Editorial

This is the first number of *FORUM* to be prepared and edited in its entirety *after* the June 2001 General Election; and this extended Editorial provides me with an ideal opportunity to *both* look back over the four years of the first Blair administration *and*, at the same time, provide a personal assessment of prospects for the future in the light of the policies outlined in the Education Green Paper *Schools: building on success: raising standards, promoting diversity, achieving results*, launched back in February. It may well be that the key proposals in the Green Paper will have been 'updated' in the form of a new White Paper by the time this Editorial appears; but one imagines that the main trends of government policy will merely have been confirmed.

After 18 years of coping with the wild excesses of a succession of right-wing Tory governments, some *FORUM* readers might well have been prepared to give the Blair administration the benefit of the doubt where education policy is concerned. Yet the contents of the Green Paper, along with the Prime Minister's own well-publicised pronouncements on the failings of comprehensive education and the need for universal streaming and setting, seem to me to put the whole issue beyond question: put simply, New Labour is implacably opposed to everything this journal has campaigned for since the late 1950s. It matters not that Estelle Morris has now replaced David Blunkett as Education Secretary; the policies endorsing choice, diversity, selection and privatisation remain the same, and they must be challenged at every level.

It is quite extraordinary but very revealing that the Prime Minister saw no reason to distance himself from the deliberate and insulting claim made by his official spokesperson Alastair Campbell that the publication of the Green Paper meant that the day of 'the bog-standard comprehensive' was clearly over. Indeed, by arguing that the Green Paper was actually ushering in 'a post-comprehensive era', Tony Blair was giving welcome ammunition to all the opponents of comprehensive education, provoking headlines in the right-wing press like 'Death of the Comprehensive' in *The Daily Mail* and 'Comprehensives have failed' in *The Daily Telegraph*. From now on, according to the Prime Minister, everyone should be aware that 'promoting diversity' was indeed synonymous with 'raising standards' and 'achieving results'.

The Conservative Legacy

To be fair, it is, of course, true that New Labour inherited a sharply divided system of state schools at the secondary level. In addition to 164 grammar schools, concentrated in 36 local authorities in England, there were 1155 grant-maintained schools, accounting for 19.6% of students in secondary schools (but only 2.8% of primary-age children), 15 City Technology Colleges and 181 specialist schools and colleges, 151 specialising in technology and 30 in modern languages. Any attempt to create a successful comprehensive structure subject to fair and transparent admissions rules clearly faced formidable obstacles.

Yet the first Blair administration actually saw no need to tackle this degree of diversity and create a more unified system of schools. Nothing was done to secure the abolition of the existing 164 grammar schools, with campaigning groups finding it extremely difficult to activate the necessary local ballots of parents. In particular, the outcome of the ballot held in Ripon in March 2000, where groups of influential parents were able to secure the long term future of Ripon Grammar School, left many campaigners feeling angry and dispirited. Then again, there was concern that the phasing out of grant-maintained schools was to be accompanied by the introduction of *three* new categories of school: community, aided and foundation – with only *community* schools subject to admissions procedures determined by the local authority. And finally, it was a cause of much dismay and regret that incoming New Labour ministers were embracing the Conservatives' 'specialist schools' project with a zeal of which John Patten and Gillian Shephard would have been proud. By the beginning of 2001, the number of such schools had risen from 181 to 608. Moreover, the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act stipulated that specialist schools could select up to ten per cent of their intake on the basis of their aptitude for one or other of four 'specialist subject areas': technology, languages, sports and the arts.

The Programme for the Second Blair Administration

The Green Paper argues that primary education has already been 'transformed' with the introduction of such successful initiatives as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. It is now time to perform similar miracles with the secondary sector; and in this respect, there are a number of major themes and policy alignments running through the document, notably:

- a rejection of the principles underpinning the era of the 'one size fits all' comprehensive (though it is, of course, debatable whether such an era ever actually existed);
- a concern to see the promotion of diversity among secondary schools and the extension of autonomy for 'successful' schools; and
- a desire for private and voluntary sector sponsors to play a greater role in the organisation of secondary education.

As a prime means of promoting 'diversity', the Government intends to accelerate the Specialist Schools Project so that there will be around 1,000 specialist

secondary schools in operation by September 2003. We now know that all specialist schools and colleges will receive a £100,000 capital grant plus £123 per student per year – a total of £225,000 for a school of 1,000 students. This will prove particularly divisive over the next five years as nearly half (46%) of all maintained secondary schools become specialist schools, while the other half have to be content with non-specialist status and no additional funding.

As an extension of the cherished Specialist Schools Programme, the Government intends to introduce in due course a new category of *Advanced* Specialist School which will be open to 'high-performing' schools after five years as 'specialist schools'. They will be expected to 'volunteer' to take on a number of innovative ideas from a 'menu' developed centrally by the new DfES (Department for Education and Skills). In return, they will receive an additional capital investment to strengthen their role as 'centres of excellence'. An important aspect of their work might well be initial teacher training, with many of these institutions playing a leading role as Training Schools.

Then, as yet another element in this bewildering array of new institutions, there are the Beacon Schools (the subject of a critical appraisal by David Webster in this number of *FORUM*). These new Schools are intended to develop and spread good practice among neighbouring establishments. Back in March 1999, David Blunkett announced that there were to be around 1,000 Beacon Schools in operation by September 2002. It is now intended that there will be 1,000 of these Schools in existence by September 2001, a year ahead of schedule, including some 250 at secondary level.

The Green Paper is also anxious to see an increase in the number and variety of schools within the state system supported by the Church of England and other major faith groups. Some 560 secondary schools are already provided by the Church of England or the Catholic Church; and the Government wishes to see more Muslim, Sikh and Greek Orthodox Schools brought inside the state system and funded on the same basis as existing 'aided' schools.

In addition to more 'faith-based' schools, which act as their own admissions authority, the Government is also anxious to promote an increase in the number of schools that owe their existence to private sponsorship. The City Academy Programme, launched in March 2000, enables sponsors from the private and voluntary sectors to establish new schools whose running costs are then fully met by the state. Many have, in fact, seen the Programme as being modelled on the City Technology Colleges Project founded by the Conservatives in the late 1980s and which proved to be such a costly failure in its original format.

At the same time, the Government intends to develop a new model which will enable an external private or voluntary sector sponsor to take over responsibility for a 'weak' or 'failing' school against a fixed-term contract of, say, five to seven years, with renewal subject to performance. This will be based on the situation at King's Manor School in Guildford, where '3Es', a charitable off-shoot of the City Technology College at Kingshurst in the West Midlands, was given responsibility for establishing a new school in February 1999.

Other policies for tackling 'underperformance' and 'failure', such as the Excellence in Cities Programme launched in March 1999, are also discussed in the Green Paper, though there is little prominence given to the Education Action Zones Initiative which formed such an important part of the *Excellence in Schools* White Paper published in July 1997. What is stressed is that secondary schools operating in 'challenging circumstances' will be expected to achieve at least 15% of students gaining five GCSE A to C grades by 2003; 20% by 2004; and 25% by 2006.

As far as the internal organisation of schools is concerned, the Government wants to see more setting within subjects, including 'express sets' for 11 to 14 year olds to enable the 'most able' in each year group to advance *beyond* the level set for their age and to take Key Stage Three tests early. At Key Stage Four, students will still take a number of GCSEs, but, increasingly, they will be able to mix 'academic' and 'vocational' GCSEs and work-based options.

Towards a New Education System

There is very little in the Government's Programme to please the supporters of a unified system of secondary education; the emphasis throughout is on competition and division.

Yet as long ago as 1993, the National Commission on Education was expressing concern, in its Final Report *Learning to Succeed*, about the Major Government's obsession with creating 'new types of secondary school' and warning that 'there is a serious danger of a hierarchy of good, adequate and "sink" schools emerging within the maintained system'.

Some headteachers and union leaders believe that all will be well if *all* secondary schools are allowed to become specialist schools, and perhaps there is a case for making the best of what has already happened (see John Dunford's piece in this number), but this is to ignore some very real problems. What happens, for example, if the local specialist school does not offer the specialism many parents want? And, in any case, in a highly competitive and divided society, specialisms can never be equal: they rapidly become ranked in a hierarchy of status.

It is also absurd for politicians to claim that greater diversity within the system will result in a greater choice of school for most parents. All the available evidence indicates that in a fragmented and layered system, it is invariably *the schools that choose parents*, rather than the other way round. Indeed, it was Lord Griffiths of Fforestfach, the right-wing Chairperson of the School Examinations and Assessment Council, who admitted back in February 1992 that 'if you give parents real choice in the system, it is inevitable (and probably desirable) that the schools themselves will demand to choose the kind of pupils that come'.

The education system towards which we are heading has nothing to commend it. It is part of an ugly concept of a meritocratic society which benefits the few at the expense of the many.

Clyde Chitty

IQ, Racism and the Eugenics Movement

CLYDE CHITTY

This article is a shortened version of an inaugural lecture given at Goldsmiths College, London, on 27 February 2001.

Introduction

While not wishing to argue that all those who believe in the efficacy of intelligence testing or in the notion of fixed innate ability are either racists or eugenicists, this article seeks to demonstrate that the mental measurement movement has its origins in concerns about mental degeneracy and racial purity. It is argued that one of the great tragedies of the last 100 years has been our failure as a nation to take on board the essential concept of human educability and thereby challenge the idea that children are born with a given quota of 'intelligence' which remains constant both during childhood and in adult life. It is also argued that the concept of educability should have been at the heart of the case for comprehensive education.

Intelligence Testing and the Eugenics Movement

It is one of my chief purposes to stress the extent to which the obsession with mental measurement and intelligence testing in the first half of the twentieth century grew out of the well-publicised pre-occupations of leading eugenicists and their pessimistic estimates of the future of modern society. The term 'eugenics' – meaning *the study of methods of improving the quality of the human race, especially by selective breeding* – had been coined by Francis Galton (1822-1911), English explorer and scientist and a cousin of Charles Darwin, in the 1880s; and his loyal disciples made use of the press, public lectures and parliamentary lobbying to publicise the key importance of eugenic issues. Largely due to their efforts, racial improvement was to become one of the burning issues in this country in the 40 years before the outbreak of the Second World War.

There was seen to be a very real connection between a concern with hereditary mental characteristics and 'the quest for national efficiency'. At the beginning of September 1910, for example, as the far-reaching implications of the appointment of the first school doctors in elementary schools were beginning to be realised, a letter appeared in the correspondence columns of *The Lancet* which argued that:

> *The medical inspection of our school children is but one part of a larger eugenic survey of the nation whose other components, the sociological and anthropological inspections, must soon engage the attention of legislators. Eugenicists are in the main convinced that by safeguarding in every way the good stock of the nation ... we shall effect the object which all right-thinking persons have in view – namely an increased fitness, physically, mentally and morally, among the general population. (The Lancet, 3 September 1910)*

This contributor, whose signed himself 'Medicus', clearly believed that eugenic measures were 'necessary' in order to ensure a fitter population capable of withstanding all the problems associated with 'feeble-mindedness' and mental deficiency. Yet this letter by no means represented an isolated plea for policy-makers to take seriously the work of the eugenics movement. In the early years of the twentieth century, and particularly in Edwardian England, eugenic ideas exerted a powerful influence on a number of leading doctors and educators concerned with preserving the 'virility' of the Anglo-Saxon 'race'.

Indeed, by 1910, eugenicists could claim a number of significant 'victories' in the process of acquiring a degree of 'respectability' for their infant 'science'. The establishment, in 1901, of the journal *Biometrika*, jointly edited by Karl Pearson and Francis Galton, was followed six years later, in 1907, by the founding of the Eugenics Education Society (known simply as the Eugenics Society after 1926) with its own journal *Eugenics Review*, started in 1908; and all this was accompanied by the virtual takeover of the Royal Statistical Society by evangelising eugenicists.

For all the various factions of the Movement, *two* issues were to acquire overriding significance: one concerning the problem of 'racial degeneration', often expressed as a need to deal with the issue of 'feeble-mindedness'; and the other focusing on the accurate measurement of 'inborn all-round efficiency' to be described under the term 'general intelligence'.

And these were not concerns that were restricted to scientists and educationists. John Carey has advanced the thesis, in his powerful 1992 book *The Intellectuals and the Masses: pride and prejudice among the literary intelligentsia, 1880-1939*, that many of the prominent novelists and poets in the first half of the twentieth century were profoundly influenced by the new science of eugenics and by the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) in deploring the advent of mass culture and the changes brought about by the educational legislation of the last decades of the nineteenth century.

W.B. Yeats joined the Eugenics Society; George Bernard Shaw, Aldous Huxley and T.S. Eliot were all hugely sympathetic. T.S. Eliot's line in 'Gerontion' about the Jew who was 'Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp' suggests a belief in the importance of good breeding which would have been readily understood in eugenicist circles. And one can certainly detect a similar preoccupation in the following lines from one of Yeats's last poems, 'Under Ben Bulben', composed in 1938.

> *Irish poets, learn your trade,*
> *Sing whatever is well made,*

Scorn the sort now growing up
All out of shape from toe to top,
Their unremembering hearts and heads
Base-born products of base beds.

It seems clear that Yeats's own interest in the beneficial potential of eugenics was reinforced by his reading of Raymond B. Cattell's *The Fight for Our National Intelligence*, which was published in 1937. Both Cattell and Yeats were excited by the passing of a Eugenic Sterilisation Law in Nazi Germany in 1933, although it is fair to record that this measure alarmed some of the more moderate members of the Eugenics Society. Cattell congratulated Hitler's Nazi Government on being the first administration to have the courage to promote sterilisation of the unfit as a means to secure racial improvement; and Yeats praised the Fascist countries for recognising that civilisation had reached a crisis in *On the Boiler*, which was written in 1938 and then published in 1939, the year of Yeats's death. This extraordinary piece of social commentary probably represents Yeats's most forthright exposition of eugenic theories. It was here that Yeats referred to the conviction of 'well-known specialists' that the principal European nations were all degenerating 'in body and in mind', though, in Yeats's view, the evidence for this had been suppressed *both* by politicians in case it damaged their standing in their constituencies *and* by the popular newspapers in case it harmed circulation. Yeats accepted Cattell's view that innate intelligence – or what Yeats called 'mother-wit' – could now be measured, especially in children, with great accuracy. If, for example, you took a pair of twins and educated one in wealth, the other in poverty, tests administered at various stages in their adult lives would show that 'their mother-wit would be the same'. Then again, if you picked a group of 'slum children' and moved them to a better neighbourhood with all the benefits of 'better food, light and air', it would have little or no effect on their intelligence. It followed that all social welfare schemes and educational reforms were useless as 'improvers of the breed'. Yeats quoted with approval a saying popular with George Bernard Shaw to the effect that 'you couldn't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear'. Sooner or later, ways had to be found of limiting the families of the unintelligent classes. This was all the more urgent, in Yeats's view, because the lower orders were breeding so rapidly: 'since about 1900, the better stocks have not been replacing their numbers; while the stupider and less healthy have been more than replacing theirs'. At the same time, the better organisation of agriculture and industry was threatening to enable the lower classes to procure 'all the necessities of life' and thereby remove 'the last check upon the multiplication of the ineducable masses'. If this threat ever became a reality, it would become 'the duty of the educated classes' to seize and control 'one or more of those necessities'. Yeats foresaw a prolonged civil war between the elite orders and 'the drilled and docile masses'. He recalled with satisfaction that during the Great War, Germany had had only 400 submarine commanders and that 60% of the damage to allied shipping had been the work of just 24 men. Yet there was always the danger that the upper classes would *not* have the courage to fight. The most horrifying thought of all was that the European civilisation – 'like those older civilisations that saw the triumph of their gangrel stocks' – would simply accept decay.

Other writers in the first half of the twentieth century looked for inspiration to the work of Friedrich Nietzsche and, in particular, to *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, which had been written between 1883 and 1885. In the Prologue to Part One of this influential work, Zarathustra comes out of solitude, announces that God is dead and welcomes his successor, 'the Superman'. Nietzsche believed that the great majority of men had no right to existence, but were simply a threat to 'higher beings'. The idea that mass existence was mediocre and could not properly be called 'life' had a strong appeal for the young D.H. Lawrence who 'discovered' Nietzsche in Croydon Public Library in 1908. Lawrence seemed quite happy to accept Nietzsche's idea that the breeding of a future 'master race' would entail the annihilation of 'millions of failures'. In a remarkable passage in a letter of 1908 in which he explained to his friend Blanche Jennings how he would deal with 'society's outcasts', he wrote:

If I had my way, I would build a lethal chamber as big as the Crystal Palace, with a Cinematograph working brightly; then I'd go out into the back streets and main streets and bring them in, all the sick, the halt and the maimed; I would lead them gently, and they would smile me a weary thanks; and the band would softly bubble out the Hallelujah Chorus.

Without employing such inflammatory language, Lawrence also believed passionately that the masses should be prevented from learning how to read and write. He shared the view put forward in *Also Sprach Zarathustra* that the whole idea of universal education was one to be deplored. Nietzsche had argued that education should remain a privilege so that higher beings could dominate written culture: 'Another century of readers – and the spirit itself will stink ... That everyone can learn to read will ruin in the long run not only writing, but thinking too'. For Lawrence, it was essential that all schools for the masses should be closed immediately. Without education, the working class would be free to lead a purely physical life. Girls would study domestic science; boys would attend craft workshops, and it would also be compulsory for them to learn 'primitive modes of fighting and gymnastics'.

We can establish the link between a concern with 'feeblemindedness' and a belief in fixed innate intelligence by looking at the early work of Cyril Burt, who was one of the chief begetters of the eleven-plus examination and wielded enormous influence as psychologist to the old London County Council.

In an article for *The Eugenics Review*, published in 1913, Burt made clear that his own growing interest in the data to be obtained from intelligence testing derived largely from his concern with the problem of mental deficiency, emphasising that refined statistical techniques were necessary in order to identify those children who were simply not capable, by reason of mental defect, of benefiting from the instruction given in an ordinary elementary school. Arguing that there was no such thing as 'manufactured feeblemindedness', his conclusion was simple and dogmatic: 'The fact of mental inheritance can no longer be contested: its importance scarcely over-estimated ... There assuredly could be no problem upon

which experimentalist, statistician and psychologist could so fruitfully concentrate their wisdom as the problem of heredity and its influence upon the mind'.

Burt's own definition of 'human intelligence' was clearly stated in *How the Mind Works*, a book for popular consumption based on a series of broadcast talks delivered by Burt in 1933:

> *By the term intelligence, the psychologist understands inborn, all-round intellectual ability. It is inherited, or at least innate, not due to teaching or training; it is intellectual, not emotional or moral, and remains uninfluenced by industry or zeal; it is general, not specific, i.e. it is not limited to any particular kind of work, but enters into all we do or say or think. Of all our mental qualities, it is the most far-reaching; fortunately, it can be measured with accuracy and ease. (pp. 28–29)*

The implications of such a theory for the structuring of the education system were both dire and profound, as Burt himself acknowledged in a talk broadcast in November 1950: 'Obviously, in an ideal community, our aim should be to discover what ration of intelligence nature has given to each individual child at birth, then to provide him (sic) with the appropriate education, and finally to guide him into the career for which he seems to have been marked out' (reprinted in *The Listener,* 16 November 1950).

Such views, expressed with real conviction and absolute certainty, encouraged a fatalistic attitude among most classroom teachers who were being led to believe that the level of 'intelligence' any student could reach was already determined by biological mechanisms. In other words, a child was born with *all that he or she could become*. As James Lawler has pointed out, theories of the innate intellectual inferiority of certain classes of children meant that 'schools should ... not be thought of as providing an enriching and creative environment, but should be adjusted to the function of sorting out and selecting the "bright" from the "dull", as determined by nature, and as basically reflected in the existing social hierarchy' (Lawler, 1978, p. 3).

Yet the development of the divided system itself in the period after the Second World War served to challenge and undermine the hard-line 'classic' views of the leading psychometrists. In particular, the successes secured by many secondary modern school candidates in the new GCE O level examination introduced in 1951 had the obvious and immediate effect of exposing the fallibility of the eleven-plus selection procedure. It was now becoming increasingly difficult to argue that every child was born with a given quota of 'intelligence' which remained constant throughout his or her life – and that this key quality was a direct product of genetic endowment and not therefore susceptible to any educational influence.

One secondary modern school for girls serving a working-class district in a large industrial city, which took in only children who had *failed* to get into either a grammar or a selective central school, entered girls for the O level examination in 1954. Of those who gained five or more passes, one had had an IQ of 97 on entry to the school in 1949, another an IQ of 85. This was at a time when an IQ of 115 or over was generally considered to be necessary to profit from examination courses. And other schools were soon in a position to tell similar success stories, so that there were real problems involved in defending the psychometrists' standpoint (see Simon, 1955, pp. 64-66).

It was in these difficult circumstances that some psychometrists did, in fact, feel obliged to tone down some of their more doctrinaire statements and put forward a modified and more sophisticated view of human intellectual capacity. This subtle change of emphasis came in a report of a special working party set up by the British Psychological Society with the intention of responding to some of the well-informed criticisms of the whole practice of universal testing and of the notion of the IQ test as an accurate measure of *innate* ability. This Report, published in 1957, conceded that since it was clear that many children actually *enhanced* their IQs, it must be true that 'environmental' factors had *some* effect on 'intelligence' – and particularly in early childhood. But although the Report expressed reservations about the claims made for the eleven-plus and was critical of the practice of streaming within the junior school, it had nothing to say about *education* as the key to human development. A refusal to challenge the narrow assumptions of the past meant that only 'heredity' and the vague generalised category 'environment' (comprising a wide range of 'active' and 'passive' influences) were recognised as determining factors in a child's intellectual development. As Brian Simon has put it: 'From a theoretical point of view ... the psychometrists, by abandoning *heredity* for *environment* were merely switching from the roundabout to the swing, without giving any evidence of an intention to leave the fairground' (Simon, 1971, pp. 22-23).

In *The Comprehensive School*, first published in 1963, Robin Pedley argued that none of the tests conceived and tried over the course of 60 years could satisfactorily distinguish 'natural talent' from 'what has been learned'. In his view, heredity and environment were too closely entangled to be clearly identified. This meant that children from 'literate homes', with 'interested and helpful parents', had an enormous advantage over 'children from culturally poor homes' where books were unknown and conversation was 'either limited or unprintable' (Pedley, 1963, pp. 16-17.

Of much greater significance, the first chapter of the Newsom Report, *Half Our Future*, also published in 1963, contained the classic statement: 'Intellectual talent is not a *fixed* quantity with which we have to work but a variable that can be modified by social policy and educational approaches ... the kind of intelligence which is measured by the tests so far applied is largely an *acquired* characteristic' (Ministry of Education, 1963, p. 6).

Such thinking appeared to support the idea of comprehensive reorganisation; and as comprehensive schools spread throughout the country – growing in number from 262 in 1965 to 1145 in 1970 – they began to show what could be achieved with hitherto deprived working-class students. Even *Black Paper Two*, published in the late 1960s, carried an article by Dr Rhodes Boyson accepting, albeit in cautious terms, that the eleven-plus selection system was flawed: 'There is no doubt that the eleven-plus test made considerable mistakes, that very many secondary modern school pupils can undertake academic work and that the arrangements for transfer within the tripartite system were unsatisfactory' (Boyson, 1969, p. 57).

