

FORUM

for the discussion of new trends in education

Autumn 1987

Volume 30 Number 1

£1.75

This issue

**Special Number
The Primary School**

**Ray Pinder, Andy Hargreaves, Denis Lawton,
Clyde Chitty, Roger Murphy, Maureen Hardy,
Peter Mortimore, Pat Sammons, Doreen Weston,
Annabelle Dixon, Christine Mason, Glyn Johns
and others**

Editorial Board

Michael Armstrong, Harwell County Primary School, Oxfordshire.

Michael Clarke, Little Hill Primary School, Leicestershire.

Annabelle Dixon, Holdbrook JMI School, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire.

Lee Enright, Cranborne Middle School, Cranborne, Dorset.

Emma Parkinson, Galliard Primary School, Edmonton, Enfield.

Roger Seckington, The Bosworth College, Leicestershire.

Liz Thomson, Kent Inspectorate.

Roy Waters, ILEA Inspectorate.

Harvey Wyatt, The Woodlands School, Coventry.

Editors

Brian Simon, Emeritus Professor, University of Leicester.

Nanette Whitbread, Ex-President, National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education.

Reviews Editor

Clyde Chitty, Institute of Education, London University.

ISSN 0046-4708

Editorial Communications: typescript articles (1500-2000 words) and contributions to discussion (800 words maximum) should be addressed to The Editor, 11 Pendene Road, Leicester LE2 3DQ. Tel: 0533-705176. Please enclose s.a.e. Two copies please.

Business information: correspondence relating to subscriptions etc. should be addressed to Anne Warwick, FORUM, 7 Bollington Road, Oadby, Leicester LE2 4ND. Tel: 0533-716284.

Forum is published three times a year in September, January and May. £5 a year or £1.75 an issue.

Contents

Vol.30 No.1	Autumn 1987
Denis Lawton and Clyde Chitty	Towards a National Curriculum 4
Roger Murphy	Pupil Assessment in Primary Schools 6
Peter Mortimore, Pamela Sammons, Louise Stoll, David Lewis and Russell Ecob	For Effective Classroom Practices 8
Annabelle Dixon	First and Four-Most 12
Ray Pinder	Multi-Cultural Practice in London Schools 14
Maureen Hardy	I, You and It — Together We Learn 16
Andy Hargreaves	9-13 Middle Schools and the Comprehensive Experience 19
Glyn Johns and Iorweth Watkins	A Mathematics Camp for Secondary School Pupils 22
Christine Mason, Frieda McGovern and Ian Menter	Bussing to Birmingham 24
Doreen Weston	Saints, Nurses and Queens — Sex-Stereotyping and History 26
Discussion	Policy and Neutral Progressivism 28
Reviews	Progressive Practice 29
	Educational Growth and the community 30
	Comprehensive Byblow? 31
	Demasculinisation of science 31

The Next Forum

A major article, by the editors, will provide a detailed and critical analysis of the government's Education Bill. A second focus will be on Sheffield's ambitious School-focused curriculum reform project, involving the mass secondment of groups of teachers from both primary and secondary schools (by George Hill and others involved, and by Rosie Grant). Mary James, involved in the Pilot Records of Achievement in Schools Evaluation, contributes on this study, while Colin Biott continues our series on teacher-enquiry groups, this time from Sunderland. Colin Everest writes on maths teaching and 'numeracy', and Ron Needham on 'Work-based learning and assessment'.

The Education Bill

STOP PRESS

This issue contains a four page insertion (free to subscribers). This is the FORUM Editorial Board's response to the main 'Consultation Papers' issued in relation to the Government's proposed Education Bill. This document has been sent to the DES, the press, and to a substantial proportion of members of both Houses of Parliament.

With this issue, **FORUM** celebrates its thirtieth birthday. This may be considered quite an achievement, since it is one of the few genuinely independent educational journals in existence, owing nothing to institutional support of any kind. Neither contributors nor editorial staff receive a penny for their labours, which have been freely given in support of the values and policies for which the journal stands.

FORUM was founded in support of the then growing movement towards the abolition of the 11-plus, and the substitution of comprehensive education for the divided secondary system that went with it. A further objective was the abolition, or at least modification of rigid forms of streaming and differentiation within primary schools. Looking back now on these thirty years, it can be seen that the issues we supported have in fact become general practice throughout the country as a whole.

But today, on our thirtieth birthday, marked by our second special number on Primary Education, these values and policies are very clearly under attack. The so-called Great Education Reform Bill, about to be rushed through Parliament, is likely to contain various clauses the main purpose of which appear to be deliberately to destabilise local systems of comprehensive education. The clear aim (already enunciated by Kenneth Baker) is to establish a set of schools, variously controlled (but not by local authorities) and differentiated (probably largely by social status) between the 'public' schools on the one hand, and locally maintained systems on the other; in other words to outflank existing systems by deliberately building up a set of schools appealing to the well-heeled section of the population that will compete with them. Such differentiated provision has important implications for primary education also, since pressures on 'popular', 'grant-maintained' schools is bound to introduce an element of selection into their pupil recruitment, as is almost certainly intended (whatever the disclaimers). Thus a modernised 11-plus is the likely outcome.

FORUM has consistently warned against all such developments in recent numbers — as the shape of things to come became increasingly apparent. This issue went to press before several of the major 'Consultation' papers from the DES had been issued; it is published at the close of the 'Consultation' period. The nonsense that such a short period implies must be apparent to all. This Act (or Bill) is to be imposed by *force majeure*. It is in fact a political, not an educational measure, as the Prime Minister made clear when she stated publicly that the purpose of the government's educational reform was to lay the base for a further Conservative victory in the General Election of 1991/92.

Nevertheless the Bill itself deals with educational issues: devolution of financial control to heads and governors, removal of earlier limits on school size (to allow 'popular' schools to expand), possibly the right to charge for 'extras', and, above all, the right to opt out of local systems — clearly seen as a half-way stage (with the help of an enlarged Assisted Places Scheme) towards full independence (or privatisation). The implications of all these measures need strict and careful analysis, and this will be undertaken by the Editorial Board in our next issue. In the meantime it can be said with total confidence that this set of measures, related together (as well as the foundation of a number of City Technology Colleges) are seen as the means of disrupting local systems of comprehensive education. It is in the tradition of **FORUM** to expose such measures for what they are, and the threat they embody for the future.

As is well known, the Bill will also include clauses laying down, in statutory form, a National Curriculum. This, perhaps the most important, was in fact one of the last of the Consultation documents to be published (late in July). We carry two major articles in this number commenting on this issue; that by Denis Lawton and Clyde Chitty ('Towards a National Curriculum'), and that by Roger Murphy ('Pupil Assessment in Primary Schools'). The first of these warns against the imposition of a 'bureaucratic model' of the curriculum (which the Consultation paper makes very clear is precisely what is intended); the second warns against the whole 'benchmark' philosophy written into the government's essentially managerial plans and outlook. Benchmark tests, at seven and eleven, writes Roger Murphy, will almost certainly become 'crude remote measures of a very limited part of the achievement of primary pupils'. Instead, teachers should be given the training and the resources needed 'to develop their own role in the assessment of all children throughout the primary school years'. The benchmark proposals are probably the worst aspect of a policy which, overall, is likely severely to damage the schools and their pupils. This proposal, then, merits particular resistance.

It is too early yet to make a full assessment of the government's measures. They are to be driven through Parliament early in the session, as Kenneth Baker has announced. We will, of course, return to this whole question in our next (January) number. In the meantime we offer, in this number, a group of articles having a special focus on the primary school where our object must be, as in secondary education (and in spite of the bleakness of the climate), to continue the fight for genuinely humanist values and practices in our schools.

Towards a National Curriculum

Denis Lawton and Clyde Chitty

As part of its educational 'reorganisation', the government is intending to legislate for a National Curriculum. This important issue has been much discussed over the last few years. In this article, Denis Lawton, Director of the University of London Institute of Education, and Clyde Chitty, long-standing member of the Editorial Board — both curriculum specialists — take this idea apart, and draw attention to some of the dangers the schools may face, if a bureaucratic solution to this complex problem is imposed.

Background

Interviewed by Matthew Parris on ITV's **Weekend World** programme on 7th December 1986, Education Secretary Kenneth Baker announced that a third Thatcher administration would introduce a major education bill legislating for a 'national core curriculum' with set objectives. Bench-marks would be established in a wide range of subjects at the ages of 9, 11 and 14 (later changed to 7, 11 and 14). Although there was no intention to 'chill and destroy the inventiveness of teachers', Baker made it clear that 'there would have to be more direction from the Centre as far as the curriculum was concerned'. The proposed 'national curriculum' should be seen as part of the move towards central control in the interests of the children. In Baker's view, the comprehensive system was 'seriously flawed'. Only a national curriculum, centrally imposed, could ensure an all-round improvement in standards, particularly at the secondary level.

The Education Secretary went on to expand his thesis a month later in a speech to the North of England Conference on Education. He began by referring to England's 'eccentric' education system — less centralized and standardized than that operating, for example, in France or Germany. He argued that existing standards were not high enough, and complained about the lack of agreement concerning the 14-16 age group's curriculum, stressing the confusion in schools over the question of balance and the failure to work out satisfactory objectives: 'These weaknesses do not arise in those West European countries where the schools follow more or less standard national syllabuses. In these countries the school system produces results which overall are at least as satisfactory as those produced here, and the teachers are no less professional than ours. Nor do these countries show any sign of wanting to give up the advantages of national syllabuses. So it would be foolish to reject out of hand the idea of moving much nearer to the kind of curricular structure which obtains elsewhere in Western Europe. For my part, I am sure that we must so move...'

The proposal to establish 'a national core curriculum' became the first of four major reforms outlined in **The Next Moves Forward**, the Conservative Party Election Manifesto published in May: 'It is vital to ensure that all pupils, between the ages of 5 to 16 study a basic range of subjects — including Maths, English and Science. In each of these basic subjects syllabuses will be published and attainment levels set, so that the progress of pupils can be assessed at around ages 7, 11 and 14, and in preparation

for the GCSE at 16. Parents, teachers and pupils will then know how well each child is doing. We will consult widely among those concerned in establishing the curriculum.'

Two Concepts of a National Curriculum

There are, of course, sound arguments to support the idea of a national curriculum. All children should have the right of access to a curriculum that is liberating and worthwhile and there ought to be as much consensus as possible nationally on the general aims and objectives of compulsory education. But, having said that, it is important to be clear about the exact meaning of the term. There are two very different approaches to the idea of a national curriculum — the professional and the bureaucratic — and it is worth devoting some space to differentiating between them.

A professional model for the curriculum is provided by Her Majesty's Inspectorate in **Curriculum 11-16**, the so-called 'Red Book One' published in December 1977. Here it is argued that it is not enough simply to construct a compulsory 'core' consisting of a limited range of subjects: something far more positive is required.

'Pupils are members of a complicated civilization and culture, and it is reasonable to argue that they have nothing less than a right to be introduced to a selection of its essential elements.'

The authors see the curriculum in terms of eight 'areas of experience': the aesthetic and creative; the ethical; the linguistic; the mathematical; the physical; the scientific; the social and political; and the spiritual. It is not proposed that schools should plan and construct a common curriculum in terms of subject labels: subjects are simply the convenient means by which learning can be organized. Rather, it is necessary to look through the subject or discipline to the areas of experience and knowledge to which it may provide access, and to the skills and attitudes which it may assist to develop. In the words of the Red Book:

'If the check-list is to be used as the basis of curriculum construction or of reshaping and refining existing curricula, it will be necessary for each faculty or subject department to examine what knowledge, skills, forms of understanding and modes of learning it can offer to the education of every pupil, and for all departments together to consider how their various and complementary roles combine in the pupils' developing experience.'

This idea is explored further in the third of the HMI Red Books, published in 1983, which talks in terms of an entitlement curriculum:

'The conviction has grown that all pupils are entitled to a broad compulsory common curriculum to the age of 16 which introduces them to a range of experiences, makes them aware of the kind of society in which they are going to live and gives them the skills necessary to live in it. Any curriculum which fails to provide this balance and is overweighted in any particular direction, whether vocational, technical or academic, is to be seriously questioned. Any measures which restrict the access of all pupils to a wide-ranging curriculum or which focus too narrowly on specific skills are in direct conflict with the entitlement curriculum envisaged here.'

This, then, is the best-known professional curriculum in this country. (It has been modified somewhat in the 1985 HMI Curriculum Matters document **The Curriculum from 5 to 16**, with, for example, the eight areas of experience being increased to nine, but the basic approach remains substantially unaltered.) It represents a concern with the quality of the teaching process and with the needs of individual children. It seeks to undermine traditional subject boundaries and uses subjects to achieve higher level aims. It requires teachers who are well-motivated, well-trained, and skilled in identifying any specific learning problems for individual pupils. It has little to do with a system geared to writing off large sections of the school population as failures.

The bureaucratic approach, on the other hand, is concerned with the 'efficiency' of the whole system and with the need to obtain statistical information to demonstrate that efficiency. It is concerned with controlling what is taught in schools and making teachers generally more accountable to the central authority. Whereas the professional approach focuses on the quality of input and the skills, knowledge and awareness of the teacher, the bureaucratic approach concentrates on output and testing. Whereas the professional approach is based on individual differences and the learning process, the bureaucratic approach is associated with norms or bench-marks, average performance and norm-related criteria. Whereas the professional curriculum is concerned with areas of learning and experience, the bureaucratic curriculum is based on traditional subjects.

The emphasis and concerns of the DES elite are obvious in such documents as **A Framework for the School Curriculum** (1980) and **The School Curriculum** (1981). Indeed the 1980 document actually attempts to specify what proportion of time should be spent on key subjects. The thinking of all DES curriculum publications is very much along subject lines and shows little trace of the broader reasoning which characterized **Curriculum 11-16**. And from his recent pronouncements on curriculum matters, it would appear that Kenneth Baker has been over-exposed to bureaucratic rather than professional opinion.

The current obsession is with age-related bench-mark testing. This has all sorts of bureaucratic advantages in terms of presentation of statistics and making comparisons between teachers and schools. But age-related testing makes it extremely difficult to avoid normative procedures, norm-related criteria, and judgements based on the expectations of how a statistically 'normal' child should perform. Age-related, norm-referenced examinations tend to drive everyone (teachers, parents and governors) into thinking of a sizeable proportion of the age group as failures, and neglecting to stretch those above average. It is a clear recipe for mediocrity and insensitivity. Kenneth Baker has said that the tests will not be a question of passing and

failing; but how is this to be avoided where national normative standards are regarded as essential? What happens to the children not up to standard? Are they to be given extra lessons? Or do they have to repeat the year? Mr Baker is said to admire the French system, but *re-doublement* is one of its features that many French teachers and educationalists now regard as unacceptable. It is difficult to separate the ideas of bench-marks and failure.

We are in danger of putting the clock back over a hundred years to the period when a working-class child in an elementary school was not so much a blank slate to write the wonders knowledge upon, as an entry in the school ledgers. The Revised Code, which formed the basis for government funding of elementary education from 1862 to the end of the nineteenth century, required that from the age of 7, pupils should be examined annually in each of the 'Three R's' — reading, writing and arithmetic — through six grades: the 'bench-marks' of their day. Grants to schools were calculated on the basis of attendance and results and in many schools, teachers' salaries were tied to the grant. The tensions produced were not conducive to good learning, and helped to produce the 'deadness' and 'slackness' of Victorian schools which which Matthew Arnold discovered in his work as a schools inspector. The worst effects were clearly on the curriculum. the prescribed minimum standards tended to become the maximum. Teaching concentrated on mechanical repetition of tables and learning by rote. The Code saved money and thereby created false values of efficiency. In doing so, it lived up to the stricture of its perpetrator, Robert Lowe: 'if it is not cheap, it shall be efficient, and if it is not efficient, it shall be cheap.'

Conclusion

A national, standardized curriculum and external tests to assess achievement may well re-create the situation in late-Victorian England when the vast majority of children were educated only to pass exams. Bureaucrats like to be able to judge schools and individual teachers as successful or unsuccessful in accordance with their pass rates. But this is to ignore differences in environment and intake. It also confuses education and training. If you are training army recruits to strip a rifle, it is possible to lay down absolute standards and to judge pass and fail without difficulty. But education is much more complex and more difficult to evaluate: to take two examples from the study of history, there is no one right answer to such questions as 'What were the causes of the French Revolution?' or 'Why were atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?' Education is all about enriching a student's view of the world: not training him or her to give trite answers to complex questions.

It is not clear to what extent Her Majesty's Inspectors are actively involved in the construction of a national curriculum, although their position and influence would appear to be under threat from both the bureaucrats of the DES and the free-market philosophers of the New Right. In our present circumstances, we have much need of an independent body which can stand up for professional values and guard against bureaucratic insensitivity to educational matters. At the same time, teachers must be mobilized to demand their right to be involved in curriculum planning at school level. We need to free the proposal for a national curriculum from the

Pupil Assessment in Primary Schools

Roger Murphy

What are the most appropriate methods of assessment for primary school pupils? How should we evaluate the government's expressed intention to introduce 'bench-marks' for children aged 7, 11 (and later)? Here Roger Murphy, of the Examinations and Assessment Unit at Southampton University, draws on material from his research project in this area for a thorough discussion of this whole issue.

It is often argued that assessment has a vital role in all effective education. The justifications for this view may include teachers and pupils benefitting from being aware of the attributes that pupils bring to new educational experiences, the progress pupils are making in various areas of the curriculum, and any features that can be identified as hindering that progress. Monitoring, screening, diagnosis and evaluation are all aspects that are widely accepted as playing an integral part in the process of education, and each can benefit to a great extent from information arising from the assessment of individual pupils. Unfortunately however, pupil assessment often appears to hinder the course of good education, and in many cases it is viewed as an unnecessary adjunct to teaching and learning, standing in the way of, rather than promoting, improved classroom practice.

The influence of the 11+ examination, and other similar systems of selecting pupils for secondary schools, has done much to bolster the traditional view of pupil assessment as being linked with the formal processes of grading and selection towards the end of a period of education. Thus assessment is often seen as one of the evils of society, with its major function being to judge and categorise pupils on the basis of sweeping overall judgements, rather than having any role in contributing in any more sensitive way to the process of education itself.

A more recent manifestation of assessment in the primary sector has been the blanket testing programmes used by many L.E.A.s around the country. Gipps et al (1983) have revealed both the extent of the introduction of these in the great accountability drive in the 1970s and the confusion that has existed over their intended purpose. It seems in many cases that L.E.A.s introduced these testing programmes, utilising commercially available tests of 'cognitive ability' or 'general aptitude', more as a defence against a perceived threat if they

weren't seen to be taking steps to 'monitor standards' rather than as part of any planned programme to use the results. There is a certain amount of evidence nationally that some secondary schools have tended to use such results as a basis for setting or streaming pupils, on entry — a practice that is seen by many as highly questionable. Such developments tend to confirm the fear that if you carry out an ill-founded programme of pupil assessment and make the results available, people will quickly find ways of utilising the results, however inappropriate they may be for that particular purpose.

Alongside this rather bleak mismatch between the educational experiences of primary school children, and formal testing procedures which are frequently used to assess them, sit the internal systems of assessment and recording progress that are employed by individual primary schools and primary school teachers. Undoubtedly the approaches taken vary enormously, and there is a real danger of misrepresenting the full range of practice by attempting to describe it in summary form. It does however seem to be fairly typical for primary schools not to have an explicitly stated whole school assessment policy. In many cases the philosophy is much more one of individual teachers adopting their own approach, informally in relation to their own class, and the recording and reporting of the findings of such assessments may be confined to a few brief notes or grades in a mark book. Clift et al (1981) have provided an extensive review of the formal record keeping systems that are used around the country, and in many cases these provide no more than a very modest view of the achievements that have occurred.

Where individual pupil record systems do exist there is widespread evidence that many teachers regard them as a chore to complete, and make very little use of them once they have been completed. This attitude towards keeping formal records of pupil assessments appears to be linked in many cases to a view that good primary school teachers can quickly form their own assessments of individual children when they start to teach them, and prefer to give them a 'fresh start' rather than having their expectations coloured by formal records completed by other teachers.

