

FORUM FOR THE DISCUSSION OF NEW TRENDS IN EDUCATION

Summer 1971
Volume 13
Number 3

35p

For Continuity in Education

Pitfalls of Parental Choice
a Headmaster

A New Town goes comprehensive
Kenneth Coram

Continuity of Education and Teacher Control
Jack Walton

Primary into Secondary (2)
Harold Hayling

Discussion
*Peter Dunn, M J Golby, Edith Newbigin,
John Salt*

Science Teaching: Transition
Peter Prosser

Introducing the Integrated Day
Ernest Choat

Teaching Fourth Year Leavers
Jane Thompson

Reviews
*Annabelle Dixon, Andrew Finch,
Ray Hemmings, Douglas Holly, Brian Simon,
Joan Simon, Roy Waters, Nanette Whitbread*

Editorial Board

Michael Armstrong Countesthorpe Upper School, Leics.

Edward Blishen

Kenneth Coram Headmaster, Bandle Hill Junior Mixed School, Stevenage.

Annabelle Dixon, Minet Infant School, Hayes, Middlesex.

G C Freeland Headmaster, Alderman Richard Hallam Junior School, Leicester.

David Grugeon, Assistant Director of Studies, Open University.

H Raymond King Ex-Headmaster, Wandsworth School, London.

Ron Lendon Headmaster, Gospel Oak Junior Mixed and Infants' School, London.

Eric Linfield Senior Lecturer, Newton Park College of Education, Bath.

Peter Manger Head of Education Department, Coventry College of Education.

Roger Seckington Headmaster, Heathfield High School, Earl Shilton, Leics.

Jack Walton Senior Staff Tutor, University of Exeter Institute of Education.

Roy Waters District Inspector ILEA.

Editor Brian Simon Professor of Education, School of Education, University of Leicester.

Assistant Editor Nanette Whitbread Senior Lecturer, City of Leicester College of Education.

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

Forum is published three times a year, in September, January and May. £1 a year or 35p an issue.

Business Information

Correspondence relating to subscriptions, etc, should be addressed to The Manager, 58 Elms Road, Leicester, LE2 3JE. Tel: Leicester 708123.

The Foundations of Language

talking and reading in young children

ANDREW WILKINSON, *Reader in Education in English at the School of Education in the University of Birmingham*

The recent impetus to the study of language given by linguistics and psychology has made us increasingly aware of the central part language plays in learning. Yet many of the research reports are obscure and difficult to obtain. This book attempts to provide a clear introduction to the field. The first part concerns basic linguistic concepts; the second, illustrated with tape transcriptions, deals with the growth and development of language in the young child; and the third covers the principles and practice of reading and its relationship to general language development. The book should thus meet the needs of the colleges which require a course on language, including reading; and of the experienced teacher and advanced student who wish to get their bearings in the field of psycholinguistics. The book contains a bibliography for the student, and a comprehensive list of readings for the research worker.

224 pages stiff card covers 19 911016 6 50p net.



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
Education Department, Oxford

An educational continuum

Comprehensive reorganization of secondary schools has important implications for all stages of education: at the local level it means not only that junior schools are free to unstream, but that primary and secondary education can be considered as a continuum in a way that is impossible when children are dispersed to selective and non-selective schools.

Far from promoting this concept of an educational continuum the parental choice policy of some LEAs actually aggravates the problems of transition. Our first article is 'a case study to illustrate the proposition that if parental choice is introduced or emphasized at a time of comprehensive reorganization then the result will usually be to strengthen the position of the ex-Grammar schools and weaken that of the ex-Secondary Modern schools.' The headmaster of a primary school in a New Town that is making the change to a comprehensive structure with parental choice, however, shows that this effect can be markedly lessened if the fundamental principle of all-ability schooling through primary and secondary is understood and accepted by local teachers, and explained to parents. He has noticed 'a much more positive interest among working class parents in the structure, curriculum and aims of the secondary schools'; and he hopes this may develop into informed protagonism of the all-ability school, transcending attitudes based on traditional concepts. He tells how the change has promoted nonstreaming at the secondary stage—including at one ex-Grammar school.

The bipartite secondary system has inevitably militated against the development of the concept of an educational continuum through primary and secondary schools. A new rationale becomes possible as increasing numbers of communities are served by a fully comprehensive system and experience is consequently gained of the opportunity to consider the educational development of all local children from five to fifteen-plus.

Yet the new potential for this essential continuum has hardly begun to be realised. That same prized autonomy of the English school that has hitherto prevented the necessary co-operation between schools could be the means of concerted local endeavour.

Jack Walton elaborates a systematic means of locally instituting a planned comprehensive structure of education throughout the stages of the child's school life. He suggests that what could result 'is not only an enhanced sense of community, an opportunity to consider the total education of children, but also a real increase in the status of the teacher.' If teachers from different schools can find the means of working together, contributing their varied expertise and experience, to produce a unified and consecutive curriculum in the schools of their community, they will strengthen their own professionalism and justify their freedom to innovate locally.

Such a system of co-operative planning would assuredly militate against that 'conflict of aims and attitudes between the two stages of education' which Harold Hayling explores in his second article on the transition from primary to secondary school. This is the sequel to his previous article published in *Forum* vol 13 no 1. He here examines the anti-educational ethos of many secondary schools—as reflected by streaming, 'the clutching control of the examination system' and the 'fragmented time-table'—which alienates so many adolescents. In advocating that some of the best features of primary school teaching should be carried over into the junior secondary stage, he highlights the need for secondary teachers to gain a better understanding of aims at the primary stage. How this concept of a primary-secondary continuum applies to science teaching is discussed by Peter Prosser, who demonstrates the need for at least 'a common approach and a range of common experiences' in contributory junior schools.

Several articles in this number thus touch on aspects of the comprehensive school as a neighbourhood school. Comprehensive organization of schools in an urban community or a rural district clearly has great potential for resolving many problems hitherto apparently inherent in the transition to secondary school. For this potential to be realised there must be closer understanding between teachers at the different age stages. This raises issues concerning the training of teachers for the era of unified comprehensive school systems, on which the Editorial Board is presenting evidence to the James Committee.

Pitfalls of Parental Choice

The intention of this article is to make general points that may be relevant to reorganization schemes elsewhere. Since it is not intended to be used as a criticism of an actual LEA, no place names have been included and the author, a Headmaster, is anonymous.

This article is a case study to illustrate the proposition that if parental choice is introduced or emphasized at a time of comprehensive reorganisation then the result will usually be to strengthen the position of the ex-Grammar schools and weaken that of the ex-Secondary Modern schools. Usually, it is difficult to consider in isolation the effect of parental choice, since there are so many other constraints, such as a reluctance on the part of the Authority to encourage choice, and the longer distance to alternative schools. In this instance both these constraints are minimised.

In 1965 the LEA in question had the usual bipartite system with about 20% of pupils admitted to Grammar schools. Most of the schools were in the natural population centres, and a parent who wished to send his child to a school other than the allotted one would probably have to reckon with an extra round journey of about 20 miles a day. Nevertheless a parent who felt strongly about this was generally allowed to send his child as long as the Authority avoided unreasonable expenditure. In practice this often meant that they occupied spare seats on Grammar school buses, which gathered from the catchment areas of two or more Secondary Modern schools. This would favour those Secondary Modern schools which were situated near Grammar schools. The exercise of parental choice was of course only between schools of the same type and no parent allocated to a Secondary Modern school could 'choose' a Grammar school.

When the LEA drew up its Comprehensive reorganisation plan, it was anxious to preserve this principle of parental choice, and their report included the following paragraph:

'Some bodies have taken the view that a school cannot be a completely comprehensive school if parents have the option to send their children to schools other than those provided for them. The Working Party dissent strongly from this view which appears to them to be contrary to the provisions of Section 76 of the 1944 Education Act.'

The Working Party appeared to consider parental choice to be a fundamental right established in the 1944 Act. But the Department's Manual of Guidance to Section 76 states:

'It should be noted that Section 76 does not confer on the parent complete freedom of choice. The exercise of his choice is contingent on its being compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure. Authorities who are responsible for securing the provision of the school accommodation needed for their area would be faced with an impossible task unless they could assume that the great majority of parents will be content to send their children to the school which has been provided to serve their district.'

The Department of Education and Science's 1970 booklet of guidance for parents: **Inside Comprehensive Schools** (p. 20) uses the same arguments.

All but one of the schools under the comprehensive plan were to be (eventually) 11-18 schools with between 900 and 1,700 pupils. Some were based on former Secondary Modern schools, some on former Grammar schools amalgamated with adjoining Secondary Modern schools, and one on a former Grammar school alone. The exception was a rural Secondary Modern school of 250 which, with new housing, would expand to 450 plus. The general effect was that the local school, whatever its origin, would become the Comprehensive school for that area.

Parents not convinced

It is worth looking at this situation from the point of view of a parent living near an ex-Secondary Modern school going comprehensive. To many parents, the most satisfactory conclusion of a Primary school education is 'passing the eleven plus' and going to the Grammar school. Twenty-five years of conditioning to the idea that the gateway to any career or higher education is via the Grammar school cannot be shrugged off overnight and, not unnaturally, any parent who sees that the Grammar school and the local Secondary Modern school have been renamed 'comprehensive' is going to need a lot of convincing that the opportunities at both schools are identical.

On 12th December 1969, nine months before the re-organisation began, the LEA sent a circular to all parents of eleven-year-old children. This listed all the new Comprehensive schools identifying them by the name *and type* of school out of which they would be formed. Nothing was said about the courses offered and there was no indication that there would be any change in the facilities or staffing at any school. Parents were told that their children would be allocated to a certain school according to where they lived but that if they wanted to apply for another school they may do so before 31st December.

The decision which now faced parents had to be made hastily and on very inadequate facts. If they had not got older children, they would have no direct knowledge of any existing secondary school. If they had older children they would be attending schools whose nature was about to be radically altered. The best they could do was to enquire of the schools themselves about what courses were to be offered under the new system.

It was left to the schools themselves if they chose to get in touch with the parents in their surrounding areas and to tell them what they thought fit in the five working days between 12th December and Christmas. By leaving individual schools to 'sell their wares' the LEA was placing some schools at an enormous disadvantage. A Secondary Modern school that talks about its plans for 'A' level courses to start in 1975 (with first results in July 1977) will sound far less convincing than the Grammar school, which has only to call out its *present* university entrants list in order to impress.

For a parent to choose a Secondary Modern school in these circumstances is asking him for an act of faith. Whereas people may act in faith for themselves, they are likely to be rather more cautious when it comes to the education of their own children. It was therefore not surprising to find that the percentage of parents opting away from Secondary Modern based Comprehensives to Grammar school based Comprehensives was in one area as high as 38%.

So far we have looked at the problem in terms of ex-Grammar school and ex-Secondary Modern school. There is also the problem of the one small school. The problem is basically the same as that of the larger ones—to obtain facilities and esteem—but is considerably aggravated by disparity in size, by its placing in relation to the other schools, and (in this case) by its comparative newness.

The small school had been opened as a Secondary Modern school in 1963. It brought secondary education for the first time to all non-selected children in a scattered

rural area of 21 villages and 90 square miles. Numbers were around 220 rising to 250. A revised plan, The County Plan, took into account considerable prospects for population growth in the area and proposed a 2-3 form entry 11-16 comprehensive school. However, as there was at that time (1967) no actual growth, the Secretary of State for Education, in accepting the plan, stated that: 'He would expect the Authority to permit free transfer at any age at parental choice to larger school . . .'

The 'free transfer' issue

This phrase was to lead to a great deal of controversy in the following months. One group of people, including Councillors who had always opposed the whole idea of a small Comprehensive school, interpreted free transfer as being a permanent right and asked that parents should also have free transport to a larger school. The other attitude was that this was only a temporary safeguard intended for use (a) during the pre-growth period and (b) by those who had particular academic needs that could not yet be met at the small school. In fact the use of the word 'transfer' rather than 'choice' of school suggests that the intention was that all pupils would start at the small school and only transfer when the need arose. A letter in December 1969 from the Department of Education and Science explained that it was the latter view that had been in their minds, and a letter in late March 1970 from Mr Edward Short, then Secretary of State for Education, was to reiterate this point:

'The Department's intention was to ensure that there were adequate arrangements for transfer to larger schools where the particular needs of individual pupils could not be fully met locally. It was certainly not the intention that such arrangements should be such as to put in question the future viability of any school.'

But by then the damage had been done.