Basic Flaws in the Early Concept of Comprehensive Schooling

Yet rather than stressing the *educational* advantages to be derived from the speedy abolition of selection, political campaigners in the 1950s and 1960s devised a number of subtle and not-so-subtle strategies for 'selling' the comprehensive ideal to the British public. They took it for granted that parents could be persuaded to support comprehensive reorganisation more on the basis of the widespread unpopularity of the eleven-plus than on account of any positive values associated with comprehensive schooling as such.

It was against this background that leading members of the Labour Party were anxious to play down the suggestion that reorganisation entailed one type of school being *abolished* in order to create another. For example: Hugh Gaitskell, the Labour Leader from 1955 to 1963, rejected the accusation that the Party's education policy meant that the grammar schools would be 'sacrificed' in a letter written to *The Times* in July 1958: 'It would be much nearer the truth to describe our proposals as amounting to "a grammar-school education for all" ... Our aim is greatly to widen the opportunities to receive what is now called a grammar-school education; and we also want to see grammar-school standards, in the sense of higher quality education, extended far more generally' (Letter to *The Times*, 5 July 1958).

This view of Labour Party education policy was reiterated by Harold Wilson (Gaitskell's successor as Party Leader from 1963 onwards) in the period leading up to the 1964 General Election. Despite the embarrassment caused to committed educationists – particularly those Party members who for a decade or more had supported the comprehensive principle for educational and egalitarian reasons and were well aware of the limited value of the grammar school model – the slogan of 'grammar schools for all' in fact served a number of useful functions: it silenced the opponents of reorganisation within the Party itself; it appealed to growing demands for a more 'meritocratic' system of secondary education; and it dispelled the fears and misgivings of those parents who still placed their trust in the traditional grammar school curriculum. David Hargreaves has summed up its undoubted appeal in the following terms: 'The slogan was a sophisticated one for it capitalised on the contradictions in the public's mind: parents were in favour of the retention of the grammar schools and their public examinations, but opposed to the eleven-plus selection test as the basis of a "once-for-all" allocation' (Hargreaves, 1982, p. 66).

The idea of promoting the new comprehensive schools as 'grammar schools for all', with the clear implication that a grammar-school education could now be made more widely available, was also enshrined in the introduction to Circular 10/65, requesting local authorities to prepare plans for comprehensive reorganisation, which made reference to a motion passed by the House of Commons on 21 January 1965 endorsing government policy:

> *That this House, conscious of the need to raise educational standards at all levels, and regretting that the realisation of this objective is impeded by the separation of children into different types of secondary school, notes with approval the efforts of local authorities to reorganise secondary education on comprehensive lines, which will preserve all that is valuable in a grammar-school education for those children who now receive it and make it available to more children. (Hansard, H. of C., Vol. 705, Col. 541, 21 January 1965)*

As well as being forced to perpetuate all the assumptions of a grammar-school education, at least for their students in the 'top' streams and sets, the new comprehensive schools also suffered from being burdened with a bewildering array of unrealistic expectations.

In the early days of the 1964-70 Labour Government, many genuinely believed that a capitalist society could be reformed, and that the new comprehensive schools would be a step on the road to achieving greater equality – greater equality in the sense that working-class children would be able to move into 'white-collar' occupations or proceed to higher education. The leading sociologist A.H. Halsey could begin a widely-quoted article on 'Education and Equality' in the journal *New Society* in June 1965 with the ringing declaration: 'Some people, and I am one, want to use education as an instrument in pursuit of an egalitarian society. We tend to favour comprehensive schools, to be against public schools, and to support the expansion of higher education'.

Other Labour supporters simply believed in the theory of the 'social mix' which looked forward to the *amelioration* of social class differences through students' experience of 'social mixing' in a common secondary school. This narrow view of egalitarianism also found expression in Circular 10/65: 'A comprehensive school aims to establish a school community in which pupils over the whole ability range and with differing interests and backgrounds can be encouraged to mix with each other, gaining stimulus from the contacts and learning tolerance and understanding in the process.'

Another strongly-held view saw a direct and indisputable correlation between educational reform and economic prosperity: a skilled and educated work-force would facilitate economic growth which would, in turn, constitute a firm basis for continuing educational expansion. This superficially attractive message secured keen converts when the economy appeared to be experiencing steady growth and advancement. It lost much of its appeal when the economy began to fall apart in the 1970s and it was all too easy to blame schools and teachers for the rising rate of youth unemployment.

It was precisely at the time when the confidence and optimism of the 1960s were beginning to give way to the cynicism and pessimism of the 1970s that Arthur Jensen published an extraordinary article in *The Harvard Educational Review* entitled 'How much can we boost IQ and scholastic achievement?' Jensen had been a pupil of Hans Eysenck, who had, himself, been a pupil of Cyril Burt. This immensely long 1969 paper, running to over 120 pages, soon acquired considerable notoriety because it set out to reiterate Burt's theory of innate intelligence in terms not only of 'class' but also of 'race'. It began with the assertion that compensatory education had been tried and failed. What it had failed to do was to improve the scores on IQ tests of 'under-privileged children' – and particularly of black children. As measured by IQ tests,

black children apparently scored an average of 15 points below white children. According to Jensen, 'environmentalists' who had argued in favour of massive compensatory education programmes designed to equalise opportunities had been guilty of seriously misleading the American Government. As a consequence, resources had been wasted and a great deal of effort expended on a pointless exercise. In Jensen's view, just as working-class white children were inferior (in terms of measured intelligence) to middle- and upper-class white children, so black children were innately inferior to white children. Any attempt to compensate for this 'natural' state of affairs was a waste of time and money.

Issues of Curriculum Content and Pedagogy

As we have already seen, the early comprehensive schools of the 1950s and 1960s were 'promoted' by many politicians and campaigners as making a 'grammar-school education' available to more children; and along with this obsession with the grammar-school model went a failure to question the 'appropriateness' of the grammar-school curriculum for the new comprehensive schools, either in its pure form for the students of measured 'high ability' or in a watered-down version for those in the lower bands and streams. As late as 1973, Professor Denis Lawton could lament 'the consistent failure to re-think the curriculum and plan a programme which would be appropriate for universal secondary education' (Lawton, 1973, p. 101).

To understand why this should have been so, it is important to remember that allied with a firm post-war belief in fixed innate ability went the conviction that there were, in fact, three 'types of mind'. It was, after all, the 1943 Norwood Report (produced by a special committee of the Secondary Schools Examinations Council chaired by Sir Cyril Norwood, former Headteacher of Harrow) which confidently asserted that the education system had 'thrown up' three 'rough groupings' of children with three different 'types of mind'. These were: first, 'the pupil who is interested in learning for its own sake, who can grasp an argument or follow a piece of connected reasoning'; second, 'the pupil whose interests and abilities lie markedly in the field of applied science or applied art'; and third, 'the pupil who deals more easily with concrete things than with ideas ... to whom abstractions mean very little ... His horizon is near and within a limited area his movement is generally slow'. For these three groups of pupils, three types of secondary school were needed: grammar, technical and secondary modern.

There were clear echoes of D.H. Lawrence's prescription for the idea curriculum for working-class boys and girls in a contribution from the late Conservative politician Quintin Hogg (later Lord Hailsham) to a debate in the House of Commons in January 1965:

> *I can assure Hon. Members opposite that if they would go to study what is now being done in good secondary modern schools, they would not find a lot of pupils biting their nails in frustration because they had failed the eleven-plus. The pleasant noise of banging metal and sawing wood would greet their ears and a smell of cooking with rather expensive equipment would come out of the front door to greet them. They would find that these boy and girls were getting an education tailor-made to their desires, their bents and their requirements ... I am not prepared to admit that the Party opposite has done a good service to education, or to the children of this country, by attacking that form of school, or seeking to denigrate it. (Hansard, H. of C., Vol. 705, Cols. 423-4, 21 January 1965)*

It took a long time to discredit such views, even *after* the introduction of the comprehensive school. An HMI survey of secondary education, published in 1979 (DES, 1979), found that, whatever form the differentiated curriculum took in Years 4 and 5 (now Key Stage Four) – whether organised around completely segregated courses or a bewildering variety of option schemes – it was obvious that, in reality, the 'top' streams had taken over the traditional grammar-school curriculum with its emphasis on all the 'cognitive-intellectual' skills of the academic school subjects; while all those below were following either a diluted version of that curriculum or programmes of work much influenced by the Newsom Report and the practical and vocational aspects of the curriculum of the secondary modern schools.

After recalling all that, it becomes something of a relief to turn to the HMI definition of an 'entitlement curriculum' to be found in the third of the three Red Books, published in 1983 (DES, 1983). Here at last is an acknowledgement that all youngsters are *entitled* to a broad range of experiences which constitute a synthesis of the academic, the technical, the practical and the vocational. In the words of the Inspectorate: 'Any measures which restrict the access of all students to a wide-ranging curriculum or which focus too narrowly on specific narrow skills are in direct conflict with the entitlement curriculum envisaged here' (p. 26).

Postscript

In recent years, we have tended to reject the idea of human intelligence as 'all-round intellectual ability' in favour of the concept of 'multiple intelligences'; while the Government now talks in terms of selection by *aptitude* for particular subjects rather than selection by general *ability*, though it is not always clear what the distinction is between them. At the same time, it is surely a cause for concern that so many black and working-class students still find themselves in the bottom streams and sets of our secondary schools (see Gillborn & Youdell, 2000).

Since embarking on the writing of this article, I have been intrigued to learn from reports of the analysis by two major groups of international scientists of the first human genetic map, known as 'the genome' (see, for example *The Observer*, 11 February 2001; *The Guardian*, 12 February 2001) that we actually possess far fewer genes than previously thought and that environmental influences play a powerful role in shaping the way humans act. These scientists are anxious to demolish the claims made by some biologists that there are individual genes shaping behaviour patterns ranging from sexuality to criminality – and even including political preference. All of which would seem to undermine the theory that human beings are simply 'prisoners' of their genes.

Similar conclusions were reached by Susan Greenfield, Professor of Pharmacology at Oxford University and Professor of Physics at Gresham College, London, in her popular and influential book *The Human Brain: a guided*

tour, published in 1997; and she had interesting observations to make about the characteristics of identical twins:

> *Identical twins are clones of each other. They are two people with identical genes because of the single fertilised egg split into two. But are they identical people? ... If identical twins are questioned about their preferences, attitudes and experiences, there are, perhaps not surprisingly, often considerable similarities. However, a coincidence in tastes and ideas might not be that remarkable in any siblings reared in the same environment ... Identical twins will also show signs of distinct perceptions, abilities and thoughts that make it clear they are individuals with their own private consciousness, even though so much of their genetic make-up is the same.*

Professor Greenfield moved on to argue that:

> *The process of evolving a unique brain is perhaps most dramatic up to and including the teenage years; but even then, the brain is not caught in freeze frame. Our character and intelligence continue to adapt and develop as we respond to, and recoil from, the incessant experiences thrown in our path. For experiences to have any lasting significance in this way, they need to be remembered ... and perhaps we should emphasise memory as a way of understanding the secret of the physical basis of individuality. (Greenfield, 1997, pp. 121-22)*

For Professor Greenfield and others, the development of human intelligence and personality is the result of a set of complex interactive processes, and discussion cannot be reduced to the inane and simplistic terms in which the 'nature/nurture' debate is often couched.

Which is why, for me at least, it is sad to find reference in the recent DfEE Green Paper to the establishment of a new Centre for Gifted and Talented Youth (along the lines of those pioneered by Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, USA), a concept which the late Caroline Benn did so much to challenge, in two articles for *FORUM* on 'The Myth of Giftedness' published in 1982, and which would seem to ignore the fact that *all* children are 'talented'.

It seems very fitting that I should end this article with a statement from Caroline on this very issue:

> *We give up our commitment to looking for gifts, talents and abilities in the vast majority of children once we have accepted the argument that the search for "giftedness" is limited to the hunt for a few ... The way we support "giftedness" is by encouraging a flexible, alert, high-standard, stimulating and supportive comprehensive education service for everyone at every stage of their lives ... A comprehensive system is the only way we can openly ensure attention to all equally and, at the same time, protect and reveal the full range of human gifts. Encouraging human ability in all its various forms is just one more reason why we must continue to work to get a genuine comprehensive education system safely started in Britain – and to promote it relentlessly when we have. (Benn, 1982b, p. 84)*

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Who has the Authority to Inspect Schools?

COLIN RICHARDS

The article explores the question 'From where do OFSTED inspectors get their authority to inspect schools?' It argues that inspectors should meet a number of professional requirements if they are to be regarded as authorities on the issues or activities being inspected and on the inspection process itself. Many, but by no means all, OFSTED inspectors meet these necessary professional criteria. A question mark remains about the authority of those who do not. Colin Richards is a former HMI and currently Professor of Education at St Martin's College in Cumbria.

Introduction

The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) has been operating since 1992 as a non-ministerial government department. It has a number of principal functions:

- to hold schools accountable to central and local government and to parents and the local community for the educational standards and quality of education they achieve;
- to provide information about standards and quality to inform parental choice of schools;
- to ensure that schools comply with government legislation and regulations; and
- to provide evidence of schools' value for money in terms of educational gains to costs.

OFSTED is one of a number of instruments of accountability set up by central government during the later years of the twentieth century. Others include the Audit Commission (with a remit including, but wider than, education), the enlargement of the powers of school governing bodies, the requirement laid on local authorities to monitor school performance, the introduction of national testing of selected outcomes of schooling and the publication of performance or 'league' tables. Unlike other instruments of accountability, OFSTED has been set up to evaluate and report not just the outcomes of education in individual schools but also the quality of the processes and activities employed within them. It has also attempted to discern and report on interrelationships or associations between processes and outcomes based largely on first-hand evidence gathered as a result of observation and discussion with teachers and pupils.

Its main operational task has been to oversee the introduction and regulation of a new system of school inspection by independent registered inspectors such that over a delimited period (initially four years, now six) every maintained school in England has a full inspection lasting several days, involving a number of inspectors who use a publicly known inspection framework and methodology including pre-determined inspection criteria. These inspections are intended 'to identify strengths and weaknesses so that schools may improve the quality of education they provide and raise the educational standards achieved by their pupils' (OFSTED, 1995).

As a process the inspection of schools by OFSTED inspectors involves more than observing activities, collecting evidence and reporting it. Inspectors are not simply the equivalent of value-less cameras or video-recorders providing snap-shots of schools and classrooms. Inspection involves the interpretation, not just the reporting of activities. Centrally too, it involves making judgements as to the worthwhileness or otherwise of what is observed, collected and reported. It involves the making (and justification) of qualitative judgements; such judgements are inevitably subjective to a degree since they involve both the interpretation of complex social situations and the application of general criteria expressed in 'everyday language' which in turn is subject to diverse interpretation. To be *valid* interpretations, such judgements need to be informed by an understanding of the aims and values of the activity or organisation being inspected (Richards, 2001).

To be credible such judgements need to be made by people with *authority*. But from where, and on what basis, do OFSTED inspectors get their authority? By what right have they the power to inspect schools?

The Legal Right to Inspect

There is a reasonably straightforward *legal* answer. According to the School Inspections Act 1996 registered inspectors have the authority to conduct inspections if they are on a register kept by the Chief Inspector.

The Chief Inspector can register a person only if 'it appears to him *(sic)* that that person: (a) is a fit and proper person for discharging the functions of a registered inspector; and (b) will be capable of conducting inspections competently and effectively' (School Inspections Act 1996 S. 7(3)).

Every inspection has to be conducted by a registered inspector with the assistance of a team consisting of persons who '(a) are fit and proper persons for carrying out the inspection; and (b) will be capable of assisting in the inspection competently and effectively' (School Inspections Act 1996 schedule 3 para. 3(1)). Such persons appear on a list kept by the Chief Inspector.

All inspectors are required to complete satisfactorily a course of training provided by, or complying with, arrangements approved by the Chief Inspector. The latter can remove a person from the register if he or she is judged no longer to meet the above criteria or has produced a report of an inspection which is seriously misleading. Equally, a team inspector can be removed from the list kept by the Chief Inspector if they are judged no longer to meet the criteria above. Legally, then,

inspectors have the authority to inspect vested in them by the Chief Inspector as a result of fulfilling the requirements set out in the School Inspections Act 1996.

The Educational Authority to Inspect

But an inspector is not merely in a position of *authority*. Their fitness and 'properness' to take part in inspections should also rest on their being *an authority* on the issues, areas or activities being inspected and, arguably, on the inspection process itself. Using Hirst & Peters's (1970) characterisation of being an authority in a branch of knowledge, does inspectors' authority derive 'from their special training and mastery of the relevant sphere of knowledge, on their success in getting things right in a sphere where what is right and true does not depend on the pronouncements of any individual, but on reasons and evidence that any one can, in principle, grasp' (p. 116)?

There would seem to be a number of minimum requirements if inspectors are to be regarded as authorities. For example, they need to have sufficient knowledge, understanding and skills in the subjects they are inspecting, though it has to be acknowledged that these requirements are difficult to spell out in practice and are contentious when the attempt is made. For example, what degree of subject expertise is required to inspect, say, mathematics in a key stage one class – knowledge equivalent to level 6 in the National Curriculum? GCSE grade C or A level grade D or a first degree in mathematics? Or what? Inspectors also need a working knowledge of National Curriculum requirements and level descriptors in the subjects they inspect. How far an adequate working knowledge can be acquired (and internalised) without actually teaching and assessing pupils in respect of the National Curriculum is an open question.

Inspectors need to have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the phase they are inspecting, but what constitutes that knowledge and understanding – teaching experience in that phase? Inspection or advisory experience in the phase? Understanding based on extensive reading about the phase? Experience as a parent of children in the phase? This issue is particularly relevant in relation to the inspection of early years provision or special education where many would argue that inspectors can achieve sufficient understanding and expertise only if they have had direct experience of teaching such children.

Inspectors also need what Hirst & Peters refer to (1970) as 'special training' – in this case in the craft of inspection. They need to know about the purposes of inspection; they need to have acquired the techniques of inspection; they need to have a shared understanding of the concepts used in inspection; they need to know how to communicate the findings of inspection to various audiences. This is no small undertaking. As a craft demanding complex knowledge, understanding, skills and, particularly, judgement, inspection cannot be 'mastered' easily or quickly; it requires induction into its complexities, internalisation of ideas and procedures and reflection on practice over a long period. It is not simply a matter of slavishly following a technical pre-specification enshrined in an inspection manual. It is not that sort of activity.

Fourthly, inspectors need experience of inspecting schools in a wide variety of circumstances so as to ground their judgements in what is realistically possible and to ensure that their judgements are not unduly influenced by the expectations and methods which characterised their own teaching experience.

Many would argue that HMI (or at least most HMI!) met those criteria. They had been recruited nationally from a large field of applicants on the basis of their phase and/or subject expertise. As Winch (1996) pointed out, the Inspectorate 'was generally believed to recruit the ablest members of the teaching profession to its ranks' (p. 134). They had extensive teaching experience in one or more of the phases of education they had to inspect. In particular, they were given 'special training' through a year-long induction period which involved them working closely with fellow inspectors, gradually acquiring inspection skills and gradually assuming more responsibility through the course of the year – all under a strict regime of supervision and support. They were then deployed nationally as well as regionally so as to gain inspection experience in a wide range of contexts. On formal inspections of schools their judgements were discussed with, and moderated by, more experienced colleagues. In these ways they were inducted into the 'craft' of inspection and their judgements broadly harmonised with those of other HMI.

How far in practice are OFSTED registered and team inspectors able to meet the criteria outlined above? It is impossible to generalise about their subject expertise, but it is likely that this is no more problematic for them than for individual HMI. The phase expertise criterion is, however, a different matter – especially for those inspecting primary rather than secondary schools. Particularly in the first cycle of inspections many primary schools were inspected by teams, some of whose members had had no, or very little, experience of teaching that age range. The political imperative to meet the target of inspecting every maintained school over a four-year period meant that the phase criterion was too often not met. The situation has probably improved over time (though OFSTED has not produced evidence to that effect) but it is likely that a considerable number of those currently inspecting primary schools have not been teachers in the phase, though they may have extensive experience of such schools since the beginning of the first inspection cycle! Of course, it does not follow that an inspector *has* to have teaching experience in the phase to be effective, but their effectiveness (let alone their professional credibility) is likely to be enhanced by that experience.

The special training criterion is again difficult for many OFSTED inspectors to meet – through no fault of their own. Especially during the first inspection round the training they were given was perfunctory – initially a one week course followed in the case of would-be registered inspectors by an attachment to one HMI-led inspection. Even with improved procedures, OFSTED inspectors have been superficially 'trained' for their very demanding roles. There has been nothing remotely comparable in terms of scale and thoroughness to the one year induction period provided for HMI. Nor has the provision of opportunities for inspectors' professional development been other than perfunctory. The criterion related to breadth of inspection experience was impossible to meet initially, unless OFSTED inspectors had been inspectors previously. The early tranche of OFSTED inspectors were thrust into

school inspections without necessarily having had any previous experience of inspecting schools in the case of team inspectors and with only the experience of attending one HMI-led inspection in the case of registered inspectors. However, over time it is true that this deficiency in experience should have been remedied by those who have inspected a wide range of primary, secondary or special schools in a variety of localities.

Consideration of all these criteria suggest that in the case of many inspectors, especially during the first round of school inspections, the claim to be an *authority* was questionable to say the least. Undoubtedly many current inspectors now meet the criteria. But a question mark must still rest about the authority of those who do not. They may have the *legal* right to inspect but that right may not rest on adequate professional foundations.

To sum up, for all its inspectors to be able to inspect with authority, as well as from a position of authority, OFSTED needs to employ inspectors who work closely together on inspections but in frequently re-arranged teams, inspect work in a wide variety of contexts nation-wide, have a lengthy, in-depth training, participate regularly in a substantial programme of inservice education and are subject to a network of supervision and support. These necessary conditions are simply not available at present – through no fault of OFSTED inspectors themselves.

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OFSTED Inspection and School Improvement

to what extent does inspection improve examination performance in the comprehensive school?

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OFSTED Inspection

In 1992, an Act was passed that brought the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) into being. OFSTED described its role as to improve 'standards of achievement and quality of education through regular independent inspection, public reporting and informed advice'.[1] School inspections were to 'identify strengths and weaknesses in schools so that they may improve the quality of education and raise the standards achieved by pupils'.[2] These inspections began in 1993 and involved lesson observation, scrutiny of students' work, discussion with students, teachers, governors and parents, and a review of documents relating to, for example, aims, policy and programmes. Examination results have been used as an indicator of the 'standards' and 'quality' of education.[3]

OFSTED's motto is 'Improvement through Inspection'. Does inspection lead to improvement? Gray & Wilcox believe that, 'The acid test of a school's improvement is, of course, that the learning experience of pupils is enhanced and their achievements increased'.[4] FitzGibbon points out that the very independence of the examination boards from schools produces confidence in the outcomes and is a system that commands international respect.[5] Do inspections lead to better GCSE results?

The proportion of students obtaining five or more A* to C grades is a government measure of a school's performance (the possible grades being A through to G, with A* for exceptional achievement). Cullingford & Daniels took a sample of 426 schools from six LEAs and modelled changes to the schools' GCSE results over a four-year period in which they were inspected. They concluded that, in the year of an inspection, a school's 5A* to C results would improve less than schools that were not inspected.[6] Although Cullingford & Daniels used what is arguably a representative sample, some can ignore such findings and make claims about the unstudied majority.