Undoubtedly many primary school teachers are extremely gifted in terms of their ability to assess the potential, current skills, and learning styles of individual pupils, and one can understand how brief general statements on a record card may have little to offer them. Such a system does however demand a lot of each

Towards a National Curriculum (continued from page 5)

accompanying notion of age-related bench-mark testing which will simply act as a straight-jacket on the entire system. Above all, we need to convince the Government that their plans will acquire no credibility with educationalists and teachers while a national curriculum continues to be viewed by politicians and civil servants as a convenient bureaucratic device for exercising control over what goes on in schools.

teacher, and may minimise the benefits that they can receive from the insights of their colleagues into the children they are currently teaching.

If one holds the view that the educational process can benefit from teachers having a detailed understanding of the past achievements of the individual children who they are currently teaching, then this can be seen as an argument for the recording of such achievements in a form that can be passed from one teacher to another. Without such records one inevitably depends on the transfer of such information by word of mouth, and this introduces the related danger that, where time is in short supply, the message that is conveyed will be a highly generalised one about the 'overall ability' of a child rather than anything more specific about his or her particular strengths, weaknesses, talents or interests. Closely linked to this issue is a related concern over curriculum continuity, which is recognised as being so difficult to ensure for every child, particularly in primary education, where many children are following what is in many respects an individual curriculum rather than a whole class curriculum. Assessment and record keeping can be seen to have a vital role to play in assisting with the process of attempting to promote curriculum continuity for all children.

Another major problem, which exists in relation to the prevalent informal approach to pupil assessment, lies in the lack of access that it provides to specific information about a child's progress and achievements to other interested parties. Such information may be of interest to a wide range of individuals including curriculum consultants, or other teachers with responsibility in the school such as Heads and Deputy-Heads. Teachers within the school may be able to obtain the information that they need by occasional visits to the classroom, to teach or observe, and through discussions with the individual teacher when the need arises, but once again time may limit the extent to which this can occur.

More problematic are the needs of parents, governors, L.E.A. officers and advisors, and other elected representatives with a responsibility for the provision of education in schools. At present there is widespread evidence that many such individuals feel frustrated by their lack of access to information about the achievements of primary school pupils. In some cases they will turn to such standardised test results as exist and are available, and may, as has already been noted, draw quite inappropriate conclusions from them.

In such a climate there is already fairly widespread support for attempts to develop pupil assessment systems in primary schools, so that they can more adequately satisfy the needs of the various interested parties who have been mentioned. Approaches to this problem will inevitably vary enormously and in each case the costs and benefits will need to be considered very carefully. For example the resources required to develop and sustain any such new system need to be weighed against the potential benefits which may accrue from it. Shipman (1983), among others, has warned against the danger of spending much more time constructing such records than is ever spent consulting them. Nevertheless this is an area to which many primary schools are now paying a great deal of attention. Some are involved in developments which are very

similar to the profiling schemes that are being introduced in many secondary schools. These can involve pupils' personal records, negotiation, diaries and samples of work. In some cases these have been developed in liaison with the local secondary schools to which many of the pupils will move, as an attempt to aid the transfer process. Alongside this aim have been much broader aims related to the use of such information within the school as a part of the teaching and learning process.

Such schemes may reveal a basis for developing pupil assessment in primary schools in a way that is both meaningful and manageable, and which produces results that reflect the achievements of individual children in relation to the curriculum they have followed. At present they are far from complete, or universally accepted, and if they are to develop they will need to be nurtured, resourced and protected from the demands of competing ideologies.

Currently the largest cloud on the primary school pupil assessment horizon is the fear of what Kenneth Baker's proposals for 'benchmark tests' at 7 and 11 might look like in practice. If these turn out, as many fear, to be externally devised tests remote from the whole curriculum of primary schools, but with high status in terms of the way they may be used to judge teachers, schools, and pupils at the point when they wish to move to secondary school, then much will have been lost (Murphy, 1987). Such tests could quickly cut across any more informed pupil assessment systems which schools may be developing, and at the same time they will inevitably have a powerful influence in narrowing the teaching that occurs in order to improve performance on the tests. Who is going to be interested in any other assessment results once the benchmark tests become the currency of the land?

Exactly what the implications of these recent proposals will be is certain to be a matter of great concern during the coming months. Working parties will be set up to identify 'attainment targets' for seven and eleven year olds (as well as fourteen year olds) in each of the areas of the proposed national curriculum. Assuming that agreement can be reached about these, and that they can be stated in terms that can be generally understood, then the debate will turn to how they can be assessed.

The popular attraction of simple measures to gauge progress through the primary curriculum is most unlikely to be met by any feasible system to deliver such a thing. Crude measures may be adopted, as a pragmatic solution, once the complexities of the task begin to be understood, but these are unlikely to convey much information about the diversity and complexity of the achievements of individual children in relation to the full breadth of any new national curriculum. They aren't even likely to encourage schools to teach the national curriculum, as pressures will inevitably start to focus the teaching effort towards improving performance on the particular attainment targets that will be highlighted in the tests.

There is no doubt that there is a need to develop a wider understanding about and expertise in pupil assessment in primary schools. There is already much good practice and promising developments upon which future work could be developed. If pupil assessment is to

play a role in promoting effective education then it needs to be designed to minimise the disruption it causes to good education throughout primary schools. It needs therefore to be seen as a process which is closely linked to everyday teaching and learning in primary schools, and which can be used by teachers to reinforce and affirm the positive achievements of all children.

The benchmark tests have every potential to become crude remote measures of a very limited part of the achievement of primary school pupils. The focus that they will provide on a limited part of the primary curriculum, and the preoccupation that they will engender over whether children have achieved those specific attainment targets at the particular ages of 7 and 11 is difficult to defend.

There is nothing inherently wrong with pupil assessment, or with attainment targets, but both if handled insensitively, or imposed on schools for the purpose of a crude accountability system, can do much to destroy the quality of good primary school education. What is needed in our primary schools is an improvement in the support, training and resources given to individual teachers to develop their own role in the assessment of all children throughout the primary school years. Benchmark tests at 7 and 11 could remain completely divorced from such a development, and could prevent it from even being a remote possibility in the foreseeable future.

References

- Clift, P., Weiner, G. and Wilson, E. (1981) **Record Keeping in Primary Schools**. London: Macmillan Educational Books/Schools Council.
- Gipps, C., Steadman, S., Blackstone, T. and Stierer, B. (1983) **Testing Children: Standardised Testing in Local Education Authorities and Schools**. London: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Murphy, R.J.L. Assessing a national curriculum. Paper presented at a Warwick University Public Education Policy Seminary on May 2nd 1987.
- Shipman, M. (1983) **Assessment in Primary and Middle Schools**.

For Effective Classroom Practices

Peter Mortimore, Pamela Sammons, Louise Stoll, David Lewis and Russell Ecob

This is the third article in a series contributed by the ILEA research team whose Junior School Project is the most comprehensive such study to have been mounted in this country. The full research report is to be published under the title **School Matters: the junior years** (Open University). This article focuses on the key factors relating to teachers' classroom practices which appear to affect the progress and development of pupils during the junior years.

In this article, we intend to focus on four of the key factors concerning teachers' classroom practices which our research indicated affect pupil progress and development during the junior years. The four key factors are 'structured sessions', 'intellectually challenging teaching', 'work-centred environment' and 'maximum communication between teachers and pupils'.

Structured sessions

One aspect of teachers' methods of organising pupils' work which we examined was the extent to which pupils were given responsibility for managing their own work. Our results indicate that most teachers favour giving pupils responsibility for managing individual pieces of work, but tend to organise the pupils' day by planning the sequence of pupils' work. In a minority of classes, however, pupils were given the responsibility for managing their own programme of work for extended periods — such as a whole day.

We found that the latter method was related negatively to pupils' progress in reading and mathematics and to a number of the non-cognitive outcomes (self-concept, attitude to school and attitude to writing). Our findings show that, where teachers provide a framework which gives order and facilitates the progression of work, pupils' learning and development benefits. Thus, sufficient teacher direction which offers a clear structure to the school day is important. Nonetheless, there is evidence that pupil responsibility and independence for managing particular pieces of work *within* sessions (rather than for longer periods of time) is beneficial.

The extent to which pupils were given responsibility for managing their own programme of work for long periods of time was related negatively to teachers' organisation, and to the level of pupil industry and

WILLIAM MORRIS AND EDUCATION

A symposium about Morris's ideas on the aims of education in art, the crafts and society — and their relevance today.

**11am-5.30pm Saturday 14th November 1987
Moat Community College, Leicester**

**Details from William Morris Society,
Kelmscott House, 26 Upper Mall, London W6.**

involvement with their work. However, it was positively related to the amount of teacher time spent talking about routine (non-work) matters, rather than to the amount of teacher time spent communicating with pupils. These latter aspects are all related to the 'work-centred environment', which we discuss in more detail below.

From our results, it is evident that in classes where pupils were not given a sufficient structure to their day, the teacher's organisation of work was less effective and pupils were less engaged with their work. The teacher spent more time managing activities and keeping order (routine communication) and less time talking to pupils about their work. In addition, levels of noise and pupil movement were much higher (excessive noise and movement were also related to poorer pupil progress and development).

The 'structured sessions' factor is thus associated with a more 'work-centred environment'. It is also related to other factors. There is evidence connecting it with a 'limited focus within sessions' and with some aspects of 'intellectually challenging teaching'. The link with the 'limited focus within sessions' factor is perhaps not surprising. The data demonstrate that the use, by the teacher, of a high proportion of activities (3 or more) in several different curriculum areas at the same time (mixed-activities), was related negatively to pupils' progress and development. Like 'structured sessions' it was also associated with more teacher time being spent on routine (non-work) communication, and higher levels of pupil noise and movement in the class. Where pupils have responsibility for managing their work over long periods it is, of course, much more likely that there will be activities in several different curriculum areas occurring in the classroom at any one time. Moreover, from our data there is also evidence that teaching sessions were rather less challenging and interesting in classrooms where pupils were given responsibility for managing their work over long periods.

Teachers who organise a classroom within which pupils can work with some — but not too much — independence, appear to be better able to ensure that precious classroom time is not wasted, and that pupils' involvement with work remains high. In such classrooms it is less likely that important aspects of teaching and learning will be omitted. In our view this is what effective teachers have always done, and is what most teachers aim to do. To the minority of teachers who try to give responsibility to pupils for managing their work over long periods, we would urge caution. In our assessment of pupils' self-perceptions in school, we found that over 40 per cent reported that they had difficulty in concentrating on their work all or most of the time. For such pupils, the encouragement of independence in managing particular pieces of work, rather than several pieces over an extended period of time, appears more likely to prove fruitful.

Intellectually challenging teaching

The content of teachers' communications is a vitally important aspect of intellectually challenging teaching. This use of what have been termed 'high-order' questions and statements was found to contribute to

effectiveness.² By the term 'higher order' questions and statements we mean the sorts of talk by the teacher which encourages pupils to use their creative imagination and powers of problem-solving. Examples of questions of a high-order type — where there is not one right answer — might be 'How many different ways can you think of to measure the length of this room?' or 'What do you think would make a good end to this story?' Overall, and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, we found that teachers do not use higher-order questions and statements very often, on average only about two per cent of teachers' talk was observed to be of this kind.

This is much in accord with the findings of Galton and Simon (1980) in their study of teaching behaviour and pupil progress. Like them, however, we found there was considerable variation between individual teachers. Some make more use of this sort of communication than others (and a few teachers were *never* observed making use of these sorts of communication).

Our results indicate that greater use of 'higher-order' communications by the teacher has a positive impact. In classes where the teaching situation is challenging and stimulating, and where teachers communicate interest and enthusiasm to the children, greater pupil progress occurs. Our data reveal that there was a positive relationship between use of 'higher-order' communications, and the overall level of interest and challenge in teaching sessions. Analyses showed that 'higher-order' questions and statements were more frequently in evidence in sessions rated as being bright and interesting. Furthermore, teachers who used class discussions as a teaching strategy also tended to make greater use of 'higher-order' communication.

We found that intellectually challenging teaching was also related to a number of aspects of the other key factors, including the 'work-centred environment'. Thus, pupils' industry and involvement with their work was greater when there was plenty for them to do and when the teacher's approach was interesting and challenging. This approach involved the more frequent use of 'higher-order' questions and statements. Teacher who devoted more of their time to discussing pupils' work also tended to offer more stimulating work for their classes.

Another important and interesting link can be seen in the fact that the percentage of teacher time spent on contacts with the class, as a whole, was related positively to teachers' use of 'higher-order' questions and statements and, to a lesser extent, with the incidence of questions as a whole. These findings support Galton and Simon (1980), who noted a link between the proportion of class contacts and the incidence of 'higher order' communications. These authors suggested that "it may be the nature of the interactions which are shared by the whole class that differentiate between the successful and unsuccessful teachers". (p.80)

Our data show that this is likely to be the case. When we discuss our factor 'maximum communication between teachers and pupils' the implications of using an appropriate balance of class and individual communications will be dealt with in more detail. However, it is worth noting here that, in communications with the whole class, teachers were more likely to raise 'higher-order' questions and statements than in comments with individuals. At first

sight this may seem surprising: some teachers may see the greater opportunity to challenge pupils in individual work, rather than in group or class sessions.³ Our data show that, in its extreme form, this view is mistaken. Intellectually challenging communications are more likely to arise from group or class sessions than from interactions with an individual. These tend to be brief and are often pre-occupied with classroom management issues. This is because most individual interactions we observed were isolated and there was seldom time for a teacher to have an extended conversation with an individual pupil. Challenging comment can seldom be made without an appropriate building-up or focusing of ideas.

The implication for some class teachers of this finding is that they may need to reconsider aspects of their classroom practice and seek to use the opportunity of group and class sessions to promote, systematically, the sorts of 'higher-order' communications that, we have shown, challenge pupils.

Work-centred environment

A number of aspects of teacher behaviour and classroom management were found to be related negatively to pupils' progress and development. These included high levels of pupil noise and movement in the class—especially noise and movement unrelated to work activity—and a higher percentage of the teacher's time being spent on routine (non-work) communications. These three aspects were themselves interrelated. As might be expected, the incidence of high levels of pupil noise and movement were associated. It was also found that, where pupil noise and movement were high, teachers spent more time managing the classroom using routine (non-work) communications, and less time actually talking about pupils' work.

In contrast, where teachers spent more time talking about the content of pupils' work, and giving them feedback about it, progress and development benefited. Furthermore, where teachers spent more time talking about work matters and organised work so that there was always plenty for pupils to do, pupils' industry and involvement in work was observed to be greater and they appeared to be interested in what they were doing and eager to start new work. In such work-centred classrooms, levels of pupil noise and movement were lower.

The identification of consistencies in the relationships amongst these aspects of teacher behaviour and classroom practices reveal one of the important mechanisms of effectiveness—the creation of a work-centred environment. It should be noted, however, that our finding of the importance of the creation of a 'work-centred environment' does *not* imply that classrooms should be silent, with pupils permanently seated.

None of the classrooms we observed was silent or had immobile pupils. Rather, it is the *excessively high* levels of noise and movement which were associated with less emphasis on work both by pupils and by their teachers. In such classrooms, the teacher frequently was over-occupied with the management of activity, rather than communicating about pupils' work. Again, as noted in connection with 'structured sessions', pupils' responses to questions concerned with their self-perception of

their own learning behaviour, showed that many experienced difficulties in concentrating on their work all or most of the time. A very noisy classroom with much pupil movement, must provide more distractions for pupils than one which is clearly focused on work activity.

Our data also reveal that levels of pupil noise and movement were higher and teachers spent more time managing work, where sessions were organised on a mixed-activity basis (those where a class of pupils were involved with work in three or more different curriculum areas at the same time). Moreover the amount of time teachers spent communicating with the pupils about work (including giving pupils feedback) was lower in classes where more sessions were devoted to mixed-activities than where work occurred mainly in one (or, on occasions, two, broad curriculum areas. Thus the creation of a 'work-centred environment' was positively associated with the 'limited focus with sessions'.

Our findings on the value of a work-centred environment are unlikely to surprise many teachers. It might appear self-evident that children (like adults) find it harder to work when surrounded by distractions, where the noise level is high, and where movement is excessive and disruptive. This is not to say that the most effective classes were silent or that pupils were kept seated on their chairs. Where talk was about work it was encouraged; where the learning task required movement, it was permitted; but the general atmosphere was, first and foremost, work-centred. Moreover, teachers themselves spent more time talking about the content of pupils' work and giving feedback. Effective classrooms were on the whole, places where children were not only working, but enjoying their work.

Maximum communication between teachers and pupils

Our research highlighted the benefits of a high level of communication between teacher and pupils. Thus, overall the teachers who spent *less of their classroom time* communicating with pupils (and more time on other matters such as silently monitoring pupils, 'housekeeping', marking, in the stock room etc) were less effective.

In addition, we found evidence that the average amount of her or his time that the teacher spent communicating with the class, rather than with groups (which occurred very rarely as noted earlier), or with individuals was associated with beneficial impacts on pupils' progress in reading, mathematics, writing and on behaviour, self-concept attendance, and attitude to school.

Two points, however, need to be stressed. The first is that interacting with the class did not necessarily imply a 'whole class teaching' approach was adopted. In fact, our measures of the extent to which 'whole class teaching' was used were not related significantly to positive effects on pupils' progress and development. Thus, it was the proportion of the contacts directed to the class (for example: introducing work to the class, telling and discussing a story, and other class-based discussions or feedback) which was important.

The second point to stress is that, from the analysis of

the observational data, it was found that the majority of all teachers' contacts were with individual pupils (over 60% on average). This was found to be true even for teachers who claimed that they spent more of their time talking to *the class* rather than to individuals. However, some teachers frequently introduced topics, discussed work or raised points with the *whole* class. This was the case whether pupils were working individually, or in groups on different tasks, or on the same activity. A sufficient balance of class to individual interactions appears to be more effective in promoting pupil progress. Effects tend to be positive where teachers spent around a quarter or more of their contacts with pupils in communicating with the class as a whole.

It is interesting to note that our finding on the efficacy of class communication is in broad agreement with that reported earlier in the Oracle research (see Galton and Simon, 1980).

The links between the teacher's use of class communications and pupils' progress and development reflect, we think, the greater amount of attention received by members of the class through this mode of teaching. This is because when all, or nearly all, of a teacher's time is spent communicating with individual pupils, each child can receive only a relatively infrequent number of contacts with the teacher in any teaching day; even though the teacher is extremely busy. To illustrate this from our observational data, we found that, on average, pupils received only 11 individual contacts with their class teacher in any teaching day. Given that those with poor behaviour or particular learning difficulties tended to receive a higher number of contacts, other pupils generally received fewer than this average number of contacts. Moreover, it should be remembered that in larger classes than those found in the ILEA's project schools (average size in our sample was 25 pupils) the number of individual contacts for pupils will tend to be even lower. The skill of the teacher, therefore, is to achieve a balance of class, group and individual communications where appropriate, which will maximise the *total* amount of communication with pupils.

The use of a 'limited focus within sessions' (factor 8) was related positively to the percentage of teacher time spent communicating with the class. This is not, perhaps, surprising. It is easier to raise a point with the whole class when all pupils are working within one broad curriculum area, than when pupils are engaged in work in three or more different curriculum areas. Our data also indicate, as reported earlier, that the use of 'higher-order' communication was associated with the amount of teacher time spent communicating with the whole class. Furthermore, where children work in a single curriculum area within sessions, it was more common for teachers to raise an intellectually challenging point with *all* pupils.

Maximum communication with pupils was also linked with the 'work-centred environment'. We found that the amount of time teachers spent on interactions with the class was correlated positively with the amount of time she or he spent talking about work, and with pupils' industry and movement.

The main implication of our finding on the importance of achieving maximum communication between teachers and pupils is that flexibility in approach is

necessary. An over-reliance upon individual communication, paradoxically, will reduce inevitably the overall amount of teacher-pupil contacts. Therefore, teachers, and those who train them, need to be aware of the benefits of using other forms of communication wherever appropriate. The majority of teachers' talk will still be with individual pupils but, by using class (not group) communications, especially for discussions of work, and for raising intellectually challenging points, the overall level and the quality of communications can be improved.

