and motivation.</td>
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### 6.7 Final Thoughts

To conclude, I believe that the perceptions of the teachers and students who participated in this study show that the current reward scheme is underperforming and ineffective. It has been discussed in this conclusion the failings of the scheme and if recommendations for change are adopted then this could change the way students and teachers embrace this programme in the future.
This would lead to the programme fulfilling its potential whilst actively encouraging focused learning and improved behaviour.
References


Ofsted (2008a) *Good practice in re-engaging disaffected and reluctant students in secondary schools*. London: Crown Copyright. Reference no. 070255