The Modelling of GCSE Results

Do schools' GCSE results improve after an OFSTED inspection? This is not as straightforward a question as might appear. For instance, the proportion of students obtaining grade C or higher has been increasing since at least 1988, several years before OFSTED inspections were introduced.[7] Such effects have to be allowed for. Fortunately, there is a powerful statistical technique, multilevel modelling, that can take these into account. It allows an assessment of the effect of OFSTED inspections on examination performance while allowing for general changes in performance over time, for differences amongst LEAs, for differences amongst school types, and for the possibility of variation in inspection effect with other factors.[8]

Schools' GCSE results have been published in school performance tables since 1992. Three levels of performance are recorded: the percentage of students aged 15 years gaining five or more A* to C grades, the percentage of students gaining one A* to G grade, and the percentage of students gaining five A* to G grades (these last two potentially being indicators of 'social inclusion'). Information on over 3000 inspected secondary schools offering students for GCSE examination during the inspection cycle 1992 to 1997 in England was extracted and analysed by the modelling software. This amounted to 99.7% of all such schools with GCSE data. (The balance comprised new schools with incomplete GCSE data sets, merged schools and schools for which no match could be found in the GCSE data.) By far the largest group was the comprehensive school (mixed, 2477; boys only, 122; girls only, 144). Of these, the single most common provider of secondary education in England was the mixed comprehensive school maintained fully by a LEA (1933 in this study). We will focus on these.

Inspection and GCSE Results in Comprehensive Schools

Generally, approaching 35% of students in mixed, country comprehensive schools (1933 schools) obtained 5 or more A* to C grades. Inspection had a consistent, small and negative effect on achievement, depressing it by about one half of a percent. This effect persisted in the years after inspection. (Figure 1 is an illustration of the effect.)

For the 122 boys' comprehensive schools, about 35% tended to obtain 5 or more A* to C grades. Inspection had little or no effect in the year of inspection or in the subsequent years studied. In the 144 girls' comprehensive schools, almost 50% obtained 5 or more A* to C grades. Inspection generally had no effect in the year of inspection but it was associated with an increase of about 2% in the

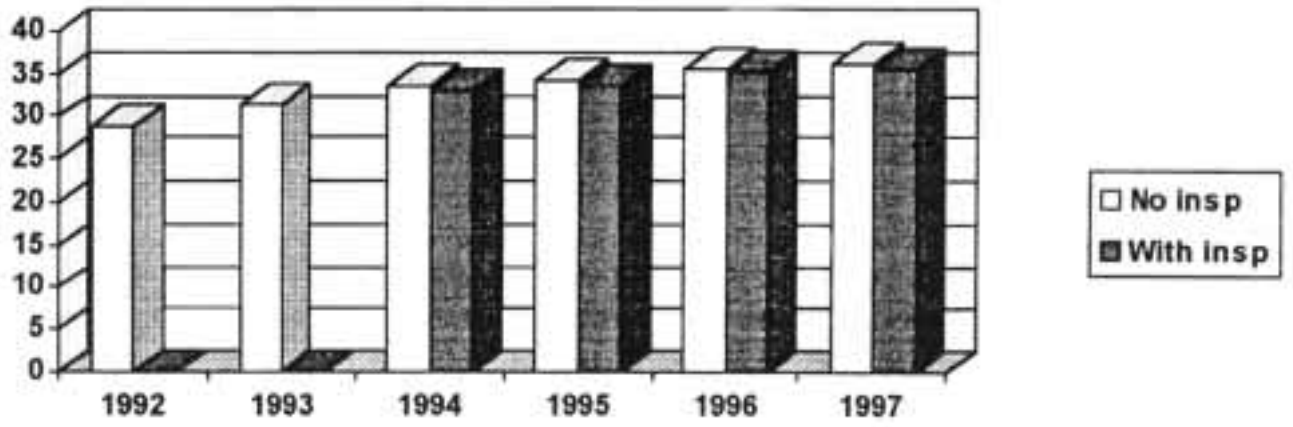

Figure 1. Percentages of students (vertical axis) gaining five or more A to C GCSE grades (1933 mixed, county comprehensive schools). Without inspection, the percentage steadily rises. The solid blocks show what could be expected if a school was inspected in 1994. Schools inspected in subsequent years showed similar effects.*

subsequent years. In grant maintained mixed comprehensive schools (124), where about 45% obtained 5 or more A* to C grades, there was an increase of about 2% in the year of inspection and a little less in subsequent years. (In the relatively smaller number of schools that selected the academically more able, over 90% of the students generally obtained 5 or more A* to C GCSE grades. Inspection tended to increase this by about 1% and maintain it in the subsequent years. In the schools that took the rest of the students, about 20% obtained five or more A* to C GCSE grades. In the year of inspection, the effect was to increase that by 1% or so. In the subsequent years, this was maintained or increased slightly.)

The proportion of students gaining any grade, A* to G, in at least one GCSE subject was generally above 95% in all schools to begin with and inspection had little effect on it. The proportion of students gaining at least five A* to G grades was 90% or more in comprehensive schools and, again, inspection generally had little effect.

Inspection: help or hindrance?

Schools may improve in a variety of ways but students' examination performance is commonly taken to be an important measure of a school, not least by governments and OFSTED itself. The percentage achieving 5 or more A* to C grades is taken to be an indicator of higher achievement. The percentages obtaining 1 A* to G grade and 5 A* to G grades are taken to be indicators of participation in the examination system. Most schools in England are of the county, LEA maintained, mixed comprehensive kind. OFSTED inspection had no positive effect on examination achievement in these. If anything, they made it slightly worse. This supports the findings of Cullingford & Daniels. Inspection made little difference to examination achievement in boys' county comprehensive schools. In girls' schools and in selective schools and grant maintained schools, where achievement could be well above average to begin with, inspection was associated with a little extra achievement. Similarly, small improvements were found in the modern schools. Regarding examination participation, this was generally high to begin with and fairly near its maximum. In general, however, the effect of inspection was broadly similar to the effect on achievement. In short, inspection was associated with small improvements in performance in the kinds of schools where achievement was different to the norm to begin with. In the overwhelming majority of state schools, inspection did not improve examination achievement and participation. The inspection purpose and process has not changed radically since these inspections took place so it is unlikely that their effect is different today as far as GCSE results are concerned. Why is this?

The obstacles to school improvement are often complex.[9] For instance, some 85% of the variance in school performance is due to differences in student intake.[10] One school may do as much for its students as another but, because of such differences, its examination performance may still lag behind the others.[11] There are many reasons for differences in intake and if it was easy to compensate for those that adversely affect performance it would, presumably, have been done. To compound matters, the so-called 'self-managing school' is commonly believed to be able to improve itself but its freedom is often constrained by economics. Labour accounts for some 80% of a school's costs and, after other essentials are included, there is little left for more than tinkering with the teaching. It is, however, the teaching that matters [12] but, as Smyth has put it, it is not values, goals and teaching that determine events but money.[13] In short, there is no quick and easy fix for some problems that a school faces.

Other ways of bringing about school improvement have been envisaged. In 1995, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) compared seven countries' approaches to the assessment of schools. It concluded that it was best achieved by 'an unthreatening but demanding climate of self-review in schools, so that they become a "learning organisation'"capable of continuous improvement'.[14] An element of self-review occurs in Scotland where schools have been encouraged 'to devise their own indicators of quality and performance and demonstrate accountability in terms of their own success criteria'.[15] While a system of self-review may determine values, goals and teaching in relation to a school's context, it is unlikely to achieve its potential if external evaluation does not take it seriously. In such a system, the inspector's role could be

to report on the suitability of the goals in relation to the context and the extent to which the school achieves its goals. A sound grasp of the context would be essential if an inspector was to do justice to such a self-improving school and the students in it. Canadian research, however, has shown that inspectors often failed to grasp 'the real, day-to-day experiences of children and their teachers'.[16] This means the role calls for a professional, highly trained body of respected inspectors who can demonstrate their abilities.

At the same time, the process of self-review is not without its own difficulties. It may identify problems but does not, by itself, provide solutions. This is where school-university partnerships may help.[17] Potential solutions are not, however, easy to test in a highly constrained and controlled system of education. The DFEE and inspectorate need to encourage and make it easier to experiment and provide support for the dissemination of those ideas found to improve performance. But this cannot be a prescriptive dissemination as each school's situation is unique. There must be some freedom to adapt ideas to suit a school, its teachers and its students.[18]

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Beacon Schools: New Labour education policy in a nutshell

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Dr David Webster teaches at the Manchester Metropolitan University. In this article, he argues that the idea of Beacon Schools is one of a raft of New Labour policies which seek to raise educational standards whilst ignoring the malign effects of market forces.

'Beacon status will confer a degree of prestige ...' (DfEE, 1998, p. 2)

Introduction

This article analyses the position of Beacon Schools in the context of New Labour education policies. It is a contribution to the debate conducted in *FORUM* (Hill, 2000; Rikowski, 2000; Simon, 2000) and elsewhere (Chitty & Dunford, 1999; Hatcher, 1998) about the ideological direction and political effects of those policies. The tenor of these academics' arguments is one of suspicion, suggesting that New Labour policies have done more to advance Conservative neo-liberal views than to advance anything effectively egalitarian let alone socialist, despite a rhetoric which appeals to egalitarian themes such as 'social inclusion'.

The article concentrates on the first waves of Beacon Schools during the first New Labour administration. Reference is made in the conclusion to the direction of the initiative in the second administration following the June 2001 General Election. After a brief outline of its main features, the Beacon Schools initiative will be placed in the context of New Labour's model for explaining educational excellence, mediocrity and failure. An alternative critical model will be outlined and evaluated and the contradictions inherent in the initiative discussed.

The Beacon metaphor refers to a New Labour-approved symbol of excellence. Britain now has not only Beacon Schools but Beacon Colleges and Beacon Councils. Even the Millennium Dome in London was described by the Government as a 'beacon of British excellence' (quoted in *The Guardian*, 30 December 1999).

The Beacon Schools initiative was announced by the Government in the summer of 1998. Seventy-five schools were chosen by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), the forerunner to the rebranded Department of Education and Skills, for pilot phase funding totalling approximately £1.8 million. The first schools began operating as Beacon Schools in September 1998. More were added in September 1999 (125), January 2000 (50), September 2000 (300), and January 2001 (38). David Blunkett announced in March 1999 that there were to be 1,000 Beacon Schools by September 2002. Within two weeks of being re-elected for their second term of office in June 2001, the New Labour Government announced a further allocation of Beacon status to 425 schools, bringing the total to around 1,000 by September 2001 – a year ahead of schedule. Around 250 of these Beacon schools are secondary schools. The total funding over three years was announced as £39 million.

The explicit aim is 'raising standards'.

> *The proposal is that schools which are identified as amongst the best performing should become Beacon Schools. Beacon Schools will represent examples of successful practice which are to be brought to the attention of the rest of the education service with a view to spreading their good practice to others. (DfEE, 1998, p. 1)*

Central to the Scheme is a 'partnership principle':

> *Eligible activities for expenditure out of each school's grant include supply cover for teacher release, provision of seminars, outreach activities, teacher training and consultancy to local schools. (National Foundation for Educational Research [NFER], 1999, p. 1)*

In a topography of excellence and good practice, then, Beacons are to be lit on the high ground to illuminate the darkness of those below.

Explaining the Topography of Excellence, Mediocrity and Failure

The New Labour Model

The New Labour Government has certainly noted the scale of the peaks and troughs. Far from concealing or excusing the poor performance of schools, it has labelled them as 'failing' through a policy of 'naming and shaming' and brought in a range of measures designed to deal with the poor performance *in situ*. Hence, superschools, Education Action Zones, Private Funding Initiatives, Excellence in Cities (see Chitty, 1998; Hill, 2000.)

All this has involved the investment of significant sums of money. And these initiatives are guided by some key principles such as:

- 'intervention in inverse proportion to success';
- 'standards not structures'.

Variations between schools are seen as due to factors intrinsic to the individual school. Characteristics which maximise standards can therefore in principle be imported into any school irrespective of its social context. New Labour, then, theorises that the geological explanations for the surface topography are based on such underlying factors as: quality of leadership; effective use of resources; diligence of staff; determination to engage parental and community support. New Labour seeks to bring the stragglers up to the standard of the exemplary without interfering in the relationship between competing schools.

The rhetoric of Beacon Schools is avowedly egalitarian in a 'social inclusion' sense. A communitarian ethos of 'co-operation' is intended to create a level playing field and maximise the educational potential of every child.

Revell, writing in *Guardian Education*, 5 December 2000, distinguishes Beacon Schools from other recent government initiatives. 'This is an initiative with a difference. Seeing good practice in action is better than ... the usual methods of in-service training which generally involve a course, a powerpoint presentation and a lot of theory'. Not surprisingly, representatives from the School Improvement camp concur with this positive assessment. Such critical comments as Revell does make are set out as minor blemishes and not as fundamental to the whole project.

The Critical Model

An alternative geological explanation for the surface topography of excellence, mediocrity and failure is to see 'level playing fields' as having been ruled out by the underlying social (economic and political) constitution of the school and, critically, its relations with other schools.

The Conservative Party administrations from 1979-97 introduced the market principles into state education. Funding for a school came to be directly dependent on the school's attractiveness in an increasingly diversified market-place. Schools could increase their budgets and derive economies of scale by attracting pupils whose parents would otherwise have sent them to other schools. The less successful schools paid for their lack of 'market attractiveness' by suffering reduced budgets and diseconomies of scale. Competition between schools for funding was the means by which schools would be motivated to raise standards. Most of the legislative reforms which facilitated this competitive market were contained in the 1988 Education Reform Act. Universal assessment and testing of a National Curriculum provided quantifiable data by which 'parents-as-consumers' would make 'objective' comparisons between schools and hence choices for their children. The 'formula funding' aspect of Local Management of Schools tied resourcing more closely to market success. 'Open enrolment' removed Local Education Authority powers artificially to restrict entry numbers to successful schools and hence removed the protection from the relatively unsuccessful schools.

In the commercial market-place, companies which fail to attract or retain consumers go out of business. To avoid this, they are forced to be innovative and creative, raising standards in the field of their products or services. The material and technological advances of the capitalist economies in which such market principles have been given some autonomy contrast markedly with the stagnation in the regulated economies of state socialism.

In the educational market-place, however, the idea of a school 'going out of business' is not applicable in the same way.

Where there is a clear choice to be made between a more and a less successful option, attentive and adequately resourced parents will ensure that their children move to the better option. But in most areas of the country, there will be a large number of parents who are not as attentive or, even if they are, lack the resources to finance the greater costs of sending their children to the superior option. Though the school may suffer funding cuts, the reduced support of 'well-connected' parents, lower teacher morale, worsening test results and increased behavioural problems, many parents will not be in a position to exercise consumer choice. The school will stay 'in business' (though in extreme cases it may attract 'Special Measures' status and ultimately be renamed and 'colonised' by a new staff).

Analyses of the effects of market reforms on the educational system as a whole, as opposed to those focussing on individual schools, persistently point to increased stratification between schools. The educational landscape surveyed by the incoming Labour administration in 1997 thus inevitably contained a large number of poorly performing or 'failing' schools. According to the critical model, it is important to recognise the strong tendency of the market mechanism to deliver the stratified outcomes considered above. And hence any strategy designed to reduce such stratification must acknowledge the central role of the market mechanism.

Yet the common factor in all of New Labour's educational policies is the denial of the impact of the market mechanism. This has been left in force and in some ways strengthened. The effect of market principles on raising standards in advantaged schools is celebrated whilst that on lowering standards in disadvantaged schools is denied. The introduction of Beacon Schools should be seen in this context. It is one of a raft of proposals which seek to raise educational standards whilst ignoring the effects of the market mechanism.

So, according to this critical model, much of the brilliance in the Beacon is fuelled by the benefits of market position, the relation of schools to one another and not to factors intrinsic to the school in isolation.

Now, of course, some caveats must be entered here. The critical model in its pure form is as fallible as the New Labour model. My argument is not that all instances of poor performance can be traced to the workings of the educational market, any more than that market advantage guarantees high performance. Complacency and poor leadership can have their effects in any type of school. The existence of other factors and forces on the social world is inevitably part of its richness which makes analysis the more complex. There will not be a perfect correlation between Beacon status and market advantage. A number of factors work against such dominance.

First, entrepreneurial and buccaneering energy and skill are not confined to the market-advantaged. In my experience, meetings of headteachers often witness claims that some schools cheat or at least skilfully repackage themselves to appear in a more favourable light than reality justifies. Much of this may perhaps be put down to sour grapes but it would be remarkable if the introduction of market principles did not encourage a more ruthless attitude to marketing and self-presentation. SATs and other Performance Indicators have become a form of currency. It would be a historical first if this currency did not attract fraud and theft like every other. In primary schools, SATs can be written in pencil. Off the record, SAT markers will tell you that they regularly come across instances of obvious touching up of scripts, in some cases with the original and corrected versions being inadvertently submitted together. Tight timescales make it unlikely that children would have the time extensively to re-edit their

scripts in the official time allowed. Stories on supposedly unrehearsed topics mysteriously begin with identical paragraphs across a whole class of children. Yet only in the most extreme cases are reports of this to the Examination Board acted upon. David Blunkett, Tony Blair and the Chief Executive of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority Nicholas Tate reacted angrily to the suggestion made by Nick Davies in *The Guardian* in July 2000 that there was corruption in the system (see Blunkett, 2000; White, 2000; Tate, 2000). And, of course, for those for whom only evidence-based research is worth listening to, the absence of hard evidence is testimony enough to the soundness of the system.

Secondly, the DfEE recognised the geographical and social unevenness of the spread of the original pilot 75 schools which were hand-picked on the basis of OFSTED reports and its selection criteria have been amended to ensure a more even spread. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals (FSM) are seen as the best available indicator of 'school circumstances'. Schools are considered for Beacon status if they are in the top 10% (for secondary) or 15% (for primary) of their FSM band and meet other criteria involving rates of improvement. This means that schools in relatively market-disadvantaged circumstances will have an increased chance of involvement. And there are, of course, schools which, through superhuman efforts of exceptional commitment, initiative and leadership and some fortunate human chemistry, defy the odds and thrive in difficult circumstances.

Summary

The New Labour model for explaining the topography of excellence, mediocrity and failure denies the impact of market mechanisms and appeals to an individualised account of differences. The critical model blames a market mechanism played out in a highly stratified social context and demands a relational analysis. Neither model is acceptable in its pure form. But it is only by intervening in the market that the DfES is able to rescue its 'social inclusion' credentials.

Contradictions

It is possible to point to three contradictions at the heart of the Beacon Schools strategy. These can be summarised as: competition/co-operation; Beacon/partnership; and winners/losers.

Competition/Co-operation

As was indicated earlier, the inevitable legacy of the market reforms of the Conservative Governments was a situation of competition for resources between schools in a given deregulated catchment area. Some teachers have been resistant to this competitive culture, seeing it as antithetical to professionalism and inappropriate in an educational context. But those who refuse to play the game lose the game, and promotion depends in many cases on a willingness and ability to contribute to advancing a school's market position.

In this context, sharing one's good practice with a rival school might be seen as the equivalent of sharing the benefits of one's Research and Development investments with a rival company. Market competition tends to discourage co-operation. Revell quotes David Hart from the National Association of Headteachers: 'The majority of heads would want to disseminate good practice. But there's an inherent conflict between spreading good practice and the market forces approach.'

In this light, the Beacon School project might be seen as an attempted palliative to the unco-operativeness engendered by the competitive market. Those with the good ideas are motivated, via the promise of status and resources, to share them with their erstwhile rivals. Hence in the DfEE's document 'Advice on Being a Beacon School' (1999) the cover slogans place 'partnership' and 'collaboration' above even 'raising standards'. Inside, the 'vision' section states that the initiative 'is intended to create a climate of co-operation and sharing. Its aim is to create a national network of schools' (DfEE, 1999, p. 2). The NFER evaluation of the pilot phase, commissioned by the DfEE, claimed that the initiative has demonstrated 'for all partners, including DfEE … the existence of a felt need among school staff to learn from each other' and 'has served to reinstate the principle of collaboration and partnership between schools …' (NFER, 1999, p. 8). In its recommendations for the future, it suggests that 'LEAs should foster a general climate for schools of sharing with and learning from each other'(p. 10).

The first contradiction, then, is that New Labour has provided the seeds for co-operation but insists they be sown in the barren soils of market competition.

Beacon/Partnership

Further tensions in achieving collaboration and partnership arise from the unequal status of Beacon and partner schools. In an equal partnership, both schools would be named 'partner schools'. Clearly the DfEE was aware of the dangers here and warns against 'the pitfalls of complacency or appearing to preach to partner schools' (DfEE, 1999, p. 5). But this is difficult when the feted Beacon School is urged to:

> *Encourage your partners to think deeply, not just about the processes you can demonstrate, but about the culture and ethos that underpin them. Be rigorous in encouraging staff from partner schools to identify what they will gain from a Beacon partnership, i.e. what their problems are, how they can be addressed and what their responsibilities are in making progress. (DfEE, 1999, p. 7)*

The second contradiction, then, is to foster an ethos of partnership and collaboration between schools clearly accorded very different status by the very same policy.

Winners/Losers

Though raising standards further in the Beacon Schools themselves is important, the real test of the success of the initiative must be in the dissemination of good practice to, and the raising of standards in, the partner schools. Indeed one of the main criteria for Beacon Schools to retain their funding beyond the first three years is 'evidence of impact'.

> *The provision of a satisfactory portfolio of evidence demonstrating that schools have developed good partnerships to the mutual benefit of the parties concerned will lead to an extension of Beacon status. (DfEE, 2000, p. 2)*

In this context, evidence from the NFER (1999) evaluation on who has benefited most from the pilot initiative is of interest. For Beacon Schools and their staff, the NFER lists 'the opportunity to innovate and experiment,' 'the career and promotion opportunities made available to (staff),' 'increased staff self-confidence and improved ... morale and self-esteem,' 'the effect of attracting more and better candidates for advertised posts'. None of these benefits was noted for the partner schools. Here, the rather less impressive list included: 'the opportunity to see what happens in other schools in 'real time'; 'the encouragement of greater self-reflection on the part of staff who visited a Beacon School'; the promotion of 'action and ... change in areas as diverse as pupil monitoring ... and ... school systems and structures;' and 'in a few cases, there were claims that standards of pupil achievement had already improved as a result' (NFER, 1999, p. 8).

Reflecting on its evaluation, the NFER gently recommended to its paymaster, the DfEE, that it 'should consider how to "demystify" the Beacon School initiative as an approach to professional development which is – perhaps contrary to some perceptions – inclusive rather than exclusive, built on partnership and mutual respect rather than elitism ...' (p. 9).

Some recognition of the problem is apparent in the DfEE document 'Advice on Being a Beacon School' which was sent to new Beacon Schools. In the section on 'Making Links', existing Beacon School teachers are quoted as advising: 'it is about developing an appropriate sense of humility balanced with assertiveness' and 'be modest in one's dealings with colleagues in other schools and develop a thick skin' (DfEE, 1999, p. 2). New Beacon Schools are accordingly advised to 'think about local sensitivities and how you can present Beacon status as the means to a collaborative and two-way experience' and to 'organise an ice-breaking event' though 'sometimes it may be better not to mention that it is a Beacon activity'.