Conclusions

We think that some of the findings have a 'common sense' feel. For example, the value of 'intellectually challenging teaching' and of a 'work-centred environment' for pupils' progress and development will surprise no-one. Other findings, however, may challenge some teachers', and their trainers' pre-conceptions — for example, those on 'structured sessions' or 'maximum communication with pupils'. In particular, some readers may be surprised at the perhaps unexpected ways in which these different factors are interrelated and are linked with positive effects on pupils' progress and development.

Notes

1. It is worth also reporting that we found that teachers could not easily be divided into distinctive groups operating particular 'styles'. The debate on 'styles' (eg 'informal/formal') has, in our view, distracted attention from the specific ways in which teachers' behaviours and approaches differ.
2. See Boydell (1974a, 1974b) for details of the scheme we adopted in our observations for the classification of different kinds of pupil-teacher contacts.
3. Although in the vast majority of classes pupils almost always sat in groups, very little group work was observed to take place.

References

- Boydell, D. (1974a) *The Teacher Record: A Technique for Observing the Activities of Junior School Teachers in Informal Classrooms*. University of Leicester: School of Education.
- Boydell, D. (1974b) *The Pupil Record: A Technique for Observing the Activities of Junior School Pupils in Informal Classrooms*. University of Leicester, School of Education.
- Galton, M. and Simon, B. (eds) 1980, *Progress and Performance in the Primary Classroom*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

First and Four-Most

Annabelle Dixon

There have been strange goings-on in relation to an HMI report on the education of the under-fives, which, though prepared, has never seen the light of day. In this article, Annabelle Dixon, long-standing member of the Editorial Board, draws attention to this issue, but also points to positive new developments in the preparation of teachers for this important, but often neglected, age-group.

It is unusual enough to hear of an H.M.I. publication that is eagerly awaited by interested groups of people throughout Great Britain: it is even more unusual to have to inform such groups that the plans for publication, initially deferred, have now been dropped altogether. This is the document already referred to by **Forum** on several occasions, that covered the education of children under five, with particular reference to those children who were in mainstream schooling, rather than attending nursery schools or classes. It was to have been an important and supportive work. It seems there are no plans at present to issue any similar such documents in the future, although it is understood that Martin Bradley was requested to produce guidelines on the subject for the Inspectorate itself.

It would appear that, although the decision was taken on financial grounds, it is worth asking why such an important area of education was considered trivial enough to slip from the budget. Given that the Inspectorate has a certain budget within which to work, somewhere and on several occasions, an individual and/or committee has decided against publication. I would suggest that while this may be due to a certain inevitable ignorance about the importance of education in the early years and its relationship to the pattern of a child's future development, it is only part of the explanation. By no means are all H.M.I.s unaware of its importance but they are also uncomfortably accountable and not only in a financial sense. The education of the under-fives is politically touchy. While the D.E.S. trumpets figures about the number of children in this age-group attending some kind of educational institution and compares Britain favourably with other countries¹, the H.M.I. document was ignoring the width and inspecting the quality. In an election year it would hardly have been seemly to have one government department criticising another, however obliquely. Bad enough to have research (T.E.S. March 20th) that revealed conditions for four-year-olds in infant classes frequently fell short of the government's own parliamentary recommendations.²

A further intractable awkwardness is the problem of responsibility: while the D.E.S. would seem to take the credit upon itself for the fact that so many four year olds are "cared" for in one respect or another, they are not legally responsible for the nature or extent of a child's education until they reach the statutory age of five. Provision, in the final analysis, is a matter for local authorities and local health and social services and, as Maureen O'Connor pointed out,³ this provision is quite

extraordinarily piecemeal, going from Gloucestershire, with no nursery provision whatsoever, through other authorities with a niggardly proportion, e.g. Bromley, Redbridge, Sutton and Bixley, to those like Walsall, Lancashire, North Tyneside, Haringey and Newham which have upwards of 80% of their under fives in some kind of schooling, mostly nurseries.

The historical reasons for this state of affairs, and indeed that of four year olds being in the mainstream schooling at all, has already been outlined⁴ (**Forum** 1986). The political influence in such provision is straightforward enough. The greater the lean to the Right, the smaller the amount spent on children under five. The correct word should probably be 'invested' but, insofar as the returns are not yet quantifiable, particularly in financial terms, it is not a word that enjoys frequent use. Even so, recent American research results indicate that pre-school experience has an influence children's academic and/or personal development beyond the initial first few years of schooling. The Bristol Child Health Study (1987), has also given us useful indications in this line even though, like much research in this field, it has been beset by methodological problems. While bearing in mind that "pre-school" can mean up to and including six years old in the United States, it is an important finding.

Having had fairly extensive personal experience of teaching young children who have had no pre-school education, I should like to suggest that much of the gain comes from having advanced their social development to a point where it no longer becomes the pressing imperative it is when they first encounter a group of children their own age. Having established a social identity seems to free their attention for other matters.

To return to the position of the local authorities, the message seems to be that if they are not doing well by their younger children, and by now there are certainly enough interested groups telling them so⁵, then it is their business and not that of the D.E.S. to sort it out. It is a subject that has no discernible place of importance on centrally funded in-service training, nor indeed has infant education as a whole been considered important enough to merit much attention at all. This is a serious enough omission in itself but co-incidental information from the Pre-school Playgroup Association (P.P.A.) gives a very illuminating insight into official attitudes; attitudes that are not necessarily publicised.

The P.P.A.⁵, together with the National Council for Voluntary Organizations (N.C.V.O.), recently

undertook a survey to establish the extent to which Y.T.S. trainees, on Community Programme projects funded by the Manpower Services Commission, were involved in pre-school playgroups. Their findings revealed a picture in which 20,000 children were involved in projects for which no guidelines of any sort had been issued by the M.S.C.; none of the local M.S.C. boards, charged with overseeing such projects, had ever met to discuss standards and a request by the P.P.A. national chairman to discuss these and other concerns with Mr. Bryan Nicholson, chairman of the M.S.C. in September 1986, had met with nothing more than an acknowledgement of the letter.

Community Programme Projects are also able to be more generously funded than P.P.A. groups but encourage none of the self-help attitudes usually associated with such groups. Projects also begin and end abruptly with little or no fostering of longer term relationships with a local area or its people. The situation was summed up by Miss Pat Hand, who had chaired the working group, who said that while the P.P.A.'s aim was to support and help communities, the children, parents, relatives and childminders, the M.S.C. was only looking to give people employment to get them off the unemployment register.

The M.S.C. can afford to ignore such criticism but its very cynicism in ignoring it is especially telling and speaks of a certain political ingenuousness: there are few on such M.S.C. programmes who do not recognise them for what they are, and as a means of unwittingly raising political awareness amongst young people it seems rather effective. As a means of telling interested parties what importance central government now places on the nature of provision for the under fives it is decidedly instructive.

However, awareness of the situation has certainly been growing apace amongst many concerned individuals and groups, the P.P.A. included, and is beginning to take a shape which was scarcely discernible two or three years ago. For example, in June 1987 the Roehampton Institute of Education, perhaps mindful of its Froebelian origins, founded a Centre for Early Childhood Studies and teachers can now apply to study for an Advanced Diploma in Early Childhood Studies at the Institute. By March 1987 a significant seminar under the joint auspices of the National Foundation for Educational Research (N.F.E.R.) and the School Curriculum Development Committee (S.C.D.C.) considered the current initiatives that were being undertaken in the field. For instance, Ilona Thomas gave an account of the Bedfordshire Four-Plus pilot scheme, Lesley Abbot described the present provision and future possibilities for the in-service training for teachers of young children and Caroline Sharp gave an overview of L.E.A. admission policies and practices. The papers given at the seminar together with a useful and illuminating foreword by Mary Jane Drummond, who has edited the publication, are to be published in the near future (£2.50)⁶ and will add to the information now currently available on the subject.

In June 1987 a national conference to promote new initiatives in training for work with under fives was held at Nottingham University attended by representatives from Nursery Nursing, Social Services and Education. Professor John Tomlinson from Warwick University

gave the opening address and the conference was co-sponsored by a newly formed panel of experts in the field from the East Midlands and the Voluntary Organisations Liaison Council for Under Fives (V.O.C.C.U.F.). Encouraging news was the fact that a new diploma in multidisciplinary approaches to young children and their families would soon be available to practising teachers and others concerned and experienced with this age group in the East Midlands. Liverpool Polytechnic is to run a course leading to a certificate of Professional Development in Pre-School work and the Community Education Project in Coventry is offering a Royal Society of Arts Certificate "Working with Young Children" to parents, childminders and playgroup leaders. There was also much interest in the High/Scope curriculum training course that originated in the United States that is specifically for children of pre-school age and is sponsored by the Thomas Coram Foundation. Even if not yet on a large scale, at least there will be future generations who will be educated about the needs of children under five.

In addition to this, there is a serious suggestion that the N.F.E.R. who now have an Under-Fives Unit, may be considering funding a research officer to investigate the experiences of four year olds in mainstream schooling and/or an investigation into in-service opportunities currently on offer to primary teachers presently teaching four year olds in their first or reception classes. One suspects that the picture to emerge from both investigations, if they are carried out, will be one of enormous local variation in range and quality, reflecting the personal concerns of advisors or small groups of interested teachers and parents. Only when awareness of these young children's needs in school has been raised to a national level, will there be sufficient pressure to demand something in the way of agreed minimum standards in terms of resourcing classrooms, training teachers and maintaining the appropriate environment for children under five.

One of the major hurdles will be the establishment of a real liaison between government departments and different professions who share a concern for young children. The hurdle seems peculiarly British and many other countries already have a degree of co-operation that should provide useful and encouraging models as to ways of breaking out of bureaucratic moulds that benefit none but the complacent.

References

1. D.E.S. (December 1986), **Statistical Bulletin**.
2. Great Britain: Parliament: House of Commons: Education, Science & Arts Committee (1986) **Achievement in Primary Schools: Third Report**. Vol.I, London H.M.S.O.
3. Maureen O'Connor (19th May 1987) 'Political Truths out of the mouths of babes', **The Guardian**.
4. Annabelle Dixon (Spring 1986) 'Playing at Schools', **Forum** Vol.28 No.2.
5. Sarah Bayliss (May 1987) 'Trouble in the Nursery', **Times Educational Supplement**.
6. M.J. Drummond (ed.) N.F.E.R. (1987) **The Four Year Old in School** (£2.50 incl. p & p.)

Multi-Cultural Practice in London Schools

Ray Pinder

Author of the very successful **Why don't teachers teach like they used to?** published earlier this year and reviewed in this issue, Ray Pinder was, until 1985, headteacher at Drayton Park Primary School in London. Since her retirement she has been assisting the Primary Inspectorate in three ILEA divisions. Here she draws on her experience to illuminate teachers' approaches to the challenge of multi-ethnic teaching.

Walking through the entrance I came face-to-face with a large display. I read 'WELCOME TO OUR SCHOOL'. Scattered over the display were children's portraits, and next to each one was a phrase in a different language. Some, such as 'Bienvenu', and 'Welkommen', I understood, although my knowledge of other European languages is sketchy. But several were in scripts which were unfamiliar to me, although I thought I recognised the Hebrew and Chinese scripts. The children had gone home for the day, so I had to resort to asking some of the teachers which languages were represented, and why they had been selected. I was told that the portraits were self-portraits and that each young painter had then written, or had an adult write, the phrase 'Welcome to our School', in their own first language. The list was not yet complete. There would be further additions, but to date they had the following: Bengali, Chinese, English, Gaelic, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Italian, Philippino, Spanish, Thai, Turkish, Urdu and Welsh.

In a second school I visited, the main hall was dominated by a painting of a crowd of children's faces. A striking feature was the variety of skin colours shown. The pink colour, known ethnocentrically as 'flesh', was part of a spectrum, but it was no longer the only kind of 'flesh' colour available. The whole rich variety of humanity was being celebrated and the painting was entitled 'We're all the colours under the sun.'

Visiting other schools in different parts of London, I was struck by the number and variety of interesting displays with which the walls of the staircases and halls were decorated. There were examples of European, African and Asian arts and crafts, drawn from a considerable range of cultures. Displayed alongside was the children's own work, which usually included pieces of writing in different languages. Bi-lingual books, both home-made and printed, were to be seen on the bookshelves. Going into classrooms I became aware that Home Corners had also become international: in one room a Chinese kitchen displayed its woks and other ethnic cooking utensils. Elsewhere, playdough chappatis were being prepared on the stove. The dressing up clothes were international too: saris, djellabas, a fez, a cowboy costume and kimonos, were available. The two girls in the Chinese kitchen wore cheong-sams.

In one school the children had been learning a Japanese song about tulips and the words, in both English and Japanese had been written out by a Japanese mother, who also came in to teach the song. On another visit I saw a group of children learning a Gujarati stick dance; they too were being taught by a parent. Several headteachers mentioned the important role of music and dance. 'Music is a third language for everyone' said one. In many London schools, Eid, Diwali, Channuka, the Chinese New Year, and other festivals were part of the calendar, and occasions for celebration and parties, alongside Easter and Christmas. The folk lore of many cultures was relayed to the children, and different cultures were high-lighted at different times. Parents from ethnic minority groups were an important resource for these occasions and played a central role in their schools.

But festivals and exotica do not form the basis of multi-culturalism. Parents also had an important role in the everyday life of the school; interpreting and translating for fellow-country men and women, assisting in the making of bi-lingual books, and vetting such books too. The last point is most important. One headteacher told me of a book in Bengali, which none of the mono-lingual English staff had been able to understand. When the book was given to an Indian parent to read, she pointed out that the subject matter was most unsuitable because the book dealt with suttee, which was, in any case a custom no longer practised in modern India.

The Opportunities of Multi-Lingualism

In one school I saw a poster which read:

Speak
Learn
Read
Write
Work

in two languages

This had been issued by the ILEA Bilingual Development Community Language Team.

While all teachers must recognise the importance of all pupils learning standard English, we should also be aware that England has been a mono-lingual country, and there has long been a concern about this and about poor levels in second language performance by English children. The multi-linguistic environment now available to many London children is seen by teachers as an opportunity for them to learn the bases of other languages. In 1985, the ILEA announced that there were then 161 languages spoken in London schools. In many schools heritage language teachers work alongside class teachers using first language teaching to reinforce the teaching of English, and strategies for the teaching of English as a second language are being integrated into whole school programmes. Certain needs have become clear.

In the past, children entering schools without any English have often been presented with very elementary work in mathematics. The provision of number lines in Chinese, Bengali and other systems provide a useful bridge for children who may be highly competent in this area, until they can move freely between their first language and English. One headteacher told me how letters went home to families speaking minority languages together with an English version because it would be mistaken to assume that all the families would be unable to read the English version. In that school 26 languages were spoken. She told me of one 11 year old who had returned to Bangladesh on holiday and sent her a postcard in English while the heritage language teacher had received one in Bengali. And she asked, 'How many of our teachers could do that?' Perhaps only those of our colleagues who have had the benefit of bilingual schooling could move so readily between their mother-tongue and a second language!

The Importance of Policies and Planning

Leela Ramdeen is a member of the ILEA Multi-ethnic Inspectorate and she defines good multi-cultural education as education which prepares all children for life in the global village which the world has become. This is important for all children, whether they attend multi-ethnic or mono-ethnic schools, just as members of all different ethnic groups need to be seen on the staffs of all schools, not only multi-ethnic schools, for they are role models for all the children.

We have to take the needs of the whole child, cognitive, cultural and self-concept, promoting mutuality of respect and equality of educational opportunity. We have to develop awareness in pupils of the contributions of different cultures.

But, as she points out, good multi-cultural education depends on careful planning, monitoring and evaluation of the achievement of *all* pupils. It requires that we recognise what each child brings into school, and value it accordingly. In essence this is no different from the demands of any good educational practice. The danger is always that *our own low expectations* might prevent the realisation of children's potential. The recent focus on the work of Section 11 teachers high-lighted the danger that schools might become a multi-ethnic haven for children, without providing necessary stimulus.

Good practice is not found where individual teachers struggle within their own classrooms, but where there is a whole school policy involving all non-teaching as well as teaching staff. The work of the school needs to be kept under review and outside support, in the form of advisers and specialists, drawn on to identify the school priorities. Key personnel in the school, like post-holders can have a ripple effect. We need to identify the strengths of teachers and other staff. After planning, there comes the setting up of working groups who feed back the results of their discussions. A time-table for aims and objectives has to be made and progress monitored: 'Have we achieved our aim?' 'How have the children benefited?'

London schools are grouped in clusters so that discussion can be extended and ideas exchanged. The Inspectors are a resource to be drawn upon for advice, especially about which schools it would be most valuable for staffs to visit. There is an awareness of the need to open up classroom doors and listen to others, especially to what the parents and children are telling us.

Equal Opportunities for All

In order to provide truly equal opportunities there has to be a conscious effort to eliminate racism, sexism and classism, (prejudice against children of working-class or middle-class origin). All London schools have had to produce an Anti-racist Policy which is agreed by all those working in the school and the school governors. It has to be made known to parents and children. Such a policy will include the attitude of the school to name-calling of all kinds, and lay down procedures for dealing with racist incidents. The discussion of such documents, and their acceptance by school communities indicates the raising of levels of awareness in those communities. All those who work in schools need to become aware of their own prejudices and eliminate those which increase children's disadvantage. Ancillary staff are especially important in this respect: it is they who are out in the play-grounds and in the dinner halls, where some children might feel that the kind of behaviour demanded by teachers in the classroom is no longer expected, so it is they who must ensure that mutuality of respect is maintained.

Multi-cultural education must of necessity embrace multi-ethnicity, thus anti-racism is a vital sector, for without it there can be no equality. London schools are having to examine their practices and curricula and ensure that they present a range of information which represents a multi-ethnic viewpoint. For while we may not be responsible for what happened in history we are responsible for putting the story straight now.

Many teachers in London feel that good multi-cultural education is synonymous with good education. If racism did not exist, there would, perhaps, have been no need to emphasise the development of multi-ethnic education in schools. Because it exists and because there are those who would perpetuate and extend it, the focus on multi-ethnic education and anti-racism has been vital in heightening our awareness of the needs of all our children in London. This is illustrated in the writings of London children, some examples of which were collected in the anthology **Harmony lines** and published by the ILEA in 1985. The following extracts are taken from that collection.

I, You and It — Together We Learn

Maureen Hardy

Currently in charge of Language Development at Sandfield Close, a large, multi-ethnic primary school in Leicester, Maureen Hardy has researched the topic 'Developing Oracy as an aid to learning in the classroom' for an M.Ed. degree at the University of Leicester. In addition to school experience, she has been a lecturer in two Colleges of Education and also at Leicester Polytechnic. This article continues the theme developed in three previous FORUM articles: Vol.22, No.2, 1980; Vol.24, No.2, 1982 and Vol.27, No.1, 1984.

What is Oracy?

An important component of modern teaching/learning strategies is 'Oracy', especially in relation to Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science. This article will focus mainly on Oracy and Mathematics, but the general principles apply across the curriculum. First, it is helpful to define 'oracy', since it is frequently confused with vocabulary development, 'correct' grammar, or elocution. The term was coined by Wilkinson in 1965 and his definition is developed in Wade B. (ed) 1982. Basically, 'oracy' embraces the reciprocal abilities of 'talking' and 'listening' within the context of a meaningful dialogue which is intended to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

Most teachers are 'orate', but this does not mean that they are in a position to inculcate or assess its development in their pupils. Current teacher education courses are attempting to remedy the situation. To be 'orate' is not necessarily to be a fine orator, but to possess the ability to communicate effectively even when using simple language as in conversation with young children. Wells (1981) suggests that it is the quality of the interaction, or 'intersubjectivity' which is crucial i.e. the mutuality and eagerness with which shared meanings are negotiated. The 'I, you and it' communication triangle appears to be an essential and

common feature of pre-school education at home (Tizard and Hughes, 1984 and Wells, 1985), which would probably prove beneficial if replicated in schools (Wells, J. and G., 1984), but which is rarely present even in the reception class (Willes, 1983).

