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FORUM

FOR THE DISCUSSION OF NEW TRENDS IN EDUCATION

TEACHERS FOR COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION

FORUM/COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS COMMITTEE CONFERENCE

SATURDAY, 6 JUNE 1970
10 am to 4 pm

Forum subscribers have already received notices of this important conference. The object is to discuss the skills and abilities comprehensive education requires of teachers, and how these may be developed, both during training and after in the schools.

The morning session will be chaired by **Raymond King,** Chairman of the **Forum** editorial board. There will be three speakers: **Professor Hilde Himmelweit** (Professor of Social Psychology, London School of Economics), **Pat Daunt** (Head of the Thomas Bennett Comprehensive School, Crawley), and **Nanette Whitbread** (Senior Lecturer in Education at the City of Leicester College of Education). These will be followed by discussion.

The afternoon session (commencing at 1.30 pm) will be chaired by **Michael Armstrong,** Chairman of the Comprehensive Schools Committee. This will take the form of a teach-in, with the accent on youth. There will be three or four opening speakers with ten minutes each, and a number of others who will make five minute contributions – but there will certainly be time for many speakers from the floor. Among those who have agreed to take part in this way are: **Margaret Nandy** (Bushloe High School, Leicestershire), **Jane Thompson** (David Lister High School, Hull), **Tony Crisp** (Malory School, London), **Tristram Jenkins** (Borough Green School, Berkshire), **John Bell** (recently of Henbury Comprehensive School, Bristol).

The conference will take place at the headquarters of the National Union of Teachers, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1.

The Conference fee is ten shillings. Many bookings have already been made. **If you wish to attend you should apply immediately to the conference organiser: Mrs H. Peston, Conference, 52 Wood Vale, London N10.**

Editorial Board

Editorial Communications. MSS and contributions to discussion (800 words maximum) should be addressed to the Editor, 11 Pendene Road, Leicester. LE2 3DQ.

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The Long Lurch to Comprehensive Education

Since our last issue went to press, three further steps have been taken in what may best be described as 'the long lurch' towards comprehensive education. In January the NFER published the final report of their investigation into Streaming in the Primary School. In February Mr Short introduced his Bill in the House of Commons. In March, the Donnison report on independent day and direct grant grammar schools finally appeared.

We may claim to have been involved in all these actions and investigations. One object for which **Forum** was launched was to lend support to the movement for unstreaming junior schools – and indeed, if some heads had not initially taken this course, there would have been nothing to investigate. The NFER accepts this estimate of our role. On the first page of the report it is stated that 'the journal **Forum**, in particular, has published many articles on the topic and suggested methods of running a non-streamed school.' Reference is made also to our evidence to the Plowden Commission where the case was argued at length (and later published in book form). Although the report found no differences between streamed and unstreamed schools in terms of cognitive gains, it points to many aspects of children's emotional and social development where the unstreamed school proved superior – at least for the majority of the children. This report is to be welcomed. It clearly has important implications for comprehensive secondary education. George Freeland comments on it in this issue.

Mr Short's Bill certainly takes things a step further in relation to authorities which have refused to submit plans for comprehensive reorganisation. But, as the Comprehensive Schools Committee has correctly pointed out, the Bill lacks bite, while, paradoxically, it contains a clause which makes selection (at 16, and possibly earlier) part of the law of the land – a position that has never been the case before. A fight against this clause is being carried through inside and outside Parliament, and we must hope it will be successful. Even so, much more specific legislation is still required to ensure that the transition to comprehensive education is introduced universally throughout the country, with clear, achieveable dates of completion.

Forum has latterly been much concerned with the creaming of comprehensive schools by direct grant and other types of school, as in London, Coventry, Bristol, Lancashire and elsewhere. A year ago we published our evidence on this question to the Public School Commission. We argued that the continuance of 'the separate existence of direct grant grammar schools, under no effective local authority control, vitiates the movement towards comprehensive education in many areas, depriving local comprehensive schools of the possibility of becoming genuinely comprehensive schools'. Our case was that the direct grant list should be abolished, so that the majority of these schools would become maintained schools, able to be included in the local provision for comprehensive education.

Fundamentally, this is what the Commission has recommended, and this is certainly welcome. The report is closely argued and we see no reason why the government should not take steps to implement it immediately. This would end the uncertainty surrounding the future of these schools, and enable authorities to begin to plan their integration into local comprehensive schemes. Why should this step be further delayed ?

The movement towards genuine comprehensive education cannot now be stopped. It has developed an impetus of its own. While welcoming these three steps, we direct attention once more in this issue to the inner organisation of the schools themselves. This number focusses attention on the problems of school counselling and pastoral care; on the sixth form in comprehensive schools; on the question of choice within the comprehensive school, and on a number of questions of curriculum and organisation. We celebrate, also, Leicestershire's achievement as the first **English** county to have abolished any form of selection at eleven for its maintained secondary schools. This is certainly an important milestone on the comprehensive road.

The Implementation of the Leicestershire Plan

Bernard Elliott

Bernard Elliott teaches at Loughborough College school, a Leicestershire upper school. He has already published histories of two Leicestershire upper schools, one of which was founded (as a grammar school) in the 15th century, the other in the 18th. Here he chronicles the transition to a complete system of comprehensive education in Leicestershire, the first English county to have abolished selection at 11.

1969 was an important date in the history of education in Leicestershire for with the opening of the Bosworth upper school the County Education Committee completed its reorganisation of secondary education on comprehensive lines. This process began in 1957 when the LEA introduced an entirely new method of secondary organisation based on the two tier system. Under this scheme the eleven plus examination was abolished and all children spent the first three years of their secondary education in a high school. At the age of fourteen, all pupils had the right to transfer to the upper school, where they continued their education, but the LEA insisted that the parents of children so transferred should give an undertaking to keep their children at school until they reached the age of sixteen.

The new pattern of secondary education was introduced (with the approval of the Minister of Education) in two pilot areas in September 1957 – the Oadby/Wigston and Hinckley areas. By 1959 the Education Committee had some idea of the public response to its scheme and from all the indications it seemed clear that the scheme was welcomed. The number of children transferred in 1959 from the high schools to the upper schools was 50% in the Oadby/Wigston area and 33% in Hinckley. The general welcome given to the Plan, together with a realisation that the new arrangement conferred greater advantages upon its secondary school population than did the normal tripartite pattern, led the Committee in 1959 to change the title of the scheme from Experiment to Plan, thereby sounding the all-clear for its extension throughout the country.

In 1960 the first extension took place when the Plan was applied to the Birstall area, adjacent to the City of Leicester. A new grammar school was being built there and the Committee decided that this school, subsequently called Longslade, should become an upper school from its inception. As a result, the neighbouring secondary modern school, Stonehill, became an associated high school, another being the Hamilton high school to the east of the City.

As the Committee extended its Plan throughout the country, it sometimes introduced it in a modified form in certain areas before putting it into full operation. It did so when it sought to extend the Plan to Kibworth Beauchamp. One of the original schools in the experimental area was the new Guthlaxton grammar school (now an upper school) at Wigston. Here the public response to the Plan had been so great that Guthlaxton soon found itself overcrowded. So the LEA decided to relieve the pressure by building a new upper school in the neighbouring village of Oadby. This new school, however, was originally planned as the successor to Kibworth Beauchamp grammar school, but it could not be built and open for use before September 1964. The pressure on Guthlaxton mounted so rapidly, however, that the Committee decided to bring the Kibworth school into the Plan before it moved to Oadby. So in September 1963 four streams of fourteen plus children from a high school in Oadby (Gartree), who were expecting to go on to Guthlaxton at 14, were sent to the Kibworth school instead.

The Committee had insisted on proper practical facilities being available in the upper schools for their new pupils. At Kibworth this provision was made possible by enlarging the nearby junior school to accommodate the infants and the school so vacated was turned into practical rooms for the upper school.

The Kibworth area was fully reorganised in September 1964 when the staff and older pupils of Kibworth grammar school moved to the new Oadby upper school, leaving the younger children to become the nucleus of the new Kibworth high school. At the same time, Market Harborough was also taken into the Plan, the grammar school becoming the upper school and Welland Park Secondary Modern the associated high school.

1964 was an important year for, in addition to Kibworth, Market Harborough and Oadby, the Plan was also applied to Melton Mowbray in that year. Its introduction here had been delayed because of a shortage

of high school places, but with the building of a new secondary school in Melton (Ferneley high school), it was possible to apply the Plan to the whole eastern area of the county.

The LEA had hoped to extend the Plan into the Loughborough area by this time, but a dispute with the Governors of the Humphrey Perkins School (a voluntary-aided school) at Barrow-upon-Soar held up its advance. As far back as 1961 the Committee had worked out its proposals for the extension of the Plan into the north of the county. There were to be two upper schools, while the remaining secondary schools were to become contributory high schools. These arrangements satisfied all parties concerned except the Governors of the Humphrey Perkins School, at this time a bilateral school with a strong grammar school tradition, but under the new dispensation it was to become a high school, thereby losing its upper forms. The Governors naturally did not relish this loss of status and they did everything in their power to have the Committee's proposals altered, appealing eventually to the Minister of Education. The dispute was decided, however, in favour of the LEA.

Once this had been settled, the LEA was able to go ahead with its plan. This involved building large scale extensions to the two schools designated as upper schools in the area: the Rawlins school, Quorn and Loughborough College School. In addition, the LEA came to an arrangement with the Governors of two direct grant schools in the area; the Loughborough Boys' Grammar and Girls' High School, which enabled these to be fitted into the Plan. All these arrangements were completed in September 1967 when the Leicestershire Plan was applied to the Loughborough area.

Before that extension took place, however, in 1966, the Committee had reached the important decision that when the school leaving age was raised in 1971 all children would automatically transfer from the high to the upper schools at the age of fourteen. Moreover, it was agreed that in those areas such as Birstall and Oadby (where the rate of voluntary transfer was over 80%) compulsory transfer at the age of fourteen would be introduced before 1970. This is now the case in both areas.

This decision was a result partly of the publication of Circular 10/65 (in July 1965) by the Department of Education and Science which examined the various types of comprehensive systems then in operation in England, including the Leicestershire Plan. The Secretary of State's attitude to the latter was that he could regard it only as an interim solution since the new arrangement provided two parallel schools for children aged fourteen to fifteen, thereby permitting a certain element of segregation. The Committee realised that compulsory transfer at fourteen was necessary before the scheme could be regarded as fully comprehensive. On informing the DES of its decision to do this, the Secretary of State, in a letter of 11 July 1967, gave formal approval to the Leicestershire Plan.

An interesting factor of the reorganisation at this stage was the agreement already mentioned with the two direct grant schools at Loughborough. A main point of this agreement was the measures taken to ensure that the Direct Grant and the Leicestershire Plan schools of the area would each get their fair share of good scholars. The county free places at the Endowed Schools (still taken at the age of 11) were to be available to children of both average and above average ability.

Under the terms of the agreement the Education Committee selects the free place scholars on the basis of several factors. Children at the primary schools of Loughborough whose parents opt for the Endowed Schools take a written paper in March as part of their normal day's work; their school record is also to be taken into consideration. They are then divided into percentile groups of ability of 5% and if in any group there are more applicants than places available, the Committee takes into account other factors such as proximity to the school, the presence of an older brother or sister in the school, or the possibility of a boarding place being required at a later date. The percentage of places at the two direct grant schools taken up by the LEA will be increased by 5% each year until the LEA takes up 50%, when the agreement will be reconsidered. In 1969 35% of places were taken and so the school took children from the top 35% of the ability-range.

At the same time as the Plan was applied to the Loughborough area (1964) two other areas were brought in as well, Ashby/Coalville (in the north east) and Lutterworth (in the south). In the former area, the problem facing the Committee had been the attitude of the Governors of Ashby Boys' grammar school. When the Plan had been first mooted in 1957, the school was a voluntary aided school and the Governors had expressed firm opposition to any suggestion that their school should come into the Plan. But by 1964, owing to financial problems, there was the possibility of a

change in the school's status and with this new development the Governors adopted a different attitude. In January of that year the Education Committee was able to report that the Ashby Governors had agreed to enter the Leicestershire Plan and in the following month the Minister of Education issued an order whereby the school became 'voluntary controlled'. This new development, together with the Minister's approval of the building of a practical block for the two Ashby schools (Boys' grammar and Girls' grammar), enabled the Plan to be applied in the north west of the county as well as at Loughborough in September 1967.

One area now remained outside the Plan – that served by Leicestershire's oldest grammar school – the Dixie school at Market Bosworth. Several years ago, its Governors agreed with the Education Committee that, when a new grammar school was built, it should be erected outside the old historic village. A new site for it was found at Desford and there a new upper school has been built which opened in August 1969. With its opening all the traditional grammar schools of the county – most of them dating back to the 16th and 17th centuries, have been brought within the Plan.

Meantime, in all areas to which the Plan had been extended, the number of transfers from the high to the upper school had been showing a rapid increase, as can be seen from the following percentage rates of fourteen plus transfers:

	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969
Oadby/Wigston	57	62	65	69	71	70
					Oadby (100)	Oadby (100)
Hinckley	43	49	53	53	59	64
Birstall	46	52	54	82	82	83
					Birstall (100)	Birstall (100)
Harborough	54	50	50	59	65	64
Melton Mowbray	44	54	61	68	69	70

For the districts like Loughborough, Lutterworth and Ashby, which did not come into the Plan until September 1967, figures are not given, because the transfer rates in these areas are not yet representative of the full ability range. Moreover, for the Oadby area separate figures are not available until 1968.