As the editorial in the journal *Managing Schools Today* commented in February 2000: 'It had become evident that the first tranche of Beacon Schools ... were not much liked by their neighbours who, rather than flocking to them for advice, complained about their unfair advantages' (*Managing Schools Today*, February 2000, pp. 6-7).

The third contradiction is that a project designed to benefit the disadvantaged in practice benefits the advantaged more and thereby increases the gulf between the two rather than reducing it.

Conclusion

Since the pilot scheme in 1998, the emphasis has shifted to the targeting of Beacon activity in areas of deprivation and has been allied with the Excellence in Cities policy.

> *All new Beacon Schools will either be in or serving a city area or will have at least one specified school partner in an areas of recognised deprivation, either urban or rural. (DfES Press Release, 21 June 2001)*

Announcing the latest 425 Beacon Schools, the new Education and Skills Secretary Estelle Morris said:

> *We are maintaining the focus on assisting schools that are in most disadvantaged and underachieving areas of the country. Indeed, many of the new Beacon Schools are managing to achieve high performance in the face of difficult circumstances. (Ibid.)*

Beacon Schools represent New Labour educational policy in a nutshell. Significant resources have been directed at solving educational inequalities *in situ*. New Labour, however, cannot touch the market principle and market mechanism which are major drivers of that inequality. The mantra 'standards not structures' perfectly expresses a policy which attacks symptoms and not causes.

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The Future for Secondary Education

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John Dunford is the widely-respected General Secretary of the Secondary Heads Association (SHA). This article is an abridged version of his address to the SHA Annual Conference held on 24 March 2001.

I want to consider the recent Green Paper on the future of secondary schools, overshadowed for all of us by Alastair Campbell's offensive remark about 'the end of the bog-standard comprehensive'.

Boswell's *Life of Johnson* records Johnson's letter to Lord Chesterfield, in which he says:

> *I had done all I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.*

SHA has members in many different types of school and college. We support their work in whatever institution it takes place. Under attack, we would all echo Samuel Johnson's words, including those of us who have spent our working lives raising standards in comprehensive schools, creating opportunities for all the young people in our care, from future physicists to those who find it difficult to read. None of us was well pleased to have such work disparaged.

It would have been bad enough if this had been the throwaway remark of an over-zealous press secretary. But, I regret to say, they actually believe it in Downing Street. Last week I received a reply to my letter to the Prime Minister. It contained not a word of apology, not a word of regret; only the following by way of explanation:

> *The comment you refer to was simply intended to underline the Government's commitment to modernise the country's secondary schools so that every child can receive a decent education and the opportunity to make the best of their talents.*

I must admit the justification of the unjustifiable makes me very angry.

And let me take you back to September, to a speech by the Prime Minister in which he accused comprehensive schools of adopting a 'one size fits all' mentality, with no setting, uniform provision, hostility to specialisation and holding back 'gifted' pupils.

This provided the next day's headlines, as it was surely meant to do. But there was much in the Speech with which we would agree. He described the Conservative education policy as 'the wackiest collection of half-baked ideas produced for a long time'. I think that seems a reasonable description – the designation of 25,000 schools as separate entities, each in charge of its own admissions policy, does not sound to me like a state system of education.

The Prime Minister went on to say that the comprehensive principle 'means recognising and providing for the particular talents of each individual'. Precisely. 'We want,' he said, 'first-rate secondaries for all, with the excellence and flexibility within every school to make the most of every pupil'. Spot on. In fact, that sounds to me very much like SHA policy, calling for diversity within each school. Much better than the diversity between schools which the Government and the Conservative Opposition both emphasise.

'Diversity and excellence' states the Green Paper, in a phrase taken directly from the John Patten era. I'm sorry, but those two words do not necessarily go together, unless they are an abbreviation for 'diversity between schools and excellence in some of them'. In SHA, we share with R.H. Tawney the notion:

> *What a wise parent would desire for their own children, so a nation, in so far as it is wise, must desire for all children.*

We stand firmly for equality of educational opportunity for all.

So where does SHA stand on specialised schools? Well, we wouldn't have invented them, and probably nor would the Labour Party, if it hadn't inherited them from the Tories. I think I was among the first to accuse the Government of creating a two-tier system of secondary schools, with specialist colleges benefiting from half a million pounds of extra funding over each three-year period.

The Government certainly isn't going to reverse this policy and the specialist colleges themselves, many of them represented here today, welcome the extra funding for their schools and their community work, as well as the challenging targets that they have to set themselves. Leaders of many schools have seen the potential benefits of specialist status and have put a lot of work into their bids. And so SHA Council said, 'Right, let's open this initiative to all schools that want to apply, get rid of the artificial limits on the number of applications from each area and increase the number of categories'. In response to our pressure, the Government has now done all this.

But they must go further. They must:

- improve the accreditation process for specialist colleges by reducing the bureaucracy;
- encourage groups of schools to make joint applications;
- include a category for humanities colleges and, more important, create a category of community colleges for schools that serve rural areas, so that they do not have to pretend to emphasise a single curriculum area when they really want to strive for all-round excellence; and finally
- remove the nonsense of selection, used by few, rejected by many, but lurking dangerously in the background, with the potential to create a steeper hierarchy of schools in each town.

The Green Paper is at its weakest when it is based on theories that are not firmly rooted in evidence. Paragraph 4.33 of the Green Paper, for example, states: 'We want to see further increases in the extent of setting within subjects'. Contrast that with paragraph 78 of the Chief Inspector's Annual Report, published only six days earlier: 'There is no clear statistical link between the extent of setting in schools and the attainment of pupils'.

Then there is the proposal that secondary schools should be encouraged to develop their own mission and ethos. I had to read that sentence twice, just to be sure that I hadn't omitted a crucial word. Where have the writers of this stuff been for the last fifty years? Like everyone else here today, I have spent my whole professional life developing a distinctive mission and ethos in the schools I have led. And this Government talks as if it invented 'ethos'. Why not say: 'It is part of the great tradition of British schools that they develop an individual ethos within a wider system. The Government seeks to encourage this and build on it.'

And why, when the early paragraphs of the Green Paper trumpet the success of the comprehensive system – in terms of improving examination results at 16 and 18, narrowing the achievement gap between boys and girls, improving the performance of many minority ethnic children, and so on – does the Government (and the Opposition) have to repeat the lie that the comprehensive system has failed? It is, as I have said before, a success story year-on-year of which any commercial organisation would be proud. Alas, the management of State Education plc rarely, if ever, gives their employees the credit they so richly deserve. It is part of the Thatcherite legacy to denigrate the achievements and magnify the faults of the public services.

Key Stage 3

I said at this Conference last year that we accept the challenge of raising achievement at Key Stage 3, but there are three conditions attached to our support for government policy.

1. The core funding of secondary education must be improved, so that we can reduce class size in those parts of Key Stage 3 where it will be most beneficial.
2. Increased emphasis on literacy and numeracy must not be at the expense of other curriculum subjects.
3. Policies must be introduced into secondary schools with a much lighter touch than the prescriptive methods of the literacy and numeracy initiatives.

The first condition – on funding – is being met in some parts of the country, but not in others. We welcome the additional funding announced by the Secretary of State.

The jury is still out on the second condition, although we have been assured by the Department that this should not happen.

Crucially, on the third condition, the touch is not light enough. Pilot schools report over-prescription at Key Stage 3, extending to advice on how long schools should spend teaching English and mathematics. In the Department's recent letter to head teachers is a list of 'suggestions' from the pilot schools:

> *To do proper justice to the respective Frameworks, a minimum of three hours per week of teaching time is needed for each of Years 7, 8 and 9. Organisational models such as four lessons of 50 minutes, or five lessons of 40 minutes, are useful.*

And so on. It calls to mind the 1904 regulations for secondary schools:

> *Not less than four and a half hours per week must be allotted to English, geography and history, not less than three and a half hours to the [foreign] language where one is taken or less than six hours where two are taken; and not less than seven and a half hours to science and mathematics, of which at least three must be for science.*

School leaders will ask themselves: Dare we do things differently? Dare we risk a bad inspection report by doing it our way, even if that way is producing excellent examination results in the school? How long before inspectors are criticising schools because they do two and a half hours of mathematics, instead of three, in Year 8? Or because their lessons are 60 minutes long, instead of 50 or 40? Will schools dare to chart their own path to Key Stage 3 success? Will the schools that have most to fear from inspection – those with more 'difficult' intakes – feel that they must adhere to the 'suggestions'?

We have again this week put these fears to Michael Barber and his team at the DfEE. I believe they have taken on board our criticisms. Schools will not, we are assured, have to follow an over-prescriptive 10 minutes of this and 15 minutes of that regime, and we can deliver improvements in Key Stage 3 in other ways. I encourage you to discuss with your staff how best Key Stage 3 can be improved in your school, take what you want from the government strategy, and do it your way. Have courage in your professional ability to deliver improvements in the way that best suits your school.

Curriculum Change

At Key Stage 4, the Government is expanding the range of 'vocational' courses open to students. But more radical measures are essential if we are to overcome the historic divide between the 'academic' and the 'vocational' in this country. For too long, academic courses have been for those who can, and vocational courses for those who can't – a situation that has caused huge damage to the country's prosperity for generations. So we need to consider with great care the Government's proposals for more vocational courses for 14 to 16 year-olds.

There really is no need to define certain courses as 'academic GCSEs' and others as 'vocational GCSEs'. The divide between A levels and vocational A levels is equally unnecessary. The designation of Law as an academic, rather than a vocational, subject illustrates how the divide is one of academic snobbery. When Winchester College introduces vocational A levels, we shall know that parity of esteem between the academic and the vocational has come at last to the UK. But at least the Government is absolutely right in the Green Paper to say that:

> *The culture of leaving education for good at 16 will cease. GCSEs will be a progress check for most at the midpoint of the 14–19 programme.*

That will be a big step on the way to the coherent qualifications structure for which SHA has worked so hard for so long.

Beginning Science Teachers
their views of scientists as revealed through drawings

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Introduction

A well-established method of gaining some insight into how people view scientists is to ask them to draw a scientist. This study explores the images PGCE science students (*n*=221) have of the gender and ethnicity of scientists; if those images of scientists changed during the course, and which factors might contribute to any changes. This is seen as important as they will be taking up posts in schools and their view of scientists may influence the way in which they approach the pupils in their care.

The students were asked to draw pictures of two scientists, complete a questionnaire and a sample were interviewed. The pictures indicated that there was a change in the sex of the scientists drawn, but that there was little change in the 'race' of the scientists. The degree of change in the drawing had a relationship with the amount of equal opportunities work covered in the courses. It was also found that teachers are not being adequately prepared for raising equity issues in the classroom.

The numbers of graduates wishing to teach science has been in decline. The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) has been concerned about this and is trying to remedy this situation. One aspect has been to focus on the lack of students from the ethnic minorities wishing to become teachers (TTA, 1997). One general initiative has been to organise three conferences in conjunction with the Commission for Racial Equity (CRE). These conferences were to identify steps to improve the numbers of people from the ethic minorities taking up teaching (TTA, 1998). One of the points made at the conferences were that trainees needed to be well prepared by their courses for teaching in multi-ethnic Britain. However, while getting a wider range of students to train to become teachers is one important aspect, it may not be sufficient, especially given that up to 10% of PGCE trainees are said to have racist attitudes (Wilkins, 1999). The purpose of this paper is to look at PGCE student's perceptions of scientists and raise questions about the general policies of the TTA with regard to initial teacher training (ITT) PGCE courses and to see if they are likely to help or hinder the situation.

One would hope that research into how students on ITT courses respond to equity issues would provide an evidence base on which to guide policy. In general though, there seems to be little research into how students on Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses in science view equal opportunities, and how they respond to the equal opportunities elements of their courses. There does not appear to be any published research in this area since 1994; a real contrast to the many articles on school pupils (Jarvis, 1996; Matthews, 1996; She, 1998; Harrison & Matthews, 1998). Examples of research carried out before 1994 include Turner & Turner (1987, 1993), who surveyed 30 science ITT institutions and found that between 1979 and 1984 there was an increase in multicultural approaches, but there was still much room for improvement. Michael Reiss (1994) investigated science students on their views of multicultural and anti-racist science education. He found that 'between 1990 and 1994 students became less well informed about certain aspects of multicultural/anti-racist education' (p. 27). Reiss postulated that this decrease might have been due to structural changes being imposed on teacher education, and in particular the decrease in time available for college-based work to tackle such issues.

It is reasonable to argue that an ITT curriculum that provides for equity in the fullest sense would help ensure that teachers entering the profession would be equipped to interest all pupils to take up science, irrespective of their gender, ethnic background etc. This in turn would make it more likely that a greater number of pupils, including those from the ethnic minorities, would think of teaching science as a career. This research was instigated to explore how much of an emphasis was placed on such issues in PGCE courses, and how the ITT students were reacting to the issues raised.

Pictures of a scientist drawn by people has been used as a guide to perceptions by many researchers (Chambers, 1983; Solomon, 1993; Tuckey, 1992). Matthews (1996) developed the basic design so that students are asked to draw a picture of two scientists working and to write on their drawings what they were doing. This method was extended again to use a questionnaire and discussion with a range of students.

Research Design

At the beginning of their PGCE science course 221 students from 4 institutions (3 inner city and 1 semi-rural) were asked to draw a picture of two scientists working. The students were not told that there was to be a second stage so that there was less likelihood that the first stage would be affected by fore-knowledge of the second stage.

At the end of their course the students were asked to do the same task again. *After* they had done their drawings they were asked to fill in a questionnaire designed to elicit *why* they drew the pictures as they did, *what* might have influenced any changes in their pictures, what they *remembered* of the equal opportunities work? done on their courses and in what *type* of school they did their teaching practice. They were asked these questions in

order to find out aspects of courses that would be likely to produce a change in attitudes in students. Each institution was asked to detail the equal opportunities parts of their courses.

A control group was chosen that did not have any equal opportunities issues raised formally in college or schools. There were no science groups that were of a large enough size available, and so 74 Mathematics students in the last year of their degree were asked to do the same tasks.

Results

The students could draw two male scientists, two female scientists, or one of each sex. From what was written on the drawings it was possible to deduce the science subject depicted, the categories used were based on previous research (Matthews, 1996; Matthews & Davies, 1999: Solomon, 1993).

The figures drawn were categorised as male or female.

The pictures were also inspected for the range of scientists drawn by each student (two male scientists, two female scientists, or one of each sex) and how these changed between the autumn and the summer. The percentages of male scientists and female scientists drawn in the autumn at the beginning of the course are shown in Table I. All figures quoted throughout the article are rounded to the nearest 1%.

	Male scientists drawn	Female scientists drawn	'Black' scientists drawn
Midlands Semi-rural campus 76 students	*81%* 58% by men, 42% by women	*19%* 18% by men, 82% by women	*0%* (10% of students from the ethnic minorities)
Old Town London 79 students	*70%* 57% by men, 43% by women	*30%* 23% by men, 76% by women	*0.6%* (33% of students from the ethnic minorities)
Docklands London *Science* 34 students	*76%* 54% by men, 46% by women	*24%* 38% by men, 62% by women	*4%* (44% of students from the ethnic minorities)
Riverside London 32 students (no biologists)	*73%* 76% by men, 27% by women	*27%* 29% by men, 71% by women	*2%* (44% of students from the ethnic minorities)
Docklands London *(Mathematics)* 74 students	*84%* 59% by men, 41% by women	*16%* 17% by men, 83% by women	*0%* (39% of students from the ethnic minorities)

Table I

The overall figure for male scientists drawn by the PGCE students is 74%. The results from Primary schools and Secondary schools are that Primary pupils drew 80% males and secondary pupils 75% males (Harrison & Matthews, 1998; Matthews & Davies, 1999). It seems then, that there is very little difference between leaving secondary school and starting a PGCE.

The percentages of male and female figures drawn in the summer, at the end of the course, are shown in Table II. There was an increase in the percentages of female scientists in all colleges and a reduction in the percentages of male scientists drawn.

Discussion

The PGCE students drew a more even balance of male and female scientists at the end of their courses than at the beginning and both men and women changed. Similarly, women drew fewer male figures overall. There is a wide variation in the changes from course to course. While it is not possible to separate out all the variables, the results indicate that one possibility is that some aspects of the equal opportunities covered on the courses were having an effect. This interpretation is supported by the lack of change in the control group. However, the control group was on average younger and they may have been less mature, which could have affected the result.

	Male scientists drawn Autumn *Summer*		*Female* scientists drawn Autumn *Summer*		*'Black'* scientists drawn Autumn *Summer*	
Midlands 76 students	*81%*	*80%* 60% by men, 40% by women	*19%*	*20%* 30% by men, 70% by women	*0%* 10% of students from the ethnic minorities	*0%*
Old Town 79 students	*70%*	*62%* 62% by men, 38% by women	*30%*	*38%* 31% by men, 69% by women	*0.6%* 33%	*4%*
Docklands 34 students	*76%*	*47%* 52% by men, 48% by women	*24%*	*53%* 52% by men, 48% by women	*4%* 44%	*45%*
Riverside 32 students	*73%*	*65%* 77% by men, 23% by women	*27%*	*35%* 46% by men, 54% by women	*2%* 44%	*3%*
Docklands *Mathematics* 74 students	*84%*	*85%* 60% by men 40% by women	*16%*	*15%* 17% by men 83% by women	*0%* 39% of students from the ethnic minorities.	*2%*

Table II

Further examination of the data reveals that there have been changes of greater significance in the drawings. Each student could draw two male scientists, one male and one female, or two female scientists. At Midlands 69% of all students drew two male scientists in the autumn. In the summer only 62% drew two males, a decrease in 7%. The percentage of drawings containing one male and one female figure increased from 25% to 38%.

In all institutions the percentage of students drawing a picture containing one male and one female scientist has increased, and could suggest a greater recognition of equal opportunities issues than the male/female scientist split indicates. The changes could also be due to the students being aware of what was being looked for, and so 'playing the game'. However, while this is certainly true for some students (see later for evidence from the questionnaire on this) it does not explain, by itself, why there is such a variation in the results from college to college; nor why the Mathematics students did not also change at all in the same direction. Also, if the students had 'played the game', then there would have been an increase in the numbers of scientists from different ethnic backgrounds drawn, and this is not evident except at Docklands. I am also unable to think of any reason why the sample of students in this study should differ considerably, either from institution to institution. In any case, the extent to which students were 'giving the researchers what they wanted' simply makes any changes less significant and so increases the need for interventions.

Further an analysis of the drawings indicates that in the vast majority of cases the male and female figures are active to a similar degree. Some pictures had active males and passive females.

The person drawing can put either the male or female figure on the left side: the figure drawn first by most right-handed people. The ratio in the Autumn was three male figures on the left to every four female figures on the left. This indicates that the female was seen as slightly more important but was probably due to women drawing many more male-female scientists than the men. In the Summer the ratio was almost 1:1, with slightly more male figures drawn on the left.

To give a flavour of what was drawn, see the pictures reproduced as Figures 1-5.

In Table III, these features are detailed. Additionally, the percentage *decrease* in these items has been calculated. So, for example, in the first case (Midlands) in the autumn the percentages were: White coat 47%; Specs 22%; Bald 8%, giving an aggregated total of 77%. In the summer the data had become: White coat 25%; Specs 8%; Bald 4% = 37%, a decrease in 40%. Here are the data, which indicate changes away from the stereotypical images of scientists.

Interestingly, there was a notable decrease in the stereotypical features, especially at Midlands where there was a small change in the ratio of male/female figures drawn. This implies that the courses were having an effect in changing the students' awareness.

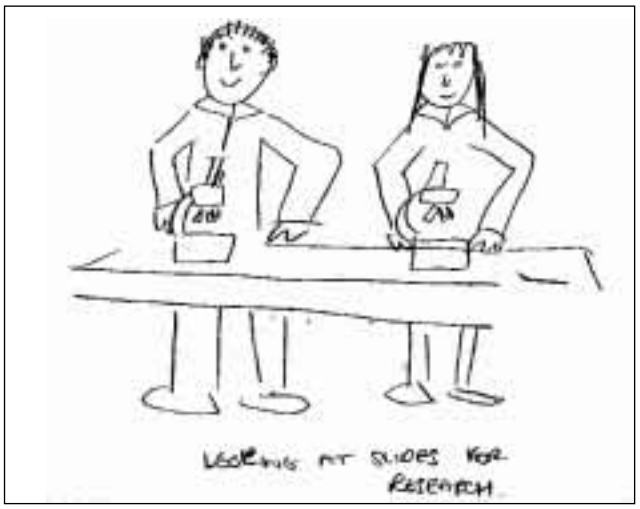

Figure 1. A picture that shows equal activity by the male and female scientists.

Figure 2. An unusual drawing that shows female complaints about a man.

Previous research indicates that stereotypical features of scientists include that they wear white coats, are bald, and wear spectacles.

Figure 3. Shows two sterotypical male scientists working together. 15% of drawings showed teachers as scientists.

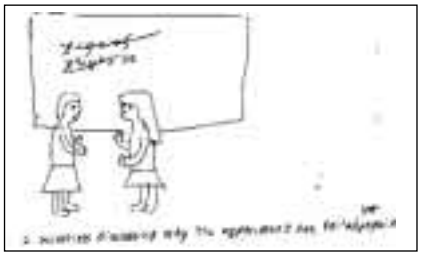

Figure 5. Drawing of two females.

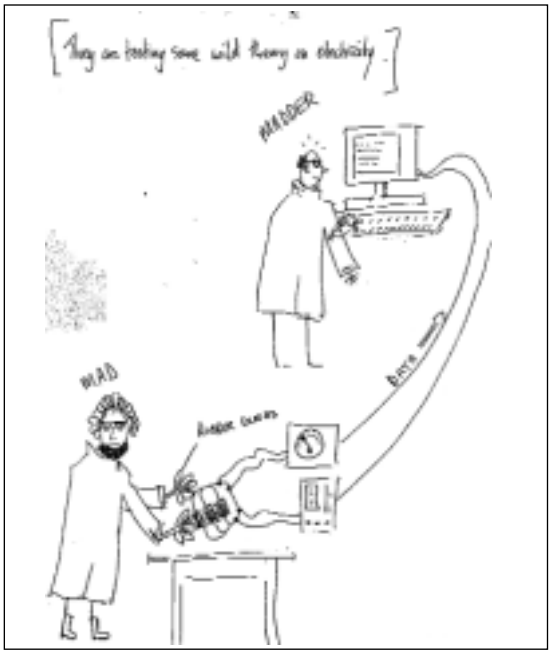

Figure 4. Two mad male scientists. In this study under 4% of the scientists were drawn as mad. This is low in comparison to those drawn in schools.

	Stereotypical features	
	Autumn	*Summer*
Midlands Semi-rural campus	White coat 47% Specs 22% Bald 8%	*White coat 25%* *Specs 8%* *Bald 4%*
	aggregate change 40%	
Old Town London	White coat 35% Specs 29% Bald 8%	*White coat 29%* *Specs 17%* *Bald 5%*
	aggregate change 22%	
Docklands London	White coat 25% Specs 12% Bald 3%	*White coat 5%* *Specs 5%* *Bald 2%*
	aggregate change 32%	
Riverside London	White coat 42% Specs 26% Bald 6%	*White coat 27%* *Specs 16%* *Bald 3%*
	aggregate change 32%	
Docklands London *(Mathematics)*	White coat 39% Specs 26% Bald 7 %	*White coat 40%* *Specs 27%* *Bald 4%*
	aggregate change 1%	

Table III

Results of the Questionnaire

At the end of the summer term the students, *after* they had completed their drawing of the two scientists, were given a questionnaire to fill in. The questions they were asked included if they remembered their first drawing, and the reasons for any changes. In particular they were asked if any of the changes were because they:

a) thought that was what their tutors or researchers wanted,
b) learnt from the previous drawing and would do it differently in the future,
c) made any changes because of any particular aspects of the course, in school or college,
d) thought the previous drawing did not influence them and any changes were incidental.