The difference in ratio of adults to children renders teachers authority figures sharing their time with many. Skilful teachers do find time for individuals, but most learning conversations take place in large groups. The lines of communication are not triangular, but a pattern of straight lines between the teacher and selected individuals. Little connection exists between the chatter of the children and the words of the teacher, to whom they may not even listen. The approach fails to involve all of the pupils, some of whom feel bored, threatened or neglected. Control is kept by a brisk patter, peppered with superficial suggestions of the 'who did what to whom, when?' type or those requiring regurgitation only. More complex, thought provoking questions of the 'how?', 'why?', 'what might be the consequence?' or 'what is the next step?' are rare. Little negotiation of meaning occurs since the teacher already knows the required response. Children rarely ask questions, other than those related to permission or instruction. The teacher, pre-occupied with control and the topic, fails to listen to the children. Traditional techniques are not conducive to developing oracy. As Wells (1984)

Multi-Cultural Practice in London Schools (continued from page 15)

YOU

You should not call People names

It hurts inside

You can't forget

By Yvonne Keane, aged 7.

BEING THE SAME

If you are fat

And I am thin

Even if you've got a

different coloured skin

You're the same inside

By Miranda Thomas, aged 10.

FURTHER

Ending misunderstanding can't be done with poetry

But it may take us one step further.

By Rose Saunders, aged 11

The Education Bill

Forum Editorial Board's response to the Consultation Papers

Founded in 1958, FORUM is an independent journal addressed to progressive classroom teachers, heads and administrators, as well as to parents interested in understanding more about new developments and trends in education.

FORUM is run by teachers for teachers. The Editorial Board is drawn from infant, junior and comprehensive schools, adult and community education, administration and teacher education. FORUM is an entirely independent journal, having no connection with any established organisation or institution. The journal has been in the forefront of the move to comprehensive education and mixed ability teaching in primary and secondary schools — trends which FORUM pioneered. The Editorial Board here responds to the four main Consultation Papers so far issued in connection with the proposed Education Bill.

Financial Delegation, Admission of Pupils to Maintained Schools, Grant Maintained Schools

1. In our view, these papers need to be assessed in their relations to each other, since it is our opinion that, unless greatly modified, legislation along the lines proposed in these three documents will inevitably have the effect of destabilising, and even disrupting, local systems of comprehensive education which now cater for the vast majority of children of secondary school age. We believe that they will also have a similar disruptive effect on local systems of primary and middle school education. The proposals in these three documents, far from being directed at strengthening such local systems, will certainly cause disarray within them. They will be disruptive of local planning for an educational continuum through pre-school, primary and secondary schools with effective arrangements for the transition from one stage to another. Clause II of the 1944 Education Act, which required LEAs to prepare and submit Development Plans, was a major step towards a framework for coherent provision within localities. At times of fluctuations in the size of birthrate cohorts, as now, this is vital. Moreover, it is essential for planning ahead when there is local demographic change caused by such factors as new housing developments, inner city renewal projects, clearance, etc. It is, therefore, our view, that far from leading to a general raising of standards within local systems, these proposals are likely to have the opposite effect, and, through the disruption of local systems, lead to a general decline in standards, particularly in schools in inner city areas, or other areas where the mass of the children are suffering from conditions of poverty and deprivation. Our reasons for this conclusion are elaborated below.

2. We believe that the major impetus for the introduction of this Bill is political, rather than educational. This has been overtly stated by the Prime Minister. 'Just as we gained political support in the last election from

people who had acquired their own home and shares', she is reported as saying, 'so we shall secure still further our political base in 1991-92 — by giving people a real say in education and housing'. The proposed Bill, she went on, 'is the key to the future: the biggest and most important legislation of the forthcoming Parliamentary session' (*The Independent*, 17th July 1987). We believe that education is too important a matter to be made the cat paw of politics.

3. As also overtly stated by Mr Kenneth Baker, Secretary of State for Education and Science, a major objective of the Education Bill, and of the three issues with which these consultation papers are concerned, is to expand and strengthen the independent sector in education at the expense of the maintained sector. Mr. Baker has explained that, at present, about 7 per cent of children attend independent schools, 93 per cent the maintained sector. 'I'm responsible for that', he said. 'What I think is striking in the British education system is that there is nothing in between. Now the City Technology Colleges are a half-way house. I would like to see many more half-way houses, a greater choice, a greater variety' (*Times Educational Supplement*, 3 April 1987). In our view, the main significance of the three Consultation Papers under consideration is that their purpose, and probable effect, is to achieve just this. The result would be decisively to weaken the maintained sector, and this just at the moment when every effort and encouragement needs to be directed at strengthening the system catering for the mass of the nation's children. For these reasons, the main direction of the legislation proposed must be opposed by those having the true interests of the great majority of the children of this country at heart. Further, the full significance of the measures proposed need to be fully understood by parents and the population as a whole.

4. To take the three Consultation Papers in turn; there is, first, the proposal to devolve financial responsibility for running schools very largely to Governing Bodies. Some experience, though limited in scope, has

already been gained in Cambridgeshire (and elsewhere). There are a large number of problems involved, such as over-burdening untrained heads (who presumably will be expected to provide the effective management of the scheme) with financial management. However, in our view, this proposal, considered in itself, is not entirely objectionable. But devolution can be done within existing legislation. We should build on good practice in, for instance, the ILEA (Alternative Use of Resources scheme), in Herts and Cambridgeshire. Its main significance, however, seen in the context of the proposed bill as a whole, is to loosen the schools from the hands of the local authorities, and so encourage some of them to take the first step towards more advanced form of independence; and it is this that needs careful consideration.

5. Second, there is the proposal to allow 'open enrolment' (within a very broad limit) to all schools ('Admission of Pupils to Maintained Schools'). Local authorities, in order to plan the contraction of their systems (due to falling rolls) rationally, with the aim of maximising the effectiveness of the system as a whole, have till now had powers to fix a limit to each school's intake. It is now proposed that this condition should be to all intents and purposes abolished. Schools, it is argued, must have the right to admit as many pupils as parents wish to send them (within existing physical capacity), and so be permitted unilaterally to expand considerably (and suddenly). Unpopular schools, conversely (which are ignored in the Consultation Paper), will be forced, in this situation, to go to the wall — and so face closure as a result of the operation of this form of market forces. The full implications of this proposal will be discussed below. In terms of overall strategy, however, the meaning of this step is clear. 'Popular' schools, now with more or less full financial responsibility, will soon begin to differentiate themselves from the others. This provides the springboard for the next step (opting out), also to be provided for in the Bill (see below).

6. Third, the Consultation Paper on 'Grant Maintained Schools' specifically states that these schools, while not charging fees, 'would be able to accept voluntary donations from parents and others in the community'. The 1944 Education Act states that 'No fees shall be charged in respect of the education provision in any maintained school'. We are glad to note that the Government has finally decided not to impose fees in publicly maintained schools, but many maintained schools today have been forced to rely on 'voluntary contributions' to provide the resources required for an effective education. We are opposed to the legitimisation of this practice in this Consultation Paper. But once again the significance of this step is clear. HMI's have, since 1983, repeatedly reported that parental contributions are increasing the disparity between advantaged and

disadvantaged schools. 'Popular' schools in affluent areas will maximise their income from such sources. This will provide such schools with the opportunity further to differentiate themselves from the ordinary run of schools, and to some extent to narrow their clientele to the more affluent section of the local population. So now the school is poised for break-out from the local system.

7. This takes us directly to the most important of the proposals — that concerned with 'opting out' on which the 'Grant Maintained Schools' paper has been issued. The proposal is that Governing Bodies of schools that wish to, as indicated by a simple majority vote of those parents actually voting, may apply to 'opt out' from the local system of which they are part, and become 'grant maintained schools', receiving a grant directly from the DES instead of the local authority. All, or nearly all, formal relations with the local authority would by this means be broken. The school, it is proposed, would become 'semi-independent', receiving the bulk of its finance from the state. By this means present mixed, multi-racial schools could become schools catering for one sex only, or for one ethnic group. A further direct effect, in our view, would be that the local system, as a 'system', would also be broken. Further, although this is not (yet) proposed, 'opted-out' schools could envisage going fully 'independent' at a later date: the existing (and officially encouraged) voluntary contributions from parents could be transformed into fees, and additional income gained from taking pupils through the Assisted Places Scheme (which, we understand, is to be expanded), whereby their fees are paid by the state.

8. By these means, and with the assistance of the 20 plus City Technology Colleges, Mr Baker's long-term plan, as publicly announced, of increasing the proportion of children attending a 'variety' of schools outside the local authority systems, could be achieved. Such, indeed, appears to be the main objective of the proposed Education Bill.

9. It remains to point to some of the likely effects of the implementation of the proposals in the three Consultation Papers under discussion. Among the most significant of these is the disruptive effect the legislation proposed is bound to have on local authority systems. It will make it impossible for local authorities to adopt rational, long-term plans for the allocation of resources in the best interests of the children as a whole. We agree fully with the opinions expressed on this point by Sir Roy Harding, general secretary of the Society of Education Officers, in his strong condemnation of the proposals which he describes as a U-turn 'from the encouragement of good planning to its negation'; as also with his view that, if these measures are implemented, standards in the schools would be bound to fall 'and it is likely there will be a fall for most children' (*Times Educational Supplement*, 3 July 1987). We agree also with Tessa Blackstone, ex-Professor of Educational Administration, Deputy Education Officer, ILEA and now Master of Birkbeck College, London University. 'Children's futures', she concludes, in a critical analysis of the proposals, 'are now threatened by a scheme casually destructive of the best in the maintained system, dangerously divisive, and administratively unworkable' (*Guardian*, 9

June 1987). We agree also with the Editorial view expressed recently in the *Times Educational Supplement* (17 July 1987). The proposal as it stands 'is going to raise costs and lower efficiency'. Open enrolment means 'the negation of planning'. If market forces are to prevail, as proposed, 'planning will, in future, be retrospective; a matter of picking up the bits and presiding over the bankruptcies after the consumers have made their educational purchases'. If these measures are implemented, the editorial continues, it is extremely doubtful if it will make any sense 'to talk about a "system" at the local level'. A 'blight' will be put 'on all plans for restructuring, closures and mergers'. Finally we agree also with Anne Sofer when she writes that 'opting out will not be a liberating but a profoundly conservative force'; future planning will be 'paralysed' (*Times Educational Supplement*, 17 July 1987).

10. In our view, the proposals in these three Consultation Papers, if implemented in their present form, mean the actual break-up of the state educational system as we have known it. The measures proposed are designed to enhance opportunities for the more affluent section of the population, at the direct expense of the mass of ordinary children, whose educational provision will be disrupted and who are, therefore, bound to suffer. This is too high a price to pay. In the present circumstances these measures are beginning to appear as totally irresponsible. In our view, they should be rejected, and a genuine Education Reform Bill introduced whose central thrust should be the enhancement and encouragement of local systems of education, under fully democratic control.

The National Curriculum 5-16: A Consultative Document

1. FORUM has for thirty years been committed to the goal of equalising opportunity for all children to enjoy the best possible quality of educational provision and to a universal system of locally maintained comprehensive primary and secondary schools (with or without a middle school phase) as the best organizational means through which to achieve that goal. Consequently, FORUM welcomes the Government's stated commitment to raising educational standards consistently throughout the country and to ensuring equal access for all children. However, FORUM cannot accept that a nationally prescribed curriculum with nationally prescribed tests at four chronological ages, as described in the consultative document *The National Curriculum 5-16*, and enforced by legislation, is a sound method for achieving that goal in our democratic and pluralist society and in the light of contemporary knowledge about how children learn successfully.

1.1. While recognising that much will depend on the nature and degree of prescription in the programmes of study for the compulsory foundation subjects, FORUM is alarmed that para 26 and the terms of reference for the subject working groups in Annex A, together with the intended 'regulations about the curriculum' and the general drift of paras 13-15, indicate far greater centralised curriculum control than the phrase 'a national framework for the secular curriculum' in para 10 might otherwise be taken to imply. It thus appears that the Government intends to legislate for far more than 'a framework' and, in doing so, to go far beyond the principles contained in para 45 of *Better Schools* and their elaboration in paras 52-71. Not only does it go far beyond the notion in para 58 of that White Paper for 'a framework set by national, LEA, and school policies', but it denies that implied partnership. Yet the Government's justification of the need to legislate for a national curriculum rests on allegedly

'widespread support for the aims of education' as set out there and uneven progress towards universal implementation in the intervening seven school terms. No evidence is adduced to justify a dramatic move to draconian legislation appropriate to a totalitarian regime.

1.2. Under the two previous Secretaries of State the White Paper, *Better Schools*, was itself preceded by a sequence of DES discussion papers, Circulars 6/81 and 8/83 directed at LEAs, and from 1984 there has been the HMI Curriculum Matters Series. FORUM has noted the trend in these publications towards an increasingly instrumental, subject-focussed curriculum emphasising acquisition of knowledge and skills rather than experiential learning and development of concepts. The pedagogical shift was most marked in the 1984 DES publication, *The Organisation and Content of the 5-16 Curriculum*. The proposals in the new consultative document carry this trend further to the point of effectively reversing

the 1931 Hadow pedagogical axiom which informed the gradual reform of the teaching/learning process in schools over the past half century.

2. Implications for Primary and Secondary Schools

The proposals need to be examined separately in respect of their implications for primary and secondary schools where the curriculum is organised differently, has evolved through distinctive traditions and consequently encounters particular problems in seeking to serve the common goal of equalising access to a sound educational experience.

2.1. Primary schools have struggled to emancipate themselves from the dreary mechanistic methods of the elementary tradition framed by the old Elementary Codes. To encourage this the Board of Education, in its first *Handbook of Suggestions* in 1905, urged the teacher 'to adjust his mind to' the pupil's and 'to draw upon their experience'. In striving to do this primary teachers gradually developed a more child-centred and unified curriculum, and have been encouraged in this direction by the Hadow and Plowden reports and by HMI until about three years ago. Greater understanding of how children's thinking develops has enabled teachers to use their own knowledge of subject disciplines as tools to construct their primary curriculum in ways meaningful for children, turning curiosity into inquiry and thus promoting learning. Primary teaching has thereby become more complex and demanding, requiring skill and imagination to ensure a properly balanced overall programme for each child. *Better Schools* recognised that, despite variety, primary schools operate a largely common curriculum.

2.2. FORUM views the proposal to legislate for a prescribed national curriculum comprising three core and six specified foundation subjects as retrograde and reminiscent of the Elementary Codes. We fear that separately identified subject programmes, emanating from discrete Subject Working Groups and enforced by regulations, would destroy the evolving unified curriculum and return primary schools to a fragmented subject-focussed curriculum out-of-touch with children's own learning experiences. We do not consider the possible special sub-groups to cover pre-determined integrated studies would provide sufficient safeguard.

2.3. FORUM is concerned for all children to experience a properly balanced primary curriculum but believes that this is more commensurate with quality than the time-measured quantified approach proposed. Recognising that the former is more difficult to evaluate and impossible to standardise, we favour monitoring at school and LEA levels through teachers' schemes of work, record-keeping for individual children's learning, and by whole school curricular policies. Ultimately it is each child's educational experience that counts — and this cannot be guaranteed by imposing a national curriculum by law.

2.4. We note anyway that the National Curriculum is not to be applied to children in nursery schools and classes, but could be applied to some 4 year olds. Not only do we

think it inappropriate for any 4 year old, but we are astounded that it should be applied to the infant age group who, in 'competitor' countries, do not start compulsory schooling until six or seven years, with no ill effects on their subsequent academic achievement.

2.5. Secondary schools have since the 1944 Act been seeking to reconcile a selective academic and an essentially higher elementary tradition in order to realise the promise of secondary education for all, and comprehensive schools became the logical and almost universal vehicle. Coincidentally there was a phenomenal explosion and structural revisions of human knowledge giving rise to new disciplines as well as intra and interdisciplinary modes of inquiry. In seeking to satisfy adolescents' individual proclivities and accommodate new knowledge structures, some comprehensives have tended to offer excessively differentiated curricular and choices which together close off later opportunities. FORUM has continually argued the case for nonstreamed teaching and has sought to develop and disseminate appropriate teaching methods as the surest way to secure access to a common curriculum. For too long divisive 16+ examinations systems impeded progress, and the problem is unfortunately not being resolved by the new GCSE structure.

2.6. Legislation for a prescribed national curriculum expressed in traditional terms, defined as three core and arbitrarily specified foundation subjects, with any other permutations excluded before the fourth year, cannot be seen as a forward-looking solution to the inherent problems with which secondary schools have been struggling in their endeavour to equip adolescents to understand and cope with the complexities of contemporary and future society. Such a mechanistic solution would stifle enterprise among teachers and marginalise non-prescribed studies in young people's minds. With statutory religious education added to the compulsory foundation subjects, the remaining time available for other studies would be negligible, with a serious risk that some, such as home economics, would revert to being gender stereotyped.

2.7. FORUM suggests that a more promising approach was being developed for the 11-16 curriculum in the HMI *Red Books* which culminated in 1983 with an attempt to delineate criteria for an entitlement curriculum through essential 'areas of experience'. This could enable every secondary school to develop a whole school curriculum policy in terms of a common entitlement while allowing for individual approaches.

2.8. Many primary and secondary schools cannot provide a balanced curriculum for all their pupils because of the shortage of teachers qualified in certain subjects and lack of resources, such as books and equipment, for teaching. Uneven resourcing, largely through RSG allocation, militates against equal access in all localities. Ample evidence on these matters has been persistently given in the annual series of *HMI Reports on the Effects of Local Authority Expenditure Policies on Educational Provision*. Legislating a national curriculum will not solve these problems. FORUM believes that the goal of equal access to a common, balanced curriculum could be more readily

and sensibly achieved if Government addressed these key problems and thereby enabled all schools to develop and deliver the contemporary curriculum which even *Better Schools* admitted most are largely committed to.

3. Programmes of Study

To prescribe programmes of study for each compulsory foundation subject within a national curriculum is to move far beyond the notion of a 'national framework' and even further beyond what was indicated in Chapter 2 of *Better Schools*.

3.1. FORUM recognises in 1.1. above that the degree of prescription is significant, but finds difficulty in reconciling the assurances in para 27 of 'full scope for professional judgement and for schools to organise how the curriculum is delivered' and 'sufficient flexibility in the choice of content' with the specificity implied in para 26 for programmes to cover 'the overall content, knowledge, skills and processes' including detailing 'a minimum of common content' and 'attainment targets' as the basis for the proposed tests.

3.2. The extent of prescription and control to be exercised by Orders, as outlined in paras 42, 47 and 51, leads FORUM to conclude that the proposed programmes of study would constitute unacceptable central control over schools' curricula.

3.3. FORUM contends that programmes of study are properly matters for LEA and school policies on which the professional judgement of teachers and LEA advisors are brought to bear in the context of local circumstances.

4. Assessment Targets and Tests

FORUM regards the principle of assessment on national attainment targets at the chronological ages of 7, 11, 14 and 16 as pedagogically unsound. Teachers' observations and research, including the work of the APU, have shown that individual differences between children of the same age are considerable. Children's intellectual development varies by rate, with much individual variation, and is influenced by a variety of factors such as home background and emotional experience, and tends to be differential by gender in certain respects. The results of the proposed attainment tests would therefore be meaningless and misleading. Their promulgation as envisaged in para 36 would be harmful, resulting in labelling, stigma and stress.

4.1. There would be a serious danger that the results of early tests would govern teachers', pupils' and parents' expectations of future performance, thereby creating a self-fulfilling prophecy syndrome. Far from raising overall standards, such systematic testing would be likely to lower them for many children. It would also encourage schools to try to group pupils for teaching in supposedly homogeneous ability groups based on misconceptions of ability derived from past performance.

4.2. Past experience has demonstrated the tendency for assessment criteria to dictate and restrict what is taught. This is inevitably restrictive in effect because some objectives prove more readily assessable than others yet are not necessarily of greater importance.

