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The Comprehensive School

This number of FORUM is devoted largely to recording the progress, and discussing some of the aspects, of the movement towards the comprehensive secondary school in England, Wales and Scotland. While the common school persisted as the traditional type of school in the rural areas of Scotland throughout this century, it was not until the passage of the 1944 Education Act that it became a practical possibility in England and Wales. In the 18 years since then, and indeed for many years before, a tremendous amount of discussion has taken place on this key question. Much of this has been ephemeral and largely theoretical, for until comprehensive schools had actually been brought into being it was impossible to buttress theoretical arguments—on either side—with examples from the actual practice of such schools. In the general free-for-all that ensued, the most dismal prognostications of supporters of the *status quo*, and they were many, could not be denied by pointing to the experience of any single existing school in England and Wales. Scottish experience was largely ignored south of the border.

The situation today is very different. Both in Anglesey and the Isle of Man the whole system of secondary education has been fully comprehensive for at least nine years. In London and Coventry important cities in England have made a genuine breakthrough in establishing comprehensive schools, even if the continued existence of independent or semi-independent grammar schools in both cases continues seriously to handicap their development as fully comprehensive schools. In Leicestershire important developments are taking place, while Croydon plans another variant of the two-tier system. It is also clear from Mr. Jones-Davies's survey that both in the rural areas and in many of the towns in Wales the movement towards comprehensive education has gathered momentum to an extent not commonly recognised. In Scotland, as Mr. Macrae shows, Glasgow is taking the lead in adapting to urban circumstances the traditional school organisation of the Scottish rural areas. "All over the country," as the Crowther Council said nearly three years ago, referring specifically to this movement, "changes are being made that pro-

foundly modify the previous pattern of education", introducing a new flexibility into school organisation.

One important result of the rich experience of comprehensive education now being gathered is that the old fears that educational standards would inevitably be lowered are being shown in practice to be groundless. On the contrary, as Mr. Raymond King shows in detail in respect to one school, Mr. Jones-Davies in relation to the Welsh schools as a whole, and Mr. Macrae to Glasgow, the comprehensive school can lead to larger sixth forms and improved examination results. All the evidence we have points in the same direction.

Surely the time has come when this question of school organisation should be submitted to a systematic, national investigation and appraisal in order to determine on rational grounds the relative merits of the common secondary school on the one hand, and the still vastly predominant bipartite system on the other. The movement towards comprehensive education, in spite of its successes, still meets with official obstruction by succeeding Ministers of Education, and today the obstacles preventing a local authority from taking this road, particularly in the urban areas of England and Wales, are many and varied. In practice such schools are now only permitted in new housing estates, although it is, of course, open to local education authorities to develop the two-tier system as pioneered by Leicestershire, a step that can be taken without Ministry approval. A full-scale enquiry, even if it took two or three years, could highlight the educational issues involved and give these priority over what are, in practice, often political considerations. Such an enquiry would, we believe, be widely welcomed in educational circles.

In this number we present what can be no more than a brief survey of the present situation contributed by an Englishman, a Welshman and a Scotsman, all of whom are closely involved in the movement in different capacities—as theorist, administrator and headmaster. Two other headmasters, Mr. Raymond King and Dr. Tyack, write on the basis of experience of their own schools, the

one specifically on the advantages that a relatively large school gives in making possible a wide variety of provision for pupils, the other on the new opportunities for development of the 'neighbourhood' school. The new problems of staff relations and organisation are discussed by Miss Philibert, while Mr. Hetherington throws light on one aspect of the Leicestershire variant, the high school. The great significance of comprehensive secondary education for the primary school is raised by Mr. Freeland. One other article, not specifically on the

comprehensive school—that by Messrs. Triggs and Witham—discusses what is in fact a closely related issue, that of streaming at the secondary stage.

There is today widespread discussion of all these questions, and this is an extremely healthy sign. But such discussion needs the constant injection of new facts and arguments. This special number of FORUM, although limited in extent, is designed to administer just such an injection, and so to help prepare the way for a more radical transformation of our educational system.

The Comprehensive School: England

ROBIN PEDLEY

Eighteen years have elapsed since the Act of 1944 in theory made possible a common, unified system of secondary education in England. How much has been achieved?

The latest figures from the Ministry of Education (relating to January 1961) show only 106 secondary schools in England which are officially regarded as comprehensive. They are listed at the end of this article, together with 32 comprehensive schools in Wales. Of the 106 in England, more than half (58) are in London; 27 are scattered among twelve counties, and 21 among ten county boroughs.

These 106 comprehensive secondary schools are a very small part of the total provision of 5,400 maintained secondary schools in England. Only 23 local education authorities, out of 129, are represented.

There is reason to think that the true number of schools which are broadly comprehensive in character is in fact over 200. The latter figure includes some schools listed variously by the Ministry as 'bilateral', 'multilateral', and 'other secondary schools'. The junior high and senior grammar schools of Leicestershire are included in the last-named category. But even taking this into account, the proportion of English children who are experiencing education in schools of comprehensive type is not more than one in 12. Further, only in three districts of Leicestershire has the 11 plus examination been abolished, England as a whole has barely scratched the surface of this problem.

London

Seen in this context, the example of London

shines like a beacon. The physical task of rebuilding an education service in a devastated city after the war was enormous. It was faced with courage and imagination.

A graded network of schools—grammar, central, junior technical, senior elementary—had to be recast in a mould better suited to the ideals of citizens who had suffered much in the cause of democracy. One of the first developments was the setting up of eight 'interim comprehensive' schools, as proving grounds for the new ideas. Their trials and triumphs are now part of the history of education.

It was inevitable, in a populous city like London, where land was precious and where people in any case were accustomed to living in a crowd, that the new secondary schools should be very big by pre-war English standards. Other areas outside London have since followed suit, and the public is no longer horrified by the thought of schools for 1,000-2,000 pupils. In fact, London's comprehensive schools today vary considerably in size, from c. 850 to c. 2,200.

It was, however, unfortunate from this point of view that the main impetus towards comprehensive schools came from London. It meant that the bogey of size was fastened to the whole comprehensive school movement. It is an important problem, but not an insoluble one, as developments elsewhere have shown.

Much more serious was, and is, the problem of London's voluntary grammar schools, over 50 in number. Their great reputation has meant that London parents seek places there in preference to

new comprehensive schools whose reputation is still to be made. In some districts the London County Council has built 'county complement' schools, associated with existing grammar schools, to ensure the provision of a full range of secondary education for all children in the area. This is an improvement on the normal grammar-modern arrangement, as the county complements are beginning to develop sixth forms of their own, but it is not a satisfactory solution to the problem.

Even where no such formal association exists, it is clear that in practice the grammar schools are creaming the intake of the nominally comprehensive schools of a considerable proportion of their most able pupils. In a sense, therefore, London still has a two-level system. On the upper level are the independent, direct grant and voluntary grammar schools. On the lower level are the new comprehensive schools for the vast majority who cannot win places at the upper level, and the minority who do not choose to do so.

Given the present social climate, so different from the radical atmosphere of 1945, it is difficult to see how the L.C.C. can break through this barrier. What it has done is to press on towards completion of the comprehensive schools network and hope that, provided with superb equipment and excellent staff, the new schools will gradually win prestige at least equal to that of the older schools. Some of them are already doing so, but this is essentially a long-term process; no wonder, then, that the education service was alarmed at proposals to abolish the L.C.C.

London, like Crowther, regards a comprehensive school simply as a school catering for all levels of ability. It is not much concerned with making it a neighbourhood centre, and perhaps one should not expect the development in London of a strong local community spirit.

It is, however, disturbing to find London perpetuating the separation of girls and boys which belongs to the thought and practice of a by-gone age. Comprehensive education is full individual and social education. Segregation of the sexes is no more defensible than segregation for reasons of class or intellectual ability.

London may have made mistakes. They do not seriously detract, however, from the splendour of its achievement. By July 1961 there were 59 comprehensive schools, taking 53.4% of the pupils in county secondary schools. Since 1958 the council has been able to guarantee a five-year course to any pupil entering a county secondary school.¹

¹ *London Comprehensive Schools* (London County Council), p.15.

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Perhaps still more important, London has set the pace for the rest of the country, a pace, alas, which others have found all too fast for their inclinations.

The provincial towns

In spite of some advances, the prospect in and near the county boroughs is far from impressive. Only Coventry and Bristol have achieved any substantial (one might say 'significant') progress; and even there the situation is regarded by some keen supporters of comprehensive education as disquieting.

It is not that the comprehensive schools are proving unsatisfactory; on the contrary, such evidence as is available suggests that their examination results, for example, are at least as good as those from the maintained secondary schools of England as a whole. The problem is really the same as London's. The comprehensive schools of Coventry and Bristol, like the odd ones at Leeds, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Sheffield, and so on, are not comprehensive in the full sense of providing for practically all local children. Although they are capable of making that provision, in fact their intake is heavily creamed by selective grammar schools.

At present, Coventry's comprehensive schools form a middle layer in a graded system of secondary schools: upper (grammar schools), middle ('comprehensive' schools), and lower ('modern' schools). The local dilemma is that, as new comprehensive schools are opened, the share of each of the most advanced pupils at 10 plus is diluted, and the prospect of building up good sixth forms dimmed.

This situation cannot be allowed to continue. Two ways round this dilemma have been found. The local education committees should consider them and implement the one they favour.

The first is essentially a short-term solution, and depends on the existence of modern schools as well as grammar and comprehensive schools. It is the policy which was operated successfully by West Bromwich until the Labour Party lost control of the council last year. This was to require parents in the Churchfields district to decide whether they favoured selection at 11 or not. If they did, their children took the 11 plus examination and were allotted to grammar, technical or modern schools in the normal way. If they did not, their children did not take the 11 plus, but went direct to Churchfields comprehensive school. Over 90 per cent of the parents preferred the comprehensive school and no 11 plus. The essential feature was that parents who preferred selection, but whose children failed to gain a grammar school place, could not then fall back on the comprehensive school as a second best.

Their places at Churchfields were filled by children from outside the school's district whose parents wanted them to attend a comprehensive school.