As in its early days, the parents of the industrial area of Hinckley have shown least response to the Plan. The great increase in the number of Birstall's transfers in 1967 was due to the fact that the rate of voluntary transfer at Stonehill high school had been so great that in 1967 compulsory transfer at the age of fourteen was decided upon. Similarly, the rate of transfer from Gartree high school, Oadby, to the Oadby Beauchamp upper school had been so great that in 1968 it was decided that the whole of the third year should transfer to the upper school. Thus, even before the raising of the school leaving age, the Plan is moving towards the full comprehensive reorganisation desired by the Government.

Having been fully occupied with the extension of the Plan during the past twelve years and with that phase now complete, the Education Committee has recently had time to stand back, to take a good look at it and to reflect what improvements can be made. One change now recommended is that pupils should spend four years in the high school instead of three. According to the Director of Education for Leicestershire, Stewart Mason, a three year course in the high school is insufficient. This new departure in the Plan will take place gradually throughout the county, but a beginning is to be made this year. In 1970 pupils attending Hind Leys and Castle Donington high schools will be recruited at ten and spend four years in those schools before transferring to the appropriate upper schools at fourteen. Another school that may operate this scheme in 1970 is the Belvoir high school, Bottesford, but no final decision has as yet been made.

It may be that the Committee will agree to other modifications of the Plan. In the meantime, an important milestone in the history of education in England was reached on 22 August 1969 when the Leicestershire LEA completed its reorganisation of secondary education on comprehensive lines with the opening of the new Bosworth upper school at Desford. On that day the Education Secretary, Edward Short, congratulated Leicestershire on being the first English county to complete the implementation of its secondary reorganisation plan. The Chief Education Officer, Stewart Mason, who has piloted the plan from the start, has also written that Leicestershire 'is the one English county where selection has totally disappeared'. This statement is true, as far as the maintained school system is concerned, but the Loughborough scheme still involves some degree of selection.

Non-streaming in the Primary School— the Next Steps

George Freeland

George Freeland, a member of the editorial board of **Forum** since its inception, was one of the earliest pioneers of non-streaming in the junior school in this country. He chronicled his experience in 1957 in a chapter entitled "Purpose and method in the unstreamed junior school" in **New Trends in English Education.** He is now head of a large (and naturally, unstreamed) junior school in the city of Leicester.

It is now fifteen years since my staff and I decided to completely unstream the Junior School at which we were then serving and which catered for between four and five hundred children in the central area of the City of Leicester. In the mid-fifties this was an unusual step for a school of that size to take. We only took the plunge after a great deal of discussion and some preliminary experimenting in individual year groups.

The school had been constructed as part of Hadow re-organisation in the early thirties round a framework of girders originally intended for a factory. It still stands, but the houses from which the children came have long since been demolished to make way for council flats and a ring-road.

These houses were then some of the meanest in Leicester, and the priority target for the city's first big post-war re-housing scheme – in other words the environment was not very favourable to schooling. Indeed non-streaming first began to be talked about at Taylor Street when my predecessor was faced with problems both of internal discipline and external delinquency in his third year. He decided to bring this into more manageable proportions by splitting up these children. His aim was first and foremost social in character.

My previous experience as a teacher had already convinced me that streaming was a form of organisation which disrupted the school community – children, teachers and parents alike – and one only to be tolerated if an overwhelming case could be made out for it on educational grounds. I could not find one. On the contrary, I saw education as a social process and could not square the all-round development of all the children with the narrow rigidity imposed by streaming. Having taught a number of lower-stream classes I had become convinced that by basing our approach on the idea of an intelligence which was innate, fixed and open to accurate measurement at an early stage, we were in fact imposing an artificial ceiling on the potentiality of a significant proportion of the children.

By contrast non-streaming was based on the idea that intelligence could develop in interaction with the environment – an idea which implied that most children could be educated to a reasonable standard given the right conditions. These included the development of new methods and a changed content of education, but it was clear to me that the non-streamed situation provided the best background for learning, a fact which it seemed must soon become self evident.

Our results at Taylor Street in the mid-fifties seemed to indicate this. Quite apart from our own subjective judgments the school 'base mean' which we had to ascertain in connection with selection at 11 plus procedures rose steadily from 92 to 97. This bore out the limited research findings at that time, namely, that whilst the changed organisation had little or no measurable effect on the ability or attainment of the A children it brought on B and C children to a significant degree.

The NFER report on **Streaming in the Primary School** recently published, strikingly confirms the original premise that non-streaming results in better attitudes to school and hence in improved motivation and participation for the mass of the children without any serious disadvantage to the brighter ones. It does not, however, show that this, of itself, results in any overall gains in cognitive development.

To a confirmed non-streamer like myself this is, of course, disappointing, but the Report itself suggests one explanation. Streaming has been the conventional form of organisation in the Junior School for the last

forty years. It has operated within a highly selective system of education, and it should not be surprising if teachers have become conditioned accordingly. Nearly half of the teachers in the non-streamed schools concerned in the project still held attitudes which were more truly typical of the streamed school and consequently were found to be still streaming the unstreamed within their class-rooms. As the Report points out, it is quite clear that a mere change in organisation unaccompanied by any serious attempt to change teachers' attitudes and practice is unlikely to make much difference.

We non-streamers present a united front on attitudes but what sort of shape are we in to offer advice on practice? Up and down the country there has been a wide but diverse response to the challenge of the new situation. It may well be that the time has come when we should attempt to make some kind of critical evaluation of our methods in order to elucidate those principles which we regard as important and which teachers as a whole can be won to accept.

It is not very helpful, in this connection, to give the impression that all that it is necessary to do is to abandon all structure, to provide as rich a background as the capitation grant will allow, and from then on to leave it all to the children.

Denis Lawton in his recent book **Social Class, Language and Education,** has followed Bernstein in pointing out the serious difficulties which many children from a restricted home background encounter in coming into school; Douglas Holly, in recent issues of **Forum,** has shown how basic difficulties in language and habits of thinking can handicap children well beyond the confines of the working class when operating in the self-directed learning situation which is an essential part of our practice.

To meet the problem at secondary level one of the 'intervention techniques' which they propose is an increase in directive teaching aimed at producing eventual self-direction. This job might be better tackled at primary level but it is one which is often shirked either because it is difficult to organise or because we have been encouraged to think that it is unnecessary or, at best, too formal an exercise. It is surely clear that if we want children to take full advantage of the less selective situation then we must give them the tools with which to achieve it, a basic vocabulary, the ability to read and use reading matter for different purposes, and a knowledge of the essential structure of our language which, for the most part, is best dealt with in the written form, not only because it is economical and convenient but because, as Vigotsky said, 'The child learns to do consciously in writing what he has all along been doing unconsciously in his speaking and with this aid to rise to a higher level of speech development.'

No one is suggesting that we can just teach children to be literate and leave it at that. It is, however, surely right to see as a major purpose of primary education to provide the experience, at first and second hand, around which language can develop. It seems to me that, with the non-streamed group, this should in the first instance be shared experience, leading to a heightened awareness of a selected aspect of the immediate environment, something which we do and feel together and which can provide a natural opportunity for the social interplay of language, with the teacher – the adult with a mature grasp of vocabulary and linguistic structures – playing the leading role. To over-individualise learning is to cast away one of the great advantages of non-streaming.

It has been one of the great achievements of non-streaming that it has broken down the barriers, the rigid and formal ideas which dominated our practice for so many years. Now into the new won flexibility we need to introduce a little stiffening by way of the basic structures – a little more cohesion in our overall approach. If, with improved staffing and conditions, we can achieve this in the primary school we shall undoubtedly be easing the way for our secondary colleagues to advance with less selective methods untrammelled by the vast remedial problems which beset them now.

Teaching Unstreamed Classes

Michael Tucker

Michael Tucker, who is head of Settle comprehensive school, Yorkshire, writes here about the course on teaching unstreamed classes arranged by the Advisory Centre for Education in Cambridge in January, 1970. He acted as chairman for the course, and, among those acting as tutors for the different subjects, there were four members of his staff. Settle school has, of course, been a pioneer school for mixed ability teaching.

This course was, basically, a repeat of one held in August 1968. Again it was subject based, but visiting lecturers crossed subject barriers. There were 120 members and many applications for places had to be refused. The course was, I felt, more active and positive than its predecessor. This was due partly to the increased experience of the tutors, but more to the greater experience of unstreamed classes among the members. In 1968 only a handful had relevant experience; this year the great majority had already grappled with the problems, if only with first forms. This reduced the insecurity that was rather a feature of the first conference; it increased the sympathy between members and tutors and helped to make the tutorial sessions much more a reciprocal giving and taking between all members, although the starting point in each subject group was an account by a tutor of his own approach to mixed ability groups.

The conference was opened by Brian Simon with a survey of the literature on grouping procedures and an account of the developments in England and elsewhere; for me, the most striking single point that he made came from a reference to the work of Colin Lacey, a Manchester sociologist, who has studied a streamed grammar school. He gives evidence that, when the brightest boys find themselves in the top stream after an unstreamed first year, many of them suffer severely from 'streaming reaction', for they are now placed lower in the form order than they have ever been before. Our assumptions about élites are sometimes oversimple: too much of the case against streaming has been concerned with unfairness to the less able (See **British Journal of Sociology** Vol. XVII No. 3).

Dorothy Diamond spoke on the work on aids to individualising learning undertaken by the Nuffield Resources for Learning Project, and Leslie Smith of Goldsmith's College Curriculum Laboratory spoke on IDE and its relevance to non-streaming. This aroused a great deal of interest but the liberation offered to us all by IDE was not presented without the price in terms of thought and planning. The period after lunch on the last day was given to personal interviews prearranged between members and tutors. This made it possible to discuss details that might not have had enough general interest to merit time in the main group.

But you can't please everybody. My spies have reported as a criticism of one group that it wasn't practical enough: a fair point perhaps since it was our advertised intention to give step by step accounts of actual lessons, to show pupils' books and teaching materials. But in the group in question, the tutor had devoted one session to practical work by the group members: they actually took the materials and worked at them as the pupils might do, films of classes in action were shown, work sheets and exercise books from unstreamed classes were exhibited and discussed. So I'm not sure how fair the criticism is. How practical *should* such a course be? I rather suspect that some teachers are looking to conferences to do their thinking and planning for them, and that unless they can take away a year's syllabus, teaching notes, exercises etc. so that no further thought is required of them, they feel they haven't had their money's worth. But the course set out to show first of all the feasibility of certain methods, to raise questions on the content of the curriculum and to prompt teachers into asking themselves who should learn what?

Two and a half years on: taking stock of experience in mixed ability teaching

Joan Leighton

Joan Leighton is deputy head and head of upper school at Levenshulme High School, Manchester. Originally a grammar school, this took its first comprehensive intake in September 1967, and decided that the 180 girls should be formed into unstreamed classes for teaching and learning in all subjects (see **Forum**, Vol. 11, No. 1). Joan Leighton here discusses the school's experience across the different subjects and subject-groups.

This article is based on a number of talks given by various members of staff to their own colleagues, who had requested an internal course on mixed ability teaching, where experience would be pooled and discussed. Levenshulme High School has been a comprehensive now for two and a half years, and a previous contribution to this magazine recounts the misgivings and early struggles of those who pioneered mixed ability teaching at the headmistress's request. Two and a half years later we are still experimenting, but the course sounded a note of experienced optimism, not quite so cautious, not quite so doubtful as on the last occasion when we compared notes together.

The main contributions to the course were made by members of the Science, History, Geography and World Studies Departments but teachers of other subjects attended in the hope of gaining practical hints which could be adapted to their own use. The Science department expressed the view that experience had proved for them the theory that early streaming tends to produce stereotyped methods on the part of the teachers, and boredom, with consequent behaviour difficulties on the part of the pupils, particularly the less academic. Their scheme of individual work cards in the first and second year encourages children to carry out simple experiments for themselves, makes them more co-operative and resourceful and frees the teacher to play a different role, that of peripatetic, individual adviser rather than demonstrator. The work cards are not graded but the children are allowed to proceed at their own pace, and the work is periodically consolidated by the use of formal lessons, final work sheets and objective tests.

The Science staff feel that the current third year groups are more enquiring and adventurous than previous ones as a result of coming up through the unstreamed first and second year system. They see the possibility of carrying on unstreaming into the third year but make the point that smaller classes, such as we have at Levenshulme by dividing two classes between three teachers, are a necessary prerequisite for this type of work. One way to achieve this is by judicious use of students as auxiliary teachers, a process which can be beneficial to old hand, trainee and child alike.

Some rather interesting final observations were made by the science staff in which they reported a more genuinely tolerant attitude on the part of the quicker children to the slow and an aspiration to higher standards by the less academic pupils, both these changes being engendered by the emphasis on co-operation rather than competition. It was also noted that staff now thought out the content of their work more critically, jettisoning much of the rather arid, conventional material which has for so long cluttered grammar school syllabuses. Science work is now centred on fundamental topics, for example Air, Water, Light.

The History department in offering their contribution to the course surveyed their efforts in the sphere of team teaching. The team has lately consisted of three history teachers and an Art specialist, and the course has covered early civilisations from the Stone Age to Ancient Greece and Rome. The basic tools are graded work cards made up into package assignments and through these training is given in note making, essay writing, oral discussion, project work, dramatisation and illustration. This work is supplemented by outside visits, and the use of museum loan collections. In addition to the much quoted benefit of allowing children to 'work at their own pace', the

history staff values a chance to provide a wider choice of activity, based on interest given to pupils, the benefits derived from collaboration between staff and the more rational use of materials.