4.3. FORUM is concerned that promulgation of test marks as proposed in

para 36 would categorise schools as well as pupils without regard to the prevailing circumstances which favoured or disadvantaged particular schools, thereby enhancing disparity.

5. Legislation (C)

The legislation proposed would establish central control over a prescribed national curriculum such as was never presented in a White Paper and which, indeed, contradicts paras 35-38 and 232 of *Better Schools*. FORUM therefore contends that for the Government to proceed to legislation on the basis of a consultative paper and a consultation period of two summer months would contravene accepted constitutional practice for such a major change in the direction of education in England and Wales.

5.1. In particular, FORUM opposes legislation to permit prescription of programmes of study, attainment targets and arrangements for assessment as set out in paras 42-44 and 47. Such detailed central prescription could not command consensus support, is inappropriate for a democracy and pedagogically unsound.

5.2. Legislation to require the Secretary of State to appoint a National Curriculum Council (NCC), specifically on a non-representative basis and with such a significant remit to advise on the entire national curriculum, is regarded by FORUM as an unacceptable departure from practice appropriate in a democracy. At the very least, such a body should comprise representatives chosen by organizations of the teaching profession, the local authorities and parents along with particular interested parties such as the churches and ethnic minorities. Moreover, the consultative process to be required of the NCC is too vague and undefined in respect of those who must be consulted and, for the outcome to carry credibility, there must be an obligation to publish comments received.

5.3. FORUM welcomes the obligation on the Secretary of State to publish 'a statement explaining the reasons for any departure from the advice of the NCC or those consulted in Wales' and to modify draft Orders in the light of comments on them, but considers a one month consultation period too short.

5.4. FORUM is opposed to the replacement of the non-statutory Secondary Examinations Council by a statutory School Examinations and Assessment Council (SEAC) unless its Council is representative of the teaching profession and the local authorities. The place for experienced experts should be as professional officers and staff rather than as members of a governing council. If these conditions were met, FORUM would agree that its functions could include (i), (ii), (iv) and (v) of para 53.

5.5. For the reasons given in section 4 above, FORUM is opposed to regulations requiring promulgation of information on each school's and LEA's aggregated assessment results for each age cohort as in para 55 (v), (vi) and (vii).

5.6. As the term 'national curriculum' is defined by para 59 to include prescribed attainment targets, programmes of study and assessment arrangements, FORUM is opposed to the proposed amendment to Section 8 or the 1944 Act to add 'as required by the national curriculum' and to the consequential proposals in para 58 (iii), (iv)

and (v), especially the abrogation of LEA policy in (v).

6. Resources (E)

Such a major exercise as that envisaged in the consultative paper, involving the setting up of Subject Working Groups for all the foundations subjects, the Task Group on Assessment and Testing and two statutory bodies, NCC and SEAC, cannot be achieved without considerable additional cost to Government. Moreover, in view of the evidence of HMI already mentioned in 2.7 above, many schools and LEAs will require additional resources to enable them to provide a national curriculum for all pupils aged 5-16 throughout the system.

6.1. FORUM is therefore dismayed at the assertion in para 84 that everything be implemented 'within the planned level of resources.' We reject this proposition as unrealistic.

6.2. The expectation that LEAs will divert resources from already identified local needs to support the imposition of a new national policy (para 83), and the declared intention of giving priority to the national curriculum in Education Support Grants and LEA training grants (para 85), together imply total diversion in INSET to central control. FORUM finds this potentially disruptive and quite unacceptable.

7. Timing of Implementation (F)

Care must be taken to avoid disruption to children's education and justice demands that there be no curtailment of curricular opportunities on which some are counting. Careful phasing-in will therefore be necessary.

7.1. As legislation will not have been enacted by the beginning of the academic year 1987/88, FORUM believes it would be unjust for control of public examinations up to 16 to be introduced before the academic year 1990/91. Hence the first examinations subject to the new approval system could not take place before summer 1992.

7.2. To avoid disruption of schools' existing planned curricula and consequent confusion of children's study programmes in mid course, FORUM recommends that phased arrangements for a national curriculum begin with the first primary year of the first cohort of pupils required to follow it, and that there be no prescription applied to any cohorts already in the school system.

7.3. In view of existing integrated primary curricula and interdisciplinary primary and secondary courses which subsume fields of study in a range of combinations, it would clearly not be possible to require any foundation subjects, including the three core, to be made compulsory under Order until all can be introduced together for the whole initial cohort.

7.4. Thus FORUM cannot accept the piecemeal timetable envisaged in paras 89-92, which would be unnecessarily disruptive.

7.5. Moreover, FORUM is surprised and disturbed that the proposed timetable does not allow for pilot trials of programmes of study nor for their evaluation.

8. Conclusion

8.1. FORUM finds the proposed legislation portentous in that it would establish a legal framework of government power that could at some time be abused for the purpose of ideological indoctrination of the nation's children. For this reason we urge the building-in of counter-balancing safeguards in the constitution of the NCC and SEAC and statutory specification of the consultative procedures.

8.2. We also believe that, for the assurances given in para 27 to have reality, FORUM would expect there to be alternative programmes of study from which schools and/or LEAs may select, and provision for schools and/or LEAs to submit their own alternative programmes and consequently be exempted under a provision similar to that indicated for curriculum development at the end of para 51.

8.3. The debates engendered by the HMI Curriculum Matters Series suggests that genuine consensus will prove much more difficult, and probably impossible, to reach on objectives and even minimum common content related to knowledge, skills and processes for programmes of study in all the foundations subjects than on broad educational aims for the curriculum as a whole on which there has been wide debate since 1975. Consensus on attainment targets is even less likely. Hence FORUM notes that guidelines rather than specific attainment targets are envisaged for art, music and physical education, and believes that they would also be more appropriate for the rest of the curriculum. This would leave schools to develop more satisfactory curriculum policies as indicated in 2.3. and 2.6. above and would considerably lessen the danger indicated in 8.1. above.

8.4. Moreover, this would also enable H.M. Inspectorate to recover their educational autonomy in properly exercising their advisory role with renewed credibility in relation to teachers and the curriculum in schools, parallel with their function to compile reports and collect data for the Department. Monitoring the delivery of a centrally imposed national curriculum could compromise their professional position by assimilation towards a policing function, and would seriously reduce their credibility as a respected source of advice to the Secretary of State.

8.5. FORUM is especially opposed to national attainment tests and above all to their publication.

8.6. FORUM therefore urges the Government seriously to reconsider the detailed strategy described in the consultative document before proceeding to attempt legislation of this magnitude.

For the FORUM Editorial Board

Roger Seckington (Chairperson), The Bosworth College, Leicestershire
Annabelle Dixon, Holdbrook JMI School, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire
Michael Clarke, Little Hill, Primary School, Leicestershire
Clyde Chitty, Institute of Education, University of London

Brian Simon

Nanette Whitbread, Editors, 11 Pendene Road, Leicester LE2 3DQ

indicates, some teachers may have to change their teaching styles if they wish to participate in encouraging discussing.

Working with small groups can be more productive in stimulating oracy, thinking, questioning, and problem solving — providing the teacher works in partnership with the children, allowing them to 'say what they mean and mean what they say' as the Cockcroft Report (1982) advises. Meanings should be negotiated, even if false trails are followed on the way to clarification. Use of this approach requires organizational ability as it involves some form of integrated day, team-teaching, or working with ancillaries — whichever is appropriate to prevailing conditions. Teachers require help in acquiring flexible organizational strategies.

If the organization is too loose, little of value can be achieved. If too tight, the atmosphere is destroyed and there is little scope to use unexpected opportunities. Organization should be both efficient and flexible as illustrated below. A child dreamed through a session of the water-cycle and drew a water-bicycle instead of a diagram. His teacher seized the opportunity to use his invention to stimulate the others to design unusual vehicles and suggest their possible uses. The project involved both Science and Mathematics, since measurement, shape, speed and balance were all involved. Oracy was a natural part of the process as ideas were challenged and designs justified. Later the other children were asked to clarify and reinforce their knowledge of the water-cycle by explaining it to the boy. A rigid timetable would have prevented such productive activity.

Wilkinson (1985) indicates that the development of oracy is in itself a creative process, enhancing social and intellectual awareness;

"I communicate — therefore I am;
I communicate — therefore you are;
I communicate — therefore it is."

This intensity of interaction applies at any level and in many modes, even in silent forms such as the rapport between author and reader and between a lecturer or actor and a captured audience. Initially, however, teachers can learn much from engaging in mutually stimulating dialogues with their pupils. Wilkinson summarized an important task of the teacher as encouraging 'the verbalization of experience and the experience of verbalization' (Wade, B. (ed) 1982).

Stimulus for interesting experiences may arise from any source, possibly from the children. On one occasion, a class asked if they could act the Assembly story — 'The tower of Babel'. Each group was given a building task to consider. The discussions were invigorating and fruitful as the subsequent acting evidenced. Later, when writing stories and drawing pictures for a related class book, the teacher worked with each group in turn, constructing a clay model, and discussing its attributes in a relaxed manner. The children's reports on how they built their tower reflected the Mathematical concepts thus clarified, e.g. 'The tower was a cuboid with a square base.'; 'We made the bricks cuboid shape so that they would balance well on each other'; 'Our tower was 36cm tall and had an arched door.' Their stories reflected

more of their own drama than the original, the most telling quote being 'The people loved their tower because they had made it themselves.' The quality of the work provided its own assessment.

The assessment of oracy and its implications for the teacher

Recent publications by the D.E.S., A.P.U. and others appear to focus on the assessment of oracy rather than its development. Assessment is only of value if it can provide feed back which may be used to improve the teaching/learning strategies or the performance of individuals. Accordingly, the first priority is to establish fostering facilities. As the pre-requisite facilities are intangible, related more to attitudes, goals and teaching-styles than to material provisions, teachers should be helped to acquire positive perspectives, in addition to fostering/assessment techniques.

For teachers who wish to try a practical, relatively quick method of monitoring oral/aural development in the classroom, the writer has produced M.O.D.I.C., details of which have appeared in previous *Forum* articles.¹ The approach provides for the continuous assessment of performance in terms of (a) participation and (b) quality of response/contribution. Also, it assists teachers in examining their own performance, for as Tough (1977) indicated, there is a relationship between the quality of the respective performances of teachers and pupils.

Teachers who examine their dialogue identify their own strengths and weaknesses. Most discover that they talk too much and listen too little. They become aware when to intervene and when not to do so. they discover that there are a range of questioning techniques which may be flexibly employed to assist children to clarify their ideas, express themselves clearly and find the gaps in their own knowledge. Also, that teachers' questions can be models assisting pupils to formulate their own questions. As the Cockcroft Report suggests, children's questions can be the springboard to new discoveries and so require positive attention. When children ask 'What would happen if ...?' or 'Could we have done the same thing with ...?' teachers should be willing to participate in exploring the possibilities.

Some teachers become aware of the mismatch between the specialist language of the topic and the interpretive abilities of their pupils, which are based on everyday experience. Where precise meanings are required, teachers should attempt to link them with the commonplace ideas and objects, e.g. 'Circumference' may be experienced as the edge of a plate, a wheel or a circular table. The Cockcroft Report states, 'discussion should seek to combine precise and unambiguous ordinary language together with mathematical terms.' As psychologists of the Russian school indicated years ago (Simon, B. and J. (eds), 1965) labelling and classifying help concept formation, but the attributes have to be identified in a meaningful context to aid understanding; a point reiterated more recently by Donaldson (1978). The current focus on oracy has reminded the profession that failure to promote meaningful learning may lead to frustration and failure, whereas the converse may happen where language is

positively linked to learning, as Luria indicated long ago (Simon, J. (ed) 1971).

Oracy and Mathematics

Mathematical discussions disclose more misconceptions that formal assessment suggests, because children have been conditioned to acquire satisfying ticks by fair means or foul. 'Talking through' the operations reveals gaps in understanding which may be unsuspected. A quiz in which a girl was asked to write 500 in words, alerted her teacher to enquire further — she had written 'five, nought, nought.' Discussion showed that she had no knowledge of place value, but achieved accurate calculation by use of numerical tricks. Children's questions and comments reveal much, for example, "Do I take the bottom from the top or the top from the bottom?"; "Do I start with the tens or the units?"; "Does increase mean make bigger or smaller?"; and "It must be an adding sum because it says 'by how much is 200 greater than 165'... greater means make bigger, doesn't it?"

Without related discussion, the correct manipulation of apparatus does not ensure comprehension. A division sum may be accurately demonstrated by the child, yet recorded as its opposite or nonsensically, e.g. 'share 12 apples between 3 people' might be represented as $12 \div 4 = 3$ or $4 \div 3 = 12$ because the child is relying on imperfect recall of half learned facts rather than the evidence of his eyes. He may just as easily have written it correctly, but still without understanding. To understand, the child needs both 'to do and to discuss'; 'doing' alone is as inefficient as the 'seeing' and 'hearing' alone of which the Chinese proverb warns.

The Cockcroft Report states that 'Mathematics is only useful in so much as it can be applied to particular situations'. Measuring tasks should be applied in practical situations, for children do not always realize the importance of establishing precise starting and stopping points. Cooking or making models often requires the interpretation of written instructions, so the children must master this skill in addition to the Mathematical content involved. However, teachers should be aware that inability to read the card does not mean that the child cannot cope with the Mathematics involved. Discussion diagnoses the precise nature of the problem, so that appropriate remediation may be undertaken.

Collaborating to learn

Opening up channels of communication between teacher and pupils and between pupils and pupils in non-threatening situations assists the process of effective learning. Often, too little time is devoted to talking about the tasks, because written evidence seems to be required. It is time to reconsider priorities, since many pupils appear to be ill-equipped in relation to oral/aural skills. In the 1986 A.P.U. Report 'Speaking and Listening', MacLure & Hargreaves state:

Narrating, describing, giving instructions and conveying information which has been acquired through listening are well within the scope of most 11 year olds, *if presented in a form of clear and carefully structured tasks.*

Superficially this sounds satisfactory, until it is considered that in life these skills are used in unstructured situations, often emergencies. The ability to transfer simulated learning to real tasks requires a grasp of the underlying principles plus practice to the point of automation. Eleven year olds have time to acquire such abilities, given favourable facilities.

The report continues:

Evaluating evidence, speculating about possible alternatives, hypothesising and justifying an argument or point of view in discussion appear to present more problems.

This indicates lack of opportunity in school to exercise such abilities. They may be fostered from the start, for example when an adult shares a good book or a practical activity with a child and engages in a discussion which stimulates both to observe, think and predict. Predictions become hypothesising; justifying arises from mutual challenging; and meanings are negotiated as the partners raise questions and help each other to solve problems. The sequence of a story becomes the basis of investigations jointly undertaken to satisfy shared curiosity. Collaborative learning is visibly progressing when the children begin applying specialised knowledge to interpret their surroundings, as when a group of children informed the guide to a historic building that the tower was octagonal and the floor tessellated. The communication of 'I' and 'you' had indeed created 'it' and 'it' was being applied beyond the school.

Note

1. A booklet on M.O.D.I.C. can be obtained by writing to the author at Sandfield Close Primary School, Leicester, LE4 7RE.

References

- The Cockcroft Report**, Committee for the enquiry into the teaching of Mathematics in schools, 1982.
- Donaldson, M. (1978), **Children's Minds**, Fontana.
- MacLure M. and Hargreaves, M. (1986), **Speaking and Listening, Assessment at 11**, A.P.U., NFER-Nelson.
- Simon, B. and J. (eds) (1963), **Educational Psychology in the U.S.S.R.** Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Simon, J. (ed) (1971), Luria, A.R. and Yudovich, F. Ia, **Speech and the development of mental processes in the child**, Penguin.
- Tizard, B. and Hughes, M. (1984), **Young Children Learning**, Fontana.
- Tough, J. (1977), **Talking and Learning**, Ward Lock.
- Wells, G. (1981), **Learning through Interaction**, Cambridge U.P.
- Wells, J. and G., 'Talking and Learning', **English in Education**, Vol.18, No.1, Spring, 1984.
- Wells, G. (1985), **Language Development in the Pre-School Years**, Cambridge U.P.
- Wiles, M.J. (1983), **Children into Pupils**, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Wilkinson, A., The implications of Oracy, in Wade, B. (ed) (1982) **Language Perspectives**, Heinemann.
- Wilkinson, A., 'I communicate — therefore I am', **Educational Review**, Vol.37, No.1, 1985.
- Hardy, M. (1985), **Developing Oracy as an aid to Learning (M.O.D.I.C.)** — unpublished M.Ed. thesis, University of Leicester.

9-13 Middle Schools and the Comprehensive Experience

Andy Hargreaves

In his recent book, **Two Cultures of Schooling: The Case of Middle Schools**, reviewed elsewhere in this issue, Andy Hargreaves reports his intensive research into the problems of school organisation and policy that have surfaced in these schools. Here he draws attention to some of these, reaches clear conclusions as to how these schools may develop, and emphasises the lessons that can be drawn from middle school experience for the future of comprehensive schools generally.

With all the political and public attention focused on the education of 14-19 year olds, the quiet and gradual passing of another important part of the comprehensive experience has gone virtually unnoticed. Having emerged as recently as the late 1960s, amid all the optimism of comprehensive reorganisation and primary school innovation, English middle schools, especially 9-13 ones, are now being wound up in many local authorities. In less than two decades many middle school systems have gone from birth to death. Economic expediency brought them into being — they offered a cheap way of going comprehensive by allowing maximum use of existing schools buildings. And economic expediency is bringing about their end as falling rolls in the 16+ age range lead many LEAs into tertiary reorganisations which themselves require adjustments further down the system in order to avoid 13-16 schools.

Has this short flourish of the middle school upon the educational scene been futile and insignificant? Or — given its position at the very centre of the 5-18 span — is there some light that this brief candle can shed upon the rest of the comprehensive experience? Drawing on my more extensively reported study of middle schools in **Two Cultures of Schooling**,¹ I want to consider how some of the strengths and weaknesses of 9-13 middle schools can, in fact, illuminate our understanding and vision of comprehensive education more generally.

Over the brief course of their development, 9-13 middle schools have struggled hard to find their own identity. Yet, like the children and young adolescents they have educated, they have not found this easy. Poised somewhere between the world of primary and secondary education, between generalist and specialist approaches to the curriculum, they have often been uncertain whether to extend the best primary practices upwards, introduce children to the benefits of specialisation rather earlier than has been the case, or provide some blend of or transition between primary and secondary experience. In the main, though, 9-13 middle schools have wanted to be more than a mere blend of ingredients from many areas. They have searched for their own distinct vintage. Over the years, some distinctive properties of that special vintage have indeed begun to emerge — the year system as the basic unit of staff and pupil organisation, the advisory role of the subject specialists as a way of securing vertical continuity in the curriculum, and the development of

patterns of subject setting instead of broader systems of streaming and banding.

Running counter to these forces of change and innovation, though, have been powerful and deep seated historical influences in 9-13 middle school policy and staffing arrangements that have often pulled the middle school back to more conventional models of practice. Because of their development as a cheap form of comprehensive reorganisation in a way that would not threaten pupils' run-up to examinations at 16 (unlike the Leicestershire junior high schools) 9-13 middle schools took on the same meritocratic mantle that most comprehensive schools did, as institutions that would not prejudice the selective chase for certificates among the academically able.

Their recruitment of large numbers of secondary modern teachers at the time of reorganisation, with their interests in subject specialism, firm discipline and formal teaching styles further reinforced this academically-slanted, meritocratic orientation of middle schools, especially in their upper years. And if 9-13 middle schools sometimes operate like watered-down secondary moderns in their upper years, current Government policy does little to offset this, given its increasing stress on subject specialisation, the need for greater differentiation in teaching arrangements, and the anxieties it fuels among 'choosy' middle class parents about examination success at 16 and the apparent ability of different schools, even 9-13 middle schools, to prepare for them.

Many 9-13 middle schools, then, are searching for something new and distinctive, but wanting to, and in some senses being constrained to, hang on to what is already familiar. I shall now look at two areas of 9-13 middle school practice where its identity is being keenly contested amid these conflicting forces: the provision of specialist expertise and patterns of ability grouping.