The second solution is to integrate the grammar school in an end-on system of comprehensive education. Leicestershire is operating this in one form, with a break at 14. Now Croydon proposes to adopt the same principle, but with a break at 15 or 16. If applied throughout the country, this second plan would mean developing some existing comprehensives, and all modern schools, as fully comprehensive schools for all local children aged 11-15/16, with the grammar schools becoming sixth form colleges normally taking pupils aged 16-18 plus, but taking a few 'flyers' at 15 plus. This pattern would probably need to be reached *via* an interim stage in which transfer to the grammar school was made either at 13 plus or at 15/16, according to a careful assessment at 13 of each child's needs, rate of progress, and prospect of going on to a full sixth form course.

Comprehensive schools which have already established flourishing sixth forms, and which can hold their own in competition with the grammar schools in this respect, would keep them. Others might well establish a case for growing a sixth form top. But in general the two-tier pattern appears the most sensible and most acceptable solution. It offers enhanced prestige to both grammar and modern schools. It is true that some existing comprehensive schools would lose their attenuated sixth forms, but those with reasonable prospect of preserving or building up good sixth form studies would be able to do so. In any case, being truly comprehensive for the five years 11-16 is surely preferable to being a thin, emaculated shadow, a sub-comprehensive school attempting to do the full job from 11 to 18 and never really succeeding.

Leicestershire

Leicestershire's contribution in the field of comprehensive secondary education has been, quite simply, to show that ideas previously canvassed, and denounced as mere theories, do work when put into practice.

In three districts this county has turned its modern schools into junior comprehensive schools and its grammar schools into senior semi-comprehensive schools. Normally children spend three years at the junior high school (11-14). Their parents then decide whether to send them to the senior grammar school for at least two years or to keep them at the junior high school for a last year of schooling. (About 5 per cent of each year group, the 'flyers', are promoted early from the primary school to the junior high school at 10, and thence to the

grammar school at 13.) In well-to-do, professional class areas, at present some two-thirds of the parents choose to send their children on to the senior grammar school, in working class areas only about one-third; but the proportion everywhere is rising.

The special advantages of the scheme, other than those normally associated with comprehensive schools, are these. First, modern schools are given a place in the sun, and in response are showing that they are fully capable of teaching GCE courses. Second, grammar school teachers are once more made aware, as they were before 1944, of the needs of less able children and the challenge they offer. Their teaching and their humanity benefit as a result. Third, a change-over to comprehensive education is possible quickly and economically. Existing schools are used, and the permission of the Minister of Education is not required. Fourth, grammar schools are integrated in the system: the problem of 'creaming', faced by all the urban comprehensive schools in England, does not exist.

There are some drawbacks at present, but they are not fundamental. Transfer from junior high to senior grammar school at 14 requires close collaboration between the subject teachers in each school, and this naturally varies in degree. Optional transfer, depending on parents' willingness to sign an undertaking to keep the child at school till 16, clearly penalises the boy and girl from a working-class home. When the leaving age is raised to 16 the local authority will have to choose between transferring all pupils at 14, thus following in the footsteps of the West Riding, who plan to do this at Hemsworth, and considered doing so at Ecclesfield in 1957, and extending the junior high school range to 15/16 (when GCE ordinary level is usually taken) with the grammar schools becoming sixth form colleges.

Two-tier re-arrangement of existing schools seems essential if the 11 plus is to be abolished within a reasonable span of time. Further experiment with the different forms it can take is urgently needed.

The rural areas

Only in the countryside do we have examples of truly comprehensive secondary schools; and these have been developed for practical reasons of economy and efficiency rather than from belief in them on educational principle.

The 1944 Education Act found many rural areas with a little, single-stream grammar school and a scatter of all-age elementary schools. If secondary education was to be provided for all over 11, it was obviously better to enlarge the grammar school

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than to go to the expense of building new, small modern schools which would repeat the limitations of courses and equipment, and the inefficient use of staff, already familiar in the local grammar school.

This is what has happened in certain areas of Westmorland and Yorkshire in the north, in parts of the Midlands, and most recently in the south-west. The process is still going on, and as the schools prove their efficiency opposition to such developments has markedly lapsed. Gradually the rural areas are being filled up with small and medium-sized comprehensive schools which inherit the traditions, and often keep the names, of the local grammar schools whose functions they are extending.

It is clear that the defenders of selective secondary schools regard these areas as expendable, along with the slum-clearance housing estates. In their view the small rural schools cannot produce sixth forms big or talented enough to challenge the prestige of the city grammar schools, while the cultural environment may drag down the performance of the comprehensive school on the new estate. Their *coup de grace* is the rule that those who pass the 11 plus may elect to attend a grammar school instead.

Examinations

The most effective practical argument for comprehensive schools, in the circumstances of today, must be proof that their examination results compare favourably with the results achieved by a bipartite or tripartite system. Nowhere in England, however, is there a local authority with a complete system of comprehensive schools to set against a comparable area organised in the orthodox way. Moreover most of the comprehensive schools we have are creamed by grammar schools.

Even so, such evidence as we have is encouraging. A small sample taken by the Secondary School Examinations Council in 1961 indicates that 14 per cent of the children entering five comprehensive schools went on to gain five or more passes at the ordinary level of GCE—the minimum performance necessary for entry to most of the professions. My own investigations confirm this figure as a fair average of what is being achieved, both in England and Wales. The 1954 report on *Early Leaving* showed that, of the 20 per cent then picked for grammar schools, less than half gained a 'good' GCE with five or more passes; but of course those figures are now out of date, and a detailed study of examination performance in all types of school is

(continued on page 22)

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Comprehensive Education in Wales

D. JONES-DAVIES

Mr. Jones-Davies has been Director of Education for Anglesey since 1959. Before this he was, for 5 years, Borough Education Officer in Rhondda, and earlier still, Further Education Officer in Caernarvonshire. In 1947-8 he was Lecturer in Philosophy at University College, Bangor.

Two of the elements in the present-day conception of the comprehensive schools appear in Welsh educational thought as early as the end of the last century. Thus, when the Aberdare Committee of 1881 on 'Intermediate & Higher Education in Wales' received evidence from Anglesey, the establishment of one school of a 'comprehensive type' in the island was advocated. 'Comprehensive' at that time probably referred to the inclusion in one establishment of the three types of schools mentioned in the Taunton Report of 1868 which were distinguished in terms of leaving age, and therefore in the kind and purpose of the education offered. This use of the term is, however, sufficiently near to the contemporary meaning, in that it implied the inclusion of different 'types' and classes of children in the same school, to make it worthwhile noting that the recommendation came from an area which has now become wholly 'comprehensive' in its secondary education. In fact, the idea of a 'school for all' remained alive in Anglesey throughout the early years of the century until the ideal could be realised after the 1944 Education Act.

The other element in the conception of comprehensive schools finds expression in the Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889, which was the outcome of the Aberdare Report. The Act clearly envisaged the inclusion of facilities for a technical as well as an academic education in the same school, since Section 3(1) states: 'It shall be the duty of the joint education committee as hereinafter mentioned of every County in Wales and of the County of Monmouth to submit . . . a scheme or schemes for the intermediate and technical education of the inhabitants of their County.' These terms are defined in Section 17 of the Act, where 'technical' education is said to include instruction in subjects 'applicable to the purposes of agriculture, industries, trade or commercial life and practice suited to the needs of the district'.

In 1938 the Spens Report on Secondary Education¹ remarked upon the fact that the intention of

the authors of the Act was not fulfilled, in that this reference to technical education was never implemented. The intermediate schools became academic grammar schools, conferring upon an academic education a dominating and, in many ways, severely limiting status in Welsh secondary education.

The same report² referred to the recommendation made to the President of the Board of Education in 1929 by a Departmental Committee, which was then inquiring into the public system of education in Wales and Monmouthshire, particularly in relation to the needs of rural areas, to the effect

'that alterations in the Secondary School Regulations should be made which would render it permissible to carry on in the same Secondary School building the two types of education (a) that for children up to the age of sixteen and over, (b) that for children up to the age of fifteen'.

This suggestion was repeated by the Spens Committee, which thought that in some Welsh areas the 'establishment of small Grammar Schools which incorporate Modern (Senior) Schools . . . may assist towards the solution of the problem of providing for the technical side of education'.³

In contemporary Wales the idea of 'a school for all', incorporating the grammar, modern and also the technical sides is being increasingly implemented in the rural areas. Almost all the secondary schools in the rural counties of Merioneth and Montgomery are bilateral,⁴ and both authorities foresee that in the not too distant future their secondary education will be wholly of this kind. Almost all the truly rural schools of Cardiganshire and Caernarvonshire are bilateral; and so are a substantial number of the schools of Pembrokeshire. Altogether, therefore, in these counties we now find 22 bilateral schools. Undoubtedly one of the reasons for accepting this pattern has been the realisation that it is the only way of ensuring the existence of schools with numbers approaching 400 or over, without involving pupils in tedious daily travel. Smaller schools would mean expensive staffing ratios, and an impoverish-

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ment of the education offered the children. On the whole, entry into these schools is on the basis of some form of selection procedure, but the distinction drawn between grammar and modern children upon entry does not preclude considerable fluidity within the school itself so far as the streaming is concerned. Most of the schools claim that their ability streaming crosses grammar/modern boundaries, and the two counties of Merioneth and Montgomery, which are looking forward to completely bilateral systems, realise that once this is accomplished the whole system of pre-entry selection will need reviewing.

Abolition of 11 plus

Up to the present it is only in the area of my own Authority that eleven plus selection has been entirely dispensed with, and the Anglesey comprehensive schools are also larger than most of the bilateral schools, ranging in their numbers from 800 at Menai Bridge to 1,300 at Holyhead. For efficient and economic organisation, especially of the sixth form, my Authority would now say that our schools are too small, although they would be somewhat concerned about the distances which the pupils would have to travel if the present catchment areas were enlarged.

The fact that a school is bilateral inevitably implies that it is also to a certain degree 'comprehensive', in the sense that children are not rigidly divided into grammar and non-grammar types. This is shown by the fact that in almost all of them children as far down as the 45-55 per cent level of the intake are sitting the Ordinary level of the G.C.E. in certain subjects, and several schools refer to children low down in the selection test list when admitted later doing very well at Ordinary level, entering the sixth form, and going on to university and training colleges.