They were also asked if they remembered studying or encountering any equal opportunities issues. The results are shown in Table IV.

	Remembered drawing from the Autumn			Why they changed their drawing, or why they drew it as they did
Midlands Semi-rural campus 76 students	*Yes* *23%*	*No* *70%*	*Blank* *7%*	*a) 0%* *b) 12%* *c) 16%* *d) 72%*
Old Town London 79 students	*Yes* *54%*	*No* *32%*	*Blank* *14%*	*a) 8%* *b) 31%* *c) 6%* *d) 55%*
Docklands London 34 students	*Yes* *93%*	*No* *7%*	*Blank* *0%*	*a) 15%* *b) 45%* *c) 40%* *d) 0%*
Riverside London 32 students	*Yes* *22%*	*No* *78%*	*Blank* *0%*	*a) 0%* *b) 22%* *c) 10%* *d) 68%*
Docklands London *(Mathematics)* 74 students	*Yes* *41%*	*No* *59%*	*Blank* *0%*	*a) 0%* *b) 6%* *c) 0%* *d) 94%*

Table IV

The students' answers to questions b, – *learnt from the previous drawing and would do it differently in the future;* and c, – *made any changes because of any particular aspects of the course, in school or college,* indicate those who said they had learnt consciously to make more positive representations of scientists from their course. Clearly, even if the students gave b) as their answer it cannot be assumed that doing the drawing was the only influence. As one student wrote 'I had never thought about this, and when you do you realise how important it is to change'. Although none of the mathematics students was given formal feedback, one African student came up to me afterwards to discuss the task with me. She said 'You know, I never thought about that and drew white people'. In the second drawing she was one of the students who drew 'black' figures. Since the purpose of the exercise is to get the students to think about and change the way they represent scientists in the classroom, it implies that the strategy is, at least in part, making a contribution to their changing. If they were doing such drawings cynically, they could have answered a) thought that was what their tutors or researchers wanted, or even d) *previous drawing did not influence them and any changes were incidental.*

There are clear trends in that in general those students who indicated that the courses had affected them also made the greatest changes in the drawings.

	Docklands	Old Town	Riverside	Midlands
	95%,	37%,	32%	28%.
The *changes* in percentage of male:females drawn (using Table II)	Docklands 29%,	Old Town 8%,	Riverside 8%	Midlands 1%.
Percentage remembering first drawings	Docklands 93%	Old Town 54%	Riverside 22%	Midlands 23%

Table V

One possible explanation for the variation in percentage of students remembering their drawings is to say that there was a differential in students' memories from college to college, but this seems unlikely. Another explanation is that those students who were given college or school-based experiences on equality issues, thought more about the work and so were more likely to remember their drawings. If this is the case then it is also possible that they will build on this and so be more likely to pay attention to equity issues in the future as they are more aware. Alternatively, or as well, the students could see it as more important and that is why they remember it. Also one could ask, did they change because they remembered, or, because they remembered did they change?

However, although the percentage of students saying that any changes were incidental (Answer d) is high, it is clear that the courses did affect them. This can be ascertained because the scientists drawings changed significantly (either the percentage of males drawn decreased, and/or there were fewer white coated, bald men with glasses), while the mathematicians did not change correspondingly (Table II). This could be because some students would not acknowledge, either to themselves or to a researcher, that they had changed. It could also be because those who could not remember their previous drawing could be finding it more difficult to answer. As one student wrote 'My previous drawing did not influence me but I drew a woman for variety' (White male, Old Town).

The following quotes derived from open-ended questions, illustrate how students indicated that they had learnt from their course and from the exercise, and are consistent with the students changing their attitudes:

My first drawing was male, old, and serious. This time I tried to draw more friendly scientists, doing active, fun activities, involving the pupils. (Female, Old Town)

I agree that women and ethnic minorities should be represented in drawings. I have been strongly influenced by the equal opps part of the course which has been a constant theme. (African male, Docklands)

Changes in drawing as result of aspects of course, primarily assignment: Multi-cultural approach to science teaching. (White female, Midlands)

When I think of scientists working I tend to think of white male scientist. However, I have worked ... importantly as a science teacher. I am representing Muslim women, that's why I drew a female and a male. (Asian female, Old Town)

When I drew two stick men last time I did it without thinking of sex or race. However, since doing my teaching practice … I have realised how important it is to think about such things. (White female, Riverside)

It is interesting that the changes in images of the scientist have changed in terms of gender, but NOT in terms of 'race': with the exception of Docklands. One argument is that it is more difficult to draw a 'Black' person. I do not accept this, as a high percentage of Docklands' students were able to draw 'black' scientists. See Figure 6.

It is possible that it shows that racism is more embedded, or that less emphasis was placed on it. However, the lack of change must be of concern for it certainly implies that students may be unlikely to routinely present images of scientists from a range of ethnic backgrounds during their science lessons. Figure 7 is an example of one who did.

Difficulties

The percentages of students who said that they had drawn what they thought their tutors wanted (Answer a) were low, but higher in those institutions where there was a greater emphasis on equal opportunities (15% and 8%, see Table IV). Some replies indicated that a few students were having problems with the equal opportunities part of their courses:

I drew what I thought was required. Having done this course we all know what political correctness is!! (White female, Docklands)

This indicates that an emphasis on equity can lead to, or bring out, that some students will reject the philosophy of their courses. It could also be, as Wilkins (1999) found, that up to 10% of PGCE students have racist attitudes and that this might lead to them saying issues were over-emphasised. However, it must also be acknowledged that people can find it difficult to change.

… I am sure I had the same image of scientists before and after starting my PGCE course. (White male, Old Town)

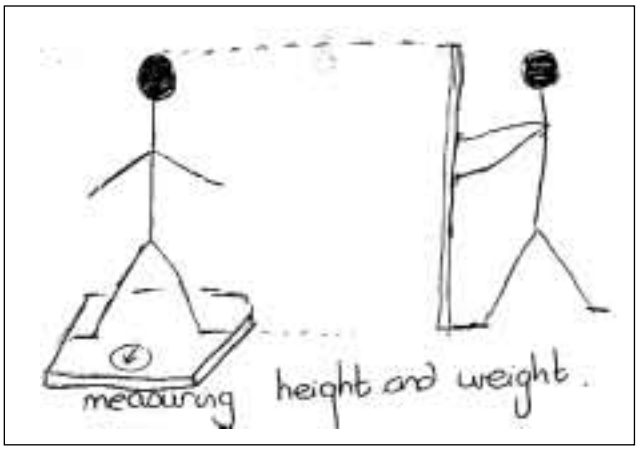

Figure 6. Shows how easy it is to draw scientists from the ethnic minorities. The two stick people are clearly 'Black'. This picture was categorised as 'physics' related, which was evident in about 17% of the drawings.

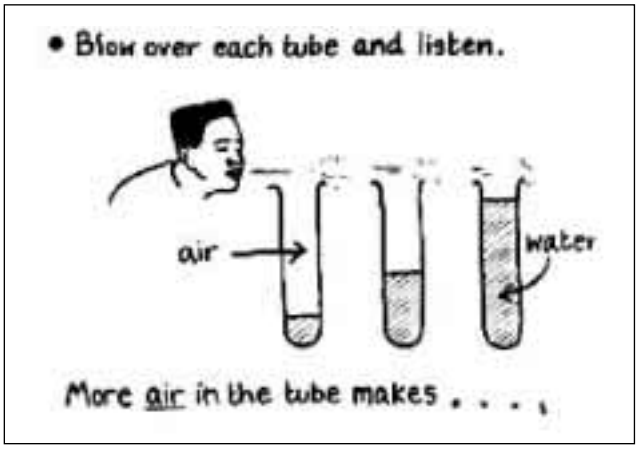

Figure 7

A scientist is a scientist gender does not matter! I did not consider the gender when doing the drawing as gender is not an issue. (White female, Midlands)

Variation in the Courses

As can be seen form the quotes above, both formal and informal aspect of the courses had influenced the students to make changes in their drawings. The degree of the changes may be explained by the degree of equal opportunity components in the courses.

Midlands

The course had: 1) an introduction to equal opportunities in a core lecture. They are asked to make it one of their focii in school visits and look at school systems. 2) A 1-hour lecture and seminar. Specific points that arise out of these sessions are covered in science, with at look at official documents. *Assessed work: an option of 12 hours on equal opportunities with an assignment. About 10% of students take this option.*

Old Town

There was: 1) a keynote lecture for all students early in the course, and followed by a seminar on issues concerning 'race' and gender in the context of science teaching. 2) References to equal opportunities in a range of contexts in

the science course. 3) Component of professional studies in schools and students can take a school-focused enquiry. (note; How well this is done in schools is varied). *This work is assessed but equal opportunities is likely to feature as a main aspect in less than 5% of cases.*

Docklands

1) In the first term there are two lectures in Educational Studies. 2) *All* students have to write-up Directed Activity booklets on equal opportunities which is *handed in for assessment*. 3) The science component of the course has two lectures solely on equal opportunities issues, and such issues are incorporated into much of the work. The nature of science is discussed, and ideas that science itself incorporates sexism and racism are raised and debated. 4) In the *Science assessed essay up to 20%* of students will focus on equal opportunities. 5) In the spring term *all science students have to hand in an original piece of classroom material that tackles equal opportunities and has been taught to pupils.* 6) In the Summer term there in professional studies up to *10% of students will study and do a school-based project taking 30 hours in equal opportunities*.

Riverside

1) In the first term a 1 hour lecture for all students on diversity and a second on bilingualism. 2) The science component has a focus on differences in ability but little follow-up on other areas of equal opportunities. 3) Some work is done in schools but how well this is done is varied. 4) component of professional studies in college in the Summer term. *This work is assessed and equal opportunities is taken by about 10% of students.*

There was only one institution (Docklands) in which *all* students had to complete assessed work in equal opportunities, and this was in both science and educational studies. In all other institutions only up to about 10% of science students had to hand in assessed work on equal opportunities, and this was in educational studies. Equal opportunities issues were followed up in science courses. At Riverside no formal work was covered in science that related directly to gender or race issues. The impact of equity issues were have been further reduced in that some of the work was done after the students had completed all their teaching practices. Similarly, at Midlands, the more formal aspects, like how government documents covered equal opportunities, were focused on, rather than approaches that could be seen by them as directly relevant to the classroom. It is also possible that the attention paid to equal opportunities throughout the course may have been less than that planned, an indicator being that comments from students that it was a waste of time were higher. The emphasis on equal opportunities, as reflected in the amount of assessed work, especially in science, would go some way in explaining the results obtained above, and why Old Town and Docklands obtained larger changes in student responses.

Another factor could be the schools in which the students did their teaching practice. In all institutions the ratio of co-ed to single sex was very similar, so it is doubtful that this could have been a factor. Midlands did have fewer multi-cultural schools than did the other colleges, and they did have the smallest change in 'black' figures drawn. There is no formal data on how well equal opportunities is covered in schools, but it varied and there is no evidence to suggest that it is covered in any depth.

However, as learning is emotional the atmosphere in which it takes place could affect the quality and quantity of changes in attitudes. The results of the present research indicate that what could matter are all the factors that influence the total culture towards equity. This would include the percentage of PGCE students from ethnic minorities and how seriously equity issues are covered by college and schools, including how many schools have significant percentages of pupils from the ethnic minorities. Another factor would be how many women are on a course, as this also affects the culture, and it is noticeable that Riverside was the only institution where men outnumbered the women. A further factor could be that for many students the science component is seen as *the course* by many students, so if equity issues are not done in science, it would not be taken as so important. This could help explain why Riverside students did not change as much as the other two London colleges.

Taking all the factors into account, it could be that the best explanation for the results obtained is to look at the total social context.

Is it also significant that fewer than 50% of the scientists drawn, where the faces could be seen, were smiling?

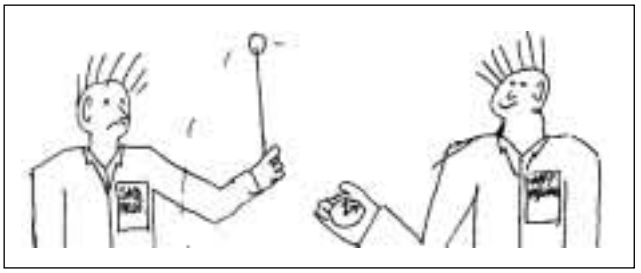

Figure 8. Details of drawing.

Conclusion

This investigation has limitations. Nevertheless, it is possible to speculate on the basis of the data reported here. This indicates that, along with Wilkin's (1999) research, there is a need for more attention to equity concerns in PGCE courses and in schools. This is especially true when one considers that the TTA calls for more science teachers from the ethnic minorities (TTA, 1997).

This would include all those features specified by Turner & Turner (1993) and in particular:

- Work on equity in science and educational studies.
- Assessed work in science and educational studies.
- Debates on the social nature of science.
- Work related to classroom and theory that explicitly raises equity issues and how to deal with them.

More research is needed, especially into what happens on PGCE courses in both college and schools. It is essential that equity issues be raised to the extent that students change their attitudes and, as teachers, in turn influence school pupils. Otherwise, we will continue the practices as now which are resulting in few students of all groups taking up science and then going into teaching. As Hsiao-Ching She (1998, p. 134) said, 'The key to fostering change is reaching students with repeated, positive

messages from parents, peers and teachers, … messages that they will carry with them throughout their education'.

It is also clear that the amount of work on equity issues is decreasing. Reiss (1994) found a drop between 1990 and 1994. Turner & Turner (1993) found that the timetabled college-based element on multicultural issues alone formed about 1% of courses, and this is clearly greater than that found in this study. It is also significant that due to pressures of time, especially with the ITT National Curriculum (DfEE, 1998), the elements dealing with equity issues are decreasing. For example, at Docklands the Education Studies assessed work has already been dropped. Informal conversations with all institutions in this study indicate that tutors and schools are finding it increasingly difficult to spend time on gender and race issues, and they are likely to be increasingly sidelined. It is clear that we are not properly preparing our teachers for multi-cultural schools.

There has been an increasing centralisation in the control of ITT courses and the laying down of a national curriculum for teacher trainers (DfEE, 4/98). In the section referring to science ITT there are only two references that touch on equal opportunities. These are to ensure that trainees are taught the importance of a) being aware of gender differences in attitude and take up of science post-16, and b) that scientists of many cultures have contributed to its progress (DfEE, 1998 p. 122). Clearly, equal opportunities issues have not been placed centrally. There seems to be no thought through social justice agenda. However, especially given the lack of numbers of scientists entering the profession, it is reasonable to argue that to produce a curriculum that provides for equal opportunities and equity in the fullest sense would help ensure that teachers entering the profession now would be equipped to interest all pupils to take up science, irrespective of their gender, ethnic background etc. This in turn would make it more likely that all pupils, including those from the ethnic minorities, would think of teaching science as a career. Teachers can and should be educated to be able to do this during their PGCE year.

This means that for schools taking on NQTs there is an increasing possibility that they will have done less work on equity issues, and that this should form part of their induction year, whether or not it is on the Career Entry Profile. There are many ways of doing this, some of which are detailed in Matthews & Davies (1999). These are:

1 Take account in planning of the fact that pupils coming from primary schools have already done science and built up a stereotypical view of scientists.
2 Make science more of a social activity, especially by encouraging pupil-pupil interactions in the classroom.
3 Use TV programmes to discuss pupils' implicit views of scientists.
4 Focus some work on scientists and science using posters, drawings etc.
5 Ensure that sketch drawings of scientists of both sexes and a range of 'races' are regularly featured in worksheets and boardwork.
6 Get the pupils to draw scientists and discuss what they have drawn (the extent to which they reproduced stereotypes).
7 Use books and other images that show a range of representations of scientists. Ensure that the pupils are aware of different cultures and sexes of scientists.
8 Try to counter the pressures of OFSTED and 'league tables' by focusing on the nature of scientific enquiry in all content areas.

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Chairs are More Than Just Governors

a radical change to the structure of governing bodies

MICHAEL PATRICK WATSON

This article is based on a PhD thesis that examined how the chairs of secondary school governing bodies achieve their objectives in everyday governance. It includes a proposal for the first stage of what is termed a 'model framework'. Its aim is radically to change the organisation and structure of school governance in order to make it more streamlined and efficient. At the time of writing this article, the author was Project Manager for Business Mentoring, in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

I chose to research the role of chair after discovering from my own experience as a secondary school governor that there were significant differences between the role of chair and that of the other governors. I believe that changes to governance have dramatically altered the role of chair, and that this has not been accounted for sufficiently in existing studies. Previous studies that examined governing bodies looked at governors homogeneously, and consequently few researchers accounted for the major differences between the roles. In my own experience as vice chair on a secondary school governing body, I found that the chair, more than anyone else, had something akin to quasi-managerial responsibilities likely to be found amongst professionals in the school. It was also evident that the role was affected by a variety of external issues, that it was onerous and required expertise, time and commitment not demanded of other governors.

Located in inner London, five secondary schools and their governing bodies, covering voluntary aided and county status, were examined in this study. The schools' names have been replaced with pseudonyms: Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Princeton and St Andrews. The schools differed in size and gender make-up, and the chairs varied in their period of office, gender, and length of service, and their names were also replaced with pseudonyms: Mr Aristotle, Mr de Silva, Mrs Augustine, Mr Cornelius and Mrs Oceano. The schools had disproportionate levels of need compared to schools nationally. Overall, the schools had higher levels of truancy, of excluded pupils, of special educational needs (SEN) students, and of pupils with free school meals (a factor that is often used to show that a child comes from a poor background). A large percentage of pupils spoke English as a second language, and all five schools were in areas with features of very real disadvantage (poor housing, high unemployment and low-skilled professions).

I started out in this study with a number of objectives. The principal objective was to produce a narrative description of the real-life experience of chairs. A second objective was to help us understand how they negotiate their role through the competing priorities that face them in day-to-day governance. Thirdly, I wanted to create new thinking on how we examine chairs of secondary school governing bodies; that is, that their role should be studied extensively and separately from the rest of the governing body.

I used a multiple perspective that consisted of the agency of chair (the interpretation they give to the position), the membership (how members of the governing body affect their role) [1] and the school setting (how the circumstances in which the school is set affects their responsibilities). This perspective provided a framework relevant to understanding, illuminating and documenting as complete a picture as possible of the experiences of chairs. It enabled me to understand the work of the chairs at many different levels, to connect their actions from one situation to another which until now had remained disconnected. Before this research, chairs had been studied primarily as part of the governing body, so it was not surprising that the prevailing interpretation of their position might be to view them as governors. I saw a multiple perspective as the most appropriate perspective to bring meaning and discovery into this area.

In the study I employed qualitative methods, within a case study approach, and some quantitative data arose out of these. The qualitative information was collated through observations of full governing body and committee meetings, interviews with chairs, some informal discussions with clerks and governors, and analysis of school and governing body literature. Quantitative information came from observation exercises that included the recording of the number of occurrences of particular events. It also included a series of data deduced from internal and external documentation.

When attempting to answer the initial hypotheses of how the role of chair is negotiated in everyday governance, the following conclusions were drawn from the study.

How Chairs Negotiate Their Role

The way in which a chair will act is particular to the circumstances of the school, to the individual chairs themselves, and to the members on the governing body. Schools and governing bodies are very complex organisations, with social, political, economic and environmental differences. Whilst there will be similarities across schools, no two situations are the same; and even with strong similarities, it is unlikely that the outcomes will be the same.

Oxford

In Oxford for example, the interpretation of Mr Aristotle's role was largely influenced by factors affecting the school, such as the expansion in pupil numbers, the appointment of new staff, and additional building developments. It was of relevance that Mr Aristotle's interpretation, largely influenced by his background in education and familiarity with schools, should have had some bearing on the way in which he fulfilled the role. It resulted in greater time spent in the school and on school matters, and more support of the interpretation that the management of the school gave to events. It was also evident in the amount that he contributed to answering questions posed to the headteacher in meetings. This approach also reflected a lack of faith in the remaining governors' ability to fulfil their responsibilities without him, which then served to increase his own responsibilities.

Cambridge

Like the other four schools, Cambridge had lower GCSE results than the average LEA and the national figures, and higher exclusion rates, SEN numbers and pupils on free school meals. However, these did not, as issues, affect Mr de Silva in the manner that became obvious in some of the descriptions of other chairs. Mr de Silva's background in the private sector, in running his own business, was of decisive influence in his approach to the work and in his leadership of the governing body. Meetings, for example, were very structured and were organised. Even the terminology applied, such as the board's secretary (what we commonly describe as the clerk to the governing body), reflected this and permeated the governing body's work at all levels (committees and even the relationship between the governing body and the headteacher). The members of the governing body and his personal interpretation, more than the school setting, defined the role of Mr de Silva. A highly active and competent governing body was instrumental in sharing the governors' responsibilities and in making it possible for Mr de Silva to concentrate on matters that were more specific.

Princeton

Princeton had been one of the more disadvantaged schools in this study. The increased difficulties did not, however, create more of a workload for Mr Cornelius, though his role was far greater in contact with the LEA because, according to him and the members of the governing body, this was what he was good at doing. Princeton was in the fortunate position of having a governing body with a high proportion of skilled professionals. Mr Cornelius's interpretation of the role arose from management practices found in the private sector (Mr Cornelius owned his own business). According to him, this style of leadership was the most appropriate one for the group of professional individuals on Princeton's governing body.

Harvard

In contrast to some of the findings in the other case studies, Mrs Augustine's role was largely defined by the circumstances of the school and the governing body. These factors included difficulties with pupil numbers, exclusions, under-achievement, social and economic disadvantage, and poor participation of the governing body. Harvard indicated how a multitude of difficulties could combine to make things much worse, especially when faced with competition from other local schools, and being under special measures. Attempts to solve the difficulties defined the work of Mrs Augustine. Her own strategy was to get involved in both the minutiae of governing body administration as well as the big issues. The combination of these issues changed her position and the priorities, making the whole process of governance much more difficult.

St Andrews

Mrs Oceano's responsibilities at St Andrews tended to illustrate how much influence a chair of governors can have on the way the governing body fulfils its objectives. Whilst evidence of the governing body and the setting of the school in influencing the role of chair was present, it was Mrs Oceano's ideas that prevailed. She believed, for example, that part of her role was to ensure that governors did not upset staff. She was also heavily involved in photocopying and presenting important pieces of information, updating governors on educational matters in the school, and negotiating with the unions. The combination of the many tasks that Mrs Oceano took on had become extremely onerous, and may also have contributed to fewer governors taking on responsibilities. The concern about communications between governors and staff contributed to making governors more cautious in their contacts with teachers. The combination of these and of other factors reduced governors' work to such an extent that Mrs Oceano described them as not fulfilling their responsibilities. The governors did less work, believing Mrs Oceano wanted to take more control, and Mrs Oceano took on more responsibility, seeing that governors did not fully contribute. Both interpretations were perpetuating the difficulties.