It should be noted that the argument for including this safeguard originated at a time when the school was only two-form entry. But by 1968 there were three forms of entry, and by 1970 the school had staff for four forms of entry. As far as the school was concerned the 'prospects of growth' had already arrived. The argument for viability at this size was as follows: With an intake of 80 pupils and assuming for the moment in a traditional organisation there could be an 'A' form of 20. These pupils would be a peer group just as able as the forms at the old Grammar school and they would have staff and facilities appropriate to their needs. Assuming that most of these 20

pupils stayed on after 'O' level, they would give a sixth form of 40: big enough to cover at least the basic subjects. The vast majority of people take from a choice of 7 'A' levels and the fact that a very wide range of choices is not available only affects very few, who could transfer elsewhere at that stage.

As a result of the LEA's interpretation of the Department's comments, the December Circular to parents, in its reference to the small Secondary Modern school added:

'If any parents feel that their children's needs cannot be properly met at (the small school) they may apply for their children to attend (the Grammar based Comprehensive school) as an alternative. Free transport will be provided for such children.'

This paragraph was repeated in a prospectus put out by the local ex-Grammar school.

So far nothing has been said about the relative merits of the schools themselves. Merit, in the sense of what a school has to show for itself, is very dependent upon uncontrollable factors, like the social background of the area, the size of the school and the number of years it has been in existence. It is probably true to say that the only specific criticism of the school in what was to become a very public controversy was from one dissatisfied parent who felt the discipline was not harsh enough and that his child should have been made to work harder. Against this must be set the fact, emphasized frequently by the parents opting for other schools, that they had no personal criticism of the smaller school: all they were doing was accepting an offer of a place at a Grammar based Comprehensive.

During the early months of 1970 repeated attempts were made through the Governors and the LEA to get the policy of choice modified at least to that applying to other schools ie: they may choose another school but would not get free transport. In March, a public meeting was held at the small school and attended by over 300 people. The intention of that meeting was to point out to people that if 38% of the intake were allowed to go elsewhere, this could frustrate any attempt to put on a Comprehensive course. Even though the staff and facilities were available it was unrealistic to put on a full range of courses to a limited range of pupils.

At a special meeting of the Education Committee a week later it was agreed that: 'Subject to exceptional cases of special need applications from parents for transfer to other schools be not approved . . .'

This put the school in the position that was apparently

the one originally intended by the Department of Education and Science. The interpretation of 'exceptional cases of special need' was left to a small committee and parents were asked to state what particular needs they felt could not be met at the small school. This committee examined the courses to be offered by the school and decided that in no instance could a parent of an 11 year old child claim that their intellectual needs were not being catered for. The school was already doing 'O' level work in eleven subjects and pupils starting in September 1970 would be able to take 'O' level at age 15 from a range of at least 22 subjects. This was the same as was apparently being offered by the Grammar based Comprehensive. Staff included appropriately qualified specialists in all subjects and as good a graduate/pupil ratio as most other local comprehensives and well above the national average. Because of the need to ensure that all subjects were covered it also had one of the best pupil/teacher ratios in the country.

Pressure group

Nevertheless the sub-committee did decide that nine 11 year old pupils were 'special cases of exceptional need' and were allowed their choice. The accepted reason for most of these transfers was they had elder brothers or sisters at the other school. It is significant to note that parents who said they wished their child to be in a school without a break at 16 were refused. Even if it had still been possible to define at 11 those who were likely to benefit by education beyond 16, to have accepted the loss of all such people would have virtually turned the place back into a Secondary Modern school. (It is quite possible that by 1975 the school will be able to run full 'A' level courses. In fact, some are starting in 1971).

By now most of the 29 families who had opted for the Grammar based Comprehensive had formed a group to press their point of view. In this they were not without support from the press and from some County Councillors. Following the decision of the Committee refusing the requests of 18 parents, almost all these parents appealed to the Department of Education and Science under the Section 68 of the 1944 Education Act. In its simplest form their case was that they had been offered a choice and it was now being taken away from them. Their second stated 'reason' was that they felt the school was too small to offer an education suitable for their children.

Next came the change of government. Mrs Thatcher's reply to the appeal was that while she accepted the status

of the small school as Comprehensive, she maintained the right of all parents to choose their school as long as accommodation was available at the receiving school. This reply was considered at a special meeting of the Education Committee on 24th July. Up to that day it had been assumed that the receiving school was a six form entry school (with 180 first year places). Without the 18 refused in March by the LEA they were due to receive 177 pupils. However at the meeting it was announced that the school was to be organised on a *seven* form entry basis allowing room (somehow) for 210 pupils. The LEA therefore had no alternative than to accept the choice of all the parents. The free transport concession was to remain in 1970 since the LEA did not feel they could go back on the promise made. But in future years it would be withdrawn.

This sorry tale has ended with a small 'Comprehensive' school starting without 38% of its intake. Without a selection exam it is impossible to be precise about the ability of the 38% who have opted for elsewhere, but discussion with Primary school heads suggests that if the expected intake numbers were divided, by ability, into four quarters the school received the following:

Top Quarter:	4%
Second "	8%
Third "	25%
Lowest "	25%

Fortunately, in spite of this great loss, the school still has the staff and facilities appropriate to a full intake and so it can safely be said that even the ablest pupils are receiving an education appropriate to their ability.

Conclusions for LEAs

If any personal conclusions may be drawn from this case study they are:

1. Where a reorganisation scheme means that a school is asked to take on a new function, then the LEA should ensure that the school is fully equipped from the start for that function. This will be costly (particularly in the smaller schools), and could mean diverting resources from one type of school to another. But unless all schools start off with staff and facilities to educate all pupils, they are not comprehensive, and parents can hardly be blamed for wanting their children to go to what they feel are the better endowed schools.
2. The LEA should accept responsibility for building up parents' confidence in the new system. Any desire by parents for a school other than the local one should be regarded by the LEA as an indication of inadequate public relations or under-endowment, or both.

3. It does not seem to be sufficiently understood that there is a world of difference between the section 76 parental 'choice' which originally had in mind transfers between schools of the same type and the kind of choice which parents are now making. Although the new choices are also theoretically between Comprehensive and Comprehensive, in practice it is their origins as Grammar or Modern that matter.
4. A parent's right of choice needs to be seen in relation to the rights of the community in general. If 38% exercise their right to go elsewhere, they are depriving the remaining 62% of a Comprehensive education.
5. Once the banner of unrestricted parental choice has been waved, it must be very hard for any Councillor to speak against it. Nevertheless, it is clear that in one County at least the result of the present policy could lead to the development of a system of schools that is anything but comprehensive and socially far more divisive than the old bipartite system.

Newly Qualified Teachers

A new scheme for newly qualified teachers has been started. Teachers in their first year of teaching may take out a subscription to **Forum** for half the normal price, fifty pence (50p). Students in their last year at Colleges of Education (and those in University Education Departments) who wish to take advantage of this concession are asked to fill in the form below.

Name

Address

College

I shall be in my first teaching post in the Autumn of 1971. I enclose 50 pence for a reduced subscription to **Forum**. Return this form to the Business Manager, **Forum**, 58 Elms Road, Leicester, LE2 3JE.

A New Town goes comprehensive

Kenneth Coram

The headmaster of a Stevenage Junior School and member of the **Forum** Editorial Board describes how the determination of local teachers in junior and secondary schools to transform the bipartite into a comprehensive system with all-ability schools has minimised the dangers of parental choice.

Stevenage was the first New Town to be designated after the second world war. The original town with a population of 5,000 lay astride the Great North Road and the main railway line, less than 30 miles from the centre of London. The town has now spread far into the Hertfordshire countryside and has a population of 65,000 which will rise to 80,000-90,000 within the next few years.

Under the Hertfordshire authority secondary education in the town was planned on traditional bipartite lines. By 1965 there were 10 secondary schools in the town—3 of them three-form entry Grammar Schools and 7 four-form entry secondary modern schools.

In the early 1960's a lively debate took place in the teacher organisations and in the town generally on the future pattern of secondary education. There was a good deal of support for 11-16 all ability schools followed by junior colleges, some people favoured a merging of schools to form larger units, but the County authority rejected both these plans in favour of a scheme under which all the ten schools in the town should become five-form entry, all-ability schools within an age range from 11-18.

After initially rejecting the Stevenage plan the Department of Education and Science gave provisional agreement and reorganisation began in 1969. The money earmarked for a new secondary school together with additional funds was used to provide extensions to some of the existing secondary schools. These extensions were designed to equip these schools up to the standard required for a five-form entry all-ability school.

As a result of discussions between the authority and the teachers a phased scheme over three years came into operation in 1969. Under this plan there is a rough parity between the abilities of the intake into all the schools.

The erstwhile grammar schools accepted a gradual increase in the number of less academic children, so that within four years they will be accepting the full range of ability. This was done so that they could recruit staff to deal with remedial work and the less able child. One such school has recently advertised for a 'head of department to combine counselling and remedial work in this former grammar school now being enlarged to accept children of

all ability organised in unstreamed classes'. A remarkable change from a grammar school to an unstreamed, all-ability school within three years.

To assist parents in making a choice of school for their eleven-year-old children, Open Evenings are held in each secondary school when parents are able to ask questions, hear the Headmaster talk about the school, and look round the buildings. This is now the second year the scheme has been operating and it is interesting to note that increasing numbers of parents have taken advantage of these open evenings, and a great many questions are asked.

There is no doubt that many parents are endeavouring to find out as much as they can about the secondary schools before they make their choice. Probably the majority of parents are influenced by their own schooling and think in traditional terms about the type of secondary education for their children. But they are obviously impressed by the variety of choices offered to children in these all-ability schools, the spacious and attractive sixth form accommodation, science laboratories, craft rooms etc., and the obvious care and thought which the Stevenage secondary schools are giving to their all-ability intake.

Following these visits the parents have an opportunity to discuss their child's education with the junior school headmaster and staff, and advice is available on the choice of secondary school. The parent then fills in a form on which he has to make a choice of four secondary schools in order of preference. In 1969, the first year the scheme was in operation, 75% of parents received their first choice; in 1970 this rose to 78% with 14% receiving their second choice, giving a satisfactory figure of 92% first or second choices.

Nonstreamed secondary schools

One of the most interesting results of the introduction of all-ability schools has been the increase in nonstreaming in these secondary schools.

One of these schools, previously a grammar school, stated very clearly its reasons for nonstreaming. In September 1969 they took in for the first time 120 pupils spanning 70% of the ability range, and after a discussion in which all staff were involved they created four evenly balanced classes each containing the full span of ability. They did this firstly because since their beginning as a grammar school in 1961 the whole spirit of the school had been against labelling, streaming, promoting and demoting. Secondly, as one of the reasons for setting up all-ability schools had been to remove the effect of 11+ failure, to replace this with A B C D grouping seemed absurd. Small all-ability schools must be expansive in attitude if they are to succeed, and they believed that nonstreaming would enable children to expand to their full capacities: streaming made them live down to their placing.

The heads of the various departments were happy with the results of the first year of nonstreaming: achievements had been different from those of previous years but every bit as valuable. As a result of the reports and staff discussions, they decided to continue nonstreaming into the second year.

New criteria for choice

The primary school head finds that the previous worry and frustration surrounding selection has now disappeared. There are now no feelings of grievance or failure amongst parents and children caused in the past because apparent lack of ability at 11 resulted in rejection. The fact that the less academic children are now going to what were the grammar schools has really convinced parents that all-ability schools are a fact.

There is a much more positive interest among working class parents in the structure, curriculum and aims of the secondary schools because now they have the opportunity of choosing the secondary school for their child. It will be interesting to see if any of the almost fanatical desire of sections of the middle class to retain grammar schools is transferred to sections of the other 75% of the population, and emerges as a strong desire to encourage and develop the all-ability or comprehensive school.

Whereas in middle class families the parent normally has most say in the choice of secondary school, there is evidence that in a working class milieu the child's

opinions are quite often of greater importance. Children tend to opt for the schools that their friends will attend—one extremely bad aspect of the selection system was that friendships were shattered and the beginnings of a divisive class system established.

Whatever the supporters of selection at 11+ may say the stark facts are that there is a 10-20% error in the placing of children by these methods. Moreover, this estimate does not take into account the fact that selection procedures may create the future they predict. (Plowden, Vol 1 Para. 413). This is an extremely depressing situation for the head and teachers to face at the end of six to seven rewarding years in the primary school.

My present school has been nonstreamed since it opened in 1958, and no special coaching was ever given to cope with selection procedure; but, even so, there is now a feeling of relief in the school. Parents begin to see the value of the freedom of the primary school curriculum and the opportunities for the individual child to develop. In school we are now much more aware of inefficient teaching methods, class group or individual, and in spite of what supporters of the Black Papers say, we are paying more attention to reading and mathematics than ever before.

As the writer in the article 'Stevenage Two-Towns' (New Statesman 18.12.70) pointed out, one of the great problems of the majority of young school children is vocabulary and language. To combat this we have spent a great deal of time and a large amount of the school allowance on building up a comprehensive array of reading material, a reading workshop with an able experienced teacher in charge, and we have made this the focus of our work in the junior school.