Two difficulties recorded were the penalisation of the 'average' child, and the lack of opportunity for sufficient oral discussion, arising out of a relatively small time allocation and the inevitably large numbers, even when three staff are timetabled on to two classes. Neither of these, one feels, is an unavoidable weakness, and the team teaching situation should in fact allow not only for a greater variety of materials and methods to capture the interest of the average child, but also for manipulation of numbers so as to produce manageable groups for discussion purposes.

The Geography department has experimented with mixed ability teaching for almost three years and the head of the department is much concerned with a definition of aims and a critical selection of material which will have meaning for the young student of geography. High on his list of priorities is an attempt to inspire enjoyment of the subject in addition to promoting the ability to research, and training in skills such as map reading. The theme of the geography syllabus is 'Man and his environment' and the geography staff aims to point out similarities as well as differences among twentieth century peoples living contemporaneously in primitive, advanced and industrialised communities. Again graded worksheets provide the basic method and these are controlled by guide sheets and copious page references to help pupils in their own research. Staff drew attention to the need for carefully phrased questions avoiding ambiguity. A specific number of essays is set each year, the subjects of which demand an understanding of such terms as 'environment', 'technology', and 'social and economic systems'. Children work for the most part in friendship groups, and co-operation is fostered not only in the actual working out of an assignment but in marking each other's work and comparing notes. Audio visual aids are liberally used but the department asks for an even more generous supply of these. Much material is also obtained from Tourist Offices and industrial concerns and part of the children's training is in writing off for such information.

The World Studies department is a new creation conceived as a genuine alternative for 115 children from a year group of 186 who choose not to study a second language. The aim of the course is not only to give cultural compensation but is also seen as a path to a CSE Mode III or 'O' level examination in Sociology, Economics or Environmental Studies.

Five teachers of Geography, History, English and Religious Instruction combined, French and Latin combined, and Housecraft are regularly involved. These people are periodically joined by a member of the Science staff, two language assistants and an additional Housecraft teacher. The children are always organised into four teaching units of constant composition attached permanently to the same member of staff. The existence of a fifth member of the team allows each member in turn to be freed to prepare and organise the current project. A weekly team teaching meeting is timetabled so that content and method are regularly discussed and reviewed. So far themes have been based on France and Germany, each member of the team making a contribution from her own interest, geographical, historical, architectural, musical and gastronomical. The French and German assistants have been particularly helpful in supplying detail on current affairs and cultural matters. We hope to proceed to themes on Russia, China and North America with possibly a regression to the Ancient World.

The ubiquitous work sheet is again the basic tool and audio visual aids are used whenever possible. The standard of the pupils' work is of course very variable, reflecting the ability range; some is excellent, some very poor. We have been struck by the lack of discipline problems, even with difficult pupils.

The scheme has progressed well in the first two terms, though the members of the team are asking themselves some searching questions. They wonder if examination of current affairs, which forms a part of the syllabus, is premature for third year pupils; they are concerned about overlap with history and geography syllabuses; they suspect that the "country by country" approach is rather arbitrary and are considering the possibility of a thematic study which cuts across national boundaries. All this is productive questioning, and there is no doubt that though the subject matter can be improved the organisation and techniques are eminently successful.

As an observer who has been able to view the whole spectrum of third year teaching I make this tentative summing up. We have made considerable advances in organisation and teaching technique: it is time now that we had a long hard look at the significance and quality of the content.

School Counselling and Pastoral Care

The transition to comprehensive education has made clear the need to develop new means by which the needs of individual pupils can be met in the comprehensive school. The house system or other forms of internal school grouping have been widely used; and in the last few years there has been increasing emphasis on the role of the school counsellor – four universities now provide courses for their training. The following two articles bear on this issue. **Andrew Finch,** head of Longslade upper school, Leicestershire, discusses the job of the school counsellor at his school, and speculates as to future developments. **Peter Brown,** head of Walworth school, a well-known London comprehensive, takes a long hard look at the claims for the house system in comprehensive schools. In our next issue **A W Bolger,** lecturer in educational psychology at Keele University, and one of the team which teaches on the counselling course there (the first established in this country) will provide an overview of current trends and practice, as well as a full bibliography of books and articles that have been published on this topic in the last five years.

At Longslade

Andrew Finch

Longslade School, in Leicestershire, is a comprehensive Upper School of about 1,100 students in the age range 14 - 18. When we first opened (though with much smaller numbers) in 1960, one of the earliest conclusions we drew from the astonishing diversity of students facing us was the absolute necessity of acknowledging the equal importance of every individual among them, not in spite of but because of the many differences between them in other respects. From the beginning there was therefore much emphasis on a personal and pastoral approach. The staff were well used to accepting responsibility for each individual student's all-round progress as a developing person; we took as much interest in those of mediocre or low academic standard as in the academically successful ones, and we looked on them all as human beings first and students second.

It was in this context that one of the housemasters came to me early in 1965 and said he was seriously interested in applying for secondment to the new Educational Guidance course due to start at Reading University in the autumn. The chief reason prompting him to apply was, he confessed, a certain sense of inadequacy when faced with complex and sometimes agonising personal problems of students in his house. (It was of course a measure of the man's quality that he felt this so keenly; many another would have been much more 'inadequate' and felt it much less!) So off he went to Reading – and duly returned to be our first School Counsellor.

Now, five years later, he is one of the school's two deputy heads, both of whom in fact have done the Reading course; and a third trained counsellor has come to us from the comparable course at Keele University. The deputies now do only a little counselling, in the strict sense, in the course of their multifarious school duties (though they do both work as youth counsellors in their spare time), and in the rest of this article, for simplicity's sake, I shall refer only to the work of the counsellor 'proper'.

What, then, is the purpose of 'counselling' as practised at Longslade, and what does the counsellor actually do?

First and foremost, more than half of his time during the school day is devoted to seeing students individually. Interviews can be had during class time as well as in free time or private study periods. Students who seem to be in need of special help are referred to the counsellor by his colleagues, occasionally by parents and more rarely by other responsible adults outside the school. However, a considerable majority of his cases nowadays are self-referrals. The difficulties which students bring to him cover an enormous range—family problems, problems with boy or girl friends, adolescent perplexities of all sorts, difficulties with academic subjects, course or career choices. The theoretical distinction between personal, educational and vocational counselling often breaks down in practice, and the 'presenting' problem, the overt reason given for the self-referral, often proves to have been a more or less unconscious cover for a quite different and deeper difficulty.

The counsellor's aim in these interviews is defined as follows: 'To provide a confidential and permissive atmosphere, in which by talking through his problem or problems the student may achieve better self-understanding and be better able to make considered decisions and cope with present and future concerns'. In this definition, 'permissive' and 'confidential' are key words. The students must know for certain that they can say literally anything to the counsellor without incurring explicit or implied disapproval (let alone retribution!) and without the matter being reported to a third person except with their freely given consent. In practice, in the case of self-referrals, if the counsellor sees that it could be helpful to involve other people such as parents or a colleague, the student does usually give his consent: the very fact that he has approached the counsellor of his own accord is a signal that he is psychologically at least half ready for a suitable third person to share his worries if necessary. However, the central role of the counsellor lies in his encouragement of personal decision-making, the making of a deliberate, thoughtful, responsible choice from a number of possible courses of action. If in 1970 we are not teaching children and adolescents to do just that, we can hardly be teaching them anything that is likely to prove really helpful in their lifetime.

The counsellor's numerous other functions may now be briefly described. He constitutes an important link with our 'feeder' schools. He sees all our new students, in groups, either at the beginning of the autumn term or near the end of the previous summer term, to outline to them the working of their new school and incidentally to describe his own part in it. At the request of other staff, he sometimes joins in ordinary class and group discussions, particularly when these are centred on personal and social problems of adolescence. When the need arises, he administers tests of intelligence, personality, vocational preference, etc.—and knows even better than other staff how guardedly the results must be interpreted, useful as they can be in certain cases. He plays a large part in ensuring the efficiency of our student record system.

In addition, the counsellor is the convener of a fortnightly discussion group intended primarily for teachers in their first year at the school; he is a ready friend for any probationary teacher faced with his or her own problems, and indeed for any staff who approach him. He is very much involved with parents and the home/school relationship: many parents who would shrink, however mistakenly, from approaching the headmaster or perhaps any other teacher, do feel they can approach the counsellor with less formality, and he does a good deal of evening work in this connection, including some home visiting when invited. Then he is also the school's main link with many outside agencies—Child Guidance, Schools' Medical Service, Children's Department, Welfare Department, Probation Service. In the case of the Youth Employment Service, on the other hand, he represents simply one more additional resource for unusually difficult cases, since many Upper School staff are already experienced in careers work. Not only are the Youth Employment Service careers officers, those frequent and welcome visitors, well-informed and informative, but there are elaborate work experience schemes for teachers as well as students, the whole organisation on the school's side being the responsibility of a Careers Co-ordinator. We thus reject the assumption, still found in some quarters, that a school counsellor must be a careers counsellor first and foremost.

Finally, and surprisingly enough in view of his many other responsibilities, the counsellor also does some classroom teaching, about one quarter of a time-table. (By a decision of the LEA he counts against the teaching establishment as 0.5 of a full-timer.) The classical objection to this arrangement is based on the possible conflict between the permissive attitude of the counsellor and his 'authority' role as a teacher. Such a

conflict has indeed been felt by our counsellor, on occasion, but in general students and staff seem to accept his dual role without difficulty and there are few recorded instances of a student's attempting to use in the counsellor's class any of the more provocative forms of language and behaviour which can be tolerated in his own room! I believe that the counsellor is positively helped by being known as a good and experienced teacher; he is above suspicion of being simply another 'refugee from the classroom'; and I am sure he is more readily trusted, by more teachers, than if he were entirely cut off from the teaching situation.

It may be useful to enlarge a little on this crucial question of staff relations. In a strongly authoritarian school, in which the headmaster constantly gives orders to his staff, senior staff give orders to junior staff, staff to pupils, and older pupils to younger ones, there is little scope for inculcating any real understanding of shared responsibility and individual self-discipline. *Authority* is no doubt a necessary fact of social organisation: we are probably wise, at present, not to trust ourselves with anarchy! But the *authoritarian* attitude just described is frankly incompatible with the genuine consultation, the participation and shared decision-making, towards which all educational institutions ought in my view to be tending. The head's responsibility must not be thought of as lessening the responsibility of the staff, nor should the responsibility of the staff diminish that of the pupils.

Now it is clearly in the most authoritarian schools that conflict between counsellor and teaching staff is most likely to arise. The counsellor may see the teachers as petty tyrants, insistent on getting the recalcitrant pupil to 'toe the line' and unconcerned to realise that by so doing they are treating the symptom and not the cause of trouble. On the other hand the counsellor may appear to them as an intruder claiming mysterious prerogatives, undermining proper discipline by his very presence in the school, and always siding with the pupil against authority. In a more liberal school atmosphere this conflict certainly does not take the extreme and absurd form just described. It may not vanish completely, but it is a much milder feeling, more comparable to the occasional tension that can quite normally occur in one and the same human personality, however well integrated. Our counsellor, by successfully undertaking a certain amount of teaching in addition to his special duties, demonstrates the truth of what I have just suggested, with thoroughly healthy results for the school as a whole.

Let me recapitulate a little. We regard pastoral care, in the sense of care for the students individually as well as collectively in their progress towards all-round maturity, as the main function of the staff (an attitude which of course by no means precludes high academic achievement by many students). Now it could well be pointed out that pastoral care is, in fact, a form of counselling. In this sense some counselling already takes place, by long tradition, in British schools. It is always well meant, often effective, sometimes beneficial; but it is perhaps not always as effective, or in the long run not as beneficial, as it might be; and it is almost invariably, and almost inevitably, associated with a markedly paternalistic attitude. In contrast, and apart from any other difference, the trained counsellor remains pleasantly but firmly neutral, giving the fullest possible scope for the development of the student's powers of self-direction.

The counsellor, then, does not offer an advisory service. Nor does he usurp the function of any established member of the organisation—teacher, headmaster, careers officer, educational psychologist, or any other. In fact, what I wrote earlier in connection with the school's careers service is really capable of more general application: the counsellor simply represents one additional resource, one more friend at school for his colleagues or the students or their parents to turn to; a friend who, thanks to his year's special training, has added to his previous qualifications a somewhat greater competence in psychology and sociology, which enables him to do two things. It enables him the better to understand and identify, and where appropriate to interpret to his colleagues, the needs of individual students, particularly but by no means exclusively the disturbed and the disadvantaged; and it equips him also with a certain modest skill in facilitating deeper self-awareness and improved self-fulfilment on the part of the student.

What of future developments? Well, I should like to see every school become the sort of place in which a trained counsellor would have a fair chance of doing useful work. Many schools are already like this, but some are not. As soon as possible, I should like to see heads and local authorities appointing a counsellor to each school as a matter of course. Large schools such as Longslade certainly need more than one such person. I think the next step would be to appoint another specialist, whose functions would overlap a good deal with those of the present coun-

sellor, but who might also take a more particular interest in home/school relations and might have the time greatly to extend this field of activity, including a much fuller programme of home visits, with considerable benefit both to the students and to the whole local community. (There is a second, still more recently established course at Reading, designed equally for teachers and social workers, which could be an admirable training for the kind of 'community counsellor' I have in mind.)