Discussion

Chairs of governors negotiate their role by using their value system to meet the tasks in front of them. If it is not possible to get governors to take on more responsibilities, then the chair is virtually forced to take on more, to save the situation, if he/she is determined to get things done. They contribute more time to meet the lack of participation by governors, learn more about educational matters to be able to inform others, and set themselves up as a link between the governing body and the school (headteacher) for the continuation of good relations. Chairs construct their roles with the head, governors, LEA, staff, clerks and sometimes the unions to meet the demands of the school, the expectations of governors, heads and sometimes the LEA. The extent to which any of the above activities is greater than the other may be the

defining factor in why chair's role turns out to be the way it does. I have not tried to work out a proposition about the relative levels of activity, but to argue that they are all relevant in understanding how and why chairs operate in the way they do, and for understanding why one chair's role may be different from another.

Chairs are Unique

Chairs of governors may occupy or perform a number of specialist and important managerial tasks which are crucially important to the operational effectiveness of school governing bodies. A more accurate description of their role should be a semi-educational professional concerned with bridging the gap between a number of agencies: governing body, school, LEA, consultants and parents. In essence, their position should no longer be viewed in the wider context of governing bodies as homogeneous groups; chairs should be viewed distinctly from governors because of the significant responsibility that they have. Compared to their colleagues, the tasks that chairs perform requires:

- greater knowledge relevant to the particular school (policies, pupils, staff),
- greater knowledge on educational matters (local and national policies, and statutory legislation),
- work with professional agents (the headteacher, teachers, the LEA, consultants, contractors, unions, inspectors, the director of education, other chairs, inspectors and various other professionals),
- a close working relationship with the headteacher,
- more time to take on additional tasks that may arise from the position,
- the ability to lead, motivate and organise others effectively, to achieve the objectives of the boards.

Most or all of these responsibilities represent areas that few governors in my study participated in. Even where there was some evidence of participation, this was invariably minimal in comparison with that of the chair. These rarely resemble how researchers, the government and other agencies have for so long defined the role of chairs. At present, the focus appears to be on the chair's ability to lead the governing body. However, this study has highlighted the importance of the knowledge of governance, handling of partnerships and providing direction to the school which enables the leadership role of the chair to have real meaning. Other responsibilities of the chair include chief advisor to the headteacher, LEA negotiator, and observer and monitor of the governing body's standards and work. Chairs are also called on to be motivators, supporters of school events, and even will be required to issue final warnings to pupils about their behaviour.

Discussion

Academics and professionals in education should be cognisant of the fact that schools are as distinct as the people within them are. As Greenfield & Ribbins (1993) state:

> *Despite its claim to objectivity, the science of administration is usually to be found on the side of the status quo. It starts from a standpoint of things as they are, and then asks why they are so. It does not question whether that which is ought to be. The argument here is not that conventional society or the status quo is necessarily wrong, but that positivist science cannot and should not attempt to validate social reality without revealing the weakness of its credentials for doing so. (p. 147)*

Using this as the starting point, this article recommends that researchers and professionals look at the operation of governing bodies from the perspective of the chair's leadership because it is the chair who is most likely to be influential in how the governing body will function. Several of these factors are summarised here:

- the activities of school governing bodies are determined by governors – in particular, the chair, who bears the responsibility for organising what goes on in them;
- chairs of governors determine their action through the circumstances of the situation, including a combination of their intentions, values and determination;
- there is no set way in which chairs operate – rather, these are determined by the actions of governors, the school setting and by other principal players, such as the headteacher;
- to understand how chairs work we need to examine their values, actions and views on education.

I have placed in Table I a series of principles used by Sergiovanni & Corbally (1986, p. 21) adapted here to help us understand the actions of the chair.

Action of Chairs	Terms of Reference	Model
Standard operating procedures to appropriate situations	Duties, obligations, and roles	Evolutionary selection
Can be seen as problem solving	Alternatives, consequences, and preferences	Intended rational choice
Stemming from past learning	Actions and experiences	Trial and error learning
Resulting from conflict among individuals or groups	Interests, activation, and resources	Politics – bargaining and power
Spreading from one organisation to another	Exposure and susceptibility	Diffusion
Mix of intentions and organisational actors	Attitudes, abilities, and turnover	Regeneration

Table I

The above points are indications of the complexity that surround understanding of the role of chairs of governors. It is most evident that the nature of educational administration requires the use of a series of skills and ideas, including 'on-the-job' learning, experience, knowledge, and consultation. Consequently, the role of chair has to be worked out in the field and is rarely, if ever, predetermined in advance.

One of the important aspects of this work is the move away from providing single solutions towards multiple solutions, from the short-term to the long-term; from policy to practice. Therefore, this piece of research has not only made suggestions for chairs, but for governing bodies as a whole – in the discussion on a 'radical step forward' that follows. Multiple solutions are essential because each problem or issue does not stand alone but is part of a series of complex issues that are affected by one another. This might look obvious, but in school governing bodies there has been little emphasis on organisation, structure and

process, and, governors have been seen simply as a group of volunteers – and so these important organisational processes have been ignored.

A Radical Step Forward

In my research, it became evident from the tasks adopted by chairs, the tasks undertaken by governors (or lack of them), from issues specific to a school and from supporting studies that governance is in need of attention. Issues of accountability, confusion over the roles, lack of participation, poor levels of knowledge, dissent over power, effectiveness, efficiency, training, skills, and increased responsibilities – all these are making the picture of governance impossible to define accurately. We need a new and radical approach if governments, education officials, academics and governors themselves are to move forward beyond existing problems.

The radical step forward which I have proposed is an attempt to condense the greatest number of difficulties illustrated in this article and in other research findings into a single solution which might be practical, sustainable and cost-effective. Essentially, what I shall call the 'Model Framework', proposes to reduce the number of governors on all governing bodies in England and Wales to seven governors and to provide them with a bursary. It is apparent from my research that smaller groups of governors are more effective in making decisions. This was already happening in some of the governing bodies because of poor participation and attendance by some governors. Moreover, in some schools, governors did not even know one another which was a poor basis for effective group work. The Tables II-IV summarise the number of governors and their responsibilities under the 'model framework'.

Governor	Years	Bursary	Responsibilities
Parent	5	£1,000	Curriculum
Co-opted	5	£1,000	Finance
Teacher	2	N/A	Overview
LEA	5	£1,000	Premises
Headteacher	Ex-officio	N/A	Overview
Parent (chair)	5	£1,500	External, Overview & Information
Co-opted	5	£1,000	Personnel

Table II The Model Framework: Secondary Schools

Governor	Years	Bursary	Responsibilities
Parent	5	£500	Curriculum
Co-opted	5	£500	Finance
Teacher	2	N/A	Overview
LEA	5	£500	Premises
Headteacher	Ex-officio	N/A	Overview
Parent (chair)	5	£750	External, Overview & Information
Co-opted	5	£500	Personnel

Table III The Model Framework: Primary Schools

Governor	Years	Bursary	Responsibilities
Parent	5	£250	Curriculum
Co-opted	5	£250	Finance
Teacher	2	N/A	Overview
LEA	5	£250	Premises
Headteacher	Ex-officio	N/A	Overview
Parent (chair)	5	£375	External, Overview & Information
Co-opted	5	£250	Personnel

Table IV The Model Framework: Nursery Schools

Model Framework

The following list explains further the Model Framework.

Becoming a Governor

Governors would still be known as governors. However, I have adopted the principle 'smaller is simpler is better', and propose that the number of governors on a governing body should be reduced to seven. A smaller governing body would increase the value of the position in educational circles. It would be easier to fill places: because of smaller numbers the competition for the positions should improve, as would the calibre of the candidates.

Parent Governors

As well as benefiting from a reduced number of governors, the interest of parents in taking up governing body posts is more likely to be invigorated by payment, as well as some of the other recommendations in this list (a qualification, a greater profile of governors – resulting from smaller governing bodies).

Co-opted Governors

Business people and the community have an important part to play in our schools: they balance the ideas of educational professionals, parents and political appointees. One proviso about the co-opted governor would be that ancillary staff of the school could not be appointed to the position. In several of the schools in the study, a co-opted post was filled by an ancillary member of staff. Under the Model Framework's structure, the views of ancillary staff would be represented by teacher–governors.

Teacher–Governors

The greatest percentage increase would be in the teacher-governors' position (when weighted). The teacher–governor would have an important role to play in the future management of schools. Their term of office would be limited to two years, because of the general movement of staff in schools – that is, for example, the promotion of staff internally or externally, which may alter the way teacher–governors represent the views of staff. There would be no bursary for members of the governing body who are employed by the school (these include teachers and the headteacher).

LEA Governors

Under the Model Framework, the greatest percentage reduction (when weighted) would be in the number of LEA governors, from five down to one. I would reduce the number of the LEA governors substantially because:

1. the emphasis on governors being viewed in citizenship, political or voluntary terms should end, and governors should be seen in managerial terms. Whilst there were political appointees on all the governing bodies in the study, aspects of management expertise amongst governors were more relevant. The work on governing bodies has taken a big leap forward, from a political culture going back to the 1970s to a managerial culture which began to emerge in the late 1980s. A change in the representation of governors would adequately reflect the current context of governance.

2. It is evident from this study that a number of LEA governors were selected for their availability and expertise, and it was merely coincidental that they had a political affiliations.

The Role of the Headteacher

At this stage of the 'Model Framework', there would be no change in the role of the headteacher on the governing body. The headteacher would be ex-officio to committees other than those that would lead to a conflict of interest (issues that affect their own pay policy).

Chair of the Governing Body

A chair and vice chair would be elected in the normal way, and their terms of office would last two years, but they would remain a governor until their governor term ran out. Chairs would be entitled to 50% remuneration above the bursary paid to other governors in recognition of their additional responsibilities. A chair would not be entitled to serve more than three periods in office (six years). This would prevent the kinds of permanence in the office of chair found in some governing bodies in this study. It would be a good way to inject fresh impetus or a new focus in schools where chairs are not fulfilling their role effectively, or when they have a misguided perception of their chairing responsibilities.

Clerk to the Governing Body

Under the 'Model Framework', all meetings would be clerked by an administrator of the school. All committee meetings, as well as the full governing body meeting, would be minuted (under the current system, not all committees are minuted, with only some verbal feedback); minutes would be held centrally; and the chair of governors and the headteacher would be accountable for ensuring that they are available if requested.

Years of Service

Governors (except teacher-governors) would be elected for five years, but they could be re-appointed by their electorate. This would help marginally to reduce the bureaucracy and the administration work that is necessary in organising elections. Under the 'Model Framework', the maximum number of terms for a governor would be three (fifteen years, or six years for a teacher). A change in the office of chair more regularly than was seen in some schools in my research would widen the opportunity for new people to volunteer and might help protect against stagnation by injecting fresh energy.

Governor Bursaries

Governors would receive a bursary in recognition of the more official managerial context that the 'Model Framework' would create for their positions. These would accompany specific responsibilities which differ from the current system which allows governors to decide more or less how much they might wish to contribute. The bursary would also be partly in recognition of the costs that governors currently incur, without claiming from the LEA. These can range from travel expenses to the purchase of educational newspapers, and even babysitters for those governors who have children. I have produced an approximate total figure for a secondary school governor on the basis of 48 hours' commitment per year at £20 per hour (rounded to £1000 for governors). The bursary would include any expenses in the course of duty, except crèche facilities. Governors wishing to forgo their bursary would be entitled to do so.

The differences between the bursaries for nursery, primary and secondary school governors would be based on two principles:

- there are differences in the general pay structures between nursery, primary and secondary schools (governance would maintain this consistency);
- there is a progression of responsibilities and challenges in nursery to primary, and primary to secondary schools.

The bursary would be split into two payments, paid every six months by cheque. The chair of each school would be accountable for ensuring that governors do not abuse the bursary system.

Overall Costs[2]

There would be a reduction in the number of governors in England from approximately 324,000 to 161,000 (7 x 23,000). The amount of a bursary would be fixed for five years. The cost to the taxpayer is shown in Table V (total

Number of nursery schools	569 x £1,375	£782,375
Number of primary schools	19282 x £2,750	£53,025,500
Number of secondary schools	3703 x £5,500	£20,366,500
		Total £74,174,375

Table V

£74,174,375 [3]). Income to the NGBN [4] (subscription levied on schools) £13,628,500.

The Responsibilities of Governors

The principal responsibilities of governors would not change under this first stage of the framework – only the organisation of the workload. It would, at a later second stage when a radical rethink of the roles of governors would become necessary. This first stage of the 'Model Framework' would stand alone and could be implemented within the current governing body practices.

Individual governors would monitor the work of the school in the four main areas of curriculum, finance, premises, and personnel. The chair would be responsible for:

- external matters, such as contacts with the LEA;
- information to governors which relates to briefing documentation and the organisation of training through the NGBN;
- taking an overview of the school, or understanding the bigger picture and the general issues in the school.

The purpose of this structure would be to give governors areas of responsibility in which they could become most competent. It is competencies developed in small groups which would make the learning about governance more effective than the current system of optional training with the LEA. Moreover, national seminars by the NGBN could be targeted at very specific groups of governors; governing bodies could recruit individuals who possess knowledge of

specialist areas and chairs with good leadership and organisational skills.

Meetings of the Governing Body

Governing bodies would have a three-hour full governing body meeting (FGBM) every two months. All governors would be required to attend these meetings. The 18 hours of meetings under the 'Model Framework' would be a reduction compared to the current system. At present, most heads attend committee meetings and governing body meetings, each lasting anywhere between one and three hours. On the basis of five committee meetings and one governing body meeting, this could mean anything between six and eighteen hours per term for the head and some other governors, instead of eighteen hours per year. The 'Model Framework' calls on governors to be more organised in order to truly benefit from the new structure. Secondary school governors would be given an additional eighteen hours for ad hoc meetings (i.e. school exclusions, staff disciplinary and emergency meetings). A further twelve hours could be allocated for paperwork, training and eventualities. See Tables VI, VII, VIII.

MONTH	MEETING	HOURS
January	FGBM	3hrs
March	FGBM	3hrs
May	FGBM	3hrs
July	FGBM	3hrs
September	FGBM	3hrs
November	FGBM	3hrs
When required	Ad hoc meetings	18hrs
When required	Other commitments	12hrs

Table VI Secondary Schools

MONTH	MEETING	HOURS
January	FGBM	3hrs
March	FGBM	3hrs
May	FGBM	3hrs
July	FGBM	3hrs
September	FGBM	3hrs
November	FGBM	3hrs
When required	Ad hoc meetings	12hrs
When required	Other commitments	12hrs

Table VII Primary Schools

MONTH	MEETING	HOURS
January	FGBM	3hrs
March	FGBM	3hrs
May	FGBM	3hrs
July	FGBM	3hrs
September	FGBM	3hrs
November	FGBM	3hrs
When required	Ad hoc meetings	12hrs
When required	Other commitments	12hrs

Table VIII Nursey Schools

Training for Governors

Under the 'Model Framework', the existing system for training governors would be restructured. Many governors do not take advantage of training under the current system. Moreover, the amount of training for people who are essentially part-time volunteers is not cost-effective or well thought through. This could be replaced by:

- the National Governing Body Network (NGBN); see below;
- an increase in the calibre of those applying to be governors – a result of a reduction in the size of governing bodies leading to more competition for the places and better governors;
- governors with specialist areas would train other governors and provide them with information;
- a change in the committee structure of governing bodies to one meeting per term would result in a consolidation of the issues. Consequently, governors would learn all the issues under one meeting, rather than a few issues under two or three committees. Governors would therefore learn more about the school, governance as a whole, and would learn from each other, and this would in turn raise their awareness;
- whole governing body training by Governor Trainers;
- conferences geared towards particular categories of governors.

Monitoring of the Governing Body

All governing bodies would be required to submit the following information, to be measured and placed in league tables:

- attendance at FGBMs,
- number of vacancies,
- number of governors having left office in the previous year,
- the average term of office in years,
- number of governors receiving bursaries.

Accountability of the Governing Body

The implementation of the 'Model Framework' would result in greater accountability by governors, once they would receive a bursary for delivering a service. It could bring about a re-evaluation of the kinds of people being sought for governance, of their skills and commitment, and willingness to learn. It would also strengthen reasons for OFSTED to inspect governing bodies and make recommendations. Under a paid governance system, OFSTED could argue that some governing bodies are not delivering what they are being paid to deliver, and therefore legitimately recommend that the governing body, or some governors, be replaced.

Governance as a Profession

Whilst there will still be a requirement that governors represent the communities that they serve (LEA, teacher, co-opted and parent), the role of governor could be similar to the system of non-executive directors on NHS trusts. Governors could be elected to their respective offices because of their ability, knowledge, commitment and experience. The most important criterion is that governors need to be willing to learn about their roles and responsibilities.

Transition to the Model Framework

A pilot scheme for the Model Framework could be carried out over two years in say, three local authorities of

differing social and economic circumstances, and including five schools in each LEA. The governing bodies could be reduced to seven governors by a secret ballot amongst the governing body, each governor having seven nominations on a ballot paper. The seven governors with the most nominations would become the new governing body with immediate effect.

The new governing body would be given one month to organise their system of governance; that is, to appoint the chair, and work out which governors would fulfil which responsibilities.

National Governing Body Network

All governors would be required to register with the National Governing Body Network (NGBN) before they could take up their posts as governors. All schools would be required to make an annual subscription to the NGBN, in the sum of £1,000 for secondary schools and £500 for nursery and primary schools. This would raise £13,628,500 and mean that the NGBN would be more accountable to its members. Any volunteer wishing to become a governor in the future would also need to register with the NGBN which could inform schools of the candidates in their local area, should a place become available.

The NGBN would be an amalgamation of existing bodies and would be responsible for:

- compiling statistical information;
- maintaining professional levels of service to governing bodies;
- encouraging and disseminating good practice;
- producing the latest briefing, training and advice notes for governors, principally via e-mail to every school where the chair would be responsible for collating the information and distributing it;
- making improvements in the area of governance;
- developing service in governance, in conjunction with an awards body, into a national qualification;
- making recommendations to the Secretary of State for Education on governing body matters;
- investigating and removing governors for serious misconduct;
- supporting governing bodies nationally;
- developing, holding and managing seminars.

Discussion

If we want schools to improve, and to do so significantly, we must make changes at every level and carry them through. The 'Model Framework' sets out changes which, when seen as a whole, will improve the quality of our governors and, consequently, the management of our schools. Governing bodies should become:

- more efficient and effective,
- more socialised, consisting of individuals who will know each other and work as a team,
- more accountable, so that this work can be monitored, measured and reported on,
- more structured and transparent,
- more focused on skills and representation,
- more vocal, through a single channel of the NGBN.

As with any proposal, there are likely to be critics of this framework. I would like to suggest that it is the continuation of the existing system which might prove to be most damaging to governance. Secondly, I would strengthen the need for the 'Model Framework' by arguing that governance in state schools presents too mixed a picture to determine whether the current system means much. A reduced governing body is likely to solve some of the problems created by a disparate group of people, and to make the governing body more sociable. A smaller group of governors should also concentrate the governing body's mind on attracting the right people for the position. We need of course the very best people to help run our schools, so parents with various forms of expertise would be more desirable than those who have none. With education, we need to be realistic, not idealistic, and the best person for the job is the one who has the most to offer – this may be educational knowledge, time, contacts, resources and enthusiasm.

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Notes

[1] This included the headteacher and the clerk to the governing body.

[2] These sums relate to England only, as Wales and Scotland have their own parliaments.

[3] Costs to be met by individual schools; schools would receive an increase in their budget and benefit from a transfer of existing funding to this area from LEAs.

Why is the Private School Sector Not Doing Better?

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If you work abroad for Tony Blair's New Labour government you may well be diverting potential resources from maintained schools into the cash tills of the independent sector. This has long been the case with officers in the armed services whose children are not expected to attend the service schools abroad patronised by the offspring of those they command. But there are many other categories of occupation, including education, in which government support for private schools is unquestioned. For example, an Education Programme Manager based on St Lucia will be regarded rewarded by the UK Department for International Development not only with a salary of at least £30,000 – £40,000 but will also receive a cost of living allowance of £6706 for a single person, £8649 for a couple and more for their children. There are also smaller sums for relocation and hardship! Most significantly there is an education allowance each year for each child of £13,380 for junior school and £15,225 for senior school. The notes for applicants recommend the leading St Lucian private school for younger children but 'parents are strongly recommended to arrange schooling in Britain for children aged 11 and above'. What chance that this will mean using our state-maintained boarding schools?

The private sector continues to enjoy other significant subsidies via tax relief on convenants and exploitation of charitable status. This financial support from government contributes to its very favourable pupil-teacher ratios; 9:9 for its secondary schools in 2000 compared to 17:2 for the state maintained sector, where the situation has worsened over the past decade. With better pay and smaller class sizes and shorter terms (but not necessarily shorter weeks) private sector pupils also benefit from lower rates of teacher absence. To these advantages must be added the significantly lower incidence of children with statements of special educational needs. Small wonder that private sector schools score highly in league tables and that well-known 'public' schools continue to be seen by many as epitomising the best education available.

But even with government subsidies, the most surprising feature of the private sector is its lack of growth. It takes a very small share of the market and this has fallen over the last decade to 7.0%. In this period the numbers of pupils in the private sector increased by 2.5% but in the maintained sector the increase was 4.8%. More worringly, if the information supplied by the independent sector is correct their market share may be set to fall further. In rebutting accusations of social exclusivity they have stated that at least half of their pupils have parents who did not themselves have a private education, yet this is a dubious honour. Given the lack of expansion in market share and small increase in numbers this suggests at least three possibilities: a large proportion of the private school output, despite above average academic achievement, subsequently fails to achieve the economic status that can afford the school fees; or a large proportion of the private school output reject the experience for their own children; even perhaps a markedly lower breeding rate for private school alumni but this seems the least likely.

This article is not arguing for the abolition of private education. But the input of public money into a small, apparently declining sector of the education market has to be justified. Should we not expect it to shoulder a much greater part of the burden of educating those with statements of special educational needs? Should we not be checking the reality of its reputation via longitudinal studies? Is its lack of expansion indeed a result of socially exclusive selection policies (conscious or otherwise) which contradict declared government objectives? To what extent do its high school fees inflate salaries and allowances thus making excessive government expenditure as in the example given?

Recent Educational Reform in Japan

focusing on the introduction of the 'Period for Integrated Study'

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Background

When I (Kanae Nishioka) was conducting a research project in England, I noticed that some English teachers think that there are no problems about education in Japan. On the contrary, there are many problems in Japanese schools. For example, the numbers of students who are 'school-phobic', who are indisciplined or who use violence are steadily increasing. It is reported that even experienced teachers have started having difficulties in keeping discipline in their classrooms, even at the first grade [1] of the elementary schools. It is further pointed out that many children have started 'escaping' from studying.

Japanese education has long been said to be successful. In fact, some international studies, such as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), show that Japanese children get better scores in maths and science than do children in most of the other countries. The same studies, however, show that Japanese children tend not to enjoy studying and that they do not think what they are learning is useful in their real life. The recent research about the science literacy of adults run by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reveals an even more interesting fact. According to the TIMSS study, Japanese 8th-grade students got the best scores among the 14 OECD countries, but in the OECD research, Japanese adults were the second worse.

This fact seems to show that Japanese people may study hard when they are children, but they tend to learn only how to get good scores in written examinations. They are not interested in what they are learning, and they may not even understand the meaning of the content. Because they do not think that the curriculum content is useful for their actual living, they forget about it once they leave school, and stop learning.