Remaining problems

Two main doubts exist in some teachers' minds about the small all-ability schools which Hertfordshire has favoured. Firstly, that they may not be able to offer the variety of subjects at sixth form level to compare with that previously offered by good grammar schools, and that this may mean an approach to a sixth form college in four or five years time. Secondly, that the search for good examination results and university places in an effort to justify the comprehensive approach may lead to less attention being paid to the non-academic child.

Continuity of Education and Teacher control

Jack Walton

Headmaster of a nonstreamed comprehensive school when he joined the Editorial Board of **Forum**, Jack Walton is Senior Staff Tutor at the University of Exeter School of Education where he is closely involved with in-service courses for teachers. In this article he puts forward a scheme for co-ordinating local schools so that an effective educational continuum may be worked out.

Traditionally the picture of English education is one of separate units working quite independently. Whether we look at the pre-1944 pattern or the present day situation it is generally true that educational decisions relating to children are usually made in isolation. The primary school, or elementary school as it was prior to 1944, is responsible for the academic curriculum of the children it serves and there is no compulsion upon it to work in consultation with the secondary school to which the child will go. Like all generalisations this is not absolutely correct. As we know, heads of primary schools do talk with their colleagues in the secondary field and perhaps vice versa. This link however is one that depends on the initiative of the heads concerned. The primary schools and the secondary schools have different Boards of Managers, or Governors. The name of the body to which the schools are answerable is indeed significantly different.

Whilst this division has been generally accepted for many years, there is now a growing body of opinion urging a closer collaboration between the primary and the secondary sector. There are a variety of reasons for this. The age of eleven is no longer regarded as so definite a dividing line between one type of education and another. Perhaps no longer is a child in his last month at the primary school considered to be particularly different three months later when he enters his first term at the secondary school. Curriculum changes which are taking place in the primary school, or upper primary school, could well be continued into the secondary school. But if a number of primary schools serving a secondary school are each instituting a different type of curriculum in a certain area of knowledge, what kind of continuity is possible?

The development of comprehensive reorganisation has meant that in many areas one secondary is served by a definite number of primary schools. In other words, the secondary school and the feeding primary schools are all part of a complete unit. This situation suggests more powerfully the need of continuity and consultation. Nevertheless in spite of all these factors the English

educational system 11-18 presents today even greater appearance of tessellation than ever previously. No longer have we the simple and fairly uniform division 5-11 and then 11-15 or 11-18 thereafter. This of course exists but at the same time we have 5-8, 8-12, 12-18 or 5-9, 9-13, 13-18 or 5-12, 12-16, 16-18. One can nearly say 'Write down any combination of numbers between 5 and 18 and somewhere will be an educational system which coincides with those numbers.' It seems over recent years that our concern with the reorganisation of the school system has led us to ignore the importance of vertical continuity within it. Perhaps 'ignore' is not quite correct. Efforts have been made to promote discussion between primary and secondary schools but the autonomy of the organisations involved has militated against any really effective outcome. It seems that whatever we do no change of significance will be made until we consider the problem from another angle.

Too much autonomy

What we have been attempting to do in the last few years is to promote consultation and continuity but at the same time accepting a framework of organisation which both as a complete concept and in its particular parts is bound to work against the objectives of the exercise. Every headmaster in the present structure consciously or unconsciously does not wish to relinquish any of his authority. The teachers working with him also relate themselves to the children of their school in particular. The Board of Governors of a grammar school or a comprehensive school particularly serves that school and feels a responsibility to the age range of children in that school, as do the Board of Managers of a primary school. Have we not for the sake of the children to consider the whole age range, 5-18, when making educational decisions, not just a section of it?

It was remarked earlier that it may be better to look at the problem in a different way. That is, we ought to

postulate continuity and consultation and then try to achieve them in our present piecemeal structure. Should we not say that first we must make structural alterations in order to enable the continuity and consultation to develop?

A structure for continuity

The growth of comprehensive schools suggests a possible solution more easily than does the traditional bi-partite system. If a district has reorganised its secondary schools on comprehensive lines, irrespective of the comprehensive system that has been adopted there is a greater tendency for all the children from the serving primary schools to go to the same secondary school. If the LEA in question has developed middle schools then the primary schools, middle schools and upper school are often all serving the same child population. Thus one could have the situation where some 4,000 children between the ages of 5 and 18 are served by an age hierarchy of schools. Whilst this of course can also be the case where primary, secondary modern and secondary grammar schools exist here it often happens that because of the choice system the child may travel out of his distinct catchment area into a nearby one. This argument suggests that the united and common catchment area serving a child population for the 5-18 years is a factor which can work for the good of the children concerned. There are a number of arguments to suggest that neighbourhood catchment areas have disadvantages. They prevent a social mix. They could result in ghetto school districts which teachers avoid. There is no doubt that these are problems but one wonders whether the answer to these particular problems—the dispersal of children all over a city for example—is preferable to a positive attempt to consider these ghetto areas as challenges which could be overcome by the investment in them of extra teaching power and extra money. One wonders whether dispersal is really an avoidance of the problem.

Units of 4,000 children

However, given the opportunity in a district which has become comprehensive could we not now look at our population of 4,000 children as a whole rather than look at it as a series of parts? For the sake of this paper I am going to describe this collection of children as 'a unit' and

suggest that our educational energies should be directed to the total unit and not to its parts. Perhaps it would be useful to give an imaginary life to this unit of 4,000 children. Let us suppose that the LEA concerned has favoured the First School, Middle School, Upper School principle of reorganisation. One unit, then, of 4,000 children would have one Upper School 13-18, two Middle Schools 9-13, and a number of First Schools 5-9. Some of these latter may be quite small, others would have a population of possibly 100-200 children. As things are at the moment each of these schools is generally speaking quite autonomous, working under the direction of a headmaster responsible to a Board of Governors or a Board of Managers. In spite of all its potential this is an atomised structure and no matter what efforts are used or employed complete integration is impossible. Let us suppose, however, that all the various Governing Bodies disappear and in their place is created an Academic Board representative of all the schools in the unit. The composition of this Board would have to be carefully thought out. It could however include two representatives from each First School—one a headmaster/headmistress and one teacher, four representatives from each Middle School—one headmaster and three teachers in each case, and eight representatives from the Upper School—one headmaster and seven teachers. This would probably result in a total number of some 46 people. Add to this number one representative or two representatives from the LEA, two representatives from the local College(s) of Education, and fifteen members of the local community—parents and others—and the total number of the Academic Board becomes sixty-five. Immediately the objection is raised that the number is too large, that the Academic Board would be too unwieldy to be effective. This argument has got to be considered. How does the size compare, for example, with Local Government councils? There are certainly many examples of large bodies, large because they seek to be representative but who work quite effectively if a sub-committee system of delegation of work is accepted. One would imagine our Academic Board meeting as a full board once a term, delegating its main work to a variety of committees.

If the total size can be accepted and the principle of committee delegation appears feasible, what are the other problems? These problems perhaps depend on what power the Academic Board will have. I suggest that it has a real power and that it will be responsible for the following, usually through sub-committees: it will be responsible for determining general educational aims for the whole unit; it will be concerned with matters derived from

Resources centre

these general aims, such as social organisation, curriculum planning in a general sense, etc.; it will be responsible for the in-service education of the teachers in the unit; it will in association with the Colleges be responsible for the teaching practice of students associated with the unit; it will determine its own occasional days holidays; it will be responsible for the allocation of money to schools within the unit; it will be responsible for the appointment of teachers to the unit; it will be actively concerned with the development of relationships between the unit and the community; it will be responsible for the development of a Resources Centre which will feed the whole unit.

This list of responsibilities gives the unit and the Academic Board considerable power and perhaps also implies a diminution of power both of the LEA and also of the individual schools and headmasters within the unit. Well, this may be to the good. Many people today feel that democracy is not working as well as it should because those involved feel that their actions are of no account. If in this country we want an active democracy we have got to be sufficiently courageous to give people the opportunity for effective action. If this means some diminution of the concentration of power in certain hands this may be all to the good. What I think could result from this is not only an enhanced sense of community, an opportunity to consider the total education of children, but also a real increase in the status of the teacher. Units of course would work in different ways but the unit does give the opportunity for creatively interpreting the role of the teacher. Of course his main work continues in the classroom but under the unit system he is represented directly on an academic board which can be seen to relate directly to the needs of the community; he can more actively be involved in decisions about in-service training, spending of money and the training of teachers. He can be better served in the area of resources. It may be here that lies one of the most obvious advantages of the unit structure to the teacher.

A resources centre

Each unit could be the base for a small resource centre which would have appropriate reprographic and audio-visual machines. Employed at the centre would be two technicians, one in the electrical photographic field, the

other perhaps a graphics artist. The task of the centre would be to provide for the software resources to satisfy the curriculum needs of the schools in the unit. The centre could perhaps be attached to the largest of the school libraries and work rooms should be made available for development work. Teachers from the unit could be seconded for short or long periods of time to work upon the curriculum problems presented by their colleagues. Consultants from Universities and Colleges could be called in when required and students from Colleges of Education, Colleges of Art, and the University Department of Education encouraged to work at the centre as part of their course.

This Resources Centre would perhaps become the nucleus of curriculum research and development for all the linked schools, controlled by the teachers and with easy association with outside organisations: the 'grass roots' policy of the Schools Council could become a reality.

It seems that we must look very critically at our present educational structure and look ahead imaginatively at what could be. If we believe that education should be continuous and that teachers should be involved in the decision-making process, perhaps speculations of this kind might not be capricious but helpful.

A SUBSCRIPTION TO FORUM

To: FORUM,

58 Elms Road, Leicester, LE2 3JE.

* Please send three issues of **Forum**, starting with Vol..... No..... to the address below.
I enclose cheque/P.O. for £1.00 (100p).

* Please send a Banker's Order Form to the address below.

NAME

ADDRESS

* delete as appropriate /

Primary into Secondary (2)

Harold Hayling

In the second of his two articles a District Inspector of the ILEA gives his personal opinion on some of the problems of carrying the best features of primary school teaching into the junior-secondary years: this follows his article in **Forum** vol 13 no 1. There he described some characteristics of the Great Divide separating primary and secondary schools, and analysed the best features of modern primary teaching.

There are likely to be many other problems arising from teachers' attitudes to primary methods. It is common in co-operative teaching for the teachers to work with children in the proximity of other teachers, and in consequence they are more exposed to the judgement and feelings of other adults and other children than would be the case in the traditional teaching situation. All teachers who move from class teaching to the more open teaching of co-operative inter-action between teachers and children may find the change difficult to bear in the early stages and for a short period, but there may be some teachers who will find the adjustment impossible to achieve. For these teachers the reassurance of the possibility of withdrawal to more traditional forms of teaching will be necessary. However, not only does co-operative teaching require social adjustment between teacher and teacher, but in practice the social and psychological atmosphere it brings into being necessitates the encouragement of democratic practices if the method is to develop. The commonly accepted autocratic practices of secondary teachers are likely to come into conflict with these underlying drives of co-operative teaching. It will clearly not be a simple matter to introduce secondary teachers to the virtues of co-operative teaching.

The introduction of thematic, enquiry-based approaches to teaching children in the middle years of schooling—in which subject boundaries will be crossed frequently, reference to books, to audio-visual resources, to materials and to the current experiences of the world outside school will be commonplace—may also prove to be abrasive to the professional nerves of secondary teachers. The free movement of children seeking information from a variety of resources, the practical work arising from the children's findings which may be displayed as charts, models or magazines all requiring the use of a wide range of materials such as paint, paste, clay and water may give rise to attitudes of intolerance and hostility amongst teachers who are unfamiliar with these forms of learning. Recognition of the existence of these feelings and exploration of the means by which they may be modified are likely to be vital if changing patterns of

education are to be implemented. Such action is of the utmost importance to the children since they are quick to sense teachers' attitudes and expectations, particularly if they are exposed to confusions of aims and methods which may emerge as contradictions in the behaviour patterns of adults.