In the long run both types of counsellor, and any other colleagues who might be seconded to a counselling course even though they returned (as did our deputy headmistress) to more or less the same job they had before they went, would be likely to become valuable agents of change within the school. Changes are still urgently desirable in a wide range of matters ultimately affecting pastoral care. These include superficially separate issues such as examinations, syllabuses and academic organisation, as well as (more obviously) social organisation, methods of discipline and the attitudes of teachers, parents and students. Even without a counsellor there would be many reforms, developments and innovations in progress or in prospect at Longslade, but he is involved in a significant number of them and his opinion is respected in discussion.

When all is said, though, and in whatever directions the counsellor's role may develop in the future, I would always regard him as reinforcing the school's emphasis on personal care and the encouragement of responsible decision-making; and no doubt he would always undertake, rather more expertly than the rest of us, some of the more difficult of the guidance cases on which every member of staff expects to be more or less continually engaged.

Houseproud?

Peter Brown

The headmaster of Walworth School looks at aims and claims of house systems in comprehensive schools.

It is not surprising that a recent survey shows 299 out of 331 comprehensives supporting a house system of one variety or another.[1]

For the house system has claimed a central position in the whole rationale of the comprehensive school.

What does this claim amount to?

The house system is commonly seen as a means:

(1) to reduce the dimensions of the large school to something more like a pupil-sized setting;

(2) to equalise the school's society by sharing out its people indifferently;

(3) to provide an instrument for guidance, support and reconciliation both for the group and for the individual pupil;

(4) to give a tangible sanction and focus for individual and group effort, whether competitive or not;

(5) to provide convenient subdivisions of the whole school entity for many purposes of administration and communication, and for the performing of other scaled-down tasks (e.g., house assemblies).

These aims have some applicability to many schools, though I cannot hope that they adequately express the goals aimed at by any particular house system. Instead, they may be regarded as five **target areas,** though not altogether distinct one from another. Of these, the first three are worth closer examination. What appears to happen when schools direct their house systems towards these three target areas is the theme of this article.

In area (1), the aim is to provide the pupil with a reference group which is very much smaller than

the whole school. Although the pupil belongs to a class or form (perhaps also a subject-set) and to a year, the house system provides him or her with a further nuclear group—the tutor set—and a further expanded group—the house itself. It is assumed that the most influential of all these groups will be the tutor set, the nuclear group which is seen as the analogue of the family. Certainly, this group is treated as something very distinctive in the working of the school. For example, whereas nearly all formal teaching will be experienced in 'horizontal' age-groups, tutor sets may be organised so as to contain representatives of all age-groups. Alternatively, where tutor sets are horizontally built (e.g. 3rd year sets), they usually differ from the teaching groups, in that the latter are clusters formed on such criteria as ability, attainment, vocational aim, interest, or duration of stay; whereas in the constructing of tutor sets, a prime object is to neutralise such differentials. Thus, whether horizontally or vertically built, tutor groups tend not to correspond to the teaching groups which the pupil inhabits. I suspect that most house tutors have in their care numbers of pupils whom they will scarcely teach.

Let us now step back, so as to look at the school as a totality.

A school, we may say, is basically an organisation in which people are grouped together for teaching and learning. But we now see that this basic structure also supports within itself an elaborate infra-structure, built on almost the same scale as the school itself, namely the house system. How is this duality justified? In part we must seek answers in other target areas; and they will surely need to be compelling answers to justify the costs of running a pastoral organisation separately from the teaching organisation.

We can, however, look at one of the aims which might justify a duplication of effort; for it is concerned with giving the pupil a better grip on the organisation. This is the securing for the pupil of the greatest possible stability and continuity of staffing. Separating the pastoral from the teaching function does not appear to promote this aim. Calculations based on staff deployment and movement at Walworth School suggest that where the average stay of a teacher is over four years at the school, a teacher's average stay with a particular teaching group is only 2¼ years. But will a pupil find 4 years' tutoring more meaningful than 2¼ years' teaching? An impossible question to resolve. All the same, one is bound to wonder how much that is meaningful to the pupil is to be found in the tutor group, whose operational effectiveness is undermined by (a) being as we have seen only one of a number of formal groups laying claims on the pupil in the course of school sessions; (b) lack of time and dynamic in its conduct (What would an O & M study bring to light?); (c) failing to capitalise on pupils' own social references, whether to peer-group or to admired adult (it is my belief that this failure renders membership of a tutor group meaningless to many boys and girls; and further, that it is a root cause of pupils' disorientation in school); (d) turnover of staff. (To exempt pupils from one, two or possibly three changes of tutor in the course of a five-year span, the teaching staff would have to do better than the four-year stay that is as much as many staffs manage to average these days.)

In fine, it seems hardly too much to say that, as a method of reducing the scale of things for the pupil's benefit, the tutor group is both costly and ineffectual.

So to our target area (2).

Setting up and maintaining mixed communities (the houses) within the comprehensive school occupies much devoted care and ingenuity year by year. The rogues, the athletes, the academics—all are dealt out in a special version of Happy Families, in which everyone has a mixed hand, and subsequent swopping is not encouraged. This almost means that the deal is the game; or, as Eric Hoyle has put it, applying McLuhan, 'the organisation is the message'.[2] Now it is clear that the prime objective in target area (2) is to counteract the class-consciousness of society at large. Pupils of diverse characters and backgrounds, by working and living together (though perhaps for only a snatched half-hour a day) will promote mutual understanding and harmony, and the ideal of a fairer, more altruistic society. But sad to say, there is little evidence to suggest that these objectives are capable of attainment (in any permanent fashion) through this or any other form of in-school organisation. Pupils' capacities for tolerance and co-operation, or the reverse, appear to be much more closely determined by familial and communal dispositions, especially where tradition runs strong, than by any feature of school life.

The school can of course to some extent control the way pupils behave towards one another while they are in session. But even at this level, its influence is limited. In many instances, the in-group barely speaks

to the out-group, when the divider is class or race; and when the divider is merely the street or waste ground separating two housing estates, the resulting behaviour-patterns may be no more encouraging. Only the most cloudy optimist could expect social engineering, within the limited scope available to day secondary schools, to yield much more than relatively peaceful co-existence, so long as these same schools are inhabited by heterogeneously-drawn young representatives of a society that is so intensely acquisitive and status-ridden as ours. Those who persist in seeing social magic wrought before their eyes should be warned by Julienne Ford's narrow-based but disturbing investigations in this field (investigations which also throw light on our area (1) above, by revealing the lack of relevance which house tutor systems hold for their members).[3]

By arranging our pupils in patterns, we may make an affirmation, probably a noble one, of the kind of society we wish those pupils to inherit. This is a sort of propaganda (in the best sense of the word), rather like the device of making the members of a massed choir spell out BROTHERHOOD with the colours of their shirts. Where the participants perceive the pattern, and sense its physical or metaphysical grandeur, they may well be exhilarated, even inspired. But, caught up at close quarters as they are, they are more likely to be distracted by the cumbersome girder-work or the fussy operating instructions. In other words, our constructs may get in the way of what absorbs their social being at, say fourteen years of age: such as discovering their own identity and exploring relationships.

Area (3) is the field of pastoral care.

One of the greatest merits of the comprehensive movement in education is the generous commitment to pastoral work that it has evoked. It is by no means a new thing; but applied on such a scale as it now is, it bids fair to rank as a major service to youth.

The pastoral function includes a multiplicity of services. It includes ministrations, important to the child if simple to the adult, such as granting patience, forgiveness or reassurance. But it hardly takes an elaborate organisation to sustain functions of this sort; and, some schools with no overt pastoral system at all manage to give their pupils a high degree of satisfaction and security. (Furthermore, the very presence of supernumerary adults—teachers, tutors, housemasters—with claims on the youngster may result in role-conflict or other forms of stress.)

In using the term 'reconciliation' to describe part of the pastoral process, I am concerned with the business of adapting the pupil to the school system, so that he or she may learn effectively. For me, this is what the pastoral process in school is mainly about. Now some of our recalcitrants against effective learning turn out to be basically stable well-adjusted youngsters, whose waywardness, being superficial and temporary, will cure itself (while we are busy 'curing' it with whatever remedy occurs to us, from caning to counselling!); these are our conspicuous 'successes'. But other recalcitrants will be pupils from the pages of **Children in Distress**[4] or **Cross'd with Adversity**[5]. For these youngsters, effective pastoral care must surely involve the services of experts (as well as the supportive sympathies of the staff as a whole). We certainly cannot expect the requisite skills in a teacher-tutor, nor even in most housemasters. Even if training were to become widely available, one would still have to reckon with the diversity of aptitudes and interests that characterises the members of staff of a large school.[6]

The scene is now set, I believe, for the specialist counsellor. But if he is to develop his role effectively and harmoniously, then the setting must be changed. Of course we shall continue to need a general organisational frame, within which and through which we can all go about our business. By all means let this frame continue to be known as a house system, if we so wish. But I hope it will be simpler and more flexible, and less demanding; less grand in claims, more clear in aims.

References

[1] See **One School for All,** National Foundation for Educational Research, 1969, p 17.

[2] **Journal of Curriculum Studies,** November 1969, p 235.

[3] 'Comprehensive Schools as Social Dividers', in **New Society,** 10 October, 1968, pp 515-7; and **Social Class and the Comprehensive School,** Routledge, 1970.

[4] Alec Clegg and Barbara Megson, Penguin, 1968.

[5] Schools Council Working Paper No 27, 1969.

[6] Sociologists have now mapped out the diversities or drive and motivation actuating teachers in large secondary schools. See, for instance, Len Watson, 'Office and Expertise in the Secondary School', in **Educational Research,** February 1969, pp 104-112.

Teaching Social Science

Margaret Nandy

Margaret Nandy has taught for five years at Bushloe High School, Leicestershire, a school which has experimented with non-streaming and team teaching. She has particular responsibility for developing a new social science syllabus, and writes here of the main ideas underlying her work.

It is easy for teachers challenged by structural changes in education on the scale of comprehensive reorganisation and unstreaming to become unduly fascinated by teaching method, and to forget that the ultimate reason for making these changes is to give all children the opportunity of a qualitatively different education. Most of our schools still basically aim to provide training for the technical and labour markets, but nowadays with a certain amount of cultural top-dressing – perhaps to remind us that we are no longer in Dickens' England.

For the society of the future we can be fairly confident that this is both an insufficient and an inappropriate education. Insufficient because, even on the narrowest view of education, it is no longer possible to provide once-for-all training for industry when the demands of industry are becoming increasingly specialised and, what is more, are changing constantly. This is part of what is sometimes called 'the knowledge explosion' – the quite unprecedented and accelerating growth of knowledge which is a key feature of the world our pupils are going to inhabit. One consequence of this is that the traditional conception of education, namely, furnishing young people with a package of items of information and skills ('what every educated person ought to know'), will no longer do. The information gets out-of-date, the skills become obsolescent, well within the lifetime of a single generation. Even on the narrowest view of education then (which regards education as teaching children all that is necessary and sufficient for them to function in an industrial society), the traditional conception of education is insufficient for modern industrial societies. What such societies will require on the contrary are flexible and responsive adults, capable of adapting to change, capable of confronting new situations or problems and picking out the relevant solutions, capable above all of continuing to learn all their lives.

But a society which demands from its educational system products with *these* specifications is no longer demanding new parts for the old machine, nor even new parts for a new machine. Modern industrial and urban societies require (whether modern industrialists and politicians realise it or not) *educated people.* This is why the traditional approach to education is also inappropriate. Schools can no longer function as pre-training establishments. They have to provide an education which will lay the basis for understanding and coping with the problems, stresses and challenges which an accelerating world is going to thrust upon our pupils of today.

It is not possible for the educator to guarantee whether anything is built on the basis he provides – that depends on the opportunities for development which are offered to the young adult at work, in leisure and in the wider community. But that is not to say that we cannot at least lay the basis – and our contribution so far to what we might call education for life in the community is a spectacular failure.

The social and intellectual imperatives which are driving educational practice in the direction I have suggested above are real enough. One small testimony to their existence is the growth of social science courses in schools, which bear all the marks of a panic response to an unexpected and unprecedented demand. There has been a sudden recognition that this whole area of study has been neglected and a not very clearly defined awareness that 'social studies' are somehow important. The vogue for exposing 'social problems' in the mass media intensified the sense of urgency (and panic), and the result has been a mushrooming of ad hoc courses to fill the gap.

There are two types of stop-gap social science courses, neither of which seems capable of enlarging children's perception of their social environment, but both of which certainly cause the frustration, which many teachers feel, at beating their heads against what they see as the impenetrable apathy and insensitivity of their pupils. I want to examine these two types, because in isolating the reasons for their failure, we can perhaps begin to specify the essentials of a course which can achieve something worthwhile.

The first type of course I call *cataloguing institu-*

tions. We are now all too familiar with textbooks available for schools whose chapter-headings go something like this: The Individual, The Family, The Home, The School, Industry, Government, Justice, Religion, War . . . These remind me of not very dissimilar first-year Sociology courses at University which, when pursued on their own, have a deadening effect on whatever interest the students brought with them at the start. Fortunately, university students do not pursue such courses in isolation. School pupils often do.

The implicit justification for such a course is that pupils will 'bank' the information provided and will emerge with a total picture of their society. Then, as they apply their knowledge in real-life situations (at work, in personal relationships), they acquire an inward grasp of what might otherwise have been mere abstractions. This is the theory. It is optimistic and it is unproven. It is just as likely that the pupils will classify this knowledge as discrete bits of information unrelated to their real concerns or interests. It is likely to end up, that is, not as a bank from which they draw, but as a rubbish dump.