Specialist Expertise

There are two principal ways in which teachers with subject specialist expertise can contribute to the 9-13 middle school curriculum: as expert teachers of their own subject, and as sources of advice, support and guidance for their colleagues. In their 9-13 survey, HMI suggested that standards of work were associated with the emphasis given to specialist teaching by qualified specialists, yet they also recognised that the provision of

an adequate compliment of specialists in 9-13 middle schools could prove prohibitively costly.²

But HMI's preoccupation with subject specialisation and its association with standards in many ways reflects current DES policy priorities more than it reflects the weight of its own evidence. For this evidence actually points to stronger associations of standards of work with resources and headteacher leadership than with specialist emphasis.³ Yet even if, for the sake of argument, we accept the strength and validity of HMI's findings regarding specialist emphasis, the interpretation it makes of them is still open to serious criticism. The implications of HMI's findings is that standards of work are often poor because teachers do not know their stuff, because they are teaching things for which they are not trained and qualified. Effective teaching is therefore a question of subject mastery, of obtaining appropriate specialist qualifications and being well matched with one's teaching responsibilities.⁴ If standards of work in 9-13 middle schools are poor this is therefore because specialist subjects are too often taught by poorly qualified generalists. 9-13 middle schools, that is, are underspecialised.

My own evidence concurs with HMI's finding that teachers often feel incompetent teaching specialisms outside their own (particularly maths and science), but suggests very different reasons for it. Teachers in the upper years of the 9-13 middle school, I found, are not usually broad generalists, but mainly specialists keen on their own subject. Or they are 'restricted specialists' — trained, skilled and confident only in the broad area of humanities and expressive arts teaching. These teachers, then, are not flexible generalists, but teachers who have already developed subject commitments and loyalties. And when, because of the shortage of specialists in any particular area of the middle school, they are asked to step into another subject, this is not just a question of taking on unfamiliar concepts and content; but also of stepping into a different sort of teaching environment, a different way of relating to children and interpreting what they do. English and humanities teachers, for instance, feel diffident about moving into science because they see it as too clinical, unemotional, unexpressive — they cannot cope with the sorts of relationships they feel are expected of them there.

My own evidence, therefore, suggests that 9-13 middle schools are not under-specialised but over-specialised; that the stylistic differences between subjects are exaggerated and even mystified (no emotions in science, no hypotheses in history). And some subject coordinators conspire to keep these intimidating mysteries of their own specialism going — especially those science coordinators who like to maintain a traditional, secondary, laboratory-based view of their subject. It is, therefore, over-specialisation in the 9-13 middle school, not under-specialisation, that creates inflexibility and incompetence. A more generalised, class teacher-based system in the 9-13 middle school curriculum, where the similarities in skills, style and approach between subjects were stressed more, instead of the differences, would increase teacher competence and flexibility and therefore be a more appropriate route for 9-13 middle schools and indeed teachers of younger secondary pupils to follow.

Essential to the effectiveness of such a generalist curricular programme, though, is the routine availability of specialist advice across the year groups. This is properly the role of the subject specialist as envisaged in early middle school documents and has emerged as a highly distinctive feature of middle school practice. The subject advisory system has worked at its best when spearheading and coordinating new developments across the school.⁵ Subject advisors have been much less effective on a routine, day-to-day basis, though. My own research shows that 9-13 middle school teachers go to their year colleagues much more for advice than to those with the relevant specialist expertise.

Many 9-13 middle school teachers spend virtually all of their time in their own year groups, especially in the lower years. These teaching groups are in turn reflected in staffroom relationships. The year groups sit together, talk together, socialise together. And they turn to each other and to their year heads for advice (even if that is not where the expertise is always to be found). Isolated by architecture and by their year commitments, the year groups become small, insulated, autonomous states, like Italy or Germany before unification; suspicious and mistrustful of one another's motives. Lateral coordination is strong, but vertical coordination is weak.

Some loosening of the year system is vital; to build the wider network of relationships, experience and trust among middle school colleagues on which effective day-to-day advisory systems inevitably rest. At the end of the day, effective advice is not secured by committee or clearer job specifications, but by the development of shared experience in a trusting environment.

Ability grouping

Middle schools are, of course, comprehensive schools. A key item on the comprehensive agenda over the last decade or more has been the developing commitment to mixed ability grouping. How well have 9-13 middle schools matched up to mainstream secondary schools in this respect? How comprehensive have they become?

In terms of streaming and broader ability banding, a *slightly higher* percentage of 9-13 middle schools use such systems with their first and second years than primary schools with the same age groups. At secondary level, though, only around a third of 9-13 middle schools stream or band at 12+, compared to over 40% of secondary schools at the same stage.⁶ By this criterion, middle schools seem to be less selective (and therefore more comprehensive) than their secondary counterparts.

When we look at ability grouping in specific subjects, though, 9-13 middle schools set much more extensively than secondary schools at the same stage. In mathematics for instance, in the 11+ age range, whereas less than 50% of secondary schools set their pupils for this subject (this figure includes streaming and banding also), over 70% of 9-13 middle schools do so. In this respect, middle schools are actually more secondary than the secondary schools themselves.

Defenders of the middle school might wish to argue that setting is not comparable with streaming and banding; that it is more flexible than either of these given that it rests on subject specific attainments, not measures of general ability; that it is limited to parts of

the curriculum only; and that because pupils can find themselves in different sets for different subjects, it does not produce the stigma, low status and associated behavioural problems that usually occur among pupils in low streams or bands. By this token, then, setting would not be a measure of the middle schools 'secondariness', but a mark of its greater organisational flexibility.

This argument would be somewhat persuasive if setting were established entirely on a *principled* basis — if it were confined to a small number of supposedly 'linear' subjects where it was believed that the intrinsic difficulties of these subjects required them to be taught to classes with a narrow ability range. I would want to argue that such 'linear' claims for subjects like French and Mathematics are disputable. Music and drama, for instance, could present equally strong claims to linearity (sound before melody, mime before speech), but few would seriously advocate setting for them. My main point, though, is that in middle schools, setting is not confined to these 'linear' subjects at all. Because of shortages of specialists, once a decision has been taken to set a subject on principled grounds, something must then be found to set against it. And so, the combination of principled setting and specialisation reverberates throughout the curriculum, producing high amounts of *residual* setting in other subjects too. In the schools I investigated, pupils were being set for up to 80% of their time in the fourth year in subjects like craft, home economics, drama and swimming, on the basis of their mathematics or French ability! This is not setting, but crypto-streaming. Nor does it have even the slender justification of streaming: that it is based on some measure of general ability. Instead, upper middle school pupils are often being effectively streamed for very large parts of the curriculum on the basis of their measured attainments in one or two subjects only. These are not appropriate arrangements for schools claiming to be comprehensive in character.⁷

Conclusion

The future of middle schools will be settled by economic arguments, not educational ones. The economics of tertiary provision are not weighted in the middle school's favour and reorganisation, in many cases, now seems politically inevitable. Gratuitous and dismissive educational criticism, sometimes mounted, one feels, to hasten their demise, should not be accepted with a fatalistic shrug, however. This is not only disrespectful to the real achievements of middle schools. It also perhaps encourages us to overlook the important lessons that the middle school experience holds for the developing character of comprehensive education more generally.

The 9-13 middle school's year system has served as an admirable model for curricular and pastoral coordination across each age group. Its subject advisory system has begun to show what might be achieved through specialist vertical support for teachers operating in a more generalist class-based way. And it has turned away from those rigid systems of streaming and banding that are still widely adopted in the mainstream secondary sector.

On the debit side, 9-13 middle schools have revealed some of the difficulties of establishing generalist,

integrated curriculum initiatives amid long-standing traditions of and current political pressures favouring subject specialisation. In their attempts to accommodate subject specialist traditions and interests, they have also illuminated some of the dangers of over-specialisation: inflexibility, narrow commitment and easily felt incompetence. In this sense, the middle school experience carries salutary messages for those who advocate greater specialisation in primary and secondary education and in teacher training. Middle schools also show how, when staff resources are scarce, even modest initial commitments to grouping by ability in certain subjects can quickly reverberate throughout the curriculum, creating patterns of *residual setting* that are almost as consistent and pervasive as streaming, and even less justifiable educationally. As pupil rolls continue to fall in secondary schools and government policy in favour of increased educational differentiation is interpreted as a need for more setting in the 'basic' high status subjects, it is likely that we will come to see more and more *residual setting* in the mainstream secondary system itself.

Brief candle it has surely been. But before this little light is snuffed out completely, those trying to defend and reconstruct the comprehensive experience in the face of government pressures for increased educational differentiation and more emphasis on subject specialisation would do well to look to the 9-13 middle school for warning, guidance and inspiration.

Notes

1. Hargreaves, A., **Two Cultures of Schooling**, Lewes, Falmer Press, 1987. This study examines the educational policy-making processes which led to the introduction of middle schools, through an analysis of correspondence and memoranda involving the West Riding of Yorkshire LEA and the Ministry of Education. It then traces these policy developments into the middle schools themselves and, through two case studies, looks at their implications for the year system, specialisation, setting and staffing arrangement.
2. Her Majesty's Inspectorate, **9-13 Middle Schools: an Illustrative Survey**, London, HMSO, 1983.
3. This point was first made by the National Union of Teachers, **9-13 Middle Schools**, London, NUT. I have presented a more detailed critique of HMI's approaches to evaluating middle schools in their 8-12 and 9-13 middle school surveys in Hargreaves, A., "HMI Interpretations of PSE and Pastoral Care in Middle Schools: a critique", to be published in Lang, P., **Thinking About Personal and Social Education in Primary Schools**, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, forthcoming.
4. For a more extended critique of government policy with regard to specialisation, see Hargreaves, A., "Teaching Quality: a sociological critique", **Journal of Curriculum Studies**, forthcoming.
5. Campbell, R.J., **Developing the Primary Curriculum**, Eastbourne, Holt-Saunders, 1985.
6. All figures here are taken from different HMI surveys and are reported more extensively in Chapter 6 of **Two Cultures of Schooling**, op.cit.
7. For a more detailed evaluation of the social consequences for pupils of widespread setting in middle schools, see Hargreaves, A., "PSE and the Organisation of Middle Schools", **Pastoral Care In Education**, forthcoming.

A Mathematics Camp for Secondary School Pupils

Glyn Johns and Iorwerth Watkins

Much has been heard of the Mathematical Olympiads in the Soviet Union and elsewhere. Here Glyn Johns and Iorwerth Watkins — lecturer in education at University College, Cardiff and Senior Adviser for Mathematics in the Mid-Glamorgan Educational Authority respectively — report on a related initiative in Wales, involving the organisation of a Mathematics Camp.

The Initiative

In May 1985, as a result of a joint meeting between members of staff of University College, Cardiff and the Mid-Glamorgan Education Authority, it was decided to organise a residential camp for mathematically talented pupils from local secondary schools. The LEA went quickly into action and they were able to set aside a week for this purpose (in April 1986) at their centre at Ogmore, near Bridgend. This centre is ideal since it is well-equipped and pleasantly situated on the coast at the mouth of the Ogmore river.

Preparations went ahead. A grant for a thousand pounds was obtained by Professor Beetlestone from the Standing Conference on School Science and Technology. This grant was to be used for purchasing materials, covering the administration costs and providing educational activities for the pupils who were to attend at the camp. Mid-Glamorgan Educational Authority's financial contribution was in excess of £5,000 as the pupils were to be asked to pay only a nominal fee for their week's attendance. The Camp was to be jointly organised by Dr Glyn Johns of the University at Cardiff and Mr Iorwerth Watkins, Senior Adviser for mathematics with the Mid-Glamorgan Authority.

The idea for the camp developed naturally from the work of the Mathematics Enrichment Club at Cardiff. This club has been running for eight years and is led by Professor Wiegold and Dr John Rigby. In the course of this time, many pupils have attended both the junior and senior club and eight meetings are held every year. The club sessions, which are held on Friday evenings, attract a large number of pupils to the University's Education Department, moreover, the enthusiasm and excitement of these sessions has been sustained over a long period of time, and it has survived even during the period of the teachers' sanctions. The work of the club extends to the local secondary schools where mini-clubs are held and the problem sheets, which are circulated to all the schools, are frequently used as part of the normal mathematics lesson.

A further incentive for the setting up of the camp was as a consequence of Dr Glyn Johns' visit to Czechoslovakia in 1985. This visit was sponsored by the British Council and it allowed Dr Johns to visit schools for the mathematically talented both in Prague and Bratislava as well as enabling him to attend a small

mathematics camp for primary school children. Mathematics camps for bright school children are held regularly in Eastern Bloc countries, but in this country there seems little evidence of such activities. Rabiejwska and Trad (1985), in a recent educational article, describe their work at camps in Poland and they comment on their special features, and they also outline specific activities which take place.

Fortunately, at this time, six teacher-advisers were appointed to the Mid-Glamorgan Educational Authority. These teachers had special responsibilities at both primary and secondary level, and they had a general brief to promote the teaching and learning of mathematics in local schools. In consequence, these advisers, under the direction of the senior adviser, Mr Watkins, ultimately became responsible for the organisation before and during the week of the camp. They worked exceptionally well as a team in developing investigational materials, organising outside visits and arranging the recreational activities.

The idea to set up the mathematics camp received considerable encouragement from several quarters. Mr Keith Davies, Chief Adviser for the Mid-Glamorgan Educational Authority, gave his wholehearted support for the initiative, and Mr Illtyd Lloyd, Chief HMI for Wales, officially opened the camp on Monday, April 21st. The local HMI attended the initial organisational meetings, and several of the staff of the University's mathematics department showed a keen interest in the project.

The Mathematics Camp

The timetable for the week's events was based upon the pattern of morning tutorials, afternoon visits, evening lecture followed by recreational activities. In the morning the whole group of 73 pupils (37 boys, 36 girls), aged thirteen years, was divided into three classes and, in turn, they attended the tutorial and investigational sessions. Topics for the tutorial sessions included tessellations and symmetry, modular arithmetic, logic and problem solving. The teaching approach was informal with a great emphasis on classroom discussion. A typical class would have 1 tutor and 24 pupils together with several adults. Visitors, who included post-graduate teacher training students, were encouraged to participate in these sessions and they were particularly helpful with the investigational work.

Evening sessions took the form of hour long lectures with all the pupils in attendance. These sessions were conducted by several professors from the University of Wales, who gave lectures on such topics as Prime Numbers, Computers and their Applications and the Mathematics of Knots. The last lecture caused quite a stir with the pupils who were obviously surprised and amazed by the inherent algebra of knots. It was pleasing to find that the pupils showed a great depth of interest in these topics even to the point of asking for copies of mathematical articles.

The Mathematics Olympiad

One of the several reasons for the setting of the camp was to encourage pupils to become interested in problem solving. This interest has been stimulated lately by the developments in the external examination system for sixteen year old pupils. At the same time, no one would want to disagree with Cockcroft's contention (**Mathematics Counts**, 1982) that the development of mathematical thinking through problem solving is at the heart of mathematics. To this end, Mr John Hersee was asked to talk on the topic of the Mathematics Olympiad with the specific intention of promoting local interest in National Competitions.

In the course of his lecture, Mr Hersee outlined the procedure used to select pupils for the national teams (See Hersee, 1979). He also considered the development of the International Olympiad from its inception in 1959, Great Britain's entry in 1967 and the recent expansion of national interest to include many countries throughout the world. Mr Hersee described the organisation of the international events and drew attention to the methods used to select the national teams.

The Computer Workshop

A computer workshop was organised at the camp to stimulate mathematical discussion arising from the work on investigations, and also to introduce the pupils to the notion of the computer as a tool which could be used to solve mathematical problems. Dr Mike Treadaway of the University's Education Department obtained a battery of Nimbus computers, on loan from Research Machines Ltd., and this set-up allowed twenty pupils to work in pairs at each session. A wealth of mathematical discussion ensued particularly in the areas of symmetry, tessellations and geometrical constructions. The pupils were fascinated with their use of LOGO, since with a knowledge of only a few commands they were able to explore the powerful facilities of the Nimbus machines.

In addition to the time-tabled sessions, many pupils (of whom a significant proportion were girls) used the computer whenever they could find free time. On several occasions, pupils came to use the computers to help with the solution of a problem set in the lecture session or from the investigations.

The great majority of the pupils apparently had little experience with computers prior to the camp. It was therefore pleasing to find that during the week many barriers and misconceptions were removed by their experiences of using the computer as a tool.

Pupil and Staff Reactions

Clearly, there was considerable evidence to show that the activities at the camp aroused a great deal of interest for the pupils and staff alike. The initial reaction of the staff was one of pleasant surprise to the unexpected responses from the pupils both in the tutorials and investigational sessions. The pupils worked easily and effectively together as they responded to the challenge of a different kind of mathematics presented in a different environment. Several pupils were heard to say that 'it's not like school, no one shouts at you.'

The curricular content of the course evolved rather than being specifically planned. In retrospect, it seemed to be well-balanced, taking into consideration several differing aspects of mathematics. Proof seemed to play an important role through the week's course. This is especially significant since few pupils these days have had much experience of mathematical proof at school.

Most of the tutors agreed that the pupils found difficulty in expressing their mathematics in algebraic terms, although as the week progressed this facility obviously developed. An increase of confidence was also clearly apparent so that by the end of the week pupils were keen to offer conjectures and put forward proofs of certain generalisations derived from tabulated data.

The initial reservations of the staff that there was too much mathematics in the course turned out to be unfounded as the children worked without restraint right up to the end of the course on Friday morning. They thoroughly enjoyed their visit to Atlantic College, the South Wales Gas Board in Cardiff, the Aberthaw Power station and the Align-Rite factory in Bridgend. The computer workshop was an enormous success and together with the evening recreational activities — Quiz, Disco and a Twmpath (Welsh folk dancing) there was little doubt that the week was very successful.

For the children, who were in their third year at secondary school, it was an experience they might never forget. They returned to school having learnt a great deal about mathematics. The week's activities were well-documented in their hard-backed files so that the experience could be shared with both their fellow pupils and their mathematics teachers at school.

References

- Rabbijewska, B and Thad, M (1985), 'A Mathematical Camp for Bright Pupils', **Educational Studies in Mathematics**. Vol. 16, No 1.
- Hersee, J (1979), The International Mathematical Olympiad takes place in Britain. **Trends in Education**, issue 3.
- Cockcroft, W (1982) **Mathematics Counts: Report of the Inquiry into the Teaching of Mathematics in Schools**, London, HMSO.

Bussing to Birmingham

Christine Mason, Frieda McGovern and Ian Menter

This report highlights the reactions of students to exposure to multi-racial experience in Birmingham schools. This follows up a recommendation by the Swann committee that all students should have such experience. That the experience was valuable there can be no doubt. But that some ominous attitudes were found is also clear. The authors are lecturers (in primary and secondary education) at the College of St Mary and St Paul at Cheltenham.

We hope that efforts will be made by all Teacher Training Institutions to ensure that all their students ... have an opportunity of gaining some practical experience in a multiracial school.

Thus wrote the Swann Committee in Chapter 9 of their report '**Education for All**'. While the report was being written, tutors at the College of St Paul and St Mary in the White Cotswold Highlands of Cheltenham and at Newman College in the suburbs of Birmingham were preparing a pilot scheme designed to offer some of their students just such an experience. It was agreed that 20 second year B.Ed. students from Cheltenham would spend four weeks of the Summer Term 1985 in Birmingham schools to gain experience in a multi-racial setting. The students' placements in primary and secondary schools in central Birmingham were negotiated by staff at Newman College.

During their 'Block School Experience' the students were resident at Newman during the week but normally returned to Cheltenham at weekends. Because there are insufficient schools in the vicinity of Cheltenham to meet the needs of the College, it was already necessary for some students to be lodged out on their Year 2 School Experience. The costs incurred by the College on the Birmingham project were not significantly different from the costs incurred by using schools in, for example, Swindon or the Forest of Dean.