Impact of streaming

Children's sensitivity to adult attitudes and expectations may be observed also when juniors are transferred from nonstreamed schools to streamed secondary schools. The newcomers, streamed by ability, will come to know rapidly whether they are in 'A', 'B', 'C' or 'D' stream, or they will be 'broad-banded' or 'settled' and take a little longer to gauge the significance of their position. In one way or another they will learn to work with a 'homogenised mix' of the year's intake rather than as they did in the earlier stage of their education, with a broad cross-section of the school community. This learning by the pupils has consequences both for the attitudes of the pupils and of the staff. For many of the children positive motivation to learning diminishes and simultaneously authoritarianism amongst the staff is reinforced for they now have to insist on learning rites. If streaming in the middle school years is adhered to against the general trend of good primary practice, the pupils will not take long to become aware of the conflict of aims and attitudes between the two stages of education—and these will, of course, add to staff difficulties at a time of change.

and of examinations

Nearly as powerful and all-pervading as the influence of streaming in secondary schools is the clutching control of the examination system. Its power is felt by eleven-year-olds within the first term of their entry to their secondary schools. Its unique signals are beamed to the pupils throughout the years they spend at this stage of education. The signals are specific and made very clear by constant repetition even to the dullest. The message is

'Receive the spoken words, regurgitate them as written words and recall them on the appropriate days. Follow this simple course to achieve success and recognition'. Other messages such as those concerning failure to comply with the master-message, or the consequence of non-compliance with organisational demands are beamed to the recipients at regular intervals; but inevitably, as the years pass, a substantial proportion of the intake reject the message, ignore the message or establish their own often unpleasant set of signals to announce their distaste for the regime of which they have become a part. The authors of *Half our future* appear to recognise these responses in their comment, 'there is much unrealised talent especially among boys and girls whose potential is masked,' masked, they add, by 'unsuitable programmes and teaching methods (which) may aggravate their difficulties and frustration (may express itself in apathy and rebelliousness.' (p 3). Examination policy in the middle years of schooling will need careful scrutiny.

Within the walls of most secondary schools there is an important organisational instrument which may also itself convey messages of dubious value to its pupils. It is the time-table. Those who structure the work of secondary schools appear to assume that if their pupils are to meet the demands of examinations, the pressures of a changing society and the fall-out from the explosion of knowledge, each child will solve the ensuing dilemmas most easily and effectively by being exposed to as many subject specialists as possible during the working week. Their thinking leads to the creation of the large, minutely organised, heavily fragmented time-table whose demands condition every individual in the school. These demands cannot fail to penetrate the thinking of the children for they are exposed to them daily until they are at least fifteen years of age. This process of indoctrination has much to say to pupils about learning in schools, but amongst the more important points made are that:

1. Learning emanating from teachers or books requires the picking up of fragments of information at 35 to 40 minute intervals;
2. Learning during practical periods lasts longer and gives more scope for handling resources other than books;
3. Learning requires of you interest in a topic chosen for you by a teacher and, accompanying this, an ability to adjust to the teacher's and the topics' demands upon you. Further, within half-an-hour these attributes must be switched off, but a few minutes later they must be switched on for another topic and another teacher.
4. The good pupil accommodates to seven (or eight) such encounters each day, and learns to switch on and off at command.

5. School learning is often far removed from real life, personal interests and relevance to the world outside school.

The creation of these attitudes to learning, by accident or by design, will have to be avoided during the middle years of schooling.

If some of the best features of primary school teaching are to be transferred to the junior-secondary years of education so that there may be more in common on each side of the Great Divide between the teachers' skills, the children's attitudes, the organisation, the methods and the curriculum of the two schools it will be necessary to do more than to talk or write about the problems, the difficulties and the possible solutions. It will be necessary to create a strategy and plans for action to take account of the factors discussed here and others which are raised elsewhere. It is possible that teachers' centres will be the selected vehicles for implementing these plans, where courses on 'The Middle Years' will be held after working hours on the usual basis of voluntary attendance by teachers. I doubt the efficacy of such vehicles to fulfil the demands of tasks which have been set out above in outline.

If the complex tasks of changing attitudes, expectations and techniques are to be taken seriously then it is imperative that it be recognised that the energy and the interest of every member of the staff be engaged. This means that full-time in-service education is vital for teachers if the middle years of schooling are to be changed. It is obvious that in a large secondary school full-time in-service education of all members of staff is impossible, but it could be undertaken department by department and extended over a lengthy period of time if:

- (a) teacher replacements could be obtained in sufficient quantity,
- or (b) Colleges of Education and University Departments co-operated with the schools in manning departments during periods of full-time in-service education of staff.

The first of the alternatives may be possible one day, but the second could be applied immediately with considerable advantages accruing for students and for teaching staffs grappling with the problems of changing patterns of education.

Opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not commit the ILEA.

Discussion

Comprehensives and public relations

Many people express disquiet and anxiety about the standards, size and impersonality of the comprehensive school and these doubts are easily communicated to the children. Regrettably, few LEAs have dealt rigorously or adequately with these fears, and schools will have to accept that for the next few years many people, some of them in authority, will not fully share or understand the comprehensive ideals. Despite Mrs Thatcher quite a number of schools are 'going comprehensive' and they are going to need to sell themselves to their communities far harder than they have done in the past. They ought to begin the campaign with the first-year intake and the people who have the greatest influence on them, their parents and primary schools.

Tutors should make contact with the parents well before the children come to the comprehensive. Besides the primary schools' parents organisations there are other community associations who would welcome talks, discussions and films on the activities and aims of the comprehensive. Displays of work, demonstrations by the school orchestra, drama group or gym team can easily be arranged in the primary or secondary school, or the village hall. A glossy brochure such as any self-respecting private school, however shabby, might produce is a must for every comprehensive's public relations armoury. The publication, which could be a supplement of the regular school magazine, should make quite obvious the school's concern for high standards and concern for all children whatever their ability and social background. The school should aim to have a copy not only in every house, but in every waiting room, every works canteen and

every public building in the area. Parents will receive a personal letter from the First Year Tutor welcoming them and their child, reminding them of the willingness to help and permanent availability of the pastoral staff. Teachers cannot ignore the findings of Plowden and Douglas research. Parents do matter and they must be made to feel that they matter, and regular opportunities must be found for them and staff to meet formally and informally.

The contributing primary schools often feel over-awed and under-valued by big brother comprehensive and again it is important that these and other related anxieties are not passed on to the children. We all know that schools should consult each other over all aspects of education—continuity of curriculum and teaching method, closer liaison between teachers most involved at the transfer age, discussions about the records and assessments passed on, mutual cooperation with the area social workers, etc. When the secondary school serves the whole community, liaison is easier and now is a good time to consider forming an area educational council of the primary headteachers and the comprehensive head (or his delegate), which can thrash out answers to these problems. School staff should be invited to attend each others fund-raising events, open days, PTA meetings, careers festivals, etc. These links will not just happen: they will have to be worked for.

Moving from the small primary school to the massive comprehensive is a major step in the life of any child and pastoral staff must be carefully chosen. In the early years of secondary education children make some important, if subconscious, decisions about their involvement, which are crucial for the subsequent attitude and success of the pupil and the school. From the first day they must see that the school is a caring and relevant institution. Their status within the school affects their adjustment. Many of them will have been high achievers

in various ways in their primary schools, but when they enter the secondary school they feel stripped of their previous achievements and will have to wait until they are in the Fifth or even Sixth Form before achieving similar recognition. This need not be so. A First Year could have its own Council with elected officers and publication, and sub-committees for sporting, social and community activities. In this way young children can have opportunities to develop their own individuality, a sense of responsibility, and above all a feeling that they matter.

Unless the school provides these opportunities and sells itself to its own pupils and the community behind them, many of the youngsters will opt out physically and mentally.

PETER DUNN,
Spondon House School, Derby.



Teacher training debate

Crisis of identity

Both the vocationally motivated student and his peer who regards the fact that he is preparing for teaching as second to the business of being a student and getting a higher education are stock figures in the Colleges. The one may perhaps come of a family with teaching in its blood or for other reasons have quite early set his mind on becoming a teacher. The other may be well aware that he has come to College only because he failed to gain entry to a University, or was advised not to try. He may be entirely uncommitted to the idea of teaching. The one sees himself as a teacher in training and may regard those aspects of the College curriculum that call for academic attainment above a level he thinks required for school teaching with suspicion. The other experiments with different forms of 'studenthood' and may look upon professional courses and teaching practice as diversions in the mainstream of his life.

Similarly, tutors in the Colleges can be located along a line having as left-marker the, probably Education, tutor who sees teaching practice as the culmination and test not only of his own work but also of that of the College as an institution. The right-marker is the tutor who thinks of theoretical understanding, whether of a traditional subject, of an integrated area of study or of one of the more recently demarcated disciplines of education, as his main and rightful concern.

This potential schizophrenia is most evident in Education Departments where a young psychologist or sociologist may work alongside or in the same room as a very well experienced 'general practitioner'. The young man will take every opportunity to pursue his research interests. During the time

that his colleague is researching, perhaps at the University, the 'general practitioner' may be extending his contact with local schools.

The conceptions that these two have of College tutoring could mirror their orientations. The difference could be that between a student-centred and a knowledge-centred approach to the task. Once again to state it in extreme form, the tutor who is still a teacher thinks primarily in terms of the individual student, his responses and experiences. He may from that entirely admirable position fall into the error of thinking that the provision of experiences and satisfactions exhaustively describes his job. Standards can then be allowed to fall on the grounds that the student attends, is co-operative, has the right attitudes and is a nice person who will do no harm to children. On the other hand, the tutor who has one foot in the world of research will insist that all decisions are in fact theoretical ones and that to take decisions in such a complex activity as teaching on the basis of hunch, guesswork and feel for a situation alone is to court failure. What is required, he may say, is a body of teachers who can discriminate issues and apply established knowledge and techniques to their solution. He may go on, though, to make his lectures and seminars merciless pursuits of truth, failing perhaps to take account of the interests and attitudes of his students. His failure may be the more disastrous for the lack of school teaching experience.

This tension between the 'pastoral' and the 'academic' in College seems to me to become most apparent when considering the effect of B Ed on the Colleges. Could it be that the general effect will be to contribute to what is already a trend? That the concern of

the institution to produce a rather specific kind of person as meeting a personality specification for teaching will diminish and its concern to produce people with theoretical understanding will increase?

Were this to be so, several dangers would present themselves. It would be a great pity if a shift from the practical and rule of thumb to the technical and theoretical resulted in valuable elements in the student-centred ethos of many Colleges being lost. Again, teaching is a practical activity in which practical decisions have to be taken. To expect B Ed graduates to take these decisions more effectively, to be better teachers, would not seem to be unreasonable. Yet, of course, much of the theorising behind what is the current best practice derives not from researches inside the established and separate disciplines of education such as philosophy, psychology and sociology but from the armchair speculations and edifying discourses of the 'great educators' now so much out of vogue in the Colleges. Paradoxically, those equipped with a thorough study of the field of, say, sociology of education may be less decisive performers on the classroom floor, be greatly more hesitant about decision-taking, than those equipped with a reassuring smattering of Piaget and Bernstein.

We surely need a careful reassessment both of the identity of the College of Education as an arm of Higher Education and the objectives and procedures of B Ed.

M J GOLBY,
Poulton-le-Fylde College.



Apprenticeship?

There is much dissatisfaction with the training teachers are receiving. This is not surprising when one looks at the facts. The Colleges of Education are under the umbrella of the Universities who are in a muddle as to what education is all about. They have appointed philosophers of education to think about its aims and purposes. In the meantime they are spreading their muddled thinking to their students: Professor R S Peters admitted this in his inaugural lecture.

Until the Universities are clear as to what education is, it is useless to allow them to train teachers. Teaching is the art of communicating with another person to pass on information or a skill. For teaching to be successful the teacher must have something to communicate which the pupil wishes to learn, an understanding of the way the pupil learns, and the ability to establish a line of communication with the pupil.

Children are individuals at different stages of growth physically, mentally and emotionally. They learn most readily from their own experience. The more they are allowed to learn at their own level of development the more rapidly they will progress. They learn through their relationships with other children as well as the teacher. Education is not imparting knowledge but helping the child to grow in awareness and experience. We are living in a rapidly changing world when the bounds of knowledge are continually expanding. There is no body of facts which have to be learnt except to pass examinations.

Adults do not differ from children in the way they learn except they are not so ready to experiment and try new ways. The Universities have changed least in the seven hundred years since the first one came into existence in this country. The primary schools have changed most in the hundred years they have existed, so teachers should be trained in the primary schools instead of Universities and Colleges of Education. Primary schools are child centred and trying to fulfil the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of a child. 'He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture, and enable him on a basis of equal opportunity to develop his abilities, his individual judgement, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society.' Increasingly they have an integrated day so that each child has the satisfaction of finishing one task before starting another. The teacher helps the child to do his work instead of telling him what to do. The classrooms are workshops, but their work is seriously hampered by the lack of adults as small children are most in need of adult help as they have least experience on which to draw. They cannot read so cannot gain experience from others by that

method. They need to verbalise their experience to develop their language which is a necessary preliminary to reading. There should be the greatest number of adults in primary schools instead of least. Skills are best learnt on a one to one basis and once a child can read group work should be a time for exchanging information gained about a topic or for visual work. Students should have plenty of opportunities for talking to pupils. The idea of subjects grew from a pre-scientific concept of man and the universe. Projects in which teachers with special interests work together as a team are a better basis for work in school than timetabled subjects.