Such a course fails in two ways. First, it fails to provide the analytical tools which are essential if the pupil is to jump the gap from accumulated facts *about* a society to a view *of* the society as a functioning whole—a functioning whole in which the relationships between institutions, culture and individuals make some kind of pattern. Secondly, it makes it impossible to comprehend causal relationships or to evaluate the relative importance of social institutions. For there is no particular reason why children should feel enthusiastic about the jury system in Anglo-Saxon countries or the police force in modern Britain just like that; nor is there any way in which they might evaluate these institutions if they are not aware of *other* ways in which societies cope with problems of arbitration or law-enforcement. A course which provides no way of seeing the relation of part to whole and no basis for comparison and evaluation produces, not surprisingly, boredom in the pupils and frustration in the teachers.

The second type of course I call 'social problem spotting'. The chapter headings are familiar too: drugs, war, race, poverty, strikes . . . The rationale of this kind of course is that by giving the child the opportunity to discuss these topics he is enabled to form his own viewpoint. In fact, the typical response is quite different. The pupil starts with a hazy knowledge of the subject, but is unaware that his knowledge is incomplete, because the subjects are familiar to him (perhaps because he has heard them discussed on television). He expresses his viewpoint, rejects any information that does not fit into that viewpoint and leaves the class with his views not only unaltered but probably reinforced because he has had to articulate them in public.

Once a public stance of this sort is taken up, no amount of information or evidence will transform what is essentially a prejudiced viewpoint into a rational one. The absurdity of the situation becomes particularly obvious when the viewpoint itself is a rationally defensible one, but happens to be held by the child with all the irrational ferocity that goes to the maintenance of prejudices. What is wrong in both instances (but is highlighted by the latter case) is that the child is untrained in the logic of forming a point of view after examining the facts, and of altering a point of view in the light of new evidence. The whole logic of forming conclusions (or altering them) in the light of factual evidence is missing.

I need hardly add that to a child there is nothing self-evident about the sophisticated moves between evidence and conclusion, nor is the ability to make such moves innate. There is no intrinsic reason why facts should be more convincing rather than, say, loyalty to parents or friends. Indeed, solidarity with a reference group of peers or parents provides a security which can only be superseded when children learn to have confidence in their own powers of analysis and reasoning.

I think it is fair to say that these two models dominate social science teaching in secondary schools today. Their objectives—to facilitate a comprehension of society, its problems, its direction, its potentiality for change, and the leeway of the individual in it—are indeed honourable. The trouble is that their approach is self-defeating. This is because the material used in such courses—material drawn from the children's own society and time—is too emotionally charged to be examined with detachment, too complex to exhibit patterns readily, too familiar in fact to ask fundamental questions about. We haven't, I suggest, examined the approach in these courses to see if they make sense from the pupils' point of view. We cannot automatically expect children to find the structure and function of sundry assorted social institutions interesting if they take these institutions as given, as fixed landmarks. It is only when they have

acquired an awareness that things could be differently ordered that they can be led to ask why things are ordered in this particular way, and whether that way is efficient, desirable, humane, and so on.

One reason why social science courses have acquired this character is the contingent reason that until now social science teaching usually begins when it is already too late. It begins when pupils are on the point of leaving school, and perhaps it is introduced then in the vague hope that it will somehow produce respectable, law-abiding citizens. Of course no social science course can do that; but whatever the intention, courses such as these produce little comprehension of the social system either. The first requirement, then, of a serious attempt at education in this field is that it start much earlier, early enough to construct methods of approach and to build the essential concepts which will ultimately be the tools of analysis with which the pupils might examine the society in which they live.

Sociological concepts and approaches

The concepts of sociology are obviously concerned with human behaviour, especially with recurring patterns in human behaviour. It may be said that this is the concern of psychology, physiology, indeed of all the 'human sciences'. What is distinctive to sociological concepts, however, is that they are concerned with *the social significance of key, recurring aspects of human behaviour.* It is impossible here to provide an inventory of the key concepts of sociology, and it may be much more useful to give one detailed example of what I mean.

Consider the idea of 'play'. If you ask a class of eleven-year-olds what play is for, the answers would range from 'for fun' to 'to get away from parents'. Their understanding would not be advanced by denying that these are possible answers and by providing the 'right' answer—each answer is already 'correct' in some sense. What the teacher *can* do is to enlarge a child's conception of play and to enable it to grasp the significance of play in the process of human development.

This cannot be done by asking children to collect information from reference books about play, for they will compile a list of games 'through the ages' and 'all over the world', without being able to see any kind of pattern in this information. A more fruitful approach is a structured set of materials which points the child, so to speak, in the direction of the pattern which can be detected in apparently widely divergent kinds of play. Such materials might include films of baboons engaged in mock-fighting, film of a young hunter trapping a snake (?), improvised drama of 'mothers and fathers' situation, tape recording of songs like 'When Susy was a baby, what did Susy do? . . . When Susy was a grandma, what did Susy do?' (a song about changing roles in life sung by Leicestershire children), and poems like 'The Hero' about a child's fantasy cowboy exploits. The material should be used to elicit reflection on what they tell us about why the children are doing what they are doing. Gradually the replies become more and more perceptive. The children begin to see that play is not only for fun or to get away from adults, but that it is also *a mechanism through which children learn about adult roles and relationships.*

Such a conception of play, which brings out its social significance (or function) is something which children certainly do not possess even when their childhood is ending. What is more, it is something their parents do not possess either, in the sense that they do not display any understanding of its implications as when they stop 'nasty' games like postman's knock.

Secondary school pupils cannot be expected to formulate such a concept in that form spontaneously, but they can come to an understanding of what it means through using suitable materials. Coming to an awareness of the significance of human behaviour patterns in this way not only enriches their experience, it can also alter behaviour in adult life.

Clearly such teaching requires a huge *bank of materials.* Above all, it requires a leisurely rate of progress, because its essential requirement is that the whole subject should be sufficiently pondered, so that the child possesses the results of the study inwardly and can draw on it as 'working capital' in the future.

Methods of work

How sociological material is handled, how it is used to reach solutions to problems or to arrive at a point of view, will depend on the process of acquiring the essential concepts. But it is obviously necessary to establish a pattern of inquiry followed by discussion

and conclusions, and to encourage constant criticisms of statements that cannot be substantiated.

The process of inquiry throws a great burden on teachers. There is a great deal of value in children being left to find out information for themselves. They must learn how to acquire information for themselves, because there will come a time when this is the only method available to them. But there are drawbacks. As you watch children in the lower secondary school doing this, you cannot fail to note that it is in many ways an inefficient way of proceeding and provides too many potential digressions from the real objective of the exercise. Children can go to a library to find out something quite specific and return with something related but different; or they can find a problem too hard and scale it down; or they can spend hours collecting data for its own sake and retain very little of it. Of course library resources must be made available, but I do not think that anything is lost educationally if teachers sometimes provide children with the essential and relevant information directly.

In two years of teaching some anthropology to first year pupils I was able to compare the results of the two methods of acquiring information. In the first year the children were largely dependent on library books for information about a hunting society. The results of their researches looked good, but they retained only a small proportion of the information they had gathered. It was therefore difficult to proceed to the original objective of the course—a discussion of the rationale of such societies—because they had retained so little of the information they had collected. In the second year, the introduction to the subject was much more structured—it was, in fact, a brilliant anthropological film. (**The Hunters,** filmed in the Kalahari by the Marshall Thomas team, available from the Central Film Library). It led to first-class discussion and further enquiry, and was still vividly remembered after six months.

Whatever the method of information collecting in the social sciences, it can only be a preliminary to the essential work of evaluation. Teachers must create ways in which children can begin to find answers to questions like 'what does this data tell me about Man?'. In another class the children used materials about Roman society to investigate the concept 'civilisation'. The children started with formulations like 'cleaner', 'better houses' and so on. But because some of the children emphasised aspects of Roman society like slavery while others were concerned with mosaics and baths, their initial formulations evolved into a discussion of the question 'better for whom?'. They produced a quite sophisticated debate on whether Roman civilisation had on the whole done anything for anyone who was not a freeman. They had started with a hazy and undifferentiated notion of 'civilisation' as in general an approved thing, and had come to appreciate the much more complicated notion that a state of affairs (like 'civilisation') which produced welfare for some also produced diswelfares for others.

Devising a course

The aim of a social science course is two-fold: to establish methods of investigation and analysis, so that a child acquires the confidence to handle material which increases in complexity (so that he can continue to develop an informed social awareness in adult life); and to build a framework of concepts which enable him to study his own society. Such an examination of the child's own society should be seen as the culmination of the course, and it should enable him not only to understand the organisation of contemporary society, but also to see his own roles in that society as well as the ways in which he can be meaningfully involved in the processes of decision-making and action which constitute the life of his society.

The materials selected for the course must be chosen with a child's readiness and interest in mind, but they must also lead him to make comparisons with his own experience and so gradually build up some coherent notion of what is distinctive (perhaps peculiar) about his own culture.

At the beginning of the course, the most important object is to enable the children to grasp the idea that human life is distinguished by its social character, to grasp those abilities which are unique to man*, and to perceive that human societies display patterns. Useful material which provide the necessary *comparative perspective* can be found in studies of animal organisation and in anthropology.

At the end of a year or so, children will have acquired a sufficiently sophisticated approach to prevent them from being satisfied with simplistic answers like, 'they build houses like that because they are

* See Jerome Bruner, 'Man: A Course of Study', contained in **Towards a Theory of Instruction,** for a detailed exposition of this point.

Choice and the Single Comprehensive School

Roger Seckington

Choice between schools may still be a reality for a minority of urban parents, but in many parts of the country a single comprehensive school takes the great majority of local pupils. It is then vital for the school to involve the parents and pupils in choices within the school. Roger Seckington has had experience of advising on alternative choices as head of the lower school in a large comprehensive—Exmouth School. In the autumn he takes up his new appointment as head of a Leicestershire high school.

The large comprehensive school serving a sizeable catchment area with no other maintained secondary school within easy reach has to consider the question of parental choice. Parental choice is a huge and vexed topic in itself. Educationalists might argue that a choice of school has never existed. Miss Alice Bacon, when opening a new comprehensive school in the South West recently, said that some claimed that when all schools were comprehensive, there would be no choice of school, but 'in fact the reverse is nearer the truth. What choice is there for 80 per cent of parents under the selective system? Their children are directed by the local education authority to a secondary modern school'. Yet to some parents the choice seemed real enough.

It could be argued that larger urban areas with a higher density of comprehensive schools increase the possibility of parental choice of school. It may be that 'choice' is still a predominantly middle class concept but it applies to an increasing number of parents. The oft-repeated small advertisement in the Leicester evening paper – 'Wanted, house in Leicestershire Plan area' – indicates an increasing tendency for parents to move into or out of a school catchment area according to their assessment of schools available for their children (S John Eggleston, **The Social Context of the School**). Whatever the grounds for this assessment, and however limited the numbers involved, it is reasonable to suppose a move of house and possibly a longer journey to work is all that is involved for the parents. But the single comprehensive in a large catchment area provides no alternative other than a total upheaval of the family. The choice must then be provided within the school.

'Comprehensive schools also have the advantage of being pretty large: this gives pupils greatly increased choices within the schools, between courses, subjects, and examinations. The wealth of opportunity here can be almost bewildering.' (Tyrrell Burgess, Blackboard Democracy, **Guardian,** August '69). To most parents it certainly is bewildering, and one of the essential tasks facing a school is that of enabling them to find things out more clearly. The point at which the non-selective type of school generally exposes itself to critical examination is usually left to thirteen or fourteen. External examinations have their unavoidable

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stupid', or 'they believe that because they are stupid'. Then they can begin to examine different societies in depth to discover why, despite the fact that they are very different from their own society, these societies nevertheless work. An example would be Indian culture—its historical development, its art, its religions, its social organisation, its problems. The children ought to be so saturated in this material that they become capable of identifying in a way which leads to real understanding.

Alert then to the complexities of human behaviour and organisation and of the diversity of human responses to the environment, the child can proceed to the study of contemporary society.

impact on course choices, and parents, pupils and school engage in the almost traditional process of sorting out a reasonable two-year course. It is at this point that we begin to ask whether there has been a shift in the selection process. Have we seen the passing of the 11 plus only to have it replaced by a 13 or 14 plus? To what extent do parents really exercise a degree of choice at this time? How far are the logistics of school organisation always going to be limiting factors in freer choice?

The Common Core

From eleven to fourteen, pupils tend to experience a common core curriculum. At reception into the secondary school, therefore, there is little or no selection of subjects. Parents will be advised that the common core provides a platform from which their children develop with 'equal opportunity'. Frequently, pupils are not graded and the future level of their course is not pre-determined. It is still important to stress to some parents that 'equal opportunity' does not imply 'equal ability' or 'level of attainment' but most understand the concept and are delighted to see this 'equality of treatment'. At this stage, in the early years of secondary education, the teaching/learning situation is still relatively unrestricted. Enquiry based methods, team teaching, less definite emphasis on subject disciplines, and more individualised learning are starting to be introduced in many comprehensive schools, but it is a curriculum reform that is still mainly confined to the early years. External examinations seem a long way off and teachers more readily accept that five years are not required to reach public examination standard. Parents also find it quite easy to accept the broadly based common-core curriculum. Some effort is needed to explain something of the new methods involved so that parents may better understand the work of their children in new mathematics or in a humanities project. The terms themselves are confusing enough, and to most parents some re-orientation of attitude is needed if they are to understand and support the more intrinsic motives of learning by finding out and doing.