There is admittedly another side to these commendable performances at Ordinary level. Wales undoubtedly has laid too much stress upon sitting even a few subjects in the G.C.E., and it would probably be true to say that the middle ability groups in the Anglesey schools, for example, have suffered because the schools, at the commencement, felt it necessary to prove, above all, that, academically, they were in no way inferior to the highly esteemed grammar schools. It must, however, be remembered that, on the whole, the percentage intake into grammar schools in Wales has been higher than in England and although as shown by G. J. Evans, the Deputy Chief Education Officer of Caernarvonshire,⁵ even at the intake level of 31-40 per cent, the percentage of good Ordinary level certificates in his county is 22 per cent,⁶ many pupils are purposelessly dragged willy-nilly along a very

formal and academic course. In bilateral and comprehensive schools, on the other hand, despite their emulation of grammar schools, there is more opportunity to offer a variety of courses; and in the middle streams, to dilute the academic approach with some practical and vocational interests. Performance at the Ordinary level need not dominate the whole curriculum of these schools in the same way as it does that of the grammar schools.

Another interesting development in Wales in these latter years has been that the demand for secondary education through the medium of Welsh has led to the establishment of bilateral schools offering this type of education in Anglicised areas, since the comparatively small number of children involved demands that such schools should be organised on this pattern. Flintshire is the Authority which has pioneered in this respect; and one gathers that the Welsh bilateral schools of that county are organised very much on 'comprehensive' lines.

It is reported that Glamorganshire is shortly to establish a 'Welsh' secondary school, and this, no doubt, will also have children of the complete ability range.

The urban areas

The more urbanised areas in Wales have been on the whole slower than the rural areas in breaking away from the tripartite pattern, but the number of comprehensive schools, publicly acknowledging the designation, and considerably larger in size than the rural bilateral schools, is gradually increasing. Some of these schools are by now well established and have been featured in contributions to the educational press, for example, Maesydderwen comprehensive school, Breconshire, which has 784 pupils. Swansea changed its two multilateral schools at Mynydd Bach (1,183 pupils) and Penlan (1,266 pupils) into comprehensive schools in 1961. Glamorgan has the largest comprehensive school in Wales (1,466 pupils) at Sandfields, Aberavon, a large housing estate not far from the works of the Steel Company of Wales; and is expected to provide others, e.g. one in the upper part of the Rhondda Valley. Newport has also commenced its programme of ultimately organising the whole of its secondary education on comprehensive lines, and two schools of this type are already established, Hartridge and Duffryn high schools. Although all the secondary schools in the county borough of Merthyr Tydfil are at present either grammar or secondary modern, the authority's declared policy is the same as that for Newport, and the planning of the first comprehensive school has already begun.

From what can be gathered, the amount of ability setting across form boundaries varies considerably from school to school. It seems clear that this is

practised to a greater extent in the avowedly comprehensive schools, than in the bilateral schools, but it must be remembered that the numbers in the comprehensive schools are usually greater, and these schools, therefore, have more staff at their disposal.

Comprehensive and bilateral⁷ schools in Wales usually contain a more complete cross section of the whole ability range than their English counterparts. There is less inclination on the part of Welsh parents, apart perhaps from those in the very large towns, to send their children to private and public schools. Moreover, apart from two county boroughs, parents are not given the opportunity of choosing to send their children to a neighbouring local authority grammar school rather than to the comprehensive or bilateral school. Comprehensive schools in Wales are therefore almost invariably fully 'comprehensive' in intake, and offer an excellent opportunity for judging whether this type of organisation is educationally sound.

School organisation

So far as social organisation is concerned, although all the schools mentioned in this article make use of 'houses' for games, athletics, eisteddfodau, etc., only one school is so far planned to provide specific accommodation, e.g. house/dining rooms, for 'houses'. This is the new comprehensive school at Menai Bridge, Anglesey. It is understood that the new comprehensive school in Rhondda is also to be planned on these lines and the remodelled school at Holyhead will be on this pattern, with certain refinements; for example, a special suite, including a separate dining room, for the sixth form. The other schools referred to are divided into upper and lower and, sometimes, middle schools.

On the whole it is, I think, true to say that the question of the common school is less complicated by political and class considerations in Wales than in the rest of the country; and if political arguments are not deliberately stimulated and the educational situation is allowed to develop under its own impetus, it is likely that Welsh authorities will, during the next decade or so, make quite a considerable contribution to educational thought and experiment in terms of 'one Secondary School for all'.

REFERENCES

- ¹ pp. 342, 343.
- ² p. 345.
- ³ p. 345.
- ⁴ i.e. Grammar/Modern with varying amounts of technical provision.
- ⁵ *Education*, 28th March, 1958.
- ⁶ *Education*, May, 1955.
- ⁷ There does not seem to be a school in Wales at present which calls itself 'multilateral'; although it does seem that many of the 'bilaterals' could legitimately do so.

Comprehensive Education in Scotland

KENNETH MACRAE

A graduate of Glasgow University, Mr. Macrae spent more than 30 years as a Science Master in various grammar-type schools in Glasgow. For the last 5 years he has been headmaster of one of Glasgow's biggest comprehensive schools.

The reader accustomed to the structure of education in England must keep in mind that in Scotland promotion from primary to secondary schools takes place at 12+, a year later than in England. The fourth year in a Scottish secondary school, the year in which pupils first sit the Scottish Certificate of Education (S.C.E.) 'O' Grade, is equivalent to the fifth year in England; and the Scottish fifth and sixth years, in both of which pupils sit 'Higher' papers of the S.C.E., are roughly equivalent to the English sixth form.

It has long been traditional in Scotland, particularly in the country areas, for the local school to take in all the pupils in its area irrespective of creed or academic ability, and to educate them until they left at ages varying from the prevailing minimum school-leaving age to 17 years or more. These schools were the forerunners of the modern comprehensive school. In their time they were the only practical solution to the problem of providing a good education for all and they contributed much to the strong spirit of democracy which has long been a feature of Scottish life. Public schools (in the English sense) were rare and few families sent their children to English public schools.

Today, with some modifications, education in the mainly rural areas is still based on the local comprehensive school. Let us take Aberdeenshire (which does not include the city of Aberdeen) as an example.

In Aberdeenshire there are 26,000 school pupils spread over 2,000 square miles of county. Most of these children are concentrated in or near the towns—Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Inverurie, and so on—and secondary education is based on seven academies situated in seven burghs or suburban areas fairly evenly distributed over the county. Each of these academies provides three, four, five and six years of secondary education of a type varying from the purely non-academic to the purely academic and university entrance.

A typical unit is that based on Peterhead, a fishing town with a population of 12,500 and a recently constructed academy containing about 1,100 pupils between 12 and 18 years of age. Its annual intake consists of (1) all the pupils due for transfer from the primary schools within about four miles of the town, (2) the pupils in primary schools up to about 10 miles from the town who are reckoned to have a chance of 'O' passes or better in the S.C.E. examination. The first group is completely comprehensive in range of ability and represents about 75 per cent of the total intake. The academy provides a wide range of courses to suit the needs of its various streams.

To provide for the less academically minded in the outer fringe of the surrounding countryside there are non-certificate course schools such as the beautifully designed and well equipped new school at the small village of Mintlaw about 10 miles from Peterhead. Here some 100 secondary pupils receive an excellent education with a bias towards rural science and the arts of the countryside. Like all rural education authorities in Scotland, Aberdeenshire is determined that remoteness from a town will not lower the quality of the education provided for its young people.

The urban areas

So much, then, for the general pattern of comprehensive education in the rural counties. With minor differences, what has been said about Aberdeenshire is true for the others. When we turn to the cities and the mainly industrial areas, the much greater density of population makes it possible for education authorities to have a choice between the two main systems, that based on the comprehensive school and that based on separate schools for senior and junior secondary pupils. Opinion on the relative merits and demerits of the two systems is divided. Of the cities, Glasgow is the one which is moving rapidly towards comprehensive education in all the secondary schools under the direct control of the corporation. On Glasgow, therefore, the remainder of this brief article will be concentrated.

How truly comprehensive is the typical Glasgow comprehensive school? There are in the city several fee-paying secondary schools run on a highly-selective and non-territorial basis. As well as taking the children from their own primary departments (where such exist) they cream off a percentage of the best academic pupils, which varies widely from area to area. In a typical working-class housing scheme area this might amount to only 2 per cent, but 2 per cent of an annual intake of 400, while having but a small effect on the younger classes of the local comprehensive school, reduces the sixth form by eight of the best pupils, a significant number. Apart from these pupils and the physically or mentally handicapped children who are taken care of in special schools, each comprehensive school takes all the pupils transferring from the primary schools in its area. Each primary school serves a precisely defined area. Each secondary school is assigned three or four adjacent primary feeding schools and so, in turn, serves a precisely defined area. Large fluctuations in pupil population can lead to a redefining of territorial areas, but in general these are fixed and definite.

The Glasgow pattern

The first two of the new schools specially designed for comprehensive education with extensive and well equipped practical departments were opened in 1954. There are now 22 of them with more to be opened before the end of 1962. They are of two types, (1) four-year comprehensive schools which take pupils as far as the S.C.E. 'O' Grade, (2) six-year comprehensive schools which take pupils up to the S.C.E. 'H' Grade and beyond. The first have accommodation for about 1,000 pupils, the second for about 1,350. (Comparable figures for England would be around 1,350 and 1,700 as an extra year at the lower end of the school must be accommodated.)

For each territory with a six-year school there are in general two adjacent territories with a four-year school, and the 'high flyers' in the latter (i.e. pupils capable of university entrance) are transferred to the former after two years. In addition, any other pupils who wish to continue secondary schooling beyond 'O' grade are transferred to the six-year school at the end of four years. This makes for economy in the use of teachers and for greater efficiency in setting in the fifth and sixth forms. It is an essential part of the scheme that there should be the closest possible collaboration between the heads of departments of the six-year school and its four-year neighbours.

One reads and hears about the strain on pupils and parents due to the English 11+ examination. No comparable strain exists in Scotland in areas

served by a comprehensive school. In Glasgow, the 'control' examination which decided the type of secondary school to which a pupil must go was abolished in 1958, and the placing of pupils into categories to serve as a guide to secondary headmasters is now left to the head of each primary school. A final decision is made at a meeting of these heads with the head (or heads) of the secondary school (or schools) in their area. This happens twice per year as the transfer of pupils takes place at the end of January as well as the end of August.

The three categories

Categories are of three kinds, S.C.E., Junior Secondary (Group 1) and Junior Secondary (Group 2). An S.C.E. grading is an estimate that the child has a chance of making three 'O' passes or better in the S.C.E. Category J.S.1, while not ruling out all possibility of 'O' passes, suggests that a course of study leading eventually to a City and Guilds or similar further education course is probably best. Category J.S.2 indicates little or no academic ability.