The first step in altering the present situation would be to let experienced practising teachers tutor students and pass on their expertise as part-time lecturers in Colleges of Education and Institutes of Education while making lecturers of Education teach and demonstrate their expertise to the students as part-time teachers. As children are developing individuals all teachers should have experience, during their training, of teaching all ages of children. They should also have some knowledge of how a child learns the three Rs.

EDITH NEWBIGIN
Liverpool.

A Staff College?

Among the many proposals put forward in the current debate on the improvement of teacher training it is perhaps somewhat surprising that the idea of a staff college has not been pushed to the fore. Yet the arguments in favour of the creation of such an institution would appear to be particularly strong.

In recent months much has been said and written about the deficiencies of college staffs in relation to the task in hand. Let me say at once that I consider much of the discussion to be at a woefully superficial level. At the moment the fashion appears to be to emphasize the 'impractical' nature of courses and lecturers, many of whom, it is suggested, have inadequate experience of teaching in schools. There may well be a good deal of sense in this, but the suggested solutions which derive from the discussion of the point hardly inspire confidence.

It is *not* simply a question of getting 'good, sound, well-experienced teachers' to come into colleges of education either on a full or part-time basis. The task of college of education lecturers is in fact very complex, and its requirements are not and cannot be identical with those of the teacher in schools. Success in one sphere—and one would emphasize that this point derives not from philosophical reasoning, but from direct observation in an area where objective research findings are startlingly absent—by no means guarantees success or even adequacy in the other.

To put it another way, the role change involved in the transition from school teaching to college of education work is of a very profound nature indeed. In almost any other sphere (large scale industry, the forces, the civil service) increasingly such a

transition would be engineered by a deliberate process involving some sort of structured course. In the case of move from school to college of education, however, the problem, in formal terms, is hardly admitted to exist.

A staff college would, therefore, be concerned, at least in part, with the provision of thorough-going induction courses based, it is to be hoped, on realistic investigation into both the intellectual and behavioural factors involved in the switch from one type of responsibility to another—as with other types of re-training education, it should be noted, the problem would not be simply one of teaching additional skills.

A structured induction to college of education teaching is of all current requirements one of the most logical: and possibly one should go the whole hog and suggest that the process ought to include a diagnostic element in that, as I have suggested above, past performance is not an infallible guide to success in a field where new and highly distinctive challenges appear.

Induction courses would be a central concern of the staff college, but the provision of in-service periods of study would be scarcely less important. And here, it could be argued, the retention of traditional attitudes in the criticism of the work of colleges of education has tended to obscure an extremely important point. The *canard* that tutors in colleges of education concern themselves overmuch with an elaborate, impractical and futuristic methodology is one of ancient origin and of surprising longevity. As a factor in the appraisal of college performance, however, it has become dangerously dysfunctional in that it now serves to draw attention away from the fact that in many important areas (in primary school methodology, involvement in local radio and so on) colleges are tending to lag behind the more forward-looking schools—partly, of course, because the problem of assessing student performance in a

rapidly-developing and highly diverse educational environment has become a very severe one. Here, indeed, the situation calls for the objective re-thinking in which a staff college could play a central and permanent role.

There is an additional argument. The growth of the size of individual colleges of education in recent years has been a major feature of educational development. Inevitably complex managerial problems have been thrown up to be handled, in many cases, in an *ad hoc* way. Possibly the time has come for managerial training of senior staff in a relatively systematic way and here polytechnics and colleges of technology have to some extent pointed the way.

JOHN SALT
Sheffield Polytechnic.

The James Committee

The Editorial Board of *Forum* has submitted evidence to the James Committee of Enquiry into Teacher Education. This will be published in the next issue, Autumn 1971. *Ed.*

Furthering discussion

The editors welcome contributions to discussion, particularly from readers who wish to take up points raised in articles. Contributions to our discussion pages should be not more than 800 words in length.

Science Teaching: Transition

Peter Prosser

In **Forum** vol 13 no 1 Mr Prosser discussed how the heuristic principle of Nuffield science could be applied with average secondary pupils, and here he considers some implications of the trend towards more science in junior schools.

Science on any large scale is a comparatively new phenomenon in primary schools, and like more traditional areas of learning such as mathematics, it has posed problems both methodological and organisational in the transfer of children from primary to secondary schools.

The advent of science in primary schools has often been misunderstood and not entirely welcomed by the secondary schools to which they contribute. Brady¹ has hinted, and more recently, Caroline Moorehead² has emphasized that the communication gap between the staffs of primary and secondary schools is still pretty well as wide as it has ever been. Primary school teachers think they know what kind of science is done in the secondary school, and why, and secondary teachers think they know what goes on in the primary school, but only very rarely are adequate steps taken for each to find out what the other is doing, still less to formulate a common policy.

It is generally believed that the emphasis in primary schools is now on discovery and exploratory approaches of a cross disciplinary nature. In such schools science provides one of a number of tools for investigating environmental problems, rather than a subject or a body of facts. Investigatory science of this kind has a quality of its own, and this is a sufficient reason for doing it. This is the essential reasoning behind the Nuffield Junior Project material. A further good reason for introducing scientific work in primary schools is that valuable practical pre-secondary school experience is provided at appropriate ages, so that a body of suitable concrete concepts have been built up in deliberate preparation for the abstractions to come. These are both valid reasons for science in *primary* schools, and it would be encouraging to think that this kind of science is being done on a large scale in such schools. In fact, many schools are doing no science at all, and others are doing another kind of science.

For science organised in the way I have described there is often no syllabus, possibly no record of what has been experienced in each year, and only very rarely is a record passed on to the secondary school. Topics often range far from conventional science—from the mysteries of piddocks grinding holes in stones on the shore, to the alleged properties of a new detergent. Children coming

from the primary school might be expected to have a good grounding in scientific method, and a broad base of concrete experience from which to start their secondary school courses. All of this poses no threat to the secondary school work, and would only appear to be beneficial.

But it is possible for science to be taught much more formally in the junior school. A spate of junior school science books, work cards and kits has poured from publishers eager to exploit a new market. Very little of this material is original, and much of it has been written by secondary school teachers. Much too often, the material is watered down secondary science with an emphasis on the easy, the exciting and the spectacular. This formally presented material has been traditionally done in the secondary school, and it is difficult to see what is gained by doing it *in this form* in the primary school. Few topics are (or can be) worked in any depth, or with adequate generalisation. Secondary science teachers complain, with some justification, that the children have done all the attractive experiments, but leaving the secondary teachers to develop the themes nevertheless.

Primary school diversity

If the children in all the contributory primary schools to a particular secondary school were to work to a common pattern, or even agree on a common approach, and a range of common experiences, many of the problems of transition would not arise. But mostly they do not, so some children will have experienced discovery-based environmental science, others will have done carefully prepared verification, yet others will have done descriptive nature study; and others will have done none of it at all.

This problem of diversity of background and experience can be overcome in one of two ways. The traditional solution has been to assume no previous knowledge and to 'start from scratch'. But this results in disappointment and resentment in those pupils who have been used to finding out things for themselves and, not

infrequently, misunderstanding on the part of the teacher who has not found out much about their previous education. The early work of a secondary course is often just the material—classification and so on—that the children have met in primary schools.

The alternative solution is to adopt an unstreamed, diagnostic approach in the first year; to set little practical investigations designed to test each pupil's grasp of scientific method, and main areas of experience and then to group the children accordingly so that they can start an appropriate programme of work at a suitable point.

Secondary schools often have as their undeclared aim the passing of external examinations. The urge to start work with these in view as soon as possible is strong. Pupils who have been encouraged to investigate freely and range widely, quite suddenly find that their practical activities are disciplined and done within a time limit, and they are expected to master considerable bodies of factual material from books. In what is essentially a practical subject, this change can be abrupt, and result in considerable loss of enthusiasm, on the part of the children.

Just as it is widely believed that discovery science is characteristic of modern primary school curricula, so the belief is held that in the early secondary years a revolution has been effected in teaching so that the science teaching, while being based on more narrowly defined topics, has a large individual practical element. One can find schools like this, but there are many more in which, partly for reasons elaborated in a previous article³, the teaching is very much as it has always been—book-inspired verification. It is certain that in the transitional period it is possible to build up an enthusiasm for science that will mature and last; and it is easy to kill interest so that it will never be recovered.

if not a syllabus. If this co-operation does not occur, there will be two transitional periods and it will hardly be appropriate to 'start from scratch' each time.

Caroline Moorehead has commented on the lack of understanding between secondary and primary teachers. Some attempts have been made to arrange conferences at teachers' centres so that the two sides can get together. Very rarely have secondary specialists appeared and I have heard it said that such meetings are not really necessary. Presumably they are not, if one intends to assume no previous knowledge at 11+ but if there is justification for the teaching of science in primary schools, there follows a great need for co-operation in the development of a common policy from the infants through to 15+.

I have said little about the problem of transition for children of widely different abilities, since the essential problems that apply in science will occur with children of all kinds of ability. It is possible for all children to progress some way along the road to scientific discovery. The clever ones, who at 11+ are well on the way to dealing with total abstractions will cope with transfer problems as long as their enthusiasm is maintained. Those of lesser ability are in need of skilled and sympathetic teaching in the early stages if they are to maintain an interest in science. Perhaps above all, they need to see their investigations coming to a clear and simple conclusion.

I have suggested that the difficulties in transfer from primary to secondary school that are particularly scientific, largely result from major misunderstandings between the primary school, non-specialist teachers and the secondary school specialists. Each side has so much to give the other, and it is a great pity that there is apparently so little enthusiasm for getting together, even when opportunities are provided.

Common policies needed

The advent of middle schools may resolve, or it could complicate, these difficulties. Co-operation between the first and middle schools is likely to be close so that in scientific as in other areas, common policy can be worked out. The movement from wide-ranging discovery to disciplined practical study will take place gradually during the middle school years, and such will be the short time for preparation for examinations that it will be imperative for the Upper and Middle schools to agree a policy,

References

1. BRADY, C.:
Science Teaching and transfer from primary to secondary education. *School Science Review* 50 November, 1968, 245-8 pp.
2. MOOREHEAD, Caroline:
Missing Links, *Times Educational Supplement*, 26.2.71, 4 p.
3. PROSSER, P. J.:
Nuffield Science and the Average Secondary Pupil, *Forum* 13.1.(1970).

Introducing the 'Integrated Day' in Junior School

Ernest Choat

A lecturer at Rachel McMillan College of Education tries to dispel some of the confusion about what is meant by the Integrated Day and describes how this style of learning was introduced in a particular school.

Teachers classify the 'integrated day' in a number of different ways: when groups in the class work on different aspects of a theme by means of topic methods or as a project; when the class is split into groups which rotate throughout the day to follow particular disciplines; when an unstructured framework permits the children to do as they wish during the day; when there is a pattern of 'essential' lessons in the morning and free activity in the afternoon.

When deciding to use the 'integrated day' organisation with my class, it was necessary to consider my own interpretation and what I was attempting to achieve. Acknowledging that children should be allowed to freely express themselves but that, within the freedom, each child's attainment must be maintained to my level of expectation, how was this to be secured?

The class was non-streamed, third year juniors, without experience of working by themselves or of individual relationships with the teacher. The immediate priorities were to establish each child's ability and to formulate how the children were to be introduced to work in an 'integrated day' situation. The first requisite was soon resolved, whilst the second presented two goals—(a) the desire to produce a stimulating atmosphere which would combine the children into a corporate unit to encourage class participation and socialisation, and (b) a system to promote individual and group work for the children to acquire knowledge, skills and values.

A co-ordinating theme

The investigation of a theme, extending language in the form of class discussions, was the intended method for achieving the goals. In addition, the children would be obliged to do mathematics, written work and reading each day. Mathematics was excluded from the theme: children's stages of progression in the subject differ and this requires that they work individually, at the pace and level applicable to their stage of learning.

'Road Transport' was selected as the theme to follow. By agreement with the Headmaster, the set time-table was abandoned except for allocated times to use the hall for

physical education and for organised games and swimming. The children were grouped according to the aspect of the theme which they desired to follow, and each group was allocated a time during the day when it could undertake various activities, eg write, read, paint, model, do mathematics, science, etc.

more self-direction

After four weeks the children were sufficiently used to this mode of working to enable the class organisation to be changed to a less structured day. The children themselves then chose how they organised their day, with whom they worked, and the activities which they undertook; but they remained committed to written work, reading and mathematics each day. They were not restricted to working in the classroom but in any place they wished in the school, eg library, hall, playground, etc. The class discussions were of infinite value; the children presented and discussed their findings, read their written work, questioned each other, debated future phases of enquiry within the theme. These discussions were used as opportunities to correct English faults.