Staff concerned with the early years go out into the primary schools, meeting future pupils and their parents before the children arrive. In the Spring, local meetings are held with parents to tell them about 'their' secondary school. Apart from talking at and with parents, and answering their questions, written material is provided. Later these parents come into the school to see the buildings and meet more teachers, especially tutors. The children, too, are met in the primary schools and later come to 'their' secondary school on exploratory visits so that when they do begin it is not as strangers to buildings, people or what is available for them.

Choice at Fourteen

Towards the end of the early years of the non-selective school external pressures are more evident. During their third year pupils choose subjects that they will study over the next two years, in most cases to examination level. At this juncture parents and children may for the first time, face a real choice in whether or not to continue a particular subject, or take up a new one important for future qualifications, or to what standard work will continue. Any choice that children may have had during the early years is likely to have been within the framework of their self-directed enquiry. Now, choice has a harder reality and depends in part on assessment of capabilities. Parents, children and teachers sit down together to sort out the course options for the middle years. First there are general meetings with parents in the evening and the children during the day to outline the type of course options available. Parents are invited by letter and any talk and discussion is supported by printed material outlining the multiple options and giving basic points for guidance. There follows a period of time when the parents and children digest this information and begin to establish their pattern of choice. Later, by appointment, during the working day or evening, interviews are held between a senior member of staff (Year Teacher, Head of Lower School, Head of Middle School), the child, usually the parent, and where possible the child's tutor. All children are met in this way. A subject assessment is available giving a clear guide as to the level of work that might be expected in the next two years. The wishes of the child and parents are first taken into account and a course is shaped. Advice may be given on balance of subjects or basic requirements for an anticipated career. In the rare case of a clash of opinion as to the standard at which a course is to be followed the school may have to make the final decision. (A very valuable guide is given in M Smith and V Mathew's **Middle School Choice** on choosing subjects, types of examinations, requirements for higher education, professions and careers.)

The school has to face its own organisational prob-

lems. Curriculum offered can only be so wide. Number of rooms and specialist areas, teaching strength, and actual demand shape the final framework. Against these organisational aspects no one would pretend that all pupils can reach similar standards. Professor Robin Pedley reminds us of the average Englishman's confusion 'about the meaning and implications of equality. He takes it for granted that equality implies flat uniformity, that equality in education would impose the same subjects, the same teaching methods, the same pace of progress, on pupils who obviously differ enormously in their ability, interests, and characters. Though some levelling-up is certainly involved a feature-less levelling-out would of course be a denial of all we have learnt from psychology and education. The differences between individuals are infinitely variable and complex; and our aim is the full development of everyone's talents' (R Pedley, **The Comprehensive School**). GCE 'O' levels however, still represent the 'higher' standard at 16 years of age and some sort of selection for this level of work is likely. This delay in selection to the 'middle school' (after years of inflexible groups), where individuals' standards of work are extended to the highest levels and less concern is shown for comparative or group standards, may make the final course selection seem all the more abrupt. Indeed, successfully developed curriculum work in the early years of comprehensive schools encourages more students to reach out for higher goals in the final stages. Some conflict is likely between the ambitions of students and parents, the professional opinion of teachers who are asked by the system to make an assessment of prospects, and the limits set by the organisational structure of the school.

Increasingly, then, comprehensives of the all-through kind or the various two-tier types are recognising some sort of break in the learning process at about 14 years. From a common-core curriculum students move into upper schools with course options. The trend there tends to be to make the range of courses as large as possible. Within the planning limits there will be something for all. From 'O'-level Greek to Auto-maintenance the choice depends on interests, sex and ability. Young students may have a really large number of possible course combinations to choose from, including the unavoidable (RE, games and possibly careers or drama – often taught in a continuum of lower school social groupings); courses that are more closely linked to a possible career or the practical world outside school (typing or home-making), and subjects that can be taken to examination level. The comprehensive nature of possible choice, attractive to the student, does build in problems for the school. The complicated pattern of the overall choice often restricts an individual subject department as to how flexible they can be with grouping and standards within their own discipline. Any attempt to cater for the late developer within adjustable sets may be thwarted by the difficulty of altering the other course variables. There is a danger that decisions about courses may become final at the beginning. Faced with this range of choice, the fact that there is a considerable element of selection and the consideration that to drop out or drop back at this critical stage makes it difficult if not impossible to get back in, the need for full and frank parent-pupil-teacher contact is obvious. The school has, therefore, to be very frank about what is available and involve the parents very fully in this decision process and maybe face the dichotomy of parental wishes and the counselling from school. Where conflict between parent and school occurs over the type and standard of course to be adopted it is likely to involve a parent who already has some social confidence and information.

A further critical period of choice is faced during the fifth year for a growing number of students. Many will choose to go into the sixth for one, two or three years depending on their particular course requirements. Students may continue into the sixth to re-sit GCE 'O' levels or CSE, to follow a course leading to additional GCE 'O' levels, or a GCE 'A' level course in any combination from one to four subjects, to continue with a well-liked subject or simply to grow up some more. Once again a full consultation process is carried out with students, parents, careers staff, subject teachers and usually Careers Advisory Officer.

In the single comprehensive school serving a well defined area the educational process can be seen as continuous from ten to nineteen years. For the secondary school, knowledge of, and concern for, children begins in the final stages of the primary school. From that time the aim is to provide an educational system that is a continuance for each individual allowing for maximum development of potential.

Two useful books:

1. **Middle School Choice.** CRAC. Written by M Smith and V Matthew. Pub. CRAC 1969.
2. **Upper School Choice.** CRAC. Written by P March and M Smith. Pub. CRAC.

The Sixth Form Jungle and the London Comprehensives

Guy Neave

There has recently been a good deal of discussion as to what is and what is not a 'viable' sixth form in a comprehensive school; various proposals have been made for 'concentrating' sixth forms. Among these are the proposals contained in the report of an ILEA Working Party, which analysed the situation in London.

We include here two articles which bear on this topic. The first, by Guy Neave (currently researching in education at the University of Leicester) contains a critique of the ILEA report. The second, by Michael Tucker, headmaster of Settle High School, Yorkshire, discusses the problems involved in running a small sixth form in a rural area.

June 1969. Mrs Lena Townsend, leader of the ILEA, unveiled her plans for the future organisation of sixth forms in the London area. Originally the scheme, outlined in the report **Sixth Form Opportunities in Inner London,** was published in December 1968. The working party, headed by Dr Briault, deputy education officer, was given the mandate to find out the number and type of 'A' level subjects a school should offer its sixth formers to give them a reasonable range of options. Furthermore, in view of the current teacher shortage, the working party was called upon to examine the numbers of 'A' level candidates necessary to constitute a 'viable' sixth.

The conclusions are not astounding. After mountainous labour, the committee suggested that if the 'A' level sixth was 'to have groups no smaller than 5 and no larger than 15', the optimum size ought not to fall below 40 to 45 students. The 'A' level range, it proposed, should be no less than 10 or 12 subjects.

The working party then noted, however, that some 88 schools of a total 228 under its jurisdiction had sixth forms under the acceptable level. (For the analysis of these 88 schools by type of school, see Table.) Small sixth forms, the committee concluded, were harmful in two ways: 1, they limited the spread of 'A' levels which in turn restricted their students' chances of entry to higher education; 2, schools attempting to cover this deficiency of staff resources might be tempted to concentrate on the upper school to the detriment of the pre-16 age-groups.

One cannot deny this tendency in those comprehensives living cheek by jowl with neighbouring grammar schools. In order to 'prove themselves' in this situation, there is a tendency to follow this policy. In London, however, it is a tendency arising out of the policy of the ILEA itself in retaining grammar schools.

Schools with under 40 students in sixth form, by type in ILEA.

	I No. of schools with under 40 in sixth	II Total No. of schools of this type	III Percentage of non-viable schools by type
Grammar	1	68	1.5
Comprehensive	16	81	19.8
Secondary Modern	32	32	100
'Other'	37	44	88
Technical	2	3	67
Total	88	228	100%

In some areas where, for social, economic or other reasons, the staying on rate was low, the schools trying to build up a sixth form would, it was suggested, not attain the economic minimum number of pupils for a considerable number of years, at least to 1975.

Accordingly, four proposals were developed which, it was reckoned, would allow a reasonable subject choice to 'A' level candidates.

1 Co-operation between schools and colleges of further education to cover subjects outside the school's range.

2 Close association between those schools already paired (a policy usually linking a comprehensive with a grammar school), thus providing a common coverage of subjects at sixth form level.

3 The formation of a 'consortium' of schools in a given area to marry together their separate sixth forms under the overlordship of a Director of Studies responsible to the heads of the contributing schools.

4 The concentration of sixth form work in certain established comprehensive schools fed by a contributory arrangement for 'A' level students only.

Interestingly enough, these proposals are not intended to be permanent. 'Steps taken, therefore, to ease the position during the first half of the 1970's might no longer be necessary later on', the document states cryptically.

This is a vitally important clause, especially since most of the undersized sixth forms lie in the secondary modern sector. One supposes that these schools will eventually become comprehensive at some future date, unless London is to have a new monster – the quadripartite system. They too must be allowed opportunity to build up their sixth forms so that transition to comprehensive status is not beset by overwhelming organisational difficulties in that area. But, if the sixth is to be built up in these schools (both comprehensive and secondary modern), to a viable and economic level in teacher resources, then a lot depends on the nature of the interim arrangements themselves. It is one thing to offer four ways of 'bridging that educational gap' that are possibly temporary. But whether they are so depends on the way they are implemented – and whether, in addition, the proposals allow the small sixth forms to grow during the operation of these schemes.

We may now examine these proposals more precisely, in the light of their possible effects upon the comprehensive school.

1 Co-operation between schools and colleges of further education

The argument behind this idea is a sound one. The college of further education can attract the school leaver back to full-time education later. It also has a more adult atmosphere than the school. Collaboration between school and college would make the change-over to adulthood and to the world of work easier. The suggestion for a brochure setting out available vocational courses in both school and the nearby college is a good one; as also the proposal to set aside block periods so that students may attend courses given in the college of further education.

But such an arrangement is scarcely likely to allow the development of the comprehensive sixth forms even during the interim period. So long as the collaboration were only a matter of *individual* students, it would work. Yet, for the sake of argument, suppose *many* comprehensive school students signed up for a course put on by a college. At this point, there would be some justification for the school applying for new staff so that the subject could be taught in the school. If, however, the course were being taught in the further education college, the local education authority could argue, with some strength, that there was no need to create a new post in the school.

If this were a permanent feature, then the assumption that rising numbers would boost the sixth form to the desired 40-45 students would not work out. On these terms, therefore, what started out as an interim arrangement could well turn out to be permanent.

Though there might be a temporary advantage 'for both the pupils and the school to be able to offload the staffing problems involved in increasing its 'A' level subjects, say from 10 to 15 . . . by making use of the resources of further education to economise in the use of scarce staff' the basic problem remains unsolved. Indeed, the basic problem is merely beginning. And that is: in which direction will the sixth form then move, having 'offloaded' some of its vocational pupils into colleges of further education? Will the comprehensive school then be exhorted to concentrate its sixth form staff on academic subjects alone? If this is the intention, the concentration on academic fields, and the accompanying change in the sixth form itself, will make links with further education permanent – because the sixth will not have built up its vocational side. And more to the point, after 16 the comprehensive school could no longer call itself comprehensive. It will have to differentiate between those remaining *in* the school and those, with vocational interests, taught *outside* in further education. The shadow of the 11-16 school looms here.

2 Close association between 'paired schools'

The idea of an enforced coupling between grammar and comprehensive is scarcely surprising. It is another

variation on the theme 'God preserve the grammar schools'. Consequently, whilst thinking of teacher resources, the working party has overlooked one of the fundamental points of comprehensive education – a comprehensive coexisting alongside a grammar school, cannot, by definition, be a comprehensive. But since it pleases the ILEA to dub its 11 - 18 'all in' schools comprehensive, whilst maintaining the grammar schools, such illogicality is built into the working party's thinking.

To hoist high the flag of collaboration at sixth form level and to limit the discussion to that sector of the school alone is to dismiss the possible consequences such a collaboration would produce in the lower part of the comprehensive school. The terms of this partnership would, of course, be dictated by the number of subjects the comprehensive, or for that matter, the secondary modern already covers. The less subjects taught, the closer the collaboration, with the result that students would spend a proportionately larger part of their time in the grammar school than in their original establishment. For secondary moderns, with the nucleus of a sixth, this could well turn out to be the first step in a process of assimilation of their students into grammar school. Again, like the last scheme, it would, on these terms, certainly not allow the gradual increase towards the objective of 45 pupils in the sixth. Moreover, this arrangement would seem to imply the introduction of a new form of selection inside hitherto unselective schools; those staying on to sit 'A' levels benefit from the collaboration with the grammar school, those sitting C.S.E. or 'O' levels remain in the 'comprehensive'.

The transfer of 'A' level candidates to the grammar sixth involves a reversion to a qualified entry to that form, which is counter to the development of the comprehensive, broader sixth form over the past eight years or so. It is an amazingly one-sided partnership, if it can be called a partnership at all. Since there is no intention to abolish selection in the grammar school, all the changes will have to be made by the comprehensive. There is little difference between this scheme, and that discussed above.

Is this 'marriage' a genuine one? Suppose, for instance, the grammar school staff provide the nucleus for the 'A' level courses, would the pupil exchange be two way? If comprehensive school students go to the grammar school for their 'academic' courses, will grammar school students with vocational interests go to the comprehensive? It is doubtful. Even were it to work, the implication is that the comprehensive is somehow inferior, bearing in mind the overwhelming prestige of 'academic' studies.