It was taken for granted throughout the planning of the scheme, as in the Swann Report itself, that to give students an opportunity such as this would unquestionably be to their benefit and thus ultimately to the benefit of the education system. It was never made clear just how this experience would improve the students' effectiveness in a culturally diverse society. It was therefore important that the scheme was carefully evaluated. This was carried out by the use of questionnaires, informal interviews and an analysis of diaries kept by the students throughout the teaching experience. In addition, at the end of each week the students took part in seminars at Newman College where they reflected upon their time in schools.

Before the practice, the students were asked about their feelings regarding teaching in a culturally diverse urban setting. Most of the students, despite being volunteers for the practice, showed considerable apprehension about what was in store for them:

I'm worried about my ability to cope in the situation

I feel apprehensive since I think I could be very vulnerable having lived in a country area where there are no ethnic minorities, if so very few.

Absolutely petrified.

During the practice itself the entries in the students' diaries showed a wealth of interesting observations, anecdotes and reflections. These observations encapsulate impressions of the urban decay which they saw around them, and the environment of acute material deprivation and poverty in which many of the schools had to function. The feature most remarked upon was the decay of the fabric of the buildings; some students recorded their schools as being 'old', 'dreary' and 'dilapidated'. One school's catchment area was described as consisting of rows and rows of terraced houses,

many of which looked shabby and run down. There is hardly any spare ground and this is usually rough, unsown and covered in rubbish.

Yet despite the decay of the environment, the teachers and children were perceived by the students as 'rising above it'. One student, who had been disappointed at the school's external appearance which was 'dark and run down', went on later to say:

All my doubts were dispelled when we went into the school. I immediately felt a sense of warmth and friendliness. The deputy was extremely friendly, the classrooms and halls were brightly decorated and glimpses of the children showed that they were lively and enthusiastic. Despite the building being extremely old — Victorian — the children and staff obviously made the most of what they had.

For one of the students however, the reality of racism in the school staffroom did not take long to surface. She recorded the following incident which was also witnessed by the other two students in the school.

I heard a very disturbing comment in the staffroom today one of the teachers commented that 'the Paki (sic) had got away Scot free'. To me it hung in the air like stale tobacco.

Two weeks later the same student wrote in her diary,

The same teacher who fleetingly released a racist statement has continued to do so in an increasingly disturbing way. About four days ago the comment was, 'They should send them all back' when referring to a truanting child.

As well as such examples of overt racism in the staffroom, more subtle forms of racism were observed by some students in the classroom. As one student wrote in her diary concerning a science lesson on human reproduction,

Children seem interested in science. One of the children said 'Miss, we're Muslim and we shouldn't be doing this'. The teacher asked 'Why? If your parents didn't know this, then you wouldn't be here.' The girl seemed quite embarrassed.

Racism was also observed by students as operating outside the boundaries of the schools, as the following diary entry illuminates:

Today I noticed in the staffroom the talk of the staff concerning racist parents. Apparently the teacher had given her child a book from the reading scheme and the white mother had brought it back saying it was for other children and not her son. Another white child in Esther's class called the other children Pakis and said he couldn't go to their party (the one for Eid) because his mum wouldn't let him. I find it very sad that parents' values are passed on to the children so young and that by the age of five, they are becoming prejudiced already.

The students also had the opportunity to learn the curricular implications of the diversity of culture for schools and the responses of schools to this diversity. One student recorded in her diary how the headmistress during assembly

talked to the pupils of middle school about different ways and means of fasting

Another diary entry recorded the closure of the school for Eid:

Occasional day's holiday — taken for Eid.

While another student described critically how her school continued as normal.

One boy in the second year had brought in a note explaining his absence due to Eid and his father had written that he had been away 'for our Xmas'. Therefore it seems really ignorant that a school which prides itself upon really positive discrimination does not hold its own Eid party of any kind and also next Friday they are having an occasional day, wouldn't it have been more helpful to have Eid as an occasional day as a mark of respect?

Although all the students spoke highly of most aspects of the schools, strong reservations were expressed by some students about the apparent gap between the multicultural philosophy of the school as articulated by the headteacher and the practice in the classrooms, for example,

teachers treat school as any other school. Syllabus geared towards examination — no multicultural content. The head teacher is keen on the multicultural perspective but not the teachers.

Another student was concerned by the 'strictness of discipline' in her school which included some physical punishment. Several students expressed disappointment at resourcing levels and the state of repair of schools.

The one thing that struck me most (being a PE student) was the lack of facilities and equipment. The children were working (so well) in such appalling conditions — which is great.

From the above it would appear that the students' teaching experiences in Birmingham were a source of enrichment which should enhance and enlighten their future practice as teachers in a culturally diverse society. They had learned that the reality of inner city schools was very different from the popular conception, they had also learned about some aspects of Islam and their knowledge of teaching in an inner city multicultural situation was broadened. In their classroom practice they generally demonstrated teaching qualities which their supervisors praised, often explicitly demonstrating in their work a recognition of linguistic and cultural diversity. Certainly the students themselves perceived their experiences as a source of enrichment as the following diary quotations illustrate.

I wish this had been my final T.P., to be truthful. I don't feel as if I want to leave. I'm very grateful to have experienced the past four weeks at this school.

Asians, West Indians, etc, feel no longer distant. I feel very near (if you know what I mean).

I have become really attached to these children and get really angry that some people dislike them simply because of the colour of their skin.

I think even if you're going to teach in an all-white school you should have the experience. All schools should have a multicultural approach. Until you have experience of a multicultural school you can't really develop that. It was clearer than any lecture or book would have been — just going in and seeing it.

But of course this society is not just 'multicultural', it is also one in which racism prevails in many different forms. So, while the students clearly adopted a culturally diverse approach in their work it is less clear whether they started to develop ways of tackling racism. Indeed as some of the quotations above begin to indicate a minority of students seemed ready to adopt subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) racist perspectives. The possibility that some students might become less suitable as teachers as a result of their experience was not considered at the outset, but this clearly emerges from the evaluation as a problem. For example the widely discredited 'colour-blind' perspective emerges in one student's diary very explicitly:

...to me they are all kids, black, white, yellow or brown. I don't feel the odd one out or any different when I'm teaching a class of 20 Asians.

Some students also readily ascribed pupils' behaviour to cultural stereotypes. For example

West Indians will answer you back if anybody.

...the noisiest group went next door. I admit to being very relieved as they were very noisy and just talked across the classroom. In hindsight they were West Indian and I wonder whether it is in their culture to do so....

Another student uncritically recorded the following staffroom conversation:

There was a very jolly atmosphere in the staffroom today and (it was) quite amusing when two of the members of staff were bemoaning the fact that they wanted to hear some real hymns for a change, something like 'Abide With Me'. They weren't being nasty, I think, just taking the mick a little.

Saints, Nurses and Queens — Sex-Stereotyping and History

Doreen Weston

In this article, Doreen Weston tackles a crucial issue relating to sex-stereotyping through history teaching. She also indicates how this approach may, and should be countered. A secretary for 25 years, Doreen Weston turned to teaching through taking O and A levels at evening classes, entering college when the youngest of her four children left school (and obtaining a B.Ed. (Hons) degree with a first class). She has now been teaching for over seven years and has recently assisted the newly set up Working Party on gender and multi-cultural/world studies for the Bexley LEA.

Image is an important thing — especially if one does not have the right one. Seven years ago, as the oldest student at my teacher training college and already a grandmother, the reaction to my request to be allowed to undertake a piece of curriculum innovation on sex-stereotyping and history, was one of incredulity. Only the support of a sympathetic male lecturer who was prepared to supervise me and who undertook the task of reading books on gender and schooling (which I had to lend him) finally made it possible.

In the previous year I had completed a review of history textbooks in the primary schools, which, incidentally, were on the recommended list from the Historical Association. My findings were discouraging. They did not lend themselves to the project I wished to carry through.

Every time a boy declares, and a girl is unable to refute that history shows that there have never been great women artists, or engineers, or explorers, history is being used to compound social prejudice. Every piece of historical evidence which denies to women a role outside that of wife and mother is perpetuating and reinforcing the negative self-image of girls, and the view that 'biology is destiny'. In discussing the objectives of a study of history Jeanette Coltham in 'Educational Objectives for the study of history' says:

...history consists principally of human beings' activities in the past ... study of this area of knowledge demands conative effort on the part of the learner to enter into ... 'the skins' of people met only through such evidence... (he should) identify with a character under study (with the) aim of assisting personal development ... As personality

develops, the individual becomes, first, more aware of what he is responding to ... if he accepts such behaviours as desirable for him personally ... he consciously practises them, willing himself to adopt them.

Given that the male pronoun is also intended to apply to girls, these objectives are difficult to achieve in a situation where women are almost invisible in history textbooks, which leave the impression that women did not exist in historical times other than as saints, nurses, Queens and coathangers for elaborate clothing! Even apart from the language actually used, with 'he', 'him', 'his', 'men', 'mankind' almost exclusively employed, when other terms are substituted these are read as males. Without substantial contemporary experience of females in these roles how else can children interpret 'farmer', 'merchant', 'doctor', 'leader'? Yet think again and you will see that these can refer equally to women.

We all absorb attitudes as well as content through learning, and it is our attitudes which colour what we see, or, more importantly, FAIL to see in the content.

The under-achievement of girls in the educational system is now becoming more widely acknowledged, but then and now my contention is that history textbooks in the primary schools which allow women to remain invisible contribute to negative self-image. A re-reading of the ubiquitous Unstead will prove the point. *The Story of Britain* specifically credits men with the invention of pottery, weaving and toolmaking in the stone age, despite the fact that most historians would now accept that women, in their role as food gatherers, were more likely to have been instrumental in these and in initiating agriculture, which entailed production of specialist tools. The textbooks not written by Unstead tend to follow the same pattern.

Obviously the teaching of history alone is incapable of changing the attitudes of girls and their parents towards poor educational attainment, but it can provide the necessary legitimation for those who do wish to venture into new fields and to break out of the trap of traditional stereotyping. History can be seen as an attempt to recreate life as it was lived in past times. Women being denied a part in history does leave girls today deprived of culture, and with an image of being treated as objects not participants.

Because of the unsatisfactory nature of commonly found texts in primary schools seven years ago, I was forced to think about how I could circumvent the problem, and to find justification for the attempt. The

Bussing to Birmingham (continued from page 25)

Views such as these must be a matter of major concern and we would suggest that great care is necessary in implementing Swann's enthusiastic call for action. Clearly, the students had a rich and intense experience which has added greatly to their understanding of teaching in contemporary Britain. But, in the case of a few of the students some doubts remain. For example, what can be done about those for whom the experience reinforces stereotyped, patronising or 'colour blind' attitudes? And how might students avoid being influenced by racist language or views expressed by teachers?

Equal Opportunities Commission's 'Do you provide equal opportunities?' and an article by Valerie Hannon (formerly Head of the education section of the E.O.C.) gave me courage.

Primary school teachers need to take positive action to eradicate sex stereotyping in their schools ... by introducing positive de-stereotyping elements into their teaching. (E.O.C.)

and

...there is a need to examine what girls are learning about women's abilities and potential and therefore what they should expect for themselves. (Valerie Hannon)

My aims were to be fulfilled by examining the theme of the world of work, since this might be of assistance to both boys and girls, and could, I felt, be studied without commercially produced history texts. The project would

- a) indicate the importance of women's labour in the past,
- b) give the pupils information about jobs today,
- c) encourage the girls in particular to look beyond the traditional female occupations and perhaps help them to avoid narrowing their options in the secondary school.

Resources would be difficult, and those finally used included slides, wall displays, artefacts, photographs, adult books selected for their visual content, and most of all, oral history and visits.

The teaching started with this riddle:

A man was driving his son to school. The car was involved in an accident, and the father is killed. The son is badly hurt, and is rushed to the hospital. He must have an operation right away. The surgeon comes in, sees the boy on the operating table, and says 'Oh, it's my son!' (Answer the riddle)

It certainly grabbed their interest! The answers offered were ingenious, but they finally agreed that the answer was 'Ghost', which only goes to prove that, in our society, women are even more invisible than ghosts. One boy and one girl guessed correctly.

They were fascinating to find through the slides that women in the past have taken part in most aspects of industrial and agricultural life. The slides which caused the most comment were one from medieval times showing some women bell-foundry workers in a stained glass window, and a photograph of a woman nail-maker from the early part of this century.

The lessons moved on from there to visits from a woman bank manager, police constable, and a visit to the Greenwich Observatory where the astronomer gave a shortened version of her usual programme, and then answered questions put to her about how she became an astronomer. She is, incidentally, now President of the Royal Astronomical Society. Unfortunately, the other women invited into the classroom got cold feet. They were a gardener, a plumber and a trainee building worker, in fact, just the sort of people I most wanted in the classroom.

We began the oral history side of the work with a grandmother, who worked in the school as a cleaner,

being interviewed by a pupil using a worksheet of questions we had devised. She was an exceedingly lively character — an ideal model to interview, since she spoke to the pupils in language they could understand, and told some very funny stories about her experiences.

The pupils then interviewed their own grandmothers on tape. Some 'substitute grandmothers' had to be used, such as a great-aunt, and a next door neighbour for a pupil from Jamaica, but even those interviews conducted by telephone proved successful. The theme was the type of work women had done during the Second World War. Pupils used a 'workshop' style reporting their findings verbally, and then writing their reports which were brought together into a class book at the end of the half-term's work. Artefacts were displayed in the classroom and caused a great deal of excitement and interest. I undertook the task of transcribing their tapes, and producing another class book.

Finally, we had an open day, for grandmothers who could come in. Many were working women and could not attend, but six did come as well as three parents. We offered them tea and biscuits, and they then sat as a 'panel of experts' to judge the quiz. The pupils were again in their workshop teams. The 'experts' expressed their surprise at how much information the pupils had been able to collect; and the afternoon ended with the grandmothers answering the children's questions about their experiences and their funny stories about the 1939-45 period.

Afterwards our visitors made a point of saying how they felt that they had been able to make a real contact with their grandchildren during the taping sessions.

The point of the teaching had been to discover whether direct intervention would make a difference to the pupils' perceptions of women's role in the past, and today. Two tests were given. At the beginning of the term a test sheet asking the pupils to give names to certain characters about whom they were to write a story was presented. A brief example is given:-

Choose the names from the list given.

Doctor	Caretaker	Fred	Joanne
Car Mechanic	Footballer	Carole	Charles
Teacher	Artist	Richard	Julie
Nurse	Newsreader	Adrian	Amanda
Lorry Driver	Author	Judy	Winston
Cleaner	Pop star	Joel	Winnie
Scientist	Office work	Leila	Colin
Gardener	Engineer	Karen	Lloyd
etc			

This test was taken by the pupils in my class and in the parallel class. On the whole the findings from both classes were similar, and showed distinct sex-stereotyping.

The second test was given at the end of the half-term, and took the form given below:

Complete the following sentences using the words of no more than four letters (the aim was to get them to use pronouns).

1. The lorry driver put head out of the cab and yelled.
2. "This leg is broken" said the doctor as turned to speak to the nurse.

Discussion

Policy and Neutral Progressivism

Graham Fowler

Almost throughout education progressivism is regarded as a panacea. It is not. In reality, that which is progressive is — external to context — devoid of positive or negative connotation. It is only in context that progressive policies can be judged; only then can support be granted or withheld.

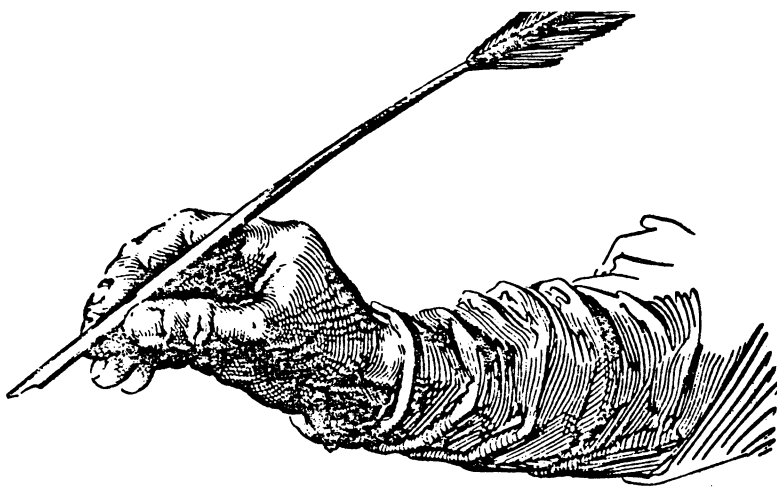
As Darling¹ argues, the dichotomy between traditionalism and progressivism is basically false. We have rather a three-way inter-relation between traditionalism, progressivism and radicalism. In Freire's terms, education is ultimately either radical or it supports the status quo.²

Simply, education satisfies society's need to select individuals for differential rewards. Selection provides legitimacy and justification for the hierarchical structure of society. In return for this education is guaranteed a degree of independence from the economy and indeed from the state. It is with this background, and realising the need to protect political control, that education policy must be judged.

From here we can review two pieces from the February issue of *Forum*: Michael Armstrong's article on The Progressive Tradition and the editorial 'Enough is Enough'. Both, whatever the merits of the educational arguments presented, fail in the last instance because they do not recognise the full extent of political implications. 'Political' is used very broadly here certainly it is more significant than party political, and may on occasion be external to time constraints. Were things to be otherwise, an election or a willingness to wait may be sufficient. By representing the political dimension in an oversimplistic way the danger is the argument is more misleading than helpful.

Armstrong's practice distinction is predicated upon prioritisation of progressivism; to argue thus is rhetorically sound but ideologically bound. More central

to this argument is Armstrong's wish to see progressively-styled education reach out to the secondary school and confront academic thought; at least implicitly, these values are also reflected in the editorial. Now, although it is perfectly 'reasonable' for primary schools to adopt progressive approaches, it is impossible for all secondary school education to be of this kind. Fundamentally the reason for this is that education must produce failure, it must accept the selection function, it must help to justify unequal rewards and hierarchical structures. This may be more evidently true of capitalist societies, but is almost certainly the case for all societies.³ The selection function, which helps to guarantee social, political and economic distributions, satisfies not only the requirements of ruling class capital but also the legitimacy needs of the polity — which must be seen as largely independent of capital. But legitimacy works



Saints, Nurses and Queens (continued from page 27)

3. The nurse tucked the sheets in and said "You'll feel better now".
4. The talk was very interesting, and the constable was clapped finished.
5. The artist's painting was good, and was pleased.

etc.

Although there was a 'drag effect' since the pupils from the parallel class had obviously taken an interest in what was going on, this time there was a distinct difference between the classes, with my class showing a much wider perception of women in various roles than the parallel class.

Prior to beginning the intervention I had attended a conference on 'Sex differentiation and schooling' organised by Michael Marland in 1980. At that conference teacher expectation was felt to be one of the main influences on success or failure, but a warning was given that negative reactions could be engendered amongst boys more especially where the intervention programme was of short duration. I sought guidance from the American woman who had made this comment. She indicated that her experience had led her to believe this to be part of the normal learning process, but had discovered that if the programme was persisted with, the reaction dissipated, and a positive stance was then achieved. I knew I would be leaving the school after the five week period, and was concerned about this.

However, the class teacher agreed to bring forward a topic on advertising, and to focus on the gender question in order to avoid any such reaction. Her enthusiasm for the project was important, and she said she would consider repeating it herself the following year. The design had obviously succeeded, since she felt confident she would be able to operate it although not herself a history specialist.

One of the incidental aims of the project was to ease the transition between primary and secondary school in various small ways. the pupils were able to sustain interest for the one-hour periods, and on more than one occasion for whole afternoons. Their interest and enthusiasm often left me surprised. During the project they began to show development of the skills of questioning and debate, although these were already of a good standard. Individual children, ones who did not normally volunteer to speak, appeared to find their voices when they had something to report, and this was very pleasing.

For myself, the teaching was very rewarding. In attempting something new one must inevitably feel doubts, and the problems seem to loom larger than they realistically are. When the project was successful both in objective and subjective terms the rewards were commensurately larger. On the last day, the grandmothers thanked me, and one commented that they had all been "made to feel like Queens". No better justification for a project on women's history could be given.

both ways: as long as education provides such justification for the state, education is guaranteed a degree of autonomy from state interference.