'Road Transport' continued until mid-term with the remaining half term covered by another theme, 'The Air'. The children did not congregate in ability, or stable, groups. It was not uncommon to see 'gifted' children working with 'backward' ones. Clusters reformed throughout the day, depending on the aspects which the children attempted. The quantity of output exceeded expectations whilst the quality of work was above the anticipated standard. The extent to which the children went to secure information was illuminating. The local 'bus garage was plagued with enquiries, travel agents visited, books borrowed from libraries, toy models brought from home, cigarette cards sought, business houses written to, relations questioned, and other classes in the school asked to supply data. Work was freely completed at home and brought to school, and connected innovations pursued.

One of the problems was to ensure that the children followed a balanced curriculum. A new appraisal was

necessary if the children were to balance their studies. The next theme being 'The Sea', the children grouped themselves to investigate aspects in depth whilst, in addition, each child prepared a folder to complete work on six topics in less detail, three of which—'The Sea Shore', 'Discoverers', and 'Food From The Sea'—were compulsory. This ensured that the children acquired natural scientific, historic and geographic knowledge apart from the knowledge which accrued from their own interests.

Again, the children brought many items to school and sought their information from various quarters. On this occasion the Maritime Museum, the 'Cutty Sark' and 'Gypsy Moth' were visited to give authentic background knowledge. As with the previous themes, the children's work expanded in many directions. Self-expression in writing, descriptive writing and recording were produced in volume. Some of the aspects led to dramatic activity and the writing of poetry. Classroom friezes in art and needlework supplemented the children's individual paintings. Models of boats and lighthouses were made. Graphs, which were accompanied by written explanations of the facts, were completed on the children's own instigation.

A place for class teaching

Although this involved the children in a great deal of individual work or work in small groups, the class discussions did much to engender a corporate spirit, and a story read in instalments on most days added to this. The teacher combined the class when a phase of learning was reached that justified class participation. This happened when the symmetry of sea objects was encountered, presenting an opportunity for knowledge desirable for the whole class. Symmetry was undertaken in detail and later led to work with shapes, modulo arithmetic and tessellations.

The results of working an 'integrated day' were gratifying. Motivation was beyond the degree originally envisaged. Many children forsook their break and lunch times, and stayed behind after school to continue their work. The finished products were pleasing to children and teacher. Of greater importance, the children were happy and anxious to work in the situation that the 'integrated day' created. Whenever out of the classroom without supervision, they could be trusted to pursue their efforts.

In an integrated day the teacher is an active participant in the arrangement. The onus is his to ensure that the children in his class are attaining the goals which he set out to achieve. This is an exacting role. He not only has to make certain that the organisation is such that each child is fully occupied and stimulated to undertake individual tasks, but he has to use his powers of guidance wisely. He must not officiously intervene and destroy the motivation that has been promoted, neither must he stand aside passively to allow a 'laissez faire' attitude to prevail. He must gauge when his guidance is required, the extent to which it is given, and the direction for which it is used. In this way he may be assured that children are completing work and assimilating knowledge that is worthwhile, and that the 'integrated day' provides the opportunity to exploit this more than any other learning situation.

REDUCED RATES SCHEME

Forum can be obtained cheap by students in Colleges and Universities. The price of each copy to individual students has been reduced to 10p. Bulk orders should be sent to the Business Manager at the address given below. One free copy of **Forum** is made available for every 20 copies ordered. Lecturers in Colleges of Education and in University Education Departments are asked to take advantage of this substantial concession. Please fill in the order form below.

Name

Address

College or University.....

Please send me.....copies of **Forum** on the reduced rates scheme, for which I enclose cheque/postal order.....

Return this form to the Business Manager, **Forum**, 58 Elms Road, Leicester, LE2 3JE.

Teaching Fourth Year Leavers

Jane Thompson

Jane Thompson teaches at the David Lister High School, Hull. She gave a memorable contribution to the 1970 conference organized by **Forum** and the Comprehensive Schools Committee.

What are the chances of teaching Fourth Year Leavers well? Basically the school must be realistic about them and their needs. In practice this will mean recognising that the majority have for various reasons rejected the traditional education and teaching methods of the school. They will be apathetic or antagonising – seldom neutral, frequently emotionally disturbed, often with a background of social experiences which will encourage petty crime, sometimes isolates, often insecure. Children who because of their behaviour, lack of motivation or personal problems are virtually unteachable in the traditional sense.

An experimental core course

During the last year, we have run an experimental course for a hundred such children at the David Lister. Four teachers have been directly responsible for what is called the Core Course and have taught approximately half the timetable. They were joined by subject teachers for the rest of the scheme. The syllabus was arranged on a thematic basis with each department responsible for providing and teaching topics to integrate with the chosen theme. Other types of Core Course work including Social Service, visits, discussions, individual duties, art, music, technical studies and games ran parallel to the main course. The syllabus comprised a selection of themes which we thought most relevant and immediate to the Youngster's interests and needs – the academic demands were still fairly rigorous, although oriented in a different guise. Our teaching materials were well supplemented by visual and oral aids and as many reality situations as we could incorporate. The structure of the course was then carefully planned and excellent in theory. In practice its success and failures depended on something more intangible.

The subject teachers on the whole taught in a way which fitted in with their normally successful approach in the general school, but in this situation, they have tended to experience the familiar problems of disruption, lack of interest and poor attendance associated with Leavers groups. The four of us who taught them for the

rest of the time – and who because of this probably knew the children better – evolved a different technique. Something like this . . .

Apparent chaos

The door bangs open and in tumble a scrummage of boys, chewing and clattering to their desks – Pete hunched in pockets; Keith gangly and uncoordinated, pushing through furniture and chairs to his favourite corner. This accompanied by laughing and cuffing – a newspaper snippet for me – a tale about a scive down Beeton Street last night – a general 'What we doing Miss?'. When everyone's just about settled and ten have borrowed pencils and I've said for the twentieth time in a meaningless middle-class way, that being in school without a pen is like being in the street without your trousers – the door again clatters open followed by a huge, stocky lad with a thatch of marmalade coloured hair – 'Killer' – Always at school at the crack of dawn, but feigning protest and timing his entrance for maximum attention.

Unconventional work

And projects are brought out and projects started. Two sent off to polish up some display boards, another two off developing photographs. Posters designed, headings printed. An interview team return half way through the session with the results of a local survey on attitudes to teenagers and full of the fun of their experiences. A boy, doing a stint as Headmaster's Messenger, wanders in with a file of papers, hands me a list and stays to give us the latest on the to-froing in the Admin block. 'Some bloke's brought us an owl for science. Mr Samuel's just caught Bruno havin' a fag in the bog when 'e's supposed to be reporting for the newspaper'. In comes Bruno looking martyred, 'I wu'nt care but I've done all this – an hour wivout a break and six sides o' writing – a quick smoke an' a breaver an' 'e nabs me – does 'is bloody nut again'.

Leon – full of having to go here, and having to go there, having to go anywhere but stay in the classroom.

And so it goes on – a coming and going of kids – groups sometimes large and settled for a film, sometimes small and working on individual assignments – doing jobs, investigations, collecting material. The chance to be out of the classroom giving, we think, more reason for coming back and helping to break down the frequently felt hostility to being confined.

The limitations of this sort of necessary flexibility in the traditional school situation will, however, be obvious. Children wandering about on individual and unrelated missions may seem to conventional teachers bound to their classrooms, like truancy or chaos. Children interested in a project and staying over a lesson change will be sought out by teachers whose lessons they are supposed to be attending. The kids themselves will break off for a sly smoke, forget to excuse themselves from classes, mislay or damage equipment, pester teachers who have the information they need and unless the value of what they are doing is generally accepted – all this will be an anathema to the patience and organisation of the school. Youngsters will be sent out on Social Service and a couple will be caught shop lifting – the whole programme will be criticised. Classroom discussion will – if it works – become very heated, often noisy, rich in the language and mannerisms of the area – dealing with personalities, relationships and contentions long since shirked by traditional teachers in the name of objectivity.

Many of the children will respond positively to their experience of an honest and accepting relationship, will

be themselves, and as the relationship grows, co-operate voluntarily. Some will always be difficult, use the informality as licence and will be endured rather than reached. Caning as a deterrent will breed nothing but a hardening of hostility, and appeals to conscience and gratitude will mean little to kids who have never experienced receiving enough, to know how or why they should be grateful.

On-going counselling

Full scope is given to individuality, some of the children will feel important for the first time in their lives – situations are carefully structured in which they can initiate action and experience responsibility for others. Odd traits of personality and humour – irritating to the harassed teacher in the exam oriented classroom – can be developed as valuable growth points in self expression. Intimacies and problems can be shared in an atmosphere of trust and friendship which is counselling in its truest sense.

And when the buzzer goes – the relationships go on – joking, concern, informal conversations, gestures, attitudes, plans concocted and shared, involving with the pupils so long, as they are in school, a whole way of life – a security which they can relate to and within which they can work out their values and objectives for the wider society.

ANNOUNCING A FORUM BOOK

AT CLASSROOM LEVEL

Edited by Maureen Hardy

60p (67p post free)

Obtainable early June from **Forum**, 9 Derwent Road, Barrow-upon-Soar, Leics.

Reviews



Relevance and Relationship

Education in the Seventies—Report of the Seminar held at the Royal Festival Hall, January 1970, Encyclopaedia Britannica International Ltd. (1970), 25p.

Resources for Learning, L. C. Taylor, Penguin Education Special (1971), 40p.

The conference held last year under the patronage of Encyclopaedia Britannica and chaired by Lord Crowther and Professor Morpurgo is reported verbatim in *Education in the Seventies*. A symposium with such distinguished contributors is nearly impossible to review adequately. It is almost as difficult to *read*—as a single entity. Jerome Bruner's opening contribution 'The relevance of skill or the skill of relevance' deserves a critical article on its own. It is no disrespect to the other offerings to say that Bruner's is on a different plane, exploring as it does the theoretical underpinnings of much contemporary secondary school innovation. The disparity is not unexpected when one considers the power of this man's thinking about the learning/teaching process and his influence on curriculum reform and pedagogical experiment, first in America, now here. The burden of this address is the need to fuse together skills of thinking embodied in our culture with a basic commitment to *do*

something about urgent human problems and to consider this as basic to the educative process.

Of the other contributions, Caroline Benn's on 'Educating the full ability range in a single school' and Sir Edward Boyle's on 'Education in the seventies' are bound to command attention in their very different ways. There are also contributions by Mr J H Elmling, a primary headmaster, Mrs Lena Townsend, leader of the Inner London Education Authority, and Dr Lincoln Ralphs, Chief Education Officer for Norfolk.

L C Taylor's book *Resources for Learning* explores the practical implications of some of Bruner's theoretical perspectives. It offers individualisation as an answer to the problem of nonstreaming, which Caroline Benn reminds us is implicit in any genuine comprehensive reorganisation. After considering the shortcomings of conventional secondary practices, the growing problems of teacher supply and the special implications of comprehensive reorganisation, Taylor takes us on a lightning tour of America, Soviet and Swedish experience and reminds us of the Dalton Plan and other previous attempts at individualising secondary teaching. This last section is particularly useful.

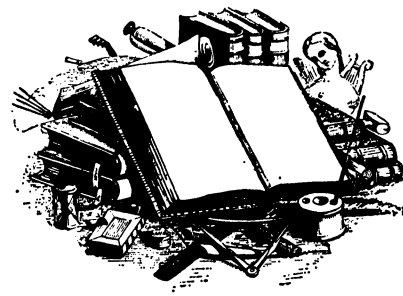
The core of the book is the chapter on 'Systems of learning'. This comes to grips with fundamental issues in a readable way. Taking as his example the Swedish IMU maths course, Taylor points out that in individualised resources-based learning 'we have shifted from the passive "I am taught" to the active "I learn".' To achieve this, argues Taylor, requires more than the mere presence of resource materials in whatever form—books, worksheets, tape recordings or slide transparencies. '*What matters is the learner's relationship to them . . . whether the boy can move independently or is constantly led among his resources for learning.*' This is indeed the nub of the

matter: the learner's relationship to learning.

Taylor's experience as co-director of the Nuffield Resources for Learning project is valuably displayed in the practical points he makes throughout: when he comments, for instance, on the different demands made by package-based learning or audio-visual equipment. Where mass-viewing or mass-listening is the aim the emphasis is on high quality, whereas in resources-based learning the emphasis is on low-priced sturdy items for use *by pupils*, individually and in small groups—'bicycles for everyone to ride a lot' rather than 'Rolls-Royces for periodic jaunts' as Taylor puts it.