Collaboration, even so, should not be limited to the sixth form, the working party reckoned. It should begin from the fourth year. This raises a more subtle but nonetheless important issue. How does this affect the long term development of the comprehensive? One of the problems would be a restriction on the freedom of the comprehensive to experiment with mixed ability groups. For, sooner or later, at the latest at 16 plus, streaming would have to be reintroduced in order to decide which student would change over to the 'A' level sixth and which remain with 'the others'. Collaboration at fourth year level could, conceivably, involve reverting to streaming from the start to allow potential 'A' level students time to adjust to the teaching methods of the grammar school.

3 Consortium of schools

The consortium of schools is perhaps the most novel of the proposals made. Schools too small to maintain a sixth form of their own, should, it is recommended, band together to form a 'viable sixth form'. Much of the criticism levelled against the foregoing 'association scheme' can be applied also to the consortium.

The interesting feature does not lie so much in the logistics of the exercise so much as in the terms describing the relationship between contributing schools. Small schools 'perhaps already listed as "comprehensive" or perhaps as "developing comprehensive" or "other" will be linked.' Reorganisation will only touch the comprehensive.

To cap it all, the way in which this proposal will be realised is remarkably woolly. Will the consortium, it is asked, cater 'only for "A" level students or meet the needs of all sixth formers including candidates for "O" level and CSE and some with no examination goal at all'? If it is intended that 'A' level students alone should be provided for, then the notion of the sixth as a social, rather than an academic unit, will disappear. And the only sixth inside the contributing school would be a 'rump'. To expect it then to develop into a fully fledged sixth at some later date is to demand us to have the faith that moves mountains, if not administrators or working parties!

4 A possible Sixth Form College

Last there is a Sixth Form College proposal. Whether it is to be a 16 plus college, an 'A' level college, or a separate college at the top of an 11 - 18 school is somewhat ambivalent, though the latter proposal seems favoured – a 'separate "comprehensive" Sixth Form College, on top of an 11 - 18 school'. This is attractive to the ILEA, and one can see why. No grammar school would be involved in the merger. Consequently the existing grammar school sixth forms would be preserved inviolate.

The question that springs to mind is disturbing. 'Are the future comprehensive schools in the London area therefore to be planned with this arrangement in mind?' If so, it would seem that the secondary moderns destined to 'go comprehensive', and at present below the sixth form norm in pupil strength, might well find themselves part of a tiered system covering the 11 - 16 age range. The working party, however, remains suitably sybilline. Such a course of action, it states, would only be contemplated 'if as a matter of policy it were desired.'

Faced with these four proposals, one is left always with the same question. 'Is it too much to wonder whether the grammar schools might not need rationalisation?' On the criteria set out in this report all the solutions point to adjustment only in the comprehensive and secondary modern schools. But one of the reasons why the sixth form in certain comprehensive schools has not developed as fast as the ILEA would wish, arises from the fact that the so-called 'creaming process', leads inevitably to a concentration of sixth form teachers in the grammar schools. Rationalisation of resources, which is the main concern of the report (whether the resources be material or human), does not necessarily entail a process of concentration. Indeed, many of the problems in the ILEA are due to the overconcentration of sixth formers, through the insistence that the 41 grammar schools will be retained even when comprehensive reorganisation has been 'completed' in 1975.

Rationalisation in the distribution of teacher resources can also involve *decentralisation* – the distribution of desperately needed specialist staff precisely at those points where pressure is likely to build up in the future, where pupils are staying on after 16, regardless of whether or not they are doing 'A' level. In terms of sheer overall numbers the problem of pressure will be greatest in the comprehensive schools.

In the end, the ILEA plan for the sixth form is only realisable on condition that comprehensive reorganisation has been carried through as a prelude to its introduction. With this proviso it might be possible to regard the London plan for what it purports to be – an interim arrangement allowing the comprehensives to develop their sixth forms. But the ILEA, on the contrary, are trying to tackle the problem of the upper school whilst the lower and middle schools remain in transition. To put forward these proposals at the present juncture is tantamount either to ignoring the transitional nature of the 11 - 16 sector, or to hoping the changes brought about in the 16 - 19 age-group will work in such a way that this sector remains as it is at present, with selective and non-selective schools coexisting. But it is precisely this situation which is now under such sharp attack, and especially by teachers and heads in the London comprehensive schools themselves.

A Small Sixth Form

Michael Tucker

Settle High School is a 4 form entry comprehensive school in a rural area; partially creamed in some parts of its catchment area, it in turn creams two other parts where there are secondary modern schools, taking about 60% of the age group. There are 630 pupils, 48 in the sixth form; 32.8 staff, a 38 period week, and a basic teaching allocation of 33 periods (head, deputy and senior mistress about 54 periods). There is a common curriculum in years 1 - 3, multiple options in years 4 - 5, then the sixth form. Of the total 1,040 teaching periods in the week, the allocation to these three sections of the school is 484, 378 and 178 respectively; that is, about 7.5% of the pupils take about 17% of the teaching. Of these 178 periods in the sixth, 134 are

German books from

CHAMBERS

edited by IAN M. HENDRY

Veil Vergnügen!

E. ERICSSON and C. EISENBERG

Every beginner in a language needs to feel that he is accomplishing something and making progress. The purpose of this book is to induce that immediate sense of achievement. With the aid of the explanations given at the foot of each page, the lively and amusing stories can be read with comprehension and enjoyment after the briefest introduction to German.
The questions based on the text and illustrations may be tackled orally in class before written answers are attempted at home. The simplest points of grammar are stressed repeatedly and plenty of practice is given in sentence construction. 12s.

Aus dem deutschen Alltag

M. VAN DER PLOEG

This book aims to teach the active use of German by presenting everyday situations in an attractive way. These situations are appropriate—by their simplicity and relevance to real life—to be studied, learned by heart and acted in the classroom. They require few props. Sentences are kept short and characters use *Alltagsdeutsch.*
Creative activity on the part of the pupil is encouraged in the *Abwandlung* type of exercise, which invites pupils to modify and give a slightly different slant to the situation they have studied in detail and acted. 8s. 6d.

Anruf in der Nacht

H. STRUIVING and K. KIRCHFELD

Attractively illustrated, this book should commend itself as a rapid reader supplementary to any course. There is plentiful use of lively dialogue which is relevant to everyday affairs and well within the range of an average third-year pupil. Chapters are of a length that fits well into the normal teaching period, and they lend themselves to oral practice and *Nacherzählung* exercises. 6s.

Deutschland heute

GISELA WOHLGEMUTH-BERGLUND

The importance of setting a language against its background, of stimulating and enlarging the interest of pupils in the life and customs of the people whose language they are studying, is widely recognised.
The photographs in this book have been selected to illustrate the various aspects of everyday life in Germany and are supplemented with enough explanatory text to encourage classroom conversation in German. The topics, covering the many-sidedness of the German scene today, lend themselves to different kinds of treatment: to oral description of particular subjects shown in the photographs, as starting points for discussion on social and political themes, and as the framework for essays. The vocabulary is within the range of fourth-year pupils. Publication June 1970

Inspection copies available from Chambers Education Department, 11 Thistle Street, Edinburgh EH2 1DG

devoted to 'A' levels, 25 to a one year commercial course, 19 to general studies.

There are, in effect though not formally, three groups of sixth formers: those intending to enter higher education and professions by way of 'A' levels (about 35-40); the Commerce students (on a course established because the remoteness of the school reduces F.E. opportunities, about 5-10 pupils); 'O' level retakes and oddments of all sorts.

'A' level subjects offered are: maths (single subject only), physics, chemistry, biology, English, French, history, geography, art and music. With these subjects suitably combined, a pupil can qualify for most university courses. Classics and languages such as Spanish, German and Russian are obvious omissions, but without these there are still some chances for linguists to start new languages at university. A disadvantage for an undergraduate from a small sixth form may be a requirement to take an additional year's course. Less obvious omissions from our curriculum are economics, sociology, British constitution, ancient history, scripture, and all the craft and technical subjects. Given extra resources, I would not wish greatly to add any of these subjects: I would much prefer to use these resources for three other purposes: to create second sets in the same subjects (or some of them) so that students could choose different combinations of subjects; and so that different biases could be developed in different groups – choice of periods in history, texts in literature and so on, as well as different ways of working; and, thirdly, to establish a much stronger and more varied programme of general studies, to be offered as an 'A' level by some students: experimental science and technology, creative work in arts and crafts (including rural studies), drama, film making, music (including singing, orchestral playing, composing).

I am quite content with a limited range of 'A' levels because it is normally possible to use the exam framework to liberal ends; I would like to make this easier by adopting a Mode 3 CSE approach as this would reduce the number of things a student would *have* to do and increase the number of things he *could* do. Despite its limitations the existing 'A' level system offers better prospects for a liberal sixth form education than the depressing multiplicities of the absurd 'Q' and 'F' levels.

But even without advanced level CSE and without a considerable addition to the resources available for the sixth form, a small school can be helped to widen opportunities in individual cases as need arises. Correspondence courses are an obvious source of help, but local authorities seem reluctant to admit their use. The National Extension College has some very well thought out courses for London GCE and I think small schools should be encouraged to use them. For about £15 a pupil can be taken from 'O' to 'A' level – much cheaper than staffing a small group; he can work on his own and at a pace that suits him. Of course there are limitations in correspondence courses, but there is no logic in the doctrinaire view that real education can only occur in a face to face confrontation. A general request to use correspondence courses is likely to be refused by a LEA, but I have had support in one case where an individual need had to be met.

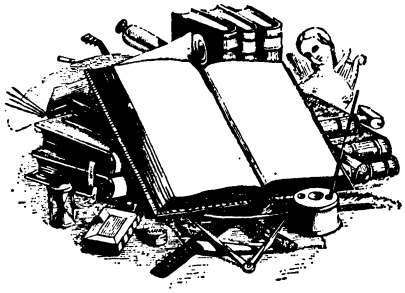
Another way to enable students to make fuller use of a small sixth form is to stagger the sixth form timetable so that fewer classes occur simultaneously: thus if, say, geography and physics 'clash', a regrettable but not uncommon occurence, or if maths should be made available with almost everything else (as it probably should), simply transpose one subject (or maths) to a staggered session after normal school hours, so that more students could choose both. Everything has its price: after-school activities, transport arrangements, avoiding overlong sessions for teachers and students would all present difficulties, but a staggered session three days a week (time for three double periods), could greatly improve sixth form choice. Would teachers be willing not only to stagger sessions but to repeat them? In this way classes would be fragmented but choice extended. Would LEAs pay accordingly the overtime due? (A staggered session would not involve overtime of course – as long as the free periods in lieu were properly safeguarded.)

As well as a reduced choice of courses, the member of a small sixth form is likely to miss the stimulation and enrichment of his thinking that should come from discussion and the comparing of notes with able companions. I have one girl taking 'A' level French alone in the upper sixth; recently a boy took maths and physics on his own – or 14 periods a week for two years of individual tuition! This might be acceptable if the students had the chance to share their academic excitements at home or elsewhere; but the rural sixth form draws its members from a widely scattered populace where the chances of finding like-minded friends are reduced (hence there is less snobbishness among rural children). Perhaps there is a case for residential courses where isolated students could meet two or three times a year, not necessarily in school holidays, with

staff drawn from schools, universities and undergraduates to study topics planned in advance to which the students' private reading would have some reference. This should help students to get a clearer idea of what academic standards are, to get personal reassurance through informal contact with others in the same lines as themselves, and to do some work that a small sixth form might not have resources for. This sort of thing is already done on a small scale in orchestral and instrumental music, outdoor activities and foreign language courses, with the individual student paying an economic fee. The sort of courses I am suggesting would be paid for by local authorities as necessary supplements to the school's course.

I suppose that in many senses small sixth forms are uneconomical; but it could well be that new ways of spending a bit more money could make them educationally satisfactory and perhaps cheaper than some sorts of reorganisation.

Reviews



A Mothball?

Cross'd with adversity: the education of socially disadvantaged children in secondary schools. Schools Council Working Paper 27. Evans/Methuen Educational. 11s 3d.

'The socially disadvantaged . . . ' We need phrases, but the urgency and agony of human problems is easily buried under their worried smoothness. This working paper tries to bring to life the plight and need of children 'denied educational opportunities because of social deprivation', and proposes compensatory measures. One effect of reading it must be to add to our dismay that still, at this late moment in the history of universal education, we are only circling round what has long been a lack of all decent realism in the approach to such children.

After describing the background and characteristics of the deprived, and assembling some account of current practice, the paper goes on to make its own proposals, for discussion: most of them obviously sensible. Of course there ought to be a continuity of care throughout school life, and the work of the various agencies should be drawn together. Of course links must be created between home and school, and of course one way of doing this is to involve the community in the life of the school – the attempt to do which is likely to lead to a complete rethinking of the very character of a school: and that certainly must happen if it is to cease to be what the lad in Newsom defined with memorable adequacy as 'a bloody school'. Of course the school programme should be flexible, and what is rather oddly called 'a non-streamed atmosphere' should be created. Of course teachers should be trained in social realities and in the skills of comprehensive education – and certainly it is deeply disturbing to discover that 'very few colleges have yet introduced courses specifically concerned' with this field.