This autonomy must be cherished, otherwise it can be dissipated by educators who either invite direct state involvement or allow it to happen (for in times of strife the state may be expected to seek greater influence). Certain factors serve to buttress state action: ultimately there is the need for the state to be seen as legitimate, additional are local authority and university influence. When local authorities are attacked so is educational independence; those engaged in education should promote local authority interests. In a sense though, local authorities are only representatives of state; the potential for state interference is consequently considerable. In contrast, universities have a long-held tradition of autonomy; academic freedom is basic. (This makes attacks on tenure a cause for considerable concern). From a policy viewpoint, criticism of universities from within education (for, in Armstrong's case, not being like primary schools) has all the makings of a self-inflicted wound in the foot, if not the head. Universities help to preserve the autonomy of education. There might be some validity in questioning the influence of universities on the school curriculum in a different politico-economic climate; currently it is the height of folly. Within the context of accountability, those involved in education should promote the autonomy of universities, who in turn, both directly and through their examination boards, help to keep political control of education in the hands of educators.

The current economic climate is the reason for education being pressurised. Yet to support education these pressures must be resisted, so that education retains political control. Within this context policies which appear progressive but involve giving up political control are unsupportable. All educators must analyse these political concerns: to advocate progressivism per se, or even to accept acquiescently that which seems progressive harms both the short- and long-term interests of education.

References

1. Darling, J. 'Progressivism, Traditionalism and Radicalism: a re-alignment' *Journal of Philosophy of Education* vol.12 (1978)
2. Freire, P. 'Neutral education does not exist' *Education on the Move* (UNESCO, 1975)
3. see Bernstein, B. *Class, Codes and Control* vol.3 (RKP, 2nd ed. 1978) ch.8.



Reviews

Progressive Practice

Why don't teachers teach like they used to?
Rachel Pinder (1987) Hilary Shipman Ltd.,
228 pp., £6.95 paperback; £16.00 hardback.

I sometimes think I acknowledge only two kinds of books. Books I am bored with and books I bore other people with. Rachel Pinder's *Why don't teachers teach like they used to?* is quite definitely a second-category book. It is a book to be particularly recommended to teacher, primary and particularly secondary, education officer, parent and school governor, to name but a few who would be both enlightened and reassured by its contents and approach.

One of the book's merits is its readability, and this has been achieved by holding the needs of the readers in mind. The author gives enough depth of information to feel one has not been given yet another three-day tour of the continent called 'Education' but has explained a difficult and complex subject with clarity and simplicity. For Rachel Pinder has undertaken a brave exercise: the explanation of what is meant by progressive education; and she has taken considerable pains to point out clearly and logically the significance of what is being described.

Basically, the book answers the question 'What am I looking at when I am looking at progressive education?' One of Rachel Pinder's strengths is that she is able to define the meaning of her terms within an understandable historical context. She charts the uneven development and inevitable misunderstandings that have always attended progressive education, not least among its practitioners, and she gives many examples of what she fairly considers to be good, thoughtful, latter-day progressive practice, in which children's intellectual development is not considered in isolation from the rest of their personal development: progressive education which is carefully planned, but has enough flexibility to take account of the expected and unexpected responses of children and adapt itself accordingly.

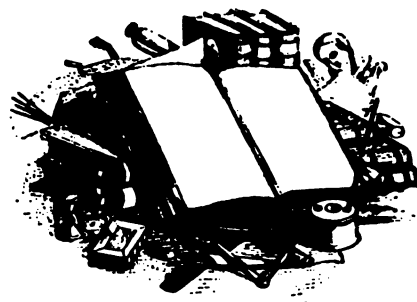
She doesn't hide the fact it makes many more demands on a teacher than any other way of teaching but leaves one feeling that it would be unfair to teach children any other way, knowing as one does by the end of the book, the needs that have to be met if children are to achieve a balanced maturity. It is fortunate that it is also a fascinating and exciting way to teach. If it looks 'easy' in the

classrooms of those who have been teaching this way for some time, it is the ease with which the experienced potter throws a pot. Rachel Pinder quotes Pope in this regard: 'Those move easiest who have learned to dance'. This doesn't mean to say she evades the problems presented by 'pseudo-progressives', but she helpfully makes the kind of distinctions which should help others when trying to sort out their own thinking. It is unfortunate that the rationalizations responsible in such instances are easier for the general public to spot than they are in many bleak and formal classrooms where tradition and 'parental backing' can stem criticism and lend support to the idle teacher.

Modern issues and political challenges to the continuation of these approaches are skilfully outlined which broadens the book's appeal to parent and governor alike who are not necessarily aware of the significance of some recent developments. The only drawback in a book which is a precis of a longer piece of work is that certain areas are dealt with rather summarily, for example, the development of the Froebelian approach to the education of young children has been far more positive than she describes and was particularly influential in recognizing the differing needs of individual children. That modern psychology gets scant attention except for a few developmental psychologists like Piaget and Bruner, is largely psychology's own fault. It has much to offer in a considerable body of research which could well be utilised in the advancement of education but still appears piecemeal and incidental.

These are but the slightest of reservations, however, in appreciation of a book which should simply be in every school staffroom, in the library of every teacher-training institution, on the bookshelves of advisers and education officers and nailed to the desk of Mr Kenneth Baker.

ANNABELLE DIXON



Educational Growth and the Community

John Rennie (ed.), **British Community Primary Schools: Four Case-Studies**, Falmer Press, 1986, pp.158.

In the introduction the editor sets the scene by indicating that the book, which covers four case-studies of community schools, is not a definitive statement about community education in the United Kingdom at present, but seeks to provide some background to the development of these schools and goes on to examine four case-studies drawn from various authorities.

'This book is not based on empirical research, but on close observations by friendly senators.'

And whilst there is obviously a certain lack of objectivity, the book adds significantly to the literature on the subject.

The first chapter usefully sets out, for the reader who is unfamiliar with the concept of the community school, the historical perspective and records the names of those instrumental in developing the concept — Morris, Midwinter, Halsey and, of course, Plowden. The Plowden Report has had a great effect on fostering the partnership between schools and parents. Furthermore, it created an awareness of the plight of the inner cities although each of the four case-studies goes far beyond the recommendations made by Plowden, as indeed do many primary schools not themselves designated community schools.

Each case-study is written by a different author who manages to capture the atmosphere and ethos of each individual school, although I found some of the pictorial illustrations somewhat uninspiring. From Chapter two onwards the book comes alive and it is easy to imagine children and adults engaged upon numerous activities. It would not be right to pick any one case-study as depicting the ideal way a community school should be run because while there are similarities in each school the differences are dictated by the needs of the local community. It is the differences, based on need, which make the whole concept so interesting and exciting.

The first case-study concerns an infants school in Liverpool: a typical Victorian building from the outside but a colourful caring school from the inside. A teacher from a school which is heavily committed to parental involvement may well see many similarities. The major difference is that there is L.E.A. funding for this venture which includes a teacher, a non-teacher and extra resourcing which results in an exciting structured programme for adults and children. In the large parents room numerous activities take place during the school year: conferences, sporting events, beauty demonstrations and numerous courses including basic mathematics and computers. In addition, and for me the most interesting feature, is the Parent Support Programme (75% funded from central government) where parents learn elements of child development. Parents also work in the classrooms and it is this which perhaps makes them most aware of the meaning of

education. With the statutory involvement of parents in education it is vital that they also become more informed and how better than at their own child's school? A mobile creche solves the problem of younger siblings.

The Bellfield Community School — Rochdale is the subject of the second case study and proves fascinating reading. The origin and philosophy of the school have their roots in Plowden but are more diverse. They are clearly and consciously conveyed reflecting the depth of knowledge and understanding of the headteacher of the school.

The government of the school consists of the Governing Body and, interestingly, a Community Council made up of numerous agencies and which deals with the short and long term needs of the community and which is also accountable for the financial management.

The timetable allows for teachers to make home visits thus forging even closer links between home and school, although the extra staffing allocation does not appear over-generous considering the requirements of the local community. The reader may well wish for further information on home visiting, particularly the strategies used with parents who are reluctant to become involved with the school. Parental involvement is a major commitment in the school and parents are encouraged and, more importantly, prepared for working in the school with their own children. This creates a positive attitude towards the school and the teaching profession, although the book makes no attempt to reach significant conclusions regarding "attitude". This particular school reaches far into the community and the chapter gives an honest account of the problems encountered. The community aspects start from the cradle and end at old age — encompassing activities and information on pre-school provision, health, police and even bus timetables. The reader, however, may well feel that rehabilitation work for adults is extending the role and function of a community primary school just a little too far.

The needs of an 89% multi-ethnic school roll dominate the organisation and policy of Broad Heath Community Primary School, Coventry for the third case study. One example is the need to employ extra caretaking staff who play an important role in ensuring that Asian girls participating in out-of-school hours gym clubs are not watched by members of the opposite sex. Additional clerical staff have also been appointed to cope with the administrative load but there has been only one extra member of the teaching staff appointed. There was an assumption that the staffing for the whole project was totally inadequate and that it was only the commitment of those involved that made it work.

Between 4.00pm and 9.30pm the school has a wide and varied timetable including Mother tongue classes, basic mathematics, English 'O' level, sporting and musical activities. The steel band is a major enterprise and is truly multi-cultural.

The sensitively-structured 'Family Curriculum' proves interesting reading and includes the pre-school child and its parents through to the seven years a child is in the school. It also includes home visits which are systematically recorded.

Architecturally, the school was not built for its present function but the constraints of the building have not daunted the present head whose personality is a key feature in the success of the venture. Indeed, the reader will surely have become aware how vital is the role of the headteacher in each of the case-studies.

The final case-study concerns a Church of England community Primary School in Leicestershire situated in the 'neat seemingly prosperous village of Croft'.

The firm foundations of Leicestershire's pioneering work in 'progressive' approaches to education coupled with circumstantial factors, such as the coincidence of the completion of part of the present school and the Parish Councillors' desire for a new village school led to the emergence of the community school notion in Croft.

Architecturally, the purpose-built school provides accommodation which enables the community to use the building for a wide variety of educational, social and recreational purposes. There are clubs for senior citizens, the W.I., and doctors surgeries are held regularly.

The school's involvement in educational matters are paramount and include a drive to increase parental involvement, an awareness of current educational practice and in a broader sense a concern with the educational matters of the whole community.

The central nature of the teachers' role is emphasised although they are not formally required to participate and interestingly none resides in the village. The Headteacher also occupies the role of warden of the Association which consists of teachers, administration, elected members, and members of voluntary organisations. Understandably this network of relationships is not always smooth running.

The influence of the school is seen in dual terms — both as a symbol of social continuity and future hope; and as an organisation which promoted Educational growth in the community at large.

In conclusion, I would unreservedly recommend this easy-to-read book, and not only to those connected with education for its interest may well appeal to a wider audience. Each case-study left me with the feeling that it could easily be a book in itself. Indeed, the lack of literature in this field should ensure the success of this and, hopefully, further publications.

DIANA BATT
Headteacher
St Matthew's Junior School
Luton

Comprehensive Byblow?

Two Cultures of Schooling: The Case of Middle Schools

by Andy Hargreaves. Falmer Press (1986) pp257, Hardback: £15.95; paperback: £8.50.

This is an important book for anyone interested in education today and, in my view, essential reading for those, like myself, committed to middle school education. In it, Andy Hargreaves discusses the implications of educational policy for school practice, using the case of middle schools as his example.

The book is divided into four sections. Part 1 deals with educational policy and, right from the start, it paints a depressing picture. Middle schools, Hargreaves suggests, were conceived not for educational reasons but were, "to a large extent, a direct result of comprehensive reorganisation at the secondary level under conditions of severe economic stringency". The Plowden Report of 1967 (which recommended transfer at 12+) and ROSLA (implemented in 1972/73) provided further justification (on economic grounds) for the introduction of middle schools.

Middle schools quickly became important, catering for over 20% of children of middle-school age, but suffered from an identity crisis caused by vague ideology and the uneasy mix of ex-secondary and ex-primary staff with their own views and styles of education.

Part 2 (School Organisation) uses two case studies of West Riding schools: "Moorhead" and "Riverdale" (pseudonyms). This section looks at the year system (with its lack of continuity and often an obvious break at 11+), setting (often practised even more than in the equivalent age groups in secondary schools), and subject specialisms (one of the middle schools' greatest problems being to resolve the tension between specialist and generalist teaching).

In Part 3 Hargreaves discusses the "two cultures of teaching": the academic/elementary style practised by ex-secondary teachers whose main preoccupations are their subjects, firm discipline and a transmission style of pedagogy; and the developmental style of teaching promoted by Plowden and seen in the work of the ex-primary teachers who are more concerned with processes of learning and relationships. These primary teachers were mainly younger and less experienced than their secondary colleagues, and female. They therefore had little influence on the schools as a whole, the academic/elementary style of teaching has thus held sway.

Interestingly, the teachers who had been trained specifically for the middle years (at the time of the case studies there were few) tended to have experience of a wider age range, a greater breadth of curriculum expertise (though fewer specialisms) and a greater commitment to middle-school education.

In Part 4 Andy Hargreaves concludes with a review of middle schools past, present and future, and suggests that, if middle schools are to survive at all, they should increase the proportion of generalist teaching, develop a strong curricular advisory system, break down the isolation of the year group system, reduce the amount of setting and increase the use of mixed-ability groupings. He also suggests that there should be greater

collaboration of heads and teachers between schools.

Much of the book is profoundly depressing, painting as it does a picture of schools created for the wrong reasons and lacking any clear vision or purpose, which have suffered disproportionately from recession and falling rolls and which have been much criticised by HMI (though Hargreaves does not accept many of their conclusions: "HMI do not appear to have allowed their evidence to cloud their judgement").

The book is thoroughly researched and very thought-provoking: I found myself constantly comparing and measuring my own policies and actions against those of the case-study schools. It is fascinating and extremely readable, and I commend it strongly to all committed middle-school teachers and to all those who are concerned about what is happening to our schools today.

DEREK GILLARD

Headteacher

Christ Church CE Middle School
Ealing

Demasculinisation of Science

Perspectives on Gender & Science ed. Jan Harding Falmer Press: 1986, pb £8.50; hb £15.95; pp 217

In a rapidly burgeoning publications field, this volume offers a collection of conference papers delivered at the 1985 British Association for the Advancement of Science meeting. That gender and science was addressed there for the first time, and under the rubric of "Section X (General)", is perhaps indicative that within the scientific community (as opposed to within the feminist, educationalist and social scientific communities) serious debate on the issue is only now beginning. The organisation and substantive profile of the volume, then, reflect this. Split into two parts, the first six articles are empirically factual in character. Together, they describe the past and present (under)representation of women in scientific and technological education and employment; they also suggest the ways in which girls who *do* choose these fields might be distinctive, as well as what factors may be instrumental in alienating the majority of girls from science and technology.

Most of this information is not new, but Glynis Breakwell's uncompromising quantitative survey of attitudes towards new technology amongst 14-18 year olds and undergraduates furnishes not only very useful information: it also leaves readers with enticing findings worthy of further speculation and research. She confirms that gender differences are established by age 14 and do affect subject preferences. Girls are much less likely to want to "grab" new technology, and this is related to their lower self esteem and restricted access to computer experience and literacy at school and, *importantly* at home. Women undergraduates, including scientists, are much more likely to be critical of new

technology's social and ecological consequences, but they do *not* reject new technology as such.

Part 2 addresses itself to explaining such gender patterns and differences in more theoretical terms. Four threads of argument consistently feature in these five contributions. The first is that women are both excluded and exclude themselves from science as a consequence of a culturally deeply rooted gender dualism. Femininity is by definition incompatible with a Cartesian abstracting rationality held to characterise the essence of both scientific method and masculinity. Helen Weinreich-Haste's admirably clearly-argued contribution suggests, in conformity with current feminist thinking, that we should accept women and men to have distinct and equally valid perspectives on life. These different ways of knowing should complement each other to produce a *better* science.

Secondly, although in fact scientific method may only *masquerade* as masculine rationality in action, the ideology has real consequences. Brian Easlea offers a gripping and disturbing account of the underlying misogynist implications of the frequently aggressively violent sexual imagery rife in scientific discourse, and of its potentially disastrous human and ecological consequences. Its impact is so intense precisely *because* it is written by a man, who must indeed have ultimate insight into the perspectives and motivations of those other men he so roundly denounces.

That women and men characteristically develop differing cognitive styles originating in early experiences comprises the third strand of argument evident in several papers, particularly Jan Harding's own, which comes close to positing a deficit model of masculinity: isolating/controlling and creatively limited, which if allowed to dominate, results in an altogether bad and socially hazardous science.

Finally, the papers are clear that if more girls and women are to be attracted into science, then it is *science* which must change its image and practice. Brian Easlea calls for *demasculinisation*: not only developing a socially responsible/responsive physics, but also that physicists themselves must come to understand the origins and sustaining forces of male violence. Evelyn Fox Keller writes about learning to count between and beyond two, arguing for a mode of scientific enquiry founded upon an understanding of difference (not universality) and a "feeling for the organism" (not distanced objectivity). Her analysis was strikingly post-structuralist in flavour: as if the material world were a text and scientists its readers.

This is not a book for practicalities; it offers background information and presents the ideas at the core of current debates, which until now have been largely conducted outside science departments and laboratories. It will be useful for those seeking an overview of the field, either as part of their own science education studies or within an equal opportunities initiative for the science/technology curriculum. The collection deserves a place on the library shelf; in a field which requires serious and urgent attention, it lends impetus and insight to practitioners.

LYNNE CHISHOLM

University of London Institute of Education

The following **Back Numbers of Forum** are still available price £1.75 each

Vol 10 No 1	The Sixth Form in the Comprehensive School.
Vol 11 No 2	Two Years after Plowden; Self-directed learning.
Vol 11 No 3	Freedom of Choice — for whom? A new Education Act.
Vol 12 No 2	From secondary to primary.
Vol 12 No 3	Teaching Unstreamed Classes.
Vol 13 No 1	Teachers for Comprehensives; Mixed ability science.
Vol 15 No 1	Democracy and Innovation in Education.
Vol 15 No 2	16 to 19.
Vol 16 No 3	Going Comprehensive in England, Wales and Scotland.
Vol 17 No 2	New Directions: reconstruction of knowledge.
Vol 17 No 3	The Question of Size for primary and secondary schools.
Vol 18 No 1	Mixed Ability Teaching: French, Maths, Science.
Vol 18 No 3	Examination or Assessment in primary and secondary schools.
Vol 19 No 1	In Defence of Education.
Vol 19 No 2	Comprehensive Remedial Provision for primary and secondary.
Vol 19 No 3	The Primary School.
Vol 20 No 1	Multiracial Education.
Vol 20 No 2	Non-Streaming — Why and how.
Vol 20 No 3	Secondary options or a common curriculum.
Vol 21 No 1	New Opportunities: the lower birthrate.
Vol 21 No 2	Primary and Secondary.
Vol 21 No 3	Mixed Ability Teaching and Learning.
Vol 22 No 1	The APU Threat?
Vol 22 No 2	Comprehensive Education: the threat of government policy.
Vol 22 No 3	Standards at Risk.
Vol 24 No 1	Comprehensive Principles for the Eighties.
Vol 24 No 2	Primary Schools within a Comprehensive System.
Vol 24 No 3	Curriculum, Assessment and Approach for the 11-16's.
Vol 25 No 1	Education and Training, 16-19.
Vol 25 No 2	Special needs within comprehensive context.
Vol 25 No 3	Teacher Education.
Vol 26 No 1	Curriculum and Comprehensive Education.
Vol 26 No 2	Secondary Reform.
Vol 26 No 3	The Curriculum: Content and Process.
Vol 27 No 3	Central Control of the Curriculum?
Vol 28 No 1	The Centralist Tendency
Vol 28 No 2	Anti-racism and Community Education.
Vol 28 No 3	The Teachers' Action.
Vol 29 No 1	Goodbye to Sir Keith.
Vol 29 No 2	Special Number on Primary Education.
Vol 29 No 3	Symposium on GCSE.

Order from **Forum, 7 Bollington Road, Oadby, Leicester LE2 4ND.**