In terms of its more fundamental educational assumptions, though, the book is somewhat less than radical—as one might expect of the former headmaster of a public school. He believes, in spite of individualisation, in imposed bodies of knowledge, he thinks in terms of 'boys' and 'masters', he is shaky on British state school practice. This is nevertheless a very important book—for students, teachers and parents.

DOUGLAS HOLLY



Purpose and organization in primary and middle schools

Streaming and the Primary Teacher, edited by Gabriel Chanan. NFER (1970), 44 pp, 30p.

Launching Middle Schools, DES Education Survey No 8. HMSO (1970), 19 pp, 15p.

Towards the Middle School, DES Education Pamphlet No 57.

Mr Chanan has edited a very readable account of some of the major findings of an extensive research project published in full last February (1970) under the title *Streaming in the Primary School*.

Some telling anecdotes and glimpses of character give the account a human face—but it is backed up by a cool array of statistics reflecting very painstaking research into the whole matter of streaming children of primary school-age; one of the leading findings of which was the almost Eysenckian division of personality types in teaching who approved or disapproved of streaming. Those who should give closest attention to the report shouldn't just be primary school teachers but those in all forms of secondary education. It is for these teachers, these schools, that the findings are equally significant. Particularly when children are being transferred from one form of organisation to another, be it streamed to non-streamed, or vice versa. The research findings here described could help to explain some of the difficulties that secondary schools attempting to unstream, may experience with their

less able pupils who have been conditioned to think of themselves as failures for the whole of their previous school careers.

Teachers of liberal sympathies will find much in this summary to give them heart; those of uncertain commitment may be given pause to think by the findings that illustrate the fact that no significant differences were found in academic achievement between schools that streamed and those that did not. This in itself leaves one wondering at the new rationale that will have to be produced to defend streaming by its still numerous advocates.

The summary ends with an appeal to use the help that teachers who have taught nonstreamed classes successfully could give to those wishing to follow suit. In view of the responsibilities of training colleges following this report, one wonders if this is being done: and if not—why not?

'Organisational devices elevated to educational objectives are among the more common reasons for failure in innovation'. (from *Towards the Middle School*)—and the proliferation of organisational devices in education might possibly point to a complementary paucity of educational objectives. Is the observed elevation of the former to the latter, due to this? Or is it that educational objectives, being so closely linked to such sensitive areas as personal values, emotional attitudes and class structure, are avoided as the subjects of debate and discussion, and the less disturbing and more ostensibly exciting area of organisational reform and innovation are consequently given the greatest share of attention?

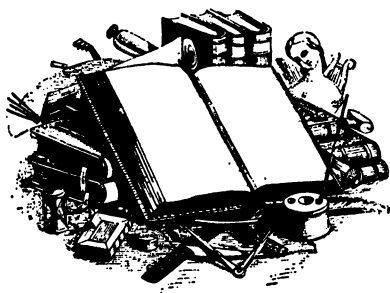
These two booklets, both interesting reading in themselves, make one consider such points. *Towards the Middle School* describes what these schools could signify and the reasons for their existence. *Launching Middle Schools* is an account of the innovation in practice in the West Riding of

Yorkshire. Without indulging further the cynical thought that overall, it is cheaper to provide middle schools, seen as one or two years tacked onto the end of the old junior school, than it is to provide for the needs of secondary schools faced with demands caused by the raising of the school leaving age. *Towards the Middle School* considers both the educational objectives and the consequent organisational changes—and in that order. Essential reading though it would be for any involved in attempting to establish a Middle School, many of the objectives, and indeed the recommendations, will seem very familiar to those engaged in the more concerned and progressive junior schools. Is this then an attempt, by creating excitement and interest in new forms of organisation, as is clearly shown by the West Riding account, to inject some kind of new life and thought into a province of education which has never been renowned, as have the infant schools or secondary schools, for either basic re-thinking about educational objectives, or genuinely exciting innovations?

One wishes the booklets a wide readership—if not to provoke into action, then at least into thought.

ANNABELLE DIXON





Against alienation

Society, Schools and Humanity,
by Douglas Holly.
MacGibbon and Kee (1971), £1.95.

Society, Schools and Humanity seems to me an off-putting title, suggesting a woolly, sentimental and too wide-ranging field for a book of 150 pages. But in fact, though the hostile reader may indeed dismiss parts of it as over-optimistic, it is a book worth reading and the title is accurate. In it, Douglas Holly considers the various elements in the 'new' secondary schools in relation to the social pressures which influence them and suggests that a fundamentally more humane approach is required than has ever existed in the past.

He sees the present system of secondary education, including the comprehensive sector, as being primarily designed to preserve the *status quo*. Young people are processed for selection, trained to serve an economic function, provided with purely instrumental goals (exams) by means of directive teaching whose emphasis is predominantly cognitive with a built-in class bias. Teachers play the role of authority figures handing down information to the incompetent

pupil. This relationship is fundamentally opposed to any possibility of a shared experience of discovery. The content of what is taught is all-important and only lip service is paid to the development of the processes of thought or sensitivity of feeling. Talk of self-expression and personal fulfilment is hypocritical since these experiences are denied to all but the relatively few pupils who share their teachers' values. Whether we consider the most important factor in a child's ability to be innate intelligence or his environment or any mixture of the two, we are essentially deterministic in our approach to secondary pupils, expecting to effect only minimal change through our efforts as teachers.

All this leads to the rejection of school by the great majority of our children. Their school work is imposed on them from without; it has no intrinsic relevance to them; they are alienated in the marxist sense. This alienation will be felt most acutely by the working class child since the cognitive emphasis will be least natural to him. Mr Holly refers perceptively to the startling success of the art departments of many down-town schools and suggests that, at least in the early secondary years, affective areas of experience should provide the basis of all the work. To make this kind of approach possible, adapted to the specific needs of an area, he strongly advocates the neighbourhood school.

So long as children are alienated from school and so long as they are offered no alternative educational experience, Mr Holly is not surprised at the attitudes to school expressed in the Schools Council's **Enquiry 1**. Further, the solutions currently offered to the problem—unstreaming, individualised learning, flexible timetables, interdisciplinary approaches, team-teaching—can achieve nothing in themselves. One essential change needed lies in the nature of the relationship of teacher and taught. Learning must be a shared experience

in which the pupil will play his role in determining his course. The primary schools have shown the way but the secondary schools have not followed. However, most important of all, we need to change our priorities. The main aim of secondary education should be personal realisation of the individual, not the production of an efficient economic unit.

In spite of the deeply humane standpoint from which Mr Holly writes, some readers will object to what may seem to be familiar and over-optimistic sociological generalities, and indeed he offers little that is startlingly original. However, those sympathetic to his thesis will find that he applies it to a usefully wide range of topics. Those to whom it is unfamiliar should find this book a helpful introduction to the subject.

ROY WATERS.

Inside the Grammar School

Hightown Grammar: the school as a social system, by Colin Lacey.
Manchester University Press (1970),
214 pp, £2.75.

To my mind, this is one of the most fascinating and valuable books yet written on education in this country. It is the work of a participant observer in a typical small town grammar school, created as a result of the 1902 Act—the only maintained boys grammar school in a largely working class city in the North of England. The study was part of a wider research project run by the Department of

Anthropology and Sociology at Manchester University, under the aegis of Professors Gluckman and Worsley. David Hargreaves' study of a secondary modern school (*Social Relations in a Primary School*), published in 1967, is another product of the work of this team.

The preface states that the study deals with many aspects of the school, 'its changing function over the last fifty years; its position within the present educational structure; the way in which selection and anticipatory socialisation affect the pupils; the process of subculture formation within the student body, and the staff and staff-pupil relations.' The aim is to view and analyse the school 'as a social system which is nevertheless embodied in a wider society.' In the course of his analysis, the author claims to 'lay bare the social mechanisms within the school in an attempt to explain the disappointing performance of working class boys in grammar schools since the 1944 Education Act.' To understand this problem, he adds, 'is to assist in solving the problem of the working class pupil within the comprehensive system that is likely to replace the tripartite system.'

The study contains the most persistent, penetrating, and often subtle analysis of the inner functioning of this school. Of particular importance is the fourth chapter which examines in detail the whole process of differentiation of pupils within the school through the system of streaming, leading to the formation of an anti-school group rejected by, and in turn rejecting, the school's academic and social values. It is impossible to summarise this brilliant chapter. The material is set out absolutely objectively; but the educationally deleterious effects of streaming—and indeed its general implications for human and social development—have nowhere been so devastatingly set out. This chapter is followed by another specifically concentrating on 'The Express Stream'.

The book opens with an historico-sociological analysis of the changing social function of the school since its foundation—again a model of how such an analysis should be carried through—and closes with a chapter on staff and staff-pupil relationships. The whole book is written with economy and high intelligence. Essentially a *sociological* study, it can be read and understood with ease by the layman, and especially by the teacher who has experience of schools organised internally on this model.

This study lends additional weight to those who wish to see an end to the classic 'streaming' system in comprehensive schools. It gives many new insights into the implications of the actual working of that system of which teachers, caught up in the system, cannot themselves be aware. It underlines the necessity for rethinking the inner structure of comprehensive schools on the basis of nonstreaming.

Lacey's work is strongly recommended to all *Forum* readers, without exception. It is the first time a serious study has been made of the inner functioning of a selective grammar school; as such it is a contribution to our knowledge and understanding of the educational process today of the very first importance.

BRIAN SIMON

Making teaching effective

Curriculum Evaluation, by S Wiseman and D Pidgeon. NFER (1971). 92 pp, 50p.

There is an impressive literature on principles and methodology of curriculum development and evaluation; but hitherto it has been rather heavily theoretical, contained in

substantial books or in articles scattered among various journals, much American—in short, not readily accessible to nor readily usable by teachers hard-pressed by their everyday job in school. On the other hand, English material aimed at teachers has generally lacked a theoretical framework and has encouraged a trial-and-error approach. This little book should be of practical use to teachers who now recognise the need for a more disciplined approach, and to Heads who wish to promote this. It is down-to-earth on the difficulties, shows the inadequacy of mere syllabus tampering, and suggests feasible methods of introducing and appraising curriculum reform in a school or subject department. Bloom's taxonomy and Scriven's classification are included as tools which may be helpful. There is practical guidance on how to write essay questions and multiple-choice items; advice on how to measure attitude and interest, and on how to ensure that both course and examination reflect the intended balance of aims.

The authors explain and assume that clarification of aims and subsequent evaluation of their implementation are integral to effective curriculum reform. In an important discussion of long-term and short-term objectives they conclude: 'if the *majority* of the stated aims of any school programme were claimed to be long-term and inaccessible to evaluation, leaving only a few minor and relatively unimportant effects to be expected during the pupil's school life, we must confess that we would have the deepest suspicions of the validity of the particular curriculum.'

Clear and concise, cheap by today's prices, this handbook is neither facile nor superficial: it deserves wide familiarity and should help any teacher to plan for more effective teaching.

NANETTE WHITBREAD.



Other nations' children

Two Worlds of Childhood: US and USSR, by Urie Bronfenbrenner. Russell Sage Foundation, New York (1970), 190 pp.

Letter to a Teacher, by the School of Barbiana. trs. N Rossi and T Cole, Penguin Education Special (1970). 138 pp, 40p.

Bronfenbrenner's study—which has aroused widespread discussion in the United States—turns on 'the concern of one generation for the next' in the two most powerful nations in the world, taking this as a criterion of the values and prospects of a society. In other words, in a specialist terminology, what is under investigation is the process of 'socialisation' in the younger generation of the Soviet Union and the United States, beginning with the family and moving on through pre-school centres, children's organisations, classrooms, schools, neighbourhoods to communities up to the national level.

The three chapters of Part I on the Soviet Union cover upbringing in the family, in collective settings and discussion of the psychological implications of the methods used. Against this background Part II considers 'Child rearing in America, Past, Present and Future' under the three headings 'The unmaking of the

American child', 'Principles and possibilities' and 'From science to social action'. To translate research findings into terms of public policy is one of the author's chief concerns.

Dr Bronfenbrenner is Professor of Psychology and Child Development and Family Studies in the College of Human Ecology at Cornell University and his book derives from three interlinked investigations. First, research in the United States over five years under the heading 'Cross-Cultural Studies in Child Rearing' financed by the National Science Foundation. Second, in this connection seven visits to the U.S.S.R. from 1960 on to analyze Soviet methods of upbringing in close cooperation with the Institute of Psychology of the Academy of Educational Sciences in Moscow. Third, plans for Project Head Start for disadvantaged children, of which Dr Bronfenbrenner was a founder, the last two chapters of this book evolving from a paper prepared for that project.