In Glasgow as a whole, nearly 40 per cent of all pupils are graded S.C.E., about 45 per cent J.S.1, and the remainder J.S.2, but the first figure runs to well over 50 per cent in some areas and falls to under 30 per cent in others. It must be emphasised that these fluctuations are in no way caused by lack of school places but only by natural variations in the distribution of ability.

In a typical comprehensive school all the pupils in the first two categories follow the same course for at least six months in order that adjustments in grading can be made; but even after that, so wide is the choice of course offered, any pupil irrespective of grading who wishes to stay on for more than a three-year course can do so with profit.

Even before the introduction of the S.C.E. 'O' Grade examination, statistical evidence showed that the new comprehensive schools had brought about a significant increase in the number of pupils, S.C.E., J.S.1 and even J.S.2, staying on to at least the end of their fourth year. This year (1962), the first of the new S.C.E., saw large numbers of pupils originally graded junior secondary sitting 'O' papers in several subjects. There has also been a most encouraging improvement in the attitude of junior secondary pupils towards school and no sign of the best academic pupils suffering through being at a comprehensive school.

The adverse reaction of some parents to comprehensive schools when first they opened is rapidly disappearing with the realisation that categories are only provisional and that children of all categories seem to enjoy the school and to fare well in it.



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Comprehensive School — A Pattern of Achievement

H. RAYMOND KING

Mr. Raymond King has been Head of Wandsworth School, London, since 1932. He is an ex-chairman of the English New Educational Fellowship, a member of the Advisory Committee of the U.K. National Commission for U.N.E.S.C.O., and Chairman of its Text Books Committee.

In September 1956 by unselective entry 410 boys of eleven plus were admitted to Wandsworth school in London. In September 1961, 130 of them entered the sixth form, a proportion which a few years ago would have been respectable in a grammar school. These boys, however, belonged to a year that contained the whole range of normal educational ability. Boys from every one of the 14 forms of 1956 entrants reached the sixth, and from 9 of these 14 forms the academic sixth. Of the original 410 entrants only 62 had the I.Q. of 115 or over that distinguishes the 'grammar category'. And yet just over 70 per cent not only stayed beyond the compulsory age but continued into and mostly completed a fifth year.

In this, as in so many other respects, experience has confuted the opponents of the comprehensive plan. Here is no levelling down. On the contrary; without the opportunities presented by a comprehensive organisation, at least a half of the present sixth would have left school at 15; for the area the school serves would not be judged especially promising for what Crowther calls "setting the pace" in the trend towards a longer school life.

It will therefore be of interest to look at some of the principles on which the present school has been built up to achieve results which can be measured in the above and other ways.

The case of a comprehensive school expanded from a grammar school will afford additional opportunity to confound ill-judged prognostications.

Planning the school

Principles of policy and organisation were worked out in staff discussions over many years: for at Wandsworth we accepted from the start the proposals for the expansion of the school under the London Plan. And the internal evolution has gone according to plan, our plan, in a deliberate, sure-

footed way, based upon full consultation and general agreement. There have been incidental difficulties, of course, but they have been due, as they still are, to external factors which we do not control. I suppose in no other country in the world could a head and staff enjoy such autonomy or be entrusted with such a task.

For there never was, nor is there now, a blueprint for the organisation of a comprehensive school, either in its scholastic or its social aspect. From what is sometimes advocated and more often from what is attacked, it seems that there is some room for dispute about its nature. Let us get this clear first.

Unitary control

The conception which has governed Wandsworth's development is consistent with that of the Ministry of Education in the few pronouncements it has made, and is supported by the Crowther Report in the clear but limited references it makes to the comprehensive idea. The comprehensive school is essentially a mode of organisation, not a new theory of education. It is a mode of organising under unitary control and preferably in a single institution all the provision for secondary education deemed necessary by the L.E.A. in a given area; further, of deploying it in such a way as to override barriers between types of secondary education, and so as to offer the greatest possible variety of courses within the unity of a single educational community. Organisation is the essence of the problem. A school must first be viable before it can experiment with profit.

Wandsworth school commands a fully adequate range of provision for secondary education. Its organisation aims at making this accessible and keeping it accessible to the individual pupil as he develops. Curricular organisation is flexible and

permits choice and movement. Only so can a comprehensive school exploit its advantages, keep opportunity open, eliminate 'misfits', and suit the pupil's curriculum to his growth and development. It is able to take account of all the factors in the pupil's ultimate educability, all the emergents: late maturation of faculty or character, new-born motivations, enthusiasm, and drives, and awakening vocational ambitions.

It is clear that Wandsworth as a comprehensive is serving the individual and society better than the tripartite arrangement it has replaced. It offers all that the grammar, the technical, and the modern school offer; and because it can do this, it can do more: it provides courses intermediate between the types and courses unknown to type schools.

The range of educational provision of necessity depends largely on the size of the school. Wandsworth, like many other London schools, was planned for over 2,000 pupils. As the original three-form entry grammar school took 20 per cent of the age group, the comprehensive was planned to take a fifteen-form entry in order to include the whole ability range in normal balance. It was at first thought that a school needed to be of this size to produce a viable sixth form. In practice Wandsworth has quadrupled the sixth form of the grammar school and demonstrated that a smaller school could at least produce a viable sixth.

Admission procedure

Two principles govern admission: a balanced entry and unselective admission from a delimited area, i.e., the principles of the community school. However, in London the comprehensive schools that have expanded from, or were intended as complements to, single-sex grammar schools, are themselves single-sex schools. Most of the others are coeducational. In S.W. London, three comprehensives work together—Mayfield (girls), Wandsworth (boys) and Elliott (boys and girls)—to give parents a choice of coeducational or single-sex schools.

Because in London parents have this choice of school and pupils are not drafted, many pupils who qualify at 11 plus as suitable for advanced academic education contract out of the 'delimited area'. Hence Wandsworth has to go outside its delimited area or to accept pupils of second choice to redress the balance in the top 20 per cent of the ability range. First-choice 'grammar' entrants are about half the permitted quota.

A comprehensive school with balanced entry must be large enough to do justice to its minorities: the very able and the very dull. And it will do

justice to neither if it attempts to treat them alike. Wandsworth recognises differences and tries to organise success by deliberately varying the approach in the light of the pupil's capacity to respond. We want all pupils to move at their own best pace: hence the need for a flexible organisation permitting movement between fairly homogeneous ability groups. This is especially so when subject disciplines become important. And so by the second year 'setting' or cross classification is introduced for languages and mathematics in the upper half of the ability range. But in the lower half of the ability range, we have moved away from the specialist teacher and towards the form master.

The groups described above are as socially mixed as any others could be: while all abilities freely mix in a score of different games of which the boy has choice, in a large and splendid choir, in a dramatic society that draws on half a dozen departments for expert help, and in the innumerable voluntary groups that make the school a social community. The tutorial groups of about 30 pupils, based in 'home rooms' are mixed both in ability and age.

When in 1956 we first admitted the least able 20 per cent, I.Q. 85 to below 70, it became evident that the school was unequipped to deal as successfully with them as it had for some years been dealing with boys above that approximate level. Hence from 1957 onwards, whatever the cost and trouble, two specialists in diagnostic and remedial methods were found in each successive year to give their full time attention to the two lowest ability groups. This was built up in the course of four years a remedial department of eight teachers.

For the retarded, backward, and disturbed pupil the size of the school has been incredibly helpful. Even under the pressure of the bulge we were able to keep their teaching groups small by spreading extra numbers over abler classes. Their numbers permitted us to group them homogeneously by reading age within fairly narrow limits, thus easing the task of the teacher: our staffing resources permitted the attachment of supernumerary part-time women teachers as assistants to the remedial specialists in the first two years: above all, the large entitlement to graded posts our size permits provided special allowances for the eight teachers.

The lower school

A separately organised lower school for the first two years (11-13) was always part of our plan. This arrangement broke down numbers into approximately 800 and 1,200, enabled the lower school to have a socio-disciplinary climate and pupil-staff relationship appropriate to children of

11-13, and gave it greater freedom to concern itself with its own particular pre-occupation, the diagnostic phase.

During this phase it is the task of the teachers to stimulate and evaluate the pupil's response to a wide and varied curriculum, and of the form tutor to keep a cumulative record. The process has aptly been called 'self-selection by response'. Towards the end of the second year the lower school record card is supplemented by an allocation sheet compiled by the form tutor and designed to elicit whatever further information is relevant to allocating the boy suitably to a third year form for the orientation year. This is done in consultation with the parents.

Bias and streaming

At this point in the pupil's course a tentative bias or special emphasis is introduced into the course of general education, not so marked as to preclude adjustment by transfer during the third year, and neither then nor later finally committing a pupil to the limitations of any particular course. Organisation remains flexible and allows for movement between linked courses: while in any case all routes lead to the sixth form with its breadth of eclectic possibilities. The pupil's diagnosed aptitudes suggest the bias and the bias within a course of general education gives it direction and purpose. It has been illuminating to trace the movement of pupils from group to group on their passage up the school. 'Streaming' in the rigid sense is so little evident that no fifth form has boys from fewer than five of the original 14 first forms and some have boys from as many as ten.

Deployment of courses in the third year can be varied according to requirement, but the general arrangement may be grasped if it is understood as offering a choice of bias at five levels of general ability. Hence the courses fall into five groups: the first offers Academic A and B and Technical High; the second Technical (Engineering) A, Technical (Building) A, and Modified Academic; the third Technical (Engineering) B, Technical (Building) B, and General (Literary); the fourth a choice of four special emphases—Modified Technical, Art, Elementary Commerce, Practical—in general secondary courses; and the fifth consists of the two classes for retarded pupils described above.

We take a realistic view of the present demand by pupils, parents, employers and the national economy for public examinations certificates. An essential justification for public examinations in schools is their function in paving the way to higher or further education. We hope that the

abler boys take their examinations in their stride and that public examinations do not dominate the whole of the curriculum of the rest of the 60 per cent who take them. Hitherto it has been possible to organise O Level and a Beloe type examination in complementary fashion, boys taking O Level in any subject in which they have a chance of it and the Beloe type examination in the rest of the subjects they wish to offer.