Until recently, the Japanese economic situation was sound, and children could be motivated to study by the expectation that their hard work would be rewarded, entering a good university and getting a good job. As the economic situation deteriorates, more and more children will lose interest in studying at school if the curriculum content itself cannot motivate them.

In order to solve the problems described above, many kinds of educational reform are being carried out in Japan. One of the biggest changes in the current revision of the National Courses of Study (NCS) [2] in Japan is the introduction of the 'Period for Integrated Study' (PFIS). In this article, therefore, we would like to describe what the PFIS is and to discuss the advantages and difficulties that the school teachers are currently finding.

The Period for Integrated Study (PFIS)

The NCS describes the PFIS as follows. In the Periods for Integrated Study, each school organises interdisciplinary and comprehensive studies and studies based on children's own interests, which reflect the characteristics of the school's catchment area, its original devices, the children's realities, etc. Its aims are: (1) to help children develop the capability and ability to discover, explore and solve problems by themselves and to make decisions and judgements independently; and (2) to help children learn how to learn and reason, and develop the ability to independently and creatively cope with problem-solving activities and deepen their understanding of their own way of life.

The NCS gives three examples of tasks children may be able to deal with in the PFIS: (1) modern issues, such as international understanding, information, environment, welfare and health; (2) the topics and themes based on children's own interests; and (3) the local issues of the individual schools. When we consider the essence of the PFIS, however, it seems to be better to see it as a situation where teachers use local issues so that children learn how to deal with interesting problems which are related to their own living, and that children come to find out that local issues are all related to modern social problems as the inquiry goes on.

Let us give one example. When I (Umezawa) was teaching 3rd-grade pupils at an elementary school, my colleagues and I chose silkworms as a topic for the PFIS. Silkworms was one of the topics that we had dealt with in science lessons. When we teach about them in science, we focus on the metamorphosis. On the other hand, in the

PFIS, the primary focus is on children's own interests and their points of view.

The teachers first gave the pupils the silkworms' spawns. The teachers did not tell the children what the spawns were, and how to take care of them. So the pupils inevitably needed to encounter many problems to be solved by themselves; such as how they could find out what the kind of spawns were, where in the local area they could find the food (mulberry leaves), in which way they could give those leaves, whether it was all right for them to touch the worms all the time, and so on. Their interest in the creatures they themselves were bringing up also led them on to an inquiry about cloth in general and the silk industries. In order to solve these problems, some of the pupils looked for books to get information; others interviewed their parents and local people; and others investigated for themselves, walking around the local area. When they got new information, they took notes and reported back to their classmates. When necessary, they discussed how they could cooperate with one another and learnt how to do group work.

As the inquiry went on, the children got to know that people get silk from the silkworm. They also came to know that they needed to kill the silkworms in order to get silk. It was a tough fact for the children, especially because they had been committed to taking special care of those worms. At the same time, they knew that the people in the silk industry could not make their living without killing the worms. The children had a big discussion in the classroom. Some of them decided to kill, and some decided not to kill. All of them, however, thought seriously about the meaning of life.

The meaning of living is such a big question that even adults would not be able to have a perfect answer. The teachers' purpose was not to direct children to the one and right answer, but to let them have opportunities to make their own decisions. Throughout the process of inquiry, the teachers did guide the pupils as they needed. Sometimes, the teachers coordinated children's discussions, asked questions so that children could clarify what they were thinking, praised what children found themselves so that children could feel valued and keep motivated, suggested how children might be able to get information if they really got stuck, offered some information or suggested activities so that children could notice other points of view which they could not find themselves, and so on. We need to emphasise, however, that the teachers took the roles as facilitators, not directors, for children's learning.

Some readers may be thinking that the PFIS is similar to topic studies in Britain. They do have similarities. It seems to us, however, that topic studies are still about integrating subjects according to one topic. On the other hand, the PFIS does not involve specific concepts and skills that all children should learn. The idea of this new curriculum is that the minimum essentials of such concepts and skills should be taught in subjects, and that teachers should guarantee a certain freedom in PFIS lessons so that children can experience genuinely independent and collaborative study. We may be able to say that the PFIS is more similar to conducting research and writing dissertations at the universities.

The PFIS is to be introduced all through grades 3 to 12. Some progressive schools in Japan have had a tradition of such lessons since the beginning of the 20th century. The first NCS, which was published just after the World War Two, was child-centred because of the influence from the USA. But since 1950s, teaching subjects in a discipline-centred way has become the main part of the school curriculum in Japan. For most of the school teachers in Japan, lessons like the PFIS are a new experience. In elementary school, for example, the PFIS is to occupy 105-110 periods per year out of a total of 910-945, which is less than for the Japanese language and arithmetic, but more than for any other subject (i.e. social studies, science, music, art and handcraft, homemaking, and PE). We can see how much the Government emphasises the importance of the PFIS, but it is a big challenge for teachers.

Advantages and Difficulties

Lastly, let us discuss the advantages and difficulties of the introduction of the PFIS. First of all, those teachers who have started learning how to organise the PFIS lessons have been very pleased to see that children get more motivated and actively involved in their own studies. Children can pursue their own problems, and through that, they get to know that one topic can be examined from various aspects, learn how things are related to each other, and have opportunities to help each other, and think about their own living. They can also utilise what they learnt in subjects, which makes them realise the meaning of studying subjects.

While conducting the PFIS, teachers can develop their ability of designing a curriculum. The NCS prescribes the content of the subjects in detail, the specification of the PFIS is only about its aims, school's obligation for its establishment in the curriculum and the standard of its school hours. Choosing the topics and themes for the PFIS and planning the activities and the evaluation of children's work are new experiences for most of the school teachers in Japan. While they are looking at children's activities in the PFIS, they notice that some pupils, who were bored when working with a pencil and paper, can show brilliant performance in the PFIS. This changes teachers' understanding of children's learning. Some teachers notice that some pupils have not learnt what was taught in subjects. For example, some pupils cannot take useful notes although it has been taught in Japanese language lessons. Other pupils do not know how to design experiments although they have done many experiments in science lessons. Such facts force teachers to re-examine the way they teach subjects, which can improve subject lessons.

There are, however, many difficulties that teachers need to overcome. First of all, because the NCS did not clarify what the PFIS is precisely, some teachers misunderstand the purpose of the PFIS. Some teachers think as if the PFIS is teaching new subjects such as IT (and English in elementary schools [3]). Some other teachers think that all lessons need to be taught in the same way as in the PFIS, which can destroy a good tradition of subject learning. Other teachers explicitly and implicitly tell children the 'right' answers for the moral issues in the PFIS, which would create 'slaves' rather than independent citizens. It seems to be a task for the universities and local authorities to give teachers a good understanding of the PFIS.

Once they understand what the PFIS is, teachers need to learn how to facilitate those lessons. Many of them have got used to such lessons where the teacher transmits information to children. So they cannot help wondering whether they should give guidance or let children do as they like at each moment of the PFIS lessons. Their pedagogical approaches need to be developed further. In order to improve teachers' facilitation, assessment and evaluation are particularly important. In recent years, portfolio assessment in Japan has been gaining more attention, especially in the PFIS.

Thirdly, although the Government does give time for the PFIS, it hardly affects other school factors. The maximum class size at schools in Japan is still 40. It is very difficult to guide 40 children's learning when each of them is conducting his/her own inquiry. Teachers who have taught the PFIS tend to say that they would like the class size to be about 20.

Lastly, we need to be careful about the danger of the marketisation of schooling. It should be valued when the government gives schools some freedom to develop their own curricula. But recently there has been much argument about the issue of parental choice in Japan. In one area, one elementary school started teaching English. Then parents at the other schools started worrying about whether their children could compete when they entered the same secondary school. Some of those parents even decided to send their child to an English *juku*.[4]

If the government marketises schooling, those schools which use the time for the PFIS for teaching subjects for examination purposes would get popular; and those schools who follow the original idea of the PFIS would have difficulty in attracting enough pupils. In such a situation, Japanese education would face even more problems.

Notes

[1] In Japan, elementary schooling is from the 1st grade (age 6-7) till the 6th grade (age 11-12). Lower secondary schooling is from the 7th grade (age 12-13 till the 9th grade (age 14-15, and upper secondary schooling is from the 10th grade (age 15-16) till the 12th grade (age 17-18).

[2] The NCS is revised every 10 years. The new NCS will be formally implemented from 2002 for elementary school and lower secondary schools, and from 2003 for upper secondary schools, but the implementation has been already started in some of the schools.

[3] Currently, teaching English starts from the 7th grade, which is the first year of the lower secondary schools. English is one of the most important subjects in many of the entrance examinations.

[4] A *juku* is a cramming school, which is not exactly a school, but a private business. Some *juku* help children to catch up on school work, and others intensively train children for examinations.

Indian Education in 2001: an overview

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Shakuntala Banaji studied Literature and Philosophy and took an MA in English in Education before teaching for six years at Crown Woods School in London. She is currently researching her PhD at the Culture, Communication and Societies department of the Institute of Education, and in various Bombay cinemas. Her first novel is looking for a publisher, and she is at work on a second. Her article considers the problems faced by students and teachers in India's state schools, of which she has first-hand experience.

If some-one told you that your three year old might be getting an hour of homework per night, that your seven year old would have to carry a school-bag weighing six kilograms to school every day, that your twelve year old could get slapped or kicked for complaining of menstrual pain during a physical education class and that your fifteen year old stood a one in ten chance of attempting suicide or becoming severely depressed due to examination stress, you'd think twice before sending your child to school.

Yet every year hundreds of millions of Indian parents compete with each other, queue for days and/or pay tens of thousands of rupees in 'donations' (read bribes) for their children to experience just such delights. And they consider their children lucky – for they are the ones who can afford to go to school.

In urban India today, two major school programmes operate – one examined by individual State Governments and one examined countywide by the Central Government: both programmes are orientated towards rote learning, unthinking acceptance of text-book data and passing examinations. Although the Central Government curriculum is more outward looking, neither leaves room for individual creativity on the part of teachers or students. History, for instance, is presented as a collection of randomly gathered dates, 'great men' and 'great events' from (mainly) Indian history; at best these dates and events are commented upon in seemingly 'neutral' language by the writers of the text books; at worst, there are deliberate factual errors or omissions and the inclusion of religious myths and spurious propaganda is common.

The revival of Hindu chauvinist ideology in the last few decades has meant an increasing level of religious bigotry creeping into history text-books. It is left to individual teachers who have the desire, the skill and the patience to explain to students that history is not merely a series of 'important national dates and figures'. Since most teachers in India have achieved their status through this same education system that rewards memory and frowns upon curiosity, originality and criticism, there is little likelihood that scores of freethinking teachers will challenge orthodoxy; and even when they do, the sheer weight of the curriculum that has to be covered and the number of students in each class militate against any change to the status quo.

Another amazing fact about Indian education – there is no State provision for under six-year-olds. Narendra Nath, Minister for Education in the current BJP led 'coalition' government, when asked why the new 'Right to Education Bill' fails to mention under sixes, replied publicly on television, 'Why? What for should they have school? Don't they have mother at home to teach them? Or what about his [the father's] father – after retirement what else is he going to do? They can teach a little bit.' There are, of course, numerous private nurseries and kindergartens in urban areas that 'offer' everything from mathematics to computers if the parents are willing to pay for it. In fact, so high is the competition for places at more popular nurseries that two and three year olds are now being interviewed and given entrance examinations. They are asked questions that require a great deal of skill and more worryingly are asked questions about the financial status of their household: 'What kind of car does daddy drive?', 'Does mummy go out to work?' Children as young as three have homework set every day and are expected to compete in end-of-term and end-of-year examinations that are formally marked and reported.

I grew up in India and went to an urban State funded school during the nineteen eighties. At the time there were roughly nine thousand students registered at my school. That school, which was considered to be a reasonably good one, was attended by children of lower-middle class parents, blue-collar workers and business people. The fees were minimal but what was prohibitive for parents on really low incomes were the text books and uniforms that all had to be purchased each year. Since neither primary nor secondary education in India is compulsory, most state governments have not thought fit to see that it is free either. Literacy levels in states that offer free education at a primary level are significantly higher.

At my school, there were between 60 and 70 students in every class and we sat, throughout each day, facing a blackboard, crammed three to a bench, and were not allowed to speak. Now there are more likely to be 80 or 90 in a class. As many students can 'fail' the end of year examinations up to twice and be kept down a year each time for failing, there are classes where 18-year-olds and 12-year-olds study together. Silence is considered to be the only appropriate class room behaviour and any form of unsolicited speech, even a question about the subject being taught, can be severely punished.

In terms of content, lessons in most Indian schools are unvarying. Paragraphs are recited and learned by rote, mathematical problems are set and 'solved' at competitive speed and in silence with the stress being put *not on process*es and *understanding* but on achieving an answer using the 'text-book' method; students are penalised in examinations for solving equations in an original manner or for deviating *even by a word* from the text book definitions in Chemistry, Biology and Physics. In a system where every student is judged by their performance in a percentage of marks and colleges will accept students on merit only if they achieve above 95% in every subject, even the loss of one mark can count. So, few have the time to try to understand the processes behind the phenomena they are 'naming' or the courage to answer questions 'in their own words'.

This emphasis on rote learning has reached such a pitch in today's schools that urban parents are sending children to after-school cramming 'classes' for up to five more hours on six days a week in order to aid their memories of text-book speak and 'facts': some students thus spend six hours or more at school, five hours at private classes and then have to do homework at night. They have little time for a social life and no time for private leisure activities. Many are reported to suffer from depression, eye-strain and exhaustion.

In 1999 a teacher was publicly accused of beating to death a seven year old girl who had failed to stick the picture of a railway engine into her notebook. Though this case was made public by the parents, severe beatings, that result in partial deafness or other injuries, are rarely reported. At the school I attended, students aged from 5 to 20 were regularly beaten with rulers, board rubbers, pieces of wood broken from the benches and even slippers; they had their faces slapped repeatedly, their arms and ears twisted, their flesh pinched and their dignity destroyed by a number of ill thought out ploys like standing on benches and doing squats for 30 minutes or writing lines for hours outside the classroom: and all this brutality carried out by members of staff is perceived not only as a necessary method of 'discipline' but also, in many cases, as good practice; teachers who do not resort to such methods – and there are some – have to be doubly careful that their head teacher does not catch their classes making a 'noise' or they end up being branded 'weak' and 'ineffective'. In addition, though students are also frequently humiliated publicly for being female, for being Muslim or for being overweight, by far the greatest number are castigated for being 'useless', 'lazy', 'good-for-nothings', 'stupid fools' and 'idiots'.

If young people survive and get to college as, amazingly, millions do each year, there they often encounter a similar pedagogic approach that stresses facts and memory over process and creativity; in some small town universities, lecturers are underpaid and often absent; across the country, examination papers are often 'stolen' and 'sold' the day before or even on the day of the exam for several thousand rupees each. Medical students are particularly vulnerable during such examination fraud.

The outlook for mainstream Indian education is bleak at the moment, despite the presence of some resilient good practitioners and many wonderful students. Although there are some alternative schools that exist (or are being set up) in or near places such as Calcutta, Bangalore, Bombay and Delhi, as well as some exclusive 'International' schools that use more progressive teaching methods and can afford better teaching materials, and regardless of the fact that a new law is to be passed this April limiting the weight of school bags for younger students, the majority of children who get to school at any level in India will experience some if not all of the misery described in this article.

Schooling Citizens: a doomed experiment?

ANDREW MARKS

This article puts forward the view that the current United Kingdom Government's idea of introducing 'citizenship' classes to UK schools is doomed to failure at the outset. Since UK schools are not places of free participation, they cannot realistically be the locus of sensible discussions of citizenship. The author teaches in the Institute of Education at the University of Stirling.

Introduction

> *It is necessary that we never lose sight of what public education is for. It is not a matter of training workers for the factory or accountants for the warehouse but citizens for society. (Durkheim, 1885, p. 449,*
>
> *Citizenship involves enjoying rights and exercising responsibilities in these various types of community […] Education for citizenship is important because every society needs people who can contribute effectively, in a variety of ways, to the future health and wellbeing of communities and their environment, nationally, globally and locally. (Learning and Teaching in Scotland, 2001, p. 2)*

Much has been made in recent months in the UK about the introduction (in September 2000) of 'citizenship' classes in UK schools. It is the contention of this article that such moves are doomed to failure.

Citizenship Education: the problem of schooling

The Happiest Days of Our Lives?

> *Schools have not necessarily much to do with education … they are mainly institutions of control where certain basic habits have to be inculcated in the young. Education is quite different and has little place in school. (Winston Churchill, 1944, quoted in Shute, 1993, p. 7)*
>
> *Citizenship will include lessons on how the economy and democratic institutions are run; the study of moral culture and social issues such as young peoples' rights to further education and university places; employment law; legal obligations such as rent payments and social security … Secondary level citizenship education will become compulsory from 2002. (Lee, 2000)*

The biggest myth about the process of compulsory education in the UK is that this process is somehow for the benefit of children. Children are taken at the age of four or five and forced into a totalitarian regime wherein they are stripped of all personality, individuality and freedom and they are unable to escape until the age of sixteen at the earliest. Parents, teachers, policy makers all claim that somehow it is *necessary* for children to endure this process of psychological brutality to become rounded, well-functioning adults. The truth, as Churchill was implying in the above quote, was that 'education' was the least of things with which schools were supposed to be busying themselves. How far schools have changed (in this particular regard) since is open to debate.

> *Every child has the right to … an education that develops his or her personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest; an education that prepares him or her for an active adult life in a free society; an education that fosters respect for his or her own family, cultural identity, and language; for his or her country; and for the natural environment; an education in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance and equality. (United Nations, 1989)*

The former Secretary of State for Education, David Blunkett, identified three key strands for effective 'citizenship education' in UK schools.

1 Social and Moral Responsibility.
2 Community Involvement.
3 Political Literacy.

Let us turn to each of these strands in turn.

Social and Moral Responsibility

The school is a place where rules are implemented as absolutes to remain unquestioned. There is often little internally coherent logic behind these rules. Having one's hands in one's pockets infringes nobody else's civil liberties nor causes any danger to another person. Yet this is likely to incite punishment from a teacher who sees this happening.

The school is, as Winston Churchill pointed out, a totalitarian scenario where the ideology exists that adults are always right and children are always wrong. Furthermore, the adult can change his/her mind about what s/he is right about at any moment and the child will still be held to be *in the wrong*. Children are denied even the basic human right of being able to leave the classroom to urinate or defecate when they need to without permission from the adult at the front of the class. The adults in British schools are exclusively referred to by children as 'Sir' or 'Miss' in an entirely one-way expression of 'respect' – or more likely, deliberately teacher-fostered fear. Children are often further de-personalised by the wearing of uniform and the denial of the right to wear jewellery – or even to have non-regulation haircuts.

Manifestly any discussions of 'fairness', 'authority' and 'responsible decision making' are likely to be of questionable use here. 'Learning' liberates, but 'schooling' (a fundamentally different proposition) merely constrains.

Community Involvement

Community is a problematic term in the context of the school since by definition the 'comprehensive' school – which around 80 per cent of school children in Britain attend is open to all comers, and hence a diverse intra-school population exists.

Community involvement will only ever be seen as a partial concern. The communities of the affluent, white-collar, conservative families will have their values (deferred gratification, the valuing of qualifications) enshrined in the culture of the school. Whereas the communities of blue-collar families and ethnic minorities will be seen as a 'problem' to be overcome in the context of the appropriate socialisation of the child (see Cullingford, 1999, p. 15). Thus 'citizenship' is likely to be mediated via appropriated (normative) notions of the 'ideal' citizen and 'ideal' community. The blue-collar community and their voices will be (and indeed are) both abnormalised and marginalised by the school ethos, and crucially, by the (white collar) linguistic codes of the school. American examples (which nonetheless remain pertinent to the British school) offered by Labov (1966, 1970) suggest that *racial/ethnic* speech codes of minority ethnic children (and their communities) can be added to (and complicate) the problem. As such, any discussion of 'citizenship' in the classroom is likely to exclude large proportions of the pupil population gathered therein because of their own class and/or ethnic speech codes.

Political Literacy

Political literacy cannot flourish in the school for the simple reason that the act of questioning is rarely if ever allowed. Subjects which would encourage this intellectual faculty (notably sociology) have all but been eradicated from the curriculum. The British school reinforces andro-centric, hetero-centric, anglo-centric, Judeo-Christian world-views and presents them as immutable givens. British schoolchildren are, for example, still expected on a daily basis to take part in a Protestant–Christian 'assembly' every morning before lessons begin, regardless of their own or their families' own religious persuasion.

The notorious and noxious 'Clause 28' of the 1988 Local Government Act (still in force in England) forbids the 'promotion' of homosexuality as an alternative to heterosexuality and relegates all gay relationships to the level of 'pretended families'. The gay teenager is thus denied not only access to information about his or her sexuality and to information regarding safe-sex, etc., but also is denied the right to exist. The homosexual teenager in the UK school remains invisible (Gay Teachers Group, 1987).

The right of citizens to question their superiors (including dead ancestors) is denied to schoolchildren. The assertion, for example, that William Shakespeare is the greatest writer in the English speaking canon is never questioned. Children who find the reading of Shakespeare to be a boring or redundant exercise are never allowed the right of citizens to say so.

> *As I continued at school I became aware that I was very bright. I was often punished by caning for being disruptive (which means I asked 'why?' a lot). (Kitch, 1996, p. 11)*

Political literacy can never be taught in school because the right to *disagree* – a fundamental plank of political literacy – is denied at every stage. The classroom is not, as government literature discussed here suggests, a place of discussion and mutual tolerance; it is a place of didacticism, of received wisdom about what is 'right', 'good' and 'appropriate' (and necessarily also 'inappropriate') in the educational canon and, outside the school gates, the social, cultural and moral sphere. The school as an entity therefore is an instrument of *transmission* rather than of interactive learning.

The Culture of the Bully

That children's basic human rights are violated on a daily basis is a reality not merely accepted; it appears to be encouraged by both families and the school hierarchy. Adults send their children to school in the certain knowledge that a quarter of them will be bullied, and accept it as a 'toughening up' process which is necessary to prepare them for the rigours of the adult world. Children endure physical beatings and psychological torture because adults accept that this is part of the growing up process and choose to ignore it.

> *There was in almost every situation an undercurrent of feeling, shared by both pupils and teachers, that it was the victim's fault that he or she was being bullied. It was almost as if the victim was oppressing the bully by putting temptation in peoples' way! (Shute, 1993, p. 25)*

In truth, no adult in the free world would nor should ever have to endure even half of the indignities faced by every British schoolchild every day of his or her school-life. A child who does well at school is lauded as a success of the school system, whilst the child who does badly is pilloried for being inattentive and disruptive (see Holt, 1964, 1971). As such schools generally and teachers specifically are never seen as being the 'problem' when a child 'fails'. One of the most unpleasant consequences of this is the creation of delinquency and ultimately, in many cases, criminality. A child who is continually told by schoolteachers that s/he is worthless, has no future and that s/he is a waste of everybody's time is likely to place little value on the rights of others. Devlin (1995) in interviews with a variety of convicted violent offenders found that what they shared was an abusive school experience, where they were put-down, taunted, routinely humiliated and psychologically abused by school-teachers as part of their daily experiences (see also Cullingford, 1999):

> *When I couldn't do it, he shouted, 'Look, I'm here to teach you, and if you can't be bothered you can just get out of the class!'. He made a fool of me in front of the class and this meant that the other kids all called me dunce, thick and stupid – I had the lot thrown at me. (Devlin, 1995, p. 34)*

> *Most teachers wouldn't let me go to the toilet when I needed … The worst days were when I'd been prevented from going to the toilet and was made to stand in front of the class after wetting myself, (p. 38)*

> *There was this horrible English teacher there. She called me a scabby little Negro because I had this skin*

complaint (psoriasis) … and I used to have it on my face … This woman used to say 'Go to the back of the class, you scabby Negro! We don't want the other children to catch anything from you!'(p .43)

Other examples in Devlin's account include the forcing of naturally left-handed children to write with their right hands (and then punishing them for their subsequently poor handwriting) and the public singling out of the children who are physically different (taller, fatter, etc.) for mockery. In this way, the teacher does not merely accept the reality of the bullying of children in his/her classroom, but becomes co-conspirator in its perpetuation.

Whither Citizenship?

'Citizenship' as a learned concept will not take root in such a scenario as this. Citizenship conceptually requires the individual to have knowledge both of his/her rights and his/her responsibilities. In the school system, the child has only those minimal 'rights' which the adults concede – and even the right to protection from bullies, be they other pupils or the teachers themselves, is denied. As for 'responsibilities', children are likewise denied access to these. They are constantly told to behave like adults, and yet if they do (for example, by questioning received wisdom) they are sanctioned for their 'childishness'.

Schoolchildren therefore exist in a grand behaviourist enclosure. Forced to allow their days to be run along the rhythms of the lesson, cajoled into spending all of their days attending lessons in which they may have no interest (and which the teachers are generally unconcerned about making interesting). They are conditioned over the years into Pavlovian responses to the accompanying end-of-period bells (as preparation for life on the factory floor?). Where there is no freedom there can be no citizenship; and a school is the last place on earth where discussions of citizenship can hope to have any place.

Whither Learning?

Schools are manifestly not places of learning in any philosophical sense. Learning should (must) be a pleasurable activity rather than an enforced regime. Indeed, Bertrand Russell claimed that 'learning' should be as much a pleasurable activity as drinking or lovemaking (Russell, 1941, p. 81). So if not for learning, then what exactly are schools there for? What are these 'basic habits' of which Churchill spoke which are necessary for inculcation in the minds of the young?

What schools eventually provide is a constant outpouring of compliant, obedient and docile people to work in factories and offices. People unlikely to question their lot in life because they have been trained into expecting nothing, because they have no rights, no say in what happens to them and no right to question the prevailing order. Even among those not sufficiently scarred by their experiences of compulsory education that they want to continue 'learning' this is an observable reality. Many intelligent undergraduates enter university unable to demonstrate freedom of thought because they are (still) doing what they've been conditioned thus far to do – to look for and to respond with the 'correct' answer. Dialogue in tutorials regarding the possibilities of intellectual 'grey-areas' is near impossible. Certainly this changes, and over time students become able to consider and construct arguments, but upon entry they cannot do this because they have never before been allowed the right to question prevailing orthodoxy.

This is why 'citizenship' classes in UK schools, as currently envisioned, are fundamentally a waste of time.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Best Policy? Honesty in Education, 1997–2001

PAUL FRANCIS, 2001
Much Wenlock: Liberty Books, 256 pp., £8.00,
ISBN 0 9520568 44

Written over two years and completed in the run up to the 2001 General Election, Paul Francis's book is an analysis of the way the Labour Government's policy on education during its first term was undermined by dishonesty.

In his opening chapter, 'In Margaret Thatcher's Shadow', he dates the introduction of dishonesty in education policy-making to the Thatcher period. Since then, education ministers have shown:

- 'a crude, aggressive manner, putting forward their own views and putting teachers down, ignoring expertise or criticism';
- 'a distaste for evidence, argument and consultation, with a reluctance to look seriously at examples in the past or in other countries'; and
- 'a denial of their own responsibility and the damage they have done.'

Moving on to the New Labour Government in Chapter 2, he discusses 'spin, expertise and the real world' and notes with disappointment the 'New Labourisation' of people like Michael Barber and Tom Bentley. He itemises changes in Labour policy and attitudes from opposition to government. In opposition, Stephen Byers had attacked the Tories' City Technology Colleges as 'a scandalous waste of money when our schools are starved of resources'. In government, Byers became 'the prophet of 'naming and shaming'. There is, as you would expect, much about Blunkett: 'The David Blunkett who worked for Sheffield ... believed in quality education for all'. What a pity, says Francis, that in government he rounded on teachers, accusing them of denying diversity, underplaying excellence, pouring cold water on aspiration and expectation and much more. And there was, of course, his infamous volte-face on selection.

Chapter 3 looks at the treatment of schools and teachers by the media. 'The Ridings was a tabloid dream. Within a month, you had every element an editor could want: pupils assaulting staff, staff threatening a strike, criticisms of the local authority, a head resigning, an inspection hit squad, worried parents, suspended pupils, a school closure, and the arrival of a superhead to sort it out.'

He analyses the methods of the press. Margaret Meek questioned some of the assumptions behind the teaching of literacy. An anonymous *Mail on Sunday* article introduced her as 'archetypally Politically Correct reader emeritus at London's prestigious Institute of Education'. Paul Francis comments, 'Before we hear a word from her, we are invited to dismiss her as pretentious and dishonest.'

Chapter 4 is a detailed account and critique of the work of Chris Woodhead as head of OFSTED, his antipathy towards teachers and his contempt for any research which did not support his own views. The section on 'The Woodhead Affair' makes particularly fascinating reading.

The grotesque regime of testing and league tables with which schools are now faced is examined in Chapter 5. Francis notes Bob Schaeffer's comment that American schools have become 'test preparation centres'.

The inequalities in state education provision are described in Chapter 6, 'The Lottery Boom'. The unequal funding of schools from TVEI to 'specialist' schools, the pernicious effects of selection, the impossible hurdles parents have to jump to get rid of grammar schools, the divisiveness of religious schools and private education, the undesirable side-effects of parental choice and the 'secret strategy' to get rid of mixed-ability teaching are all analysed.

Chapter 7, 'Leadership and Lies' looks at the role of the head and government attitudes to it – 'failing heads', 'superheads', 'fresh start' and the rest. Margaret Hodge's trip to Switzerland provided her with insights into what can be achieved by giving teachers 'freedom, power and respect'. Nothing seems to have come of it. Paul Francis concludes, 'We shall not get real improvements until those in power develop the honesty to welcome such insights and look at the business of leadership rationally, without the tribal drums'.

Teachers are the subject of Chapter 8. Low morale, the crisis in recruitment and the huge number of teachers leaving the profession – or planning to leave – have persuaded Lord Puttnam that teachers must avoid 'being seen as a figure on whom change is imposed and, instead, to take on a pro-active role as architect of change'. Stirring stuff, says Paul Francis, but what is needed is for those in control to recognise that 'there is a place for expertise'.

Chapter 9, 'Honesty in School', looks at relationships between parents, staff and pupils. Paul Francis concludes, 'Our main commitment is not to supporting the government, improved statistics or a rosy view of life, but to clarity of vision and rigorous thought'.

In his final chapter, 'Free at Last', Francis analyses the devastating effects on schools of politicians' lies and deceits, their refusal to listen and their dismissal of any evidence or opinion which contradicts their own. He insists there is an alternative. 'My vision of primary education starts from a recognition that children's creative thought and action lie at the heart of educational experience from infancy and that the primary classroom, at its best, is the setting for a provocative engagement with culture, shared between a teacher and her class … We need to build an education system which isn't dependent on political gimmickry.'

Paul Francis taught in comprehensive schools for more than thirty years. He is an avid reader of books on education and a collector of press cuttings on the subject. He knows what he is talking about and clearly cares passionately about the education our children receive. There is a huge amount of information in this book. But there is more than that – there is critical analysis and informed opinion.

The Best Policy is compulsive reading (I read it in two afternoons) and will appeal to all those who, like Paul Francis, would like to see some honesty in education policy-making. I'd like to think it will be read – and its message taken to heart – by Estelle Morris, but having

heard her dismissive attitude to the teacher unions' response to her proposal for American-style 'graduation ceremonies' on the *Today* programme this morning (26 June), I'm not holding my breath …

Derek Gillard *Educational Consultant, Oxford*

Promoting Comprehensive Education in the 21st Century

CLYDE CHITTY & BRIAN SIMON (Eds), 2001
Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books. 114 pp., £13.95,
ISBN 1 85856 253 8

The attacks on comprehensive education by New Labour are beginning to provoke the defensive impulses of progressive teachers and parents all over the country.

An eloquent and collective expression of this nascent resistance is to be found within the pages of Clyde Chitty & Brian Simon's anthology *Promoting Comprehensive Education in the 21st Century.*

The editors are hugely erudite veterans of the struggle for just and fulfilling schools for all our children and see right through the concealed jeopardies of the new government's strategies.

In his chapter Selection by Specialisation, Clyde Chitty reminds his readers that, by 2005, Labour plans to make nearly half of all secondary schools 'specialist schools'.

Thus the Blair regime will implement the plans for specialisation – with its 10% selection option – set out in 1992 by the then eccentric and unreservedly Thatcherite Tory Secretary of State for Education, John Patten, who warned us that 'the new s-word for all socialists to come to terms with is specialisation'.

As Chitty concludes, 'the whole specialist schools project actually widens inequalities in secondary education by reducing opportunities and creating a two-tier system' (p. 24).

In his essay, Richard Hatcher provides a very powerful commentary upon the processes of privatisation and erosion of democratic accountability within the British educational structures.

Hatcher recognises the incursion of the ideology and ways of globalisation within the English school system and sees a fundamental contest in action between 'two distinct logics' that guide educational provision.

'One is a logic of education, based on social and individual need and notions of equity and democracy. The other is a logic of business, whose bottom line is profit.'

Hatcher identifies a number of New Labour strategies by which privatisation directly threatens state education and comprehensive schools, pointing to the example of the takeover of King's Manor – a so-called 'failing' comprehensive school in Guildford – by 3 Es Enterprises Ltd, which has tightened its grip on the constitutional control of the School by insisting that it must nominate 12 of the 21 school governors, thus overwhelming any prospect of democratic control by teachers, parents or LEA.

In another contribution, Bob Wood describes the campaign in Leeds in opposition to privatisation of LEA services by a company headed by the chairperson of Leeds United Football Club, whose players still face court proceedings over an alleged attack on an Asian youth.

John Yandell's essay, very much from the heat of the classroom, shows the effect of the examination madness within the system and how the Excellence in Cities initiative, with its emphasis upon the so-called 'gifted and talented', increases streaming and 'fast-track' deformities within schools, while offering middle-class parents succour and incentives that their children will receive extra support.

One of the most effective parts of this essential book is Brian Simon's chapter called Blair on Education, itself based on an article which appeared in *FORUM* (42(3)) in the Autumn of 2000.

The author can look back on a lifetime of commitment and struggle for comprehensive education and has been provoked to anger by Blair's denunciation of what the mass of the Labour Party have promoted over the last four decades.

As he reminds us, Blair's contempt 'takes us right back to the abuse comprehensive education suffered under Margaret Thatcher and John Major – the blanket charge of uniformity, that schools are all the same, talent unrecognised, that generally the whole exercise has been a failure'.

As Brian Simon concludes, the leadership of Blair, Blunkett and now Estelle Morris, is 'giving new currency to, and repeating the arguments of, the discredited Tory Right' (p. 101).

Chitty & Simon's book balances its moments of revelation and indignation at New Labour's school betrayals by reaffirmation of the values and principles of the comprehensive objective.

Mike Davies's essay, for example, compares a student's feelings of failure provoked by her school's persistent testing – she says: 'I'm frightened I'll do the SATs and be a nothing' – with the aims of a genuine comprehensive education, with its 'need for students to be partners in shaping at least part of their learning and to be engaged in problem-based learning within the world that they experience as well as beyond'.

Chris Searle *Community Worker and Reasercher, Sheffield*

This review is based on an article which appeared in *Morning Star* on 11 July 2001.

New Labour's Policies for Schools – Raising the Standard?

JIM DOCKING (Ed.) 2000
London: David Fulton Publishers. 210pp.,
ISBN 1 85346 611 5

This book is written by the National Education Policy Course Team at the Roehampton Institute, London. Its target readership is undergraduates and graduates of education and it has something of the text book about it. This should not, however, put off others with an interest in recent educational developments.

The book combines information giving in the form of facts and figures relating to key strands of the standards debate with questions for discussion of a more controversial nature. Recent educational developments are reviewed within their social/historical context where necessary and located on a continuum stretching from

Callaghan's infamous Ruskin College speech in 1976, by way of years of Tory educational policy to the brave New Labour world with its emphasis on education, education, education.

The first two chapters of the book are written by the editor and set out the backgound to the standards debate and the attempts by various governments to raise achievement.

The second part of the book, Looking at Particulars, comprises 10 chapters by different authors examining various aspects of New Labour's education policy and its consequences in more detail. These include: -Target Setting, Inspection and Assessment; Curriculum Issues; Early Years Education; Special Educational Needs and Inclusion and Truancy and Exclusion. Developments within the teaching profession and the changing role of Local Education Authorities are dealt with along with notions of choice, diversity and partnership.

All the chapters in the book follow the same pattern, covering previous policy summarising developments under the Conservatives, present policy outlining New Labour's approach, issues for debate discussing more controversial questions, reading lists and references.

The contributors write clearly and succinctly. This, coupled with the layout of the book, make it an accessible and unintimidating text and I can see it as being particularly useful to students of education.

As with any such book, the rapidly changing educational scene means that the situation described in it has already altered. The second term of New Labour is already offering us increased selection in schools, a massive growth of religious schools, hugely increased private sector involvement in all aspects of the educational process and a drive to increase entrepreneurial skills amongst school students.

As Jim Docking states in his introduction, 'Whether or not the policies of the party in power are seen to represent an extension of the Conservatives or a fresh approach, the pace of change continues unabated and with a missionary zeal.'

Jenny Thewlis *Educational Consultant, London*

Not for Sale: the case against the privatisation of education

BERNARD REGAN, 2001
London: Socialist Teachers Alliance.
60 pp., £2.00 (paperback)

This short pamphlet deserves close attention, particularly in the light of a declared intention by the Labour Government to increase the role of the private sector in the provision and running of schools in the maintained sector.

In a brief introduction, the author describes the rapid rise of private education companies, over a period, which has coincided with the term of office of the last Labour Government. He goes on to link this with a commitment by the World Trade Organisation to increase the involvement of private companies in the provision of education and health.

In the first chapter Regan sets the historical and political context, one in which the gradual run down of school buildings and are growing culture of blame laid at the door of the State sector is used as a justification for creeping privatisation. He goes on to describe the gradual erosion of comprehensive education in a climate where specialist schools are provided with additional funding together with the ability to select their intake.

In the remainder of the pamphlet, the author takes a closer look at the range of Government inspired initiatives, which are leading to a reduced role for LEA's and as a result diminished public accountability. He highlights the way in which the Labour Government has embraced the private sector, with zeal unmatched by that of the Thatcher administration. Privatisation is exposed as an issue of who controls education and in whose best interests. Regan argues that despite their occasional inefficiencies, the LEA's (by virtue of being directly elected) are best placed to represent the interests of education and its users. This view is supported by an analysis of the gains to the private sector. Clearly the gains are substantial, as is borne out by the number of multinational companies declaring an interest in taking control of the schools system in the UK.

Not for Sale provides an informed historical account of the various initiatives, which have paved the way for the privatisation of education services. Education Action Zones have proved to be unattractive to the business community because of the low returns. In the final chapters, Regan provides an account of the shift in emphasis and reveals how different, more successful strategies have been employed to force LEA's to involve the business community. The Private Finance Initiative and Private Public Partnership appear, on the face of it, to be an attractive solution to the current state of school buildings. However, Regan uses case studies to demolish the argument, demonstrating the ways in which schools and LEAs can become locked into unattractive and costly arrangements, while business strips the assets of schools and LEAs in the best interests of shareholders. Also highlighted are the dangers posed to staff in terms of reduced conditions of service and pay.

In a significant chapter, the author illustrates how skilful promotion of outsourcing by both the Government and OFSTED has resulted in the loss of LEA control of key services. This chapter gains added importance in the light of the promotion of Estelle Morris, a key advocate of 'outsourcing' to the position of Secretary of State for Education. It seems likely that the 2001 White Paper will help complete the jigsaw, and place the control of Education firmly in the hands of big business.

In the final chapter, Regan proposes the need for a fightback, to preserve both the comprehensive nature of schooling in the UK and the public accountability of education services. He highlights the success of Pimlico School and elsewhere. It is as he concludes 'a fight that is necessary – it is a fight that can be won'. It is also one, which can be won only by well-informed parents, trade unionists, governors and pupils. *Not for Sale* is essential reading for everyone who believes in comprehensive state education and should be required reading for all governors and education students.

For more information about the Socialist Teachers Alliance contact Alex Kenny, 1 Shrubland Road, Walthamstow, London E17 7QH.

John Wadsworth *Goldsmiths College, London*

Unfair Shares Rationing Education: policy, practice, reform and equity

DAVID GILLBORN & DEBORAH YOUDELL, 2000
Buckingham: Open University Press.
253 pp., £18.99 (paperback), ISBN 0 335 20360 4

This important book presents the results of an inquiry into how two representative secondary schools of contrasting ethos and organisation reproduce day in and day out certain particular inequalities, the hallmarks of our society. The book opens by reminding us that educational inequality is made. 'We seek,' write Gillborn & Youdell, 'to identify the mechanisms that have simultaneously delivered year-on-year increases in the headline indicator of educational "standards" *and* prompted ever-widening inequalities associated with gender, ethnic origin and social class' (p.1; emphasis in original). Pursuing the consequences of this dialectic, arguably an inevitable one within the education-system of our increasingly unrestrained capitalism, enables the authors properly to contextualise recent and current developments in education, and to scrutinise the effects of contemporary practices common to most state secondary schools, in the theoretical light which explains why such practices continue and will continue to prevent the use of education for social justice.

> *The British school system is increasingly selective, disciplinary and discriminating ... The obsession with measurable and elite "standards", the publication of school "league tables", heightened surveillance of schools and increased competition for resources (all central to the reforms) are part of the problem, not the solution. (p. 1)*

These admirably clear, direct and accurate general statements are grounded in the results of two years' research at a brace of secondary schools, the nostalgically-pseudonymed Clough GM and Taylor Comprehensive. While the schools are significantly different in the ways they organise themselves and work with their students, Gillborn & Youdell argue both are thoroughly implicated in the replication of educational inequalities, despite the conscious attempts and best efforts of teachers to work against this process.

> *The simple taken-for-granted assumptions that inform approaches to tiering, pupil-grouping, the adoption of "ability" testing etc. are the unremarkable yet devastating detail of a machine (the education system) that creates enormous disparities of experience, achievement and esteem between young people. These differences will impact on the life-chances of many children for the foreseeable future. These inequalities often flow from the unintended consequences of policy and practice. (pp. 221-222)*

Such conclusions must give all those committed to education for equity pause, for the chosen schools exemplify representative albeit divergent currents of practice within mainstream contemporary state schooling.

Gillborn & Youdell proceed to examine in detail many of the systems currently embedded, or in the process of being embedded, in secondary schools now. They recall the inbuilt biases within superficially-objective baseline 'assessments'. They reveal the pernicious way apparently common-sense notions of 'ability' work in alliance with the current regime of bought-in tests (such as those produced by the National Foundation for Education Research [NFER]) to generate a kind of educational apartheid within a school. They point out the congruence of contemporary faith in standardised testing and its powers to define a student's 'ability' with that which once attended IQ tests. They measure the weight of the 'A-to-C economy' within which the achievement by as many pupils as possible of higher-grade GCSEs becomes all-important, and under which schools and individual teachers (at least in England), are judged through the League Tables. They track the limiting consequences of this burden. They show again the classist, sexist, and racist biases built into subject-setting or grouping and into the supposedly-neutral process of choosing GCSE options. They make space for students to voice their understandings and objections to these processes, and to the 'tiering' that goes on within Maths and English sets as the GCSEs approach, noting that 'Among the most consistent and pronounced inequalities of opportunity are those suffered by Black pupils: in both schools and in both subject-departments, Black pupils are less likely to be entered in the Higher tier ... A similar pattern of inequality is evidenced among pupils in receipt of free school meals' (p. 130).

Their study locates much teacher-unease at what we find we must do in the new educational dispensation begun by the Tories with the Education Reform Act in 1988 and reinvigorated by New Labour since 1997, for 'Many teachers are passionately committed to challenging the very inequalities that they participate in reinforcing' (p. 206). But it is the second half of that sentence which packs the punch, and the study as a whole serves notice on us. As a profession we have been co-opted. As yet we have failed adequately to assert ourselves in opposition to increasingly-reactionary impositions by government which in the view of the authors has resulted in a rationing of education. Partly, they write, this is because we teachers have been unable to look at the big picture and understand our daily actions and decisions in the light of it. The book ends with some recommendations for redirecting educational policy at the micro and macro levels towards education for social justice. The urgency of the task is rivaled only by its scale.

As a teacher who worked for a decade and a half in the English department of a comprehensive not unlike 'Taylor', this study has been a sobering read. At times more than sobering: 'It is a cruel irony that the processes of selection and monitoring that have been adopted often with the aim of heightening attainment are so frequently experienced as disempowering and demotivating by pupils ... In this context the production of "predicted grades" (intended partly as a motivational "ploy" by teachers ...) can be experienced as personally insulting ...' (p. 195). I doubt I'll be the only teacher who flinches at that. The nitty-gritty of systems and structures inside contemporary secondary schools is all too recognisable within these pages, and adds to the cumulative persuasive power of the critique. We will recognise ourselves in action here, and the study should send us back yet again to look at what we do, for as the authors write '... teachers and schools can

work against the flow of top-down reforms ...' (p. 221). But the problems require systemic and not simply individual change, especially since the space for individuals to ameliorate or counter the effects of the 'reforms' continues to be narrowed, for example by the arrival at secondary level of prescriptive strategies geared to the better 'delivery' of literacy, numeracy and other elements of the National Curriculum. We cannot properly educate for equity within existing structures, designed as they are precisely to prevent that. We must organise better and more decisively first to resist and then to replace the system. Teacher-unions should redouble demands for the abolition of League Tables and an end to high-stakes testing and the 'ability'-labelling of pupils from as young as five years old. Organisations representing subject-teachers, especially teachers of Maths, English and Science, should campaign to replace tiering at GCSE level. The ideological freight within common-sense 'notions of 'ability' currently operating within the system should be exposed. The 'pseudo-science' of numbered National Curriculum levels, so handy for rank-ordering children, should be jettisoned. And resources, especially for schools working with the most impoverished children, must be substantially increased. To say nothing of ending that poverty itself, in whose grip at least one child in four now grows up, learning.

Gillborn & Youdell's study makes plain what is going on every day as a consequence of 'Education, education, education!' It bolsters by academic research the understanding of many teachers that what is happening in secondary education cannot be squared with the principles and motives which made us teachers to begin with. It is a forceful, bleak and clear-eyed account of secondary education in England now, and it requires of us a hopeful answer, that we act.

Patrick Yarker *Taverham High School, Norwich*