Briefly, and crudely, his comparative study highlights the child's recognised place in family and community in the U.S.S.R. where even the 'children's collective' has adult participants in what is a planned process of socialisation, or education. By contrast the basis of child life in America, very frequently an artificial suburban life where the productive activities of the community find no place and most families may be of the same generation, is the unadulterated peer group. This also forms the basis of school organisation so creating a potential, and increasingly actual, **Lord of the Flies** lack of civilisation, often unmitigated by parental interest or intervention in the home surroundings.

Only one of the six countries investigated showed a lower level of parental involvement in child upbringing than America, and that is England 'our principal competitor in tabloid sensationalism, juvenile delinquency and violence'. And it is a chief conclusion that to obviate

increased 'alienation, indifference, antagonism, and violence on the part of the younger generation' of all classes, it is essential to find means of overcoming the segregation of the younger generation by age. It is for research and discussion contributing to this conclusion, that the book is of close interest, there being no clear indication of the way out.

But children themselves can be eloquent about the harm society and its schools does to them, as is shown by an account by eight young Italian peasant boys of the effect of State education and their own alternative to it. How they were enabled to express their protest and ideas is a story in itself. But in so doing they speak for hundreds of thousands of the inarticulate whose silence contributes to the enormous complacency of educationists and others about the achievements of organised compulsory education and who is to blame for inequalities or failure. These boys cut through the verbiage to lay the blame on those who uncritically operate the system, and, also, those liberal intellectual parents who milk the public system of education for their own degrees and offspring, while depriving the poor child of his mother to do their domestic chores.

"The stupid and the lazy. You tell us that you fail only the stupid and the lazy.

Then you claim that God causes the stupid and the lazy to be born in the houses of the poor. But God would never spite the poor in this way. More likely, the spiteful one is you?"

And teachers are then directed to consider what they do to the 'able' son of professional parents who, becoming one in a hundred as he effortlessly moves up the selective system, has 'engraved on his soul the impression that the other ninety-nine belong to an inferior culture.' It would be a miracle were his soul not crippled, and it is indeed sick

'because his teachers have lied to

him. The culture of those other ninety-nine is not inferior; it is different.

True culture, which no man has yet possessed, would be made up of two elements: belonging to the masses and mastery of the language.

A school that is as selective as the kind we have described destroys culture. It deprives the poor of the means of expressing themselves. It deprives the rich of the knowledge of things as they are.'

J SIMON.

certain judicious detachment. He goes on to discuss generally, and all too briefly, a variety of factors affecting guidance work in schools, and he ends with some suggestions for further research. The essential nature of a wise guidance programme, as giving pupils the experience of responsible personal decision-making under the best possible conditions (motivation, information, self-knowledge), is perhaps not sufficiently emphasized, but it does emerge from a careful reading of certain passages (eg pp 74-5).

One conclusion which stands out clearly is the necessity for good team work. Vocational guidance can be a sterile undertaking when divorced from educational guidance; personal guidance fulfils an important integrating function (p 63). A trained school counsellor can be invaluable as a key member of a guidance team, not only in the expertise he can bring directly to bear on pupils' difficulties but in the help and indeed the in-service training which he can offer to other staff. Unfortunately there is still some prejudice against trained counsellors: one of the heads interviewed apparently told the author that he feared the presence of a counsellor 'could have the effect of encouraging the development of pupil problems'! More than one, while agreeing that a course of training in guidance could be useful, felt that it would be of little value to a teacher who lacked 'the right attitudes'. But teachers' attitudes can be changed, and a good course of training will tend to change them for the better. Indeed *all* staff need to be involved in guidance and personal development work, if only on the level of a house or year tutor with responsibility for twenty or thirty pupils; and the author rightly urges colleges of education to give their students some elementary training for such work.

However, training and team work are not the only needs. Official recognition is still remarkably scarce, and so, naturally, are time and space. In one school with eight housemasters

and careers advisers on the staff, none of them had any non-teaching time available for guidance work. In another, the counsellor had to do all his interviewing in the medical room. Senior pastoral care and guidance posts carry responsibility allowances, but these are often inadequate and are not easily financed at all under Burnham. Improve the facilities for school guidance in these respects, and the many other desirables mentioned in this timely book will become realities far more often than at present.

One highly desirable feature is a good, positive relationship between teacher and parent, and I regret there is so little space left in which to commend the book by Anne Sharrock, another NFER research officer, on home/school relations. I can only say that this seems to me an admirable piece of work in every way: well planned, meticulously documented, and remarkably readable, it summarises the historical background, surveys the present position and points the way forward with clarity, accuracy and a refreshing absence of jargon.

ANDREW FINCH.

Research Reports

Guidance in comprehensive schools, by B M Moore NFER (1970), 96 pp. £1.40 (by post £1.47½).

Home/School Relations, by Anne Sharrock. Macmillan (1971), 126 pp. £1.30, limp 65p.

Traditional methods of guidance in schools have generally been fairly perfunctory, or primitive, or both; and the need for something more sophisticated is only now, with the growth of large comprehensive schools, slowly becoming recognized. Not that such schools need more efficient guidance systems than other secondary schools. The truth is simply that in a fully comprehensive organisation endeavouring to cater faithfully for the widest possible range of pupil aspirations and abilities, the need for an efficient guidance system is the more obvious—and therefore eventually, we may reasonably hope, the more likely to be met, whatever the present shortages and difficulties.

Five comprehensive schools, in different parts of England, which clearly recognize this need, and the different ways in which they are organized to meet it—against all the present odds—are described in Bryan Moore's book with sympathy and a

Wrong textbooks

Modern Mathematics for Schools. W & R Chambers. Books 1-4 18s each (pupils' ed 13s/14s), Book 9 18s (16s), Supplementary Books 1S & 2S 7s each, Activity Workbooks 1A & 2A 2s each.

I want to raise some critical questions about these books not because I think they are bad ones of their kind – on the contrary, I think they are very good and perhaps enough has already been said in their praise – but because I think they are books of the wrong kind!

Apart from the quite obvious qualities of this set of texts – their clean presentation, their thoughtfulness, their really good ideas (particularly in the geometry sections),

I suppose what has persuaded so many maths departments in English schools (and even perhaps Welsh schools too!) to 'go Scottish' is that the books set out to combine what so many people want to preserve of the old with enough of the new to justify the title **Modern Mathematics for Schools**. Schools include teachers as well as children, of course, and these books are written to satisfy both, but it is my impression that a greater proportion of teachers, than of children, will be satisfied by them. I think that most of the problems which the writers have set out to solve are teachers' problems, rather than children's problems. Should one try to integrate the branches of mathematics, for instance? The word 'integrate' is usually used very euphemistically in this context – pushing everything between one set of covers and pretending that there's no real difference between one chapter and the next. The Scottish team have come clean on this, and have separated sections for Algebra, Geometry, Arithmetic and, later, Trigonometry and Calculus. They substitute 'interesting themes' for the usual vague, and often phoney, kind of integration, and this seems to me a valid solution within this conception of mathematics teaching. Combining the old with the new is another teachers' problem – children don't know the difference until it is pointed out – and this, too, they have solved reasonably well, though there is a bit of creaking at the joints. Look at Book 1, chapter 3, for instance: 'Note to Teachers: Use is made of the commutative, associative, and distributive laws to simplify expressions, so that [my italics] equations of the form $ax + b = c$ and $ax + bx = c$ can be readily solved.' I think *this* is phoney: I think these laws were introduced so that they would be learned. And I don't think this is a trivial point. It is the kind of thing that happens when the teachers' problems are put before the children's problems – or rather, when the

children's problems are not recognised as the most important of the teachers' problems. The questions become worthy of attention for children only when they meet *non-commutative* or *non-associative* operations (the text doesn't even give any such examples). Otherwise, the main problem that the children are going to be brought to face is: why do mathematicians fuss about such a silly lot of trivialities?

The main teacher's problem which this kind of series sets out to solve for him is how to get his pupils as painlessly as possible from A to B. (It remains the teacher's own problem to persuade them that that is where they want to go, or if this is not possible, to get them to accept that it is where they have got to go.) This series does that job better than most. My objection is to that conception of mathematics in the middle school. I think it is largely because maths programmes are nearly always conceived of as sequential courses of this kind that it seems an impossible subject for unstreamed classes; but even apart from that, I am quite sure that much more would be gained from a problem-based set of activities. Unfortunately, though Nuffield made a tentative start on this, no one seems to have worked it out for us very fully. However, for teachers who are interested in doing this for themselves there is quite a lot of useful material in the **Supplementary books** (1S and 2S) and the associated **Activity Workbooks** (1A and 2A).

RAY HEMMINGS.

Leadership

Head of Department, by Michael Marland. Heinemann Educational Books (1971), 104 pp, £1.25.

Schools are bigger than they were, the demand for democratic participation by teachers in running them is gaining force, and some local authorities are delegating more control to the schools themselves (in the allocation of resources, for example). For all these reasons it is becoming important for

those in positions of responsibility in schools to know something of management techniques. Aims and objectives, lines of communication and the roles of individuals have to be very carefully defined.

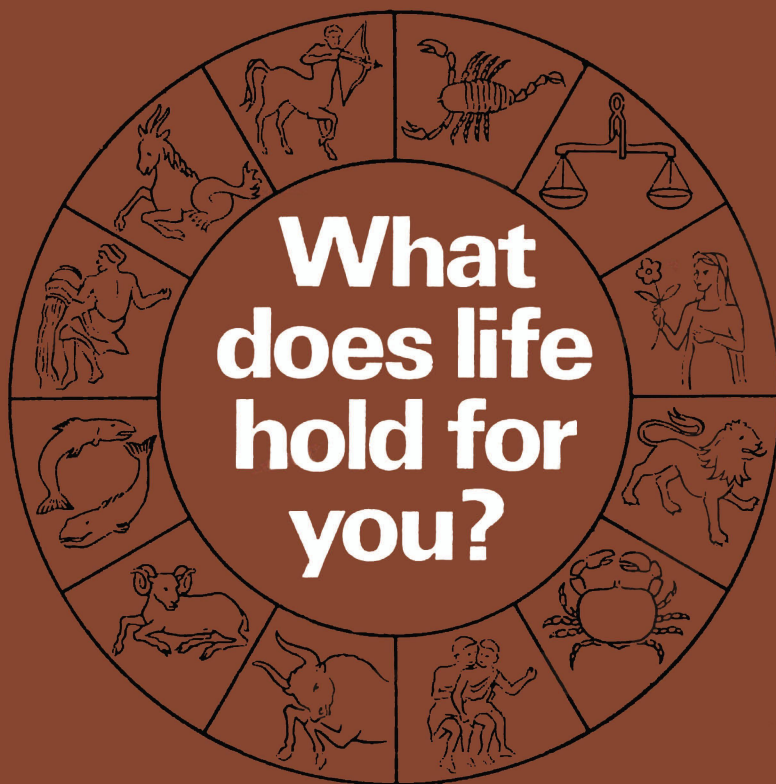
Michael Marland, for many years a highly successful head of English himself, has written a blue-print to guide heads of large departments, including the need to provide for student teachers and parents as well as for pupils and staff. It is a sensible book and many heads of department will find reference in it to areas of responsibility which they may feel they have catered for inadequately.

Unfortunately it is written very much from the point of view of the English department, and mathematicians and scientists, for example, may feel (I believe wrongly) that much of it is irrelevant to them simply because so few illustrations come from their subjects. This resistance may be reinforced by the tone of the book, which is cold and humourless; a more humane style (and Marland is a humane man) would perhaps more easily have won acceptance for management techniques, a subject which still arouses suspicion.

I would further suggest that the book does not sufficiently stress the need for the head of department to be himself demonstrably a lively, imaginative, innovative teacher in order to inspire the staff, to set the tone of the department and to win respect. His involvement with management should never drain the creative impulse of his own teaching. Finally, the department which is described is a conventional one. It would have been interesting to read a discussion of strategies for development and change.

This said, it remains true that Michael Marland's book covers his subject both fully and soundly. However good individual teachers may be, a large department which is ineffectively led cannot satisfactorily teach the children or train the teachers.

ROY WATERS.



EMERGENCY

CREATIVE IDEAS FOR THE UNEXPECTED LESSON

By Alan Harris, author of *Questions About Sex*
and *Questions About Living*

EMERGENCY caters for the teacher who has to take over a strange class at short notice. Newspaper cuttings, photographs, advertisements and drawings support a text of ideas and questions ranging from *Astrology* to *Vietnam*, *Advice columns* to *Bias in newspapers*, *Cheek to Rebellion*, *Skin trouble* to *Mongolism*, with chapters on *Design*, *Fashion* and *Falling in love*

Published April 1971
70p/non-net/paper