O Level is taken by able boys in certain subjects in the 4th year, by most of the 60 per cent in a varying number of subjects in the fifth year, and by the Lower General Sixth. In July 1961 350 boys took G.C.E. O. Level, 295 of them passing in from one to ten subjects. Fifty-one boys sat for Advanced Level and 39 passed in from one to four subjects.

All the evidence goes to show an improvement in academic standards as the more comprehensive intake reaches the top. Present passes at Advanced Level are nearly three times the average number between 1950 and 1956, though the intake of 'grammar category' pupils remained approximately the same in number and quality before and after expansion began in 1948.

In the Spring of 1962 two boys gained Open Scholarships, one to Oxford in English, one to Exeter in Physics and Mathematics: one gained a Steel Company of Wales scholarship of £300 per year for an honours course in Chemical Engineering at Birmingham: one gained an R.A.F. scholarship to Cranwell: one a W. H. Rhodes scholarship for a Canada Tour: and three won L.C.C. Modern Language Travel Scholarships for three months' study in France.

The education offered at the other end of the ability scale was described in the September 1961 issue of FORUM. I am not here concerned with that except to record that conspicuous opponents of the comprehensive school are badly out when they pontifically declare that the less able pupils must develop an inferiority complex when educated in the same school community as the more brilliant. A three years' investigation into morale by one of my colleagues working under the direction of a distinguished educational psychologist gave objective confirmation to our own impression that the morale of no group in the school suffered through the presence of any other group.

Nobody at Wandsworth, to revert to my main purpose in this article, feels that the grammar school was 'destroyed' as it gradually expanded over the total field of secondary education. On the contrary, while spreading its tone and standards over the whole it has demonstrated the added strength that comes to a grammar school that is integrally related to a total secondary service.

The "Neighbourhood" School

N. C. P. TYACK

After teaching in grammar schools and for the Bristol Extra-Mural Department, Dr. Tyack worked for 12 years in Cambridgeshire village colleges—3 years of adult education at Linton and Impington being followed by 9 years as Warden at Bottisham. Since January, 1955, he has been Headmaster of Willenhall comprehensive school which was one of the first of the four smaller comprehensive schools so far established in Staffordshire.

Increasingly in my own thinking and consideration of the comprehensive school I have come firmly to abide in the conviction that it is as a 'neighbourhood' school that such a school is to be judged—both in its achievements to date and as to its future possibilities. And I use this term 'neighbourhood' not simply as an administrative abbreviation for a catchment area within which all or the vast majority of children at 11+ go on from their primary school to their comprehensive school, there to receive their secondary education. That is simply the framework or the skeleton, as I see it. Rather do I use the term to include not only the bones of administrative organisation and the mechanics of administrative provision but also the flesh and blood of personal and group contacts, the sinews of group loyalty, the nerve system of daily activity with the energy it generates. Through all these varying and pulsating channels I see the neighbourhood feeding and nourishing the school: and the school in turn giving back to its neighbourhood in the boys and girls who go out from school to live out their lives—we would hope richer lives because of the comprehensive education they have received. In short, a comprehensive school can only succeed when it is a living organism within the neighbourhood it serves, sympathetically and consciously attuned, and, at the same time, giving a dynamic and positive lead.

The three stages

Perhaps one of the most significant and fruitful aspects of this neighbourhood dynamism is to be seen in its impact on the organisation of the work groups and the planning of the curriculum in the comprehensive school. Let us consider this impact at these significant stages: the initial two or three years (which in Willenhall we regard as the 'Foundation Course'): the fourth and fifth years (the Willenhall 'Development Course'): and the Advanced Course (the sixth year and beyond). Many comprehensive schools have virtually abandoned streaming

according to ability in the early years of their provision: and in the context of this article we can assess this, I would suggest, as a progressive response along neighbourhood lines to the neighbourhood's need. For the mixed ability group projects into the child's vital early years in its comprehensive school the similar neighbourhood atmosphere the child has had in its primary school experience.

We are only too well aware of the difficulties of the mixed ability group (particularly in the smaller school), of the enhanced demands it makes on even the most skilled and devoted teacher. Even so, the evidence is clear that, over their course as a whole, the children as a whole benefit—in that the most able go on their outstandingly successful way rejoicing and the less able appear eventually to achieve far higher standards than they otherwise would. Similarly in the curriculum for those early years we see an equally fresh virility and realism of approach—in which have been broken down many of the traditional barriers between home and school, between the outside world in general and school, and in which, at the same time, there has been a deliberate and in the main successful attempt to strengthen tradition and to create new contacts between the school and its neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood dynamism

When we come to the later years—the Development Course as we name it in Willenhall—we see this neighbourhood dynamism at work in a more mature phase. This is the phase in which the child's carefully considered choice of subjects is one of the key factors in planning the vital last two years of his or her five-year course. In so far that vocational urge constructively shapes the child's choice, then I would suggest that this is a commendable realism which is in no sense restrictive, is in no sense in conflict with or a diversion from the great liberal ideals of the English educational tradition. Rather in so far as there exists between them a basic harmony—which does exist—then both are strengthened and, most important of all, the child benefits. One has only to think of the wide-ranging development at Forest Hill and the Christopher Wren school, to mention only two examples, to realise the remarkable contribution made in this vital phase by the comprehensive schools. And herein, I would suggest, lies much of the explanation of the comprehensive schools' outstanding success in keeping their children in such large proportion for the full five-year course.

Similarly in the advanced courses a new climate has been created—as Crowther shows.¹ And, most significantly, I suggest, this new climate embraces but also extends far beyond the more traditional and astringent academic endeavours. We see again this

happy blend of liberalism and utility, rugged realism fired and inspired by the liberal ideal. That the 'middle of the road' pupil of average ability should have his or her place beside the potential high flier is, I think all would concede, a genuine step forward.

It is when we consider the incredibly rich and varied social life of the comprehensive schools and the nicely balanced complexity of their social structure that we see the great social amalgam and the cross-fertilisation. We see this in the house system in all its variants in schools of varying size, schools in which, because they are day schools, the house is inevitably one of the essential catalysts of 'neighbourhood' influence in school and out. Similarly in the many clubs and societies, the school journeys and camps, the old students' association, the parent-teacher association, we see at work, in the broadest sense of the term, the broad educational process. One type of great creative experience we see recorded in Mrs. Chetwynd's moving chapters in the *Woodbury Down Story*²: the school's contribution in a newly settled locality. The other type may be found in the Willenhall experience: a school recently established in a virile Black Country community proudly conscious of its long-standing civic and cultural tradition. These from the outset have been a strength to the school, which in turn seeks to strengthen and to widen this tradition—among pupils, former pupils, parents and in the community generally. And this has been the general experience in the comprehensive schools.

Indeed, it would appear that the considerable contribution to date and potential contribution in the future of comprehensive schools to the community's social development is only just beginning to be recognised for its key importance. It is to the future that we must look—for so much remains to be done. In particular the school's opportunity literally to go out to its neighbourhood and to seize every opportunity of positive contribution needs to be created and to be met with determination. Wide possibilities of co-ordinated endeavour with existing social agencies lie here to be realised and acted upon.

The community school

For too long have we the protagonists been absorbed in the battle of the 11+ and defensive posturing and assertion regarding what can be done for the high fliers, and in external examinations. The evidence is there: the high fliers reach their altitudes: the examination successes are on record. Similarly the child of average or below average ability is receiving an opportunity and is seizing it to a degree virtually unknown before 1945—at least in England and Wales. Rather let us recognise—in proud humility—that the comprehensive school has

much to contribute to this country's social structure: not in a merely sterile egalitarianism or in a merely party political sense, but rather in strengthening in its neighbourhood the already existing sense of community or serving to nourish or even to create that sense of community where it is weak or virtually non-existent. (Herein lies much of the virtue of the remarkable variety in our comprehensive schools—in size, organisation, and curriculum.)

This conscious and dynamic neighbourhood relationship is, then, in my view, perhaps the most significant contribution of the comprehensive school over the last two decades. I would suggest that there lies ahead for our schools an even greater opportunity of positive and varied achievement in the great social revolution which began in this country in 1945 and which is still working itself out. And, in conclusion, I would assert that the comprehensive school will stand or fall by the degree to which it effectively realises these social responsibilities and positively discharges them.

REFERENCES

¹*15 to 18*, Vol. I, sections 449 and 580; and *passim*.

²Chetwynd, *Comprehensive School*. Chapters 11 and 12.

Girl in an Examination Room

JULIAN ENNIS

She sat like Miranda in a fairyland of sums,
And I, Prospero wearing my magic gown,
Gazed at her, quoting Shakespeare in my clean mind,
Daring all Ferdinands to the test of innocence.
I admired her pretty face and precise hands,
Her young body in the school uniform,
Green and white for nature and chastity.

And as I gazed, I wished her to a nunnery.

For, suddenly, I saw her elsewhere and otherwise,
Chased by Caliban, shipped back to Milan to appear
In breezy booklets sans uniform, sans everything.
And I heard Elizabethan bawdy. And I was Trinculo.

Yet, as I gazed, I longed to remember her there,
'So perfect and so peerless', with her feet together
In those small brown shoes, a princess;
And I was near to praying that I might never leave
This island room, and that they might stay too,
This girl and her lover, blest by me and playing chess.

A Leicestershire High School: A View from Within

C. J. HETHERINGTON

After obtaining an Economics degree at the University of London, Mr. Hetherington taught for 10 years in the Home Counties in a variety of secondary schools, technical, modern and bi-lateral. He is now Deputy Headmaster of Bushloe High School, Wigston Magna, and is secretary of the mid-Leicestershire Teachers' Association.

My experience in Leicestershire has come from service in a high school in one of the three areas into which the plan has so far been introduced.

The high school is intended to provide a general education of the widest type for all its pupils which will at the same time be a suitable basis for future specialisation in the upper school. A similar aim is pursued in the lower forms of almost all other comprehensive schools, but I believe that the high school is proving itself particularly well able to perform this function.

In a small community of about 550, close personal relationships between teachers and pupils can develop, and careful attention to each child's requirements can be given at a stage in its development when these things are probably most needed. A sharp and disturbing change from primary school life to the regime associated with a secondary school with a full age range is thereby avoided. Instead, a transition is effected in the high school which keeps in step with the increasing maturity of the child. By the time he steps onwards to the upper school he is ready to live in that more adult community.

Again, the child enters the high school neither flattered nor flattened by success or failure at eleven plus and the curriculum is free from any tendency of coming unduly under the influence of the demands of the General Certificate of Education, the serious business of which becomes pressing only upon transfer to the upper school. Unfettered in these ways, the high school can, and does, make use of the stimulus to creative endeavour lying in the spontaneity of a child's interests, still strong at this age among our children who come from primary schools in which the curricula are uninhibited by examination requirements.

The high school works in a similar vein to that of the primary schools. The intention behind the staffing of the high school and the variety of facilities provided in it is to cater for a wide range of cultural, academic, scientific, and technical activities. Such provision is not easy to make in every high school

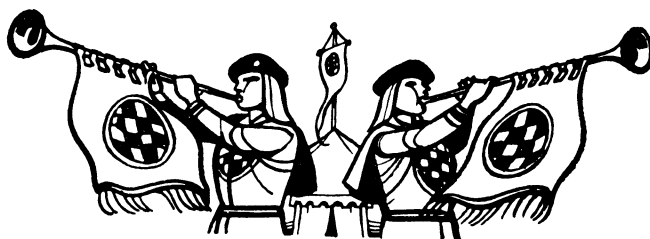
as it evolves from its modern school form. But the introduction of specially qualified staff, for the backward, the average, workshops, and so on, has been undertaken. Most of the important changes will have been made before the plan begins to operate in any school, and the rest can be gradually brought about. All subjects benefit from these influences and from the freedom which the high school possesses. In language work, in the arts and crafts, in physical education, for example, the gains can generally be clearly observed, but only more so in these subjects than in some others, I think, because in them clear evidence is more easily obtained.

Flexibility of organisation

Democracy would seem to me to be as well served by the high school as, it is claimed, it is served by the large comprehensive school. Individual talents are developed to the full, free from cramping by a restricted curriculum in an orthodox grammar or modern school. All children can proceed to the variety of opportunities offered in the upper school, and within the high school the absence of external examination pressure makes sharp distinctions between streams unnecessary and even obstructive. For most purposes of time-table and syllabus, for instance, we regard the six streams of the typical high school as falling into only three main divisions: above average, average, and below average in ability, and by groupings and settings the distinctions are frequently blurred still further.

It is a stimulating experience to work in this type of school. The teacher who comes from modern school work has the opportunity to utilise the wide scope for experiment which was once always claimed for the new modern schools, but which in recent years they have only too often had to sacrifice in the effort to find a place for external examination courses. The former grammar school teacher is able to continue to work for high academic and cultural standards, but is unfettered by rigid syllabuses nor handicapped by a narrowness of social background amongst his pupils. The high school, in brief, embodies the best traditions of the bipartite schools it supersedes, but is free from the limitations which were inherent in them. In each area of Leicestershire there exists, or will exist, a number of high schools feeding one grammar school, each school having its own head teacher and each autonomous in its internal policy and organisation.

A good understanding generally exists between such schools. The pooling of information and ideas, the co-ordination of syllabuses, and the sharing of facilities are desired by most teachers, and in my experience the tendencies to such co-operation grow stronger the longer the new pattern of schools has



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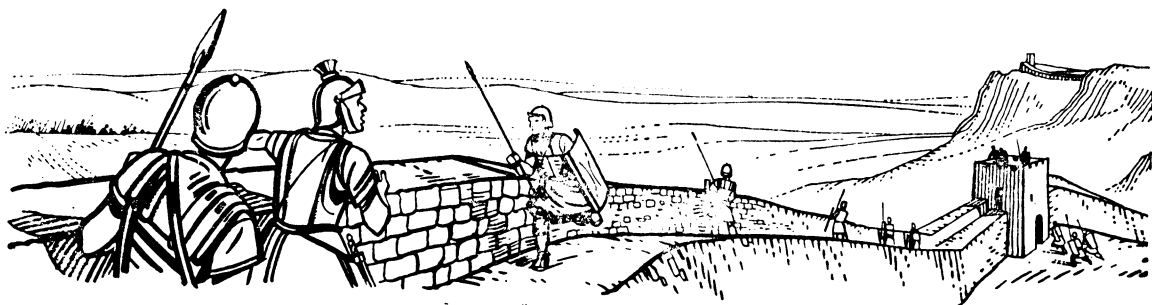
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been established. The lengths to which decentralisation of educational units at secondary level may usefully go is being thoroughly tested in Leicestershire through the day by day operations of its new secondary schools.

It is not my intention to suggest that the teacher, no matter what his previous experience, does not inevitably encounter some special problems in the new high schools. They seem to spring largely from the difficulties of developing a new form of education out of established institutions. In some cases, also, the habitual methods and attitudes of teachers towards their work need to be modified in new situations, and this cannot be expected to be an easy process.

The opportunities to develop new methods within the comprehensive system are not always used to the full, and since many teachers now serving on school staffs have been accustomed to work that is geared to the academic requirements of external examinations, some slowness in the broadening of curricula and syllabuses is not to be wondered at. Again, the high degree of decentralisation, which may be one of the desirable features of the Leicestershire pattern, has its dangers. If it results in actual neglect of the necessary co-ordination of efforts between staffs the outcome can be frustrated intentions on both sides. Top-level decisions and official meetings are not difficult to bring about, but really fruitful co-operation must depend on habits of personal discussion and mutual assistance growing up between staffs of high schools and between high schools and grammar school, and these relationships must of their very nature take some time to develop.

The 'top' of the high school—the fourth year pupils who have elected to leave at 15, and so have not been transferred to the grammar school for its minimum of a two-year course—was recognised as a problem from the start. It averages at present about 50 per cent of the age group. These adolescent pupils have at the front of their minds, of course, the life they will enter after they have left the high school, and they are not, generally speaking, very able or very enthusiastic scholastically. It is therefore difficult to devise a suitable curriculum for them. They are, because of their seniority, of necessity the main source from which school prefects can come. As pupils and as prefects they are bound to absorb a good deal of staff time which must be devoted to the special courses devised for them and to the help and advice they will require.

I find it encouraging, however, to discover that most of the problems of the high school are being worked out, or are, in fact, working themselves out. Staffs tend to choose wider aims for themselves as they gain experience of work with children whose

broad range of ability demands great flexibility of approach in all aspects of a school's teaching and organisation.

Even the high school's fourth year presents a problem which is simplicity in itself by comparison with that solved each year in the fourth form of many a modern school. The high school 'top' is, for one thing, composed of young people who have no feeling of having had educational opportunity closed to them, and therefore many of them—in spite of the indifference which they would undoubtedly show towards a mere continuation of the routine of their first three years—are glad to make the most of a vocation-based or interest-based leavers' course. The numbers in high school fourth years tend, in any case, to diminish as the plan's advantages become better understood and more children 'self-select' for the grammar school. Should the school-leaving age remain at its present official minimum of fifteen, I would therefore hazard a guess that the fourth year top in the high school will shrink to very small proportions within a decade at the most.

My experience of teaching in a high school has convinced me of the value for educational development in the country as a whole of the progress being made in Leicestershire. Here is a practical method by which, within a relatively short period of time, an improved secondary school system could be introduced into many other areas. The plan bears the stamp of comprehensive education: a determination to put the child of secondary age in the centre of the system and to cater fully for his developing interests and aptitudes, however strong or weak they may be.

THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL: ENGLAND (continued from page 8)

urgently needed. First results from children who have gone right through the new system in Leicestershire will not be available until 1964 (Wigston) and 1965 (Hinckley), or 1966 and 1967 respectively if we are looking at sixth form results.

The danger is that any such study might lead to comparison, in the public mind, of comprehensive schools with grammar schools only, whereas the only fair comparison would be with the whole grammar/modern system. I should favour highlighting the best performances on both sides, as indications of what our children are capable of doing, rather than gearing our future plans to averages dragged down by the least successful schools.

Staff Relationships in the Comprehensive School

MARIE PHILIBERT

Marie Philibert started teaching in comprehensive schools in 1950, having previously taught in grammar schools. She was head of a science department in one of these schools until September, 1961, when she was appointed Deputy Head of Walworth school, London.

How often it has been said by apologists for governmental meanness towards education that, 'It is not the school buildings that matter. It is the staff.' If what was meant was that of all the ingredients that go to the making of a good school, the staff was the most important, then one would agree. But if (as I suspect) what is meant is that it does not matter how horrible or inconvenient or inadequate a building, a good staff will put up with it cheerfully and uncomplainingly and dispense within it the best of all possible kinds of education, this indeed is quite untrue. A bad building always hinders the work of a good staff and the better the staff the more they are aware of the limitations it imposes on their work and the less are they likely to accept such conditions without trying to improve them. I will return to this point later.

Nevertheless, while bad schools are often found in bad buildings, it is equally true that there are many good schools housed in inadequate buildings; that of two schools, comparably housed, drawing on the same kind of children from the same kind of homes, one is a cheerful place with a manifest sense of purpose while the other is dreary and depressed and aimless. What then is the common factor of good schools? Surely a good staff—a staff which has the interests of the children and their education at heart, a staff which through constant and continuing discussion works out its educational ideas and their practical implementation in the school, a staff whose members feel that each one of them has a significant place in the scheme of things.

This is the kind of staff needed in the comprehensive school, and stated thus broadly the general problem of creating such a unified staff does not appear to be very different from that facing other types of school. On more detailed examination it will, however, be seen that there are certain features of the comprehensive school which make it necessary to look at the problem afresh so that new solutions can be found. Comprehensive schools are not of one mould. They do not travel along well-established lines as do, for example, the grammar

schools. Even those which have been in being for some years are still feeling their way. New ones are emerging every year and there is no set or well-trying pattern which they are expected to follow. It is, therefore, of extreme importance that staff discussion takes place, that the aims and objectives of the school are worked out clearly, that detailed plans for each subject—both as regards content and method to be used—are drawn up with the maximum participation of the staff. If members feel that they have had some part in formulating these plans, if they see their own work in relation to the whole, then they are usually prepared to accept decisions about points with which they are not in full agreement. The important thing is to ensure that at some stage they have been able to express their views and that they know that the decisions made are not for all-time but will be reviewed in the light of experience.

Staff discussions

To achieve this in the comprehensive school is not easy. Comprehensive schools are relatively large. For example, a school of 800 pupils will have a staff of 50 or more (counting part-timers), a school of 2,000 over 100. The full staff meeting is no longer a small committee which can work out from first principles detailed solutions. Yet it is important that on certain general topics such as discipline, 'streaming', etc., every staff member should feel that he can put his views before the rest. How can this problem be solved? Often by a small committee preparing a memorandum on the subject which is circulated to staff members beforehand so that at the full staff-meeting a really constructive discussion can take place and considered decisions be made. The composition of such a committee depends on the subject. On discipline, for example, it might be heads of houses or year masters or mistresses (depending on the organisational set-up within the school); on streaming it might be heads of departments. If it was the head who wanted to initiate such discussion, he himself would appoint (or cause to be appointed)

the small committee to prepare the discussion document and it would be he who would call the staff-meeting.

Not everything, of course, needs to go to a full staff-meeting. Decisions on some matters as, for example, the balance of the curriculum, allocation of subject-time, examinations, etc., can be done at meetings of heads of departments although, even so, it is essential that these decisions are transmitted to subject-panels and in many cases the subject discussed in the panel beforehand so that the head of department goes to the meeting briefed with the views of his panel members. Other subjects again are best dealt with by heads of houses or heads of years or form teachers of a year or subject teachers of a form, and no full staff-meeting need follow. As many cross-groupings as possible need to be developed so that staff members are drawn first into one group and then into another. This helps to prevent the formation of a rigid staff hierarchy in which holders of special allowances dominate and the young member feels insignificant.

The staff association

In addition to this machinery which the head can put in motion, it is essential for the staff to have its own independent organisation. The staff association or staff room council or staff common room (whatever its name may be) can call meetings on any subjects desired by its members—professional problems, staff problems, school problems. Without the presence of the head or the deputy head, discussion is uninhibited and the youngest and newest member is on an equal footing with those who have been long-established.

The staff association notes trouble spots in the school and suggests solutions. It tackles causes of friction and can often smooth the way before they become serious. The staff association is forward-looking and initiates educational discussion. Consisting, as it does, of members of all the teachers' unions, it is the ideal body for the discussion of professional matters. A wise head welcomes an active and democratic staff association in his school, weighing up very carefully (even though not always accepting) the considered opinions of the staff brought to him by the officers. For the association is productive of some of the liveliest and most fruitful ideas for the development of the school. The association also arranges social functions for its members and cares for their personal welfare. A good staff association, with officers from the 'rank-and-file' of the staff, gives its members a feeling of dignity and professional responsibility and at the same time a sense of strength. It was not by accident

that comprehensive school staffs were in the forefront of the struggle for better salaries, last year, and that they have protested at bad and inconvenient buildings (a point I promised to come back to).

The head is a very important person in all this. He needs a clear educational philosophy, he must know where he wants his school to go, he must know how to delegate authority and to see that responsibility is spread widely. He needs to be receptive to the ideas of his staff, to know when to yield as well as when to remain firm. He must not cut himself off from his staff but in making himself available to them he has also to safeguard certain periods of time in which he will be able to think and plan for the future of the school and, above all, to be about the school so that he knows what is really going on. If he has any opportunity to influence building plans, he will make sure that there is one main staff-room for his staff (and smaller staff-rooms for marking and preparation) so that the staff can meet as a whole at least once a day to drink tea or coffee together. The head should be no stranger to this room at this time. The good head is not a mere administrator. He is the leader of the team, stimulating activity here, prodding there, giving encouragement elsewhere.

The staff of a comprehensive school is a very rich mixture. It consists of graduates and non-graduates, of young and old, of specialists and non-specialists, of people with different types of special skills in teaching as well as in such activities as sailing, skiing, photography, gardening, sport, and so on. Given the organisation—and the two kinds I have described are both necessary—for the exchange of ideas, and new educational thought will evolve for charting the kind of education necessary today for young people in this complex and rapidly changing world.

Why then is this picture of staff relationships only partly true? Why is there a large changeover of staff? Why do some staff stay only for brief periods at the school and then seek one run on more traditional lines? Why do older and experienced members of staff move to a smaller school? Why does attendance at staff association meetings dwindle and interest flag? Why all this when the work in a comprehensive school is exciting and challenging and the staff stimulating and companionable? Some movement of staff is, of course, as in other schools, due to staff seeking promotion and special responsibility allowances. But some is because new and young staff are bewildered by the complexity of the school and no one finds time soon enough to explain the set-up to them. For some older members it is because the pressure becomes unbearable—so much to do, so much they would like to do, but such a heavy teaching programme that they cannot run

The Impact of Comprehensive Education on the Primary School

GEORGE FREELAND

Mr. Freeland is Headmaster of Mowmacre Hill Junior School, Leicester. He first began to experiment in the abolition of 'streaming' in 1953, an experience which he has described in the symposium New Trends in English Education.

If the most attention is today concentrated on the secondary stage, moving on to problems of higher education, the changes taking place at these levels necessarily have a direct repercussion on the junior stage. Here rethinking centres round the question of selection, namely 11 plus procedure and streaming, with parents naturally more interested in the mechanics of the ultimate decision and educationists more concerned with the question of internal organisation.

The system now in being results from the carefully conceived policy of Hadow days when plans were laid to substitute for the all-age elementary units junior and senior schools. The junior school was from the outset planned to fulfil the function of sifting out the 20 per cent or so of children destined for grammar schools.

'The break at 11 plus has rendered possible a more thorough classification of children,' noted the Consultative Committee's Report on the Primary School (1931). 'It is important that this opportunity should be turned to the fullest account. One great advantage of the self-contained primary school is that the teachers have special opportunities for making a suitable classification of the children according to their natural gifts and abilities.' The committee went on to outline the form of internal organisation—streaming—designed to fit the new school for its selective task.

In the classic form in which it developed from the

thirties, the junior school classified children on entry, pushed the 'A' stream forward through the 11 plus procedure and gave the rest the modified education which seemed appropriate for them in 'B' and 'C' classes before sending them off to spend three years—or less, according to the vagaries of dates of birth—in the senior elementary department up the road. In pursuit of this educational purpose scant attention was given to the social effects of a highly streamed environment. The whole procedure was supported by the psychological theory, quoted and accepted by the later Spens Report, that 'intelligence' is inborn, unchangeable and open to accurate measurement at an early age.

This was all of 30 packed years ago and today the weaknesses in this theory have come fully to light. 'Research has shown that both the degree of stability of general ability and the extent to which it determines specific attainment, has been somewhat exaggerated,' wrote Professor Vernon in the report of the inquiry by the British Psychological Society entitled *Secondary School Selection* (1957). 'Few psychologists would now subscribe to the statement in the Spens Report (1938), "We are informed that with few exceptions it is possible, at a very early age, to predict with some degree of accuracy, the ultimate level of a child's intellectual powers".'

There has also been growing public feeling against 11 plus selection and today there can be few areas in the country where procedures have not been modi-

STAFF RELATIONSHIPS IN THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL (cont.)

their department to their own satisfaction, cannot supervise and help the other staff in their department, cannot get their staff together after school because a number of them are having to supplement their salaries by evening-class work, finding no time during school hours to see individual pupils and chase up late homework, experiencing the greatest difficulty in arranging even rare interdepartmental meetings.

What, above all, would enable staff to enjoy and meet the challenge thrown down by the school would be to have less teaching periods. This means

a better staffing ratio for these schools than at present obtains. With less actual teaching-time and more ancillary help (secretarial, medical, laboratory and workshop) the pressure would ease and the sense of frustration too often engendered by jobs done too hurriedly and almost too late would largely disappear. This more than anything would reduce the extent of changeover of staff (not nearly so great in dimension, let it be said, as is often made out) and enable those many who stay because no other teaching work seems as worthwhile or as interesting, to carry out their work much more to their satisfaction.

fied in some way in recent years. As the Crowther Report noted in 1960:

'It is being more and more recognised that it is wrong to label children for all time at 11 and all over the country changes are being made that profoundly modify the previous pattern of education and, in certain areas, the system is not being modified so much as replaced by a different form of organisation.'

The latter is, of course, a reference to such departures as the comprehensive schools in London and the Leicestershire Plan. But elsewhere changes have been confined to playing down the examination factor by relying more on information accumulated during the four-year course in the junior school. These may minimise to some extent the narrowing effect of selection but they clearly do not amount to an abolition of 11 plus, despite claims to this effect.

With adaptation of the procedure of selection has gone a re-appraisal of streaming, which has been gradually gathering momentum in recent years. Disquiet originally centred on the social effects of segregation within the school but there is now a growing tendency to examine the more strictly educational aspects.

There is an obvious contradiction between the strictly streamed junior school and the widening horizons for secondary and higher education. Moreover, old attitudes linger on in that the primary school is still seen as the 'pre-secondary' stage rather than the basic stage in education of the greatest importance in its own right. This means that it continues to be the target of economies in expenditure, while the responsibilities and difficulties of primary teaching are greatly underestimated. Official policy is weighted against the primary school at every turn, in the staffing ratio, directives on teachers' training, salaries and prospects, capitation grants and allowances, standards of accommodation, and also in relation to size of classes and all other conditions of work.

It is not surprising, in the circumstances, that there should be criticism of the quality of the intake to secondary schools. The answer to this criticism, as to the other problems of primary schools, must be an insistence on the educational significance of primary schooling which extends to working out a new approach to the whole organisation of the first stage in education.

What has been the main effect of the long accepted policy of streaming which has hitherto determined internal organisation? It is, surely, that we have expected much too little from far too many of the children, and that in fitting education to their supposed level of 'intelligence' we have, in fact, hindered their development. There are research

results upholding this conclusion, such as those described by Dr. Daniels in the last issue of FORUM (Vol. 4, No. 3) showing that streaming markedly retards the educational progress of the slower pupil. On the other hand, there is mounting evidence that, given opportunities in comprehensive schools or the G.C.E. classes of modern schools, so-called '11 plus failures' can reach university.

Clearly it is up to the junior school to provide the same opportunities for development, to remove artificial restrictions. In these days of large classes and difficult working conditions many junior school teachers, however convinced of the inadequacies of streaming from a social aspect, may well be reluctant to handle heterogenous groups in the genuinely held belief that teaching must suffer. But the problem must be considered in the round.

In fact, the social and teaching aspects cannot be separated in the total educational situation. Children learn when they are in an environment which stimulates them to learn, provides encouragement, rewards endeavour. Even the most devoted teaching may not be able to overcome the stigma of the 'C' label which itself can act as a barrier to learning, an obstacle set in the way of teacher and pupil alike. It is, of course, the main task of the primary school to teach the basic subjects but this is not all there is to primary education. It may well be found that to pay more attention to the wider aspects of education is to facilitate the learning of reading and number. It is impossible, therefore, to evade the challenge of experimenting with non-streaming merely by stressing the need for good attainment in the basic subjects. Rather the emphasis should be on finding ways of raising attainment in the context of a positive learning situation, and not merely for some children but for all.

This raises the question—what should the majority of children know at the close of the primary course? Present standards are inevitably individual and competitive. By its very nature the 11 plus provides an incentive only for the brighter children and most other tests used in the junior school are standardised tests whose purpose is to spread the children out. If the junior school is to fulfil a new role, in tune with the expanding horizons of education, then we should begin to think in terms of a common basic course, worked out in association with the secondary school and possibly extending beyond 11 to the age of 13.

To this end we should seek to integrate our curriculum and methods with the receiving secondary schools, and to evolve ways and means of easing the difficulties of transition, as discussed in earlier issues of FORUM. Then it would become possible to formulate targets for each year group (and so each class) which can be used as incentives for all, with

the teacher exploiting for his own purposes the stimulus of a group working collectively for a common end.

This would be to re-establish the creative role of the teacher and the main preoccupation would be to find the most scientific and rational means of developing the mental abilities of all the children. Through practice of this kind the conditions could be created for the development of a genuine psychology of human learning, concerned both with the differences and with the *similarities* between children; one, for instance, which seeks to discover the stages through which the young child actually forms concepts and which assists the teacher in helping this process forward.

One of the most vital fields to which attention should be devoted, if wider aims are to be realised, is the linguistic one—the ways in which, through interplay with experience, the grasp of language can be developed as the key to full mental development. This cannot be achieved through narrow formal lessons but rather by means of a wide and many sided approach for which, with freedom from selection, there will be increased opportunities.

This is the kind of perspective that opens out before the junior school as a result of a more comprehensive approach at the secondary level. The

junior school itself is, of course, a comprehensive school and its teachers, despite the limitations of streaming, are used to dealing with all comers. They should find no real difficulty in adapting themselves to new circumstances and becoming equal partners in the development of a new system and a new outlook. Indeed, despite the weight of custom and tradition, junior schools have been the pioneers in introducing unstreamed teaching.

There is, naturally, the most scope for developments of this kind in areas where selection at 11 plus has been truly abolished or where, at any rate, the children proceed to a common secondary school. But, as has been suggested, there are few areas untouched by changes at the secondary level and in any case it is for junior schools not only to adapt themselves to such changes but to help to promote them, as part of the effort of bringing the junior school into its own as the foundation of the educational system.

It is with the aim of gathering together the experience gained in many schools in recent years, so that it may be used to further advance, that FORUM is convening a conference in London in the autumn term, the details of which will be found below.

NON-STREAMING IN THE JUNIOR SCHOOL

A Forum Conference on this subject will be held on

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17th, 1962

At THE SMALL HALL

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from 10 a.m. — 12.30 p.m.
and 2.15 p.m. — 5.0 p.m.

Main Speaker:

Dr. J. C. DANIELS

Nottingham University Institute of Education

Other speakers will include:

**GEORGE FREELAND, ERIC LINFIELD
EDWARD HARVEY**

The purpose of this conference is primarily the exchange of information and experience among primary school teachers interested in non-streaming and its significance for primary school education.

Conference fee : Five shillings (this does not include meals) to :
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Experiments in an Unstreamed Secondary School

E. TRIGGS and J. E. F. WITHAM

Messrs. Triggs and Witham both teach at Preston Secondary School, near Yeovil, where Mr. Triggs is head of Social Sciences and Mr. Witham head of English. Before moving to this school Mr. Triggs taught in a London comprehensive school and Mr. Witham in primary and secondary schools in Surrey.

Preston School is one of the few unstreamed secondary schools in Britain. It is a relatively new school, and much of the work being done is experimental. Lines of development followed so far, however, have produced some very encouraging results.

Each of the nine classes in the school is composed of the full secondary modern range of ability. Each class is named after the class teacher who takes it for one form period a week, apart from when he is teaching as a specialist, and who is responsible for the sub-division of the class into five or six mixed ability groups of six children. These groups have leaders chosen by the class teacher from the more able children in the class. The group leader is responsible for the allocation of work and for the conduct of the rest of the group, and acts as the link between the group and the teacher.

Although class teachers picked the group leaders with the best all-round academic ability, which in effect meant the most literate, it was explained to the children that if another child in their group excelled in one particular subject the group could delegate that particular child to take over the group. Thus an academically backward child might have the opportunity to show leadership in drama or woodwork or in any subject where literacy was not the test. In arithmetic projects it was quite common for another member to lead the group.

The school is organised on a basis of four co-operating sections: mathematics and science, English, social science and practical subjects. Under the heading of social science comes French, art, history and geography, the last two taught as one discipline. Practical subjects include woodwork, domestic science, needlework, flower arrangement and rural science. In all lessons emphasis is laid on work given to the class groups by the teacher, who also provides the necessary materials. The work is then carried out by the groups directed and super-

vised by their leader. In this way formal teaching, difficult in an unstreamed school, is cut to a minimum. Less able children are encouraged and helped by their class mates to contribute what they can to the group effort, and social consciousness is stimulated by the responsibility of group leaders.

In social studies (geography and history), to take an example, a topic is chosen for study. The teacher lists five or six headings under which the study can be undertaken. The topic Oil, for instance, can be sub-divided into: Looking For Oil, Oil Formation, Drilling For Oil, Oil Transport and The Uses of Oil. Five or six pieces of work are listed under each heading and these lists are distributed to the group leaders who delegate the work to their group. The school has few text books (for English literature and mathematics only), so all information must be sought in the school library which has been built up over the past year as the central workshop of the school. Letters to willing firms and embassies (a list is kept in the classroom) are sent for further information and as valuable training in letter writing. Local firms are contacted with a view to visits by the class.

Group work

When the groups have finished their work, they talk in turn to the rest of the class about their work. Questions and criticism are encouraged and willingness to take and act upon criticism from the class is evident. Standards both in the material presented and in the talks given are rising. Eventually it is hoped that some class groups will be able to 'teach' other classes occasionally so that learning through teaching will become valid for pupils as well as teachers.

Group work on this basis has much to recommend it, particularly when the topic studied is correlated in some degree with what is being learnt elsewhere in the school. The group leader is anxious that his group's work shall be of a high standard and no one is tolerated for long who refuses to contribute to the group effort. The more able children, instead of working to get into or to stay in the 'A' stream, use their ability to more socially useful ends. It is instructive to watch their attitude to the sub-normal children in some classes: not 'How stupid', but 'How can I help?'. Illiterate children at present follow the same timetable as their class, but it is expected that they will be removed from certain lessons to be given extra English tuition.

The most difficult application of the group work principle has been found in the practical departments

where basic skills take longer to teach. A start has been made by some of the senior forms on items for the school, however, and garden seats, cold frames and models for an adventure playground and school golf course have been made by groups in woodwork lessons. Excellent floral arrangements are made for the whole school by devoted groups of girls.

The English department has a particularly important role to play in the school's development. Not only is it responsible for the library, the focus of many school activities, but it also reports upon what is happening in the school. A very successful newspaper was launched last summer, a second edition appearing in December. The paper, 'The Preston Courier', carries reports from the children on school visits, the development of the adventure playground, also letters of complaint from the children, interviews with visitors to the school, book reviews and the like. The paper carries a number of photo blocks and is expensive to produce so advertisements from local businesses are eagerly canvassed by the children. They write to possible advertisers, telling them of the paper, its circulation etc., and ask them for appointments to discuss advertising. The children confirm the appointments by letter or by telephone (some have never used a telephone before) and proceed to sell advertising space. Before making their visit 'mock interviews' are played out in the classroom, but for this occasion 'mock interviews' have a real purpose.

Many firms are eager to subscribe to an attractive paper with sales of over 1,500 (six times the number in the school, which indicates the enthusiasm of the children in selling their product). Work on the paper offers tremendous opportunities for studying the content and layout of different newspapers, newspaper economics, composition, advertising and so on. Furthermore the 'Courier' plays an essential part in integrating subjects. The Christmas cake (domestic science) that was made for the crew of the school's adopted ship S.S. 'Samala' (geography) was costed (mathematics) and reported in the 'Courier' (English).

The school is only beginning to tackle the problem of external examinations. At present, no examination exists which tests social qualities and the ability to discover information rather than to learn it. In view of the unlikelihood of any external body developing an examination in line with the aims of the school, it is felt that examinations should be strictly avoided by those pupils who leave school at the statutory age of 15. Here emphasis should be placed on a group test of assessment developed within the school and recognised by local employers. However,

where children have the necessary academic ability, it is felt that by fostering real enquiry and purposeful expression of their findings these children will be just as capable of passing external examinations (demanded by certain industries and professions) in their fifth year as their fellows who have studied on traditional lines.

Naturally many criticisms have been levelled at this pioneer work. (a) "The brightest children are not fully extended". This is not so. The group leader, the most capable, must be on his or her toes. He has not only to organise the work but keep records of the group's activities and prepare the final report. (b) "The dull children suffer." We agree that some children need to be taken from lessons for remedial teaching particularly in reading, but this is far better than restricting the environment of these children by isolating them in a 'dull and backward' or cynically labelled 'Progress Class'. (c) "This is a competitive world and we must train children to compete in it." Substitute 'evil' for 'competitive'. Surely that is sufficient answer.

Progress made at Preston School owes much to the enthusiasm and drive of the Headmaster, Lt. Col. N. Read-Collins. He is building a school in which children are helped to think, speak and write clearly, for ends other than self advancement. Perhaps some of these attitudes will be carried beyond the last day at school?

NOTE: Since this article was written, Mr. B. Vaughan has been appointed Headmaster of Preston School.

FORUM CONFERENCE

In view of the great interest in the question of streaming, especially in the primary school, FORUM is calling a special conference on this topic on Saturday, 17th November, 1962, at the University of London Institute of Education. The main speaker in the morning session will be Dr. J. C. Daniels, whose article on this subject in our last issue aroused very widespread interest. Other speakers include George Freeland, Eric Linfield and Edward Harvey—all members of the editorial board, and all heads of non-streamed junior schools.

Primary school teachers in particular are invited to attend this conference which is intended primarily for the exchange of information and experience on the whole question of non-streaming. Further details, together with application form, will be found on page 27.

Relations Between Schools and