There is much in this paper that is well and humanely argued: passages of necessary trenchancy. Yet it is likely to leave a reader with a curious sense of flatness. This is partly a matter of language. The paper has a sort of thickness of texture – almost an over-writtenness – that muffles urgency. Is it unfair to ask that a paper with the aim of provoking response from teachers and others should be sharper, brisker – more challenging? The very title is a mothball. But more important – there are arguments here, statements of aims and recommendations, that remind us that we have been here before, too often – at this kindly point of paralysis. There seems a range of questions that might appear to be beyond the scope of such a working party, but that surely must be asked in the context of a society so ready to promote such inquiries and so reluctant to act upon their conclusions. Why do we care so little? *How* do we inject real heart into our approach to the socially damaged? What do we do about the awkward truth that children with these handicaps require nothing less than to have all disadvantage removed from them? And how do we make real any attempt to do this, through education, within a society that simply manufactures disadvantages?

EDWARD BLISHEN.

A case study

Values and Involvement in a Grammar School, by Ronald King. Routledge and Kegan Paul (1969), 40s.

This book is a case study of one of the London grammar schools in which the author was both pupil and, later, teacher. In it, the values of pupils at different levels of the school, the second, fifth and sixth to eighth years are investigated and compared to those considered important by the teaching staff: honesty, truthfulness, tolerance and scepticism amongst others. The cultural values of the school are also examined to see how they are reflected in the reading habits and pastimes of the pupils.

It is interesting that such a book should appear at this time, involving as it does a sociological study of what was previously considered as above question and understood by all, namely grammar school values.

Though Dr King has shown that his particular school does enhance the involvement of some of the pupils, mainly those drawn from second generation grammar school children and those in the 'express stream', equally he has pointed out that these values do not have the same impact either upon first generation children or those in the 'non express' groups. Much of the involvement of pupils depends on the structure of social and academic status that is in-built to all levels of the school. In the 'non expressed' groups the deprivation of both academic status and social prestige works as a selective device within an already highly selective

system. More to the point, it works to the detriment of children in culturally deprived homes, or those of the first grammar school generation. 'Those who could make the best of this organised deprivation passed the test and remained at school to enter the élite status sixth form with its extensive privileges. Conspicuously, it was the second generation non expressed pupils who (virtually) managed this . . . ' (p 154).

As the author points out, success in the grammar school also depends on a social and cultural continuity between the values held by the school and similar ones at home. Where there is a close cultural 'fit' between home and school, the child is in a good position to profit from the instruction offered. I say 'instruction' intentionally. One of the roles of education is, surely, to enable pupils who do not have the same cultural background to develop in the broadest sense without putting a penalty on them for their non conformity. Indeed, many pupils who do not have a common cultural continuum between home and school are apt to regard the school as little more than an examination shop (p 152).

To a large extent, the pupils of this school were isolated from outside society. Their friendship groups tended to be with other grammar school boys. Even so, this isolation was beginning to break down by the time the sixth form was reached. Many of the values regarded as desirable by the teaching staff were not accepted with the same alacrity at sixth form level as they were in the earlier years. Dr King reckons this partial rejection by the sixth former is due to his adjustment towards his future occupational role in adult life. On the other hand, it could well be that these young people, increasingly in contact with society outside school, come to realize the artificiality of a teacher-imposed school society. The implication is that integration into outside society requires the rejection of some of the values of school society, especially the authoritarianism which proved so rankling to the fifth formers. It is interesting to speculate whether or not the differences between school society and society 'beyond the walls' are not the basis for the rise of movements like the Schools Action Union, which might be a more extreme form of the rejection at sixth form level that Dr King discovered in his school.

In any study like Dr King's the final question remains: are these values uniquely a grammar school possession? If they are, then this could account for the social isolation of the grammar school that makes it exceedingly difficult for pupils not holding the same value emphasis to adjust to it. If, on the other hand, the values are not unique to the grammar school and are common to all society, then the school is exceedingly inefficient at getting them recognised by its inmates.

GUY NEAVE.

What is and what might be

The school that I'd like, edited by Edward Blishen. Penguin Education Special (1969).

However frustrated we feel about the imponderable slowness of significant change in our secondary schools, this book reveals that we are not alone.

> 'At present, the main difference between secondary and primary schools is that primary education is enjoyable and secondary education is absolutely dreary and boring. Primary education . . . that golden land where the revolution has at least partially taken place. May it soon take place in our secondary schools!'

This comment by a thirteen-year-old boy was part of his entry in a competition organised in 1967 by **The Observer** on the subject, 'The school that I'd like'. From a thousand entries from all sorts of schools, Edward Blishen has made a sympathetic and potent selection. In this small book we are confronted by the children we teach, and it is both an exhilarating and a frightening confrontation.

Edward Blishen has largely concentrated his selection of quotations on major themes: curriculum reform, teachers, teaching and examinations, emphasising that 'there is a most striking coincidence of opinion. Standing out above everything else is the children's desire to teach themselves, rather than to be the passive targets of teaching: a great restlessness about classrooms, timetables, the immemorial and so often inert routine of schools'. His own comments, introducing each section, quietly yet passionately insist on the reasonableness of the children's comments and the devastating nature of their verdict on their own educational experience.

In the section entitled 'Lessons Ought to Mix', the children are asking for a curriculum which will give them a meaningful total experience. They want integration, or at least the interrelation, of subjects (many refer nostalgically to primary school) and ask that the subjects themselves should have some relevance, so that school is not an experience detached from the rest of their lives. This section is exciting and encouraging and utterly depressing. How many of the writers will experience what they so articulately suggest in their own school lifetime – or even the lives of their children?

The section on teachers hits hard; as Edward Blishen points out 'a great many teachers are found singularly unsatisfactory by those they teach and the main charges are made so insistently . . . that they certainly require the most serious consideration'. Yet, ultimately, all the children are asking is that teachers should be less

aloof and authoritarian and more friendly and genuinely interested in their pupils!

Uniform, discipline, school meals, compulsory sport, morning assembly, unsuitable and uninspiring buildings have their share of serious and forthright comment, but it is significant that it is on those issues which most centrally concern the quality of education they receive, that the children are most articulately perceptive. Their indictment of examinations is powerful – they call for 'total overhaul', 'abolition', 'control', they protest against having their minds filled with disjointed bits of knowledge and having to make irretrievable choices. They ask for a system which, if it has to test at all, will test understanding rather than memory.

As Edward Blishen says, these entries 'make a picture that is so disconcerting, so exciting, and one that constitutes an enormous challenge to the present usual pattern of schooling'.

It is so disconcerting that we can't afford to ignore the implications: pupils could be leading agents in experiments with curricula methods and organisation, there should be staff *and pupil* meetings, pupils at department and interdepartmental meetings, **Forum** articles by people still at school . . . Schools *could* become the reasonable, pleasant places they are asking for.

ELIZABETH GRUGEON.

Historical analysis

The Changing Sixth Form in the Twentieth Century, by A D Edwards. Routledge and Kegan Paul, Students Library of Education (1970), 116 pp. 9s.

It's a pity that the Joint Committee of the Schools Council and the Universities' Standing Committee which produced the 'Q' and 'F' level proposals had not been able to read Mr Edwards' thoughtful and scholarly presentation of the issues at stake. Unfortunately professors of engineering who would not dream of designing a step-ladder without consulting the mathematical principles involved are quite happy, it seems, to set their names to important educational policy documents which are entirely innocent of basic educational thinking. Yet sixth form curriculum and examination is a critical area for the whole school and further education system. As Mr Edwards shows, decisions about what is to happen here are certainly based on assumptions about pre-sixteen education. Quoting Crowther he reminds us that the vaunted 'great expansion' of sixth forms has been in fact circumscribed by being on 'the relatively small and fixed base of those already in selective schools'. Whether the academic establishment like it or not, one cannot consider sixth form curriculum and university entrance in isolation from broader – and hotter – issues about select versus common education.

Mr Edwards documents an increasing narrowness, instrumentalism and dehumanisation of education at sixth form level – with classes of 30 or more and little time for conceptual awareness. This is a much more likely explanation for the alienation of university students than any advanced by the Black Paper writers.

The book underlines, too, the salience of any decisions about separate post-sixteen provision, whether it is to be in selectivist Sixth Form Colleges or Junior Colleges linking traditional Sixth Form and FE provision. Only the latter will be genuinely comprehensive, the necessary – though not of itself sufficient – condition for a humanised and liberated education at this level. And only if work here is liberated is there much hope for the widespread adoption of the new perspectives on education now being pioneered in the junior secondary years. As this book notes, it is still the Sixth Form that carries status even in comprehensive schools, and the preparatory notion is still strong, the work of each stage in education still being thought of as paving the way for the one above. For this reason, if no other, post-sixteen reform is overdue. The rigorously historical and systematic approach of Mr Edwards' book should be a valuable contribution to this, Joint Committee notwithstanding. More such historical analyses of curriculum and organisation are needed.

D HOLLY,
School of Education, University of Leicester.

Aspects of change

Education for Democracy, edited by David Rubinstein and Colin Stoneman. Penguin (1970), 6s.

'Never has discipline in the schools been so relaxed.' Black Paper authors might well nod their heads and look back to the Good Old Days when standards were standards, kids knew their place and most teachers agreed about behaviour, rules, uniform or whatnot. But Arthur Razzell, one of the twenty-eight writers in this book, completes his sentence on Primary Education: 'Never has discipline in the schools been so relaxed or the children so responsive and eager to tackle the work in hand.'

The parts of this book that I find most interesting are those where change is accepted not just as inevitable but as something that can be beneficial. 'One of the tests of an educational system,' Basil Bernstein suggests, 'is that its outcomes are relatively unpredictable.' Changes in method and content and in assessment are probably the most adequately

touched on. We have **Forum's** own Nanette Whitbread on 'non-didactic' methods in Colleges of Education and Brian Simon on 'streaming and unstreaming in the secondary school', David Sturgess on 'Happenings in a Primary School' and Albert Hunt, writing from a radical revision of complementary studies in a College of Art. The last named writes of 'the shift from an externally imposed order, based on the sacredness of subjects, to a situation in which both teachers and students are free to make decisions – and to find areas of common interest which they can explore together'.

Education for Democracy implies involving children and students in the very difficult processes of discrimination and choice from the earliest stages. Each generation produces its own strategies of delay. Basil Bernstein, in a tantalisingly brief piece, questions the present concern with the concepts of compensation and deprivation (linguistic and otherwise). 'We should start knowing,' he claims, 'that the social experience the child already possesses is valid and significant, and that this social experience should be reflected back to him as being valid and significant. It can only be reflected back to him if it is part of the texture of the learning experience we create. If we spent as much time thinking through the implications of this as we do thinking about the implications of the Piagetian developmental sequences then possibly schools might become exciting and challenging environments for parents, children and teachers.'

The area where the icecap is at last on the retreat is that of exams and assessments. The exam system used to be taken sadly for granted – at least for older pupils. But we learn from Raymond Williams that a staff-student committee of the Cambridge English Faculty 'reached the new principle that examining is justified only in so far as it serves the learning rather than the assessment process, and that its methods need radical revision to that end'. Donald McIntyre, in one of the most challenging essays in the book, widens this to the schools as well: 'In our current educational practice, although we expend an enormous amount of time and energy on assessment, very little information is obtained which helps teachers to teach. Instead, we give pupils marks or grades, that is, we concentrate on judging them, on saying how "good" or "bad" they are, on putting them in an "order of merit" . . . while the quality of assessment in teaching is dependent on complex professional skills, the *sort* of assessment we want is dependent on a political choice: more effective teaching or helping to maintain the hierarchical nature of society. Those of us who would choose the former can be encouraged by the fact that current changes in the organisation of secondary education are making it possible for headmasters and teachers to avoid the use of marks until pupils reach the age of sixteen.'

There is much that is less hopeful in this collection, where the tone becomes resigned or strident. But it's an encouraging sign that such a variety of articles, which raise some of the most important disagreements about educational policy, should have been edited by a lecturer in chemistry and a lecturer in social history at the University of Hull.

DAVID GRUGEON.

Unitary or binary?

The Comprehensive University, by Robin Pedley. University of Exeter. 6s.

One would not expect Robin Pedley's inaugural lecture as the first holder of the Chair in Exeter's Institute of Education to be anything but radical and original: a little like that inaugural of Matthew Arnold's, which he dared to couch in English instead of Latin. This is a statement, lucid and meticulously argued, of the case for comprehensive post-school education – setting side by side an examination of the failure of nerve that has led Ministers who have turned their backs on selective schooling to embrace the abandoned principle in this other field, with an account (which will be immensely difficult to answer) of the rich benefits that would flow from such reform.

EDWARD BLISHEN.

Highly recommended

Stewart Mason, the Director of Education for Leicestershire, has edited a symposium, published by Longmans (25s), on Leicestershire developments over the last decade. Entitled **In Our Experience** it includes chapters on many aspects of the transition to comprehensive education, mostly by heads of primary and secondary schools. The move towards non-streaming is chronicled by Mr Hazel ('The evolution of an unstreamed junior school'), and by the late K A Mayes ('Unstreaming in a secondary school'); C J Hetherington writes about Kibworth school, and the head of Guthlaxton writes on 'Eight years' experience of an upper school'. There are chapters on art, design and music (the latter by Eric Pinkett, the county's music adviser); on 'the community college in Leicestershire', while the symposium opens with a fascinating chapter by Stewart Mason on 'School Buildings'. This includes an analysis of the revolutionary Countesthorpe Upper School now under construction, which opens in September this year (and which, incidentally, will include a member of the **Forum** editorial board on its staff).

BRIAN SIMON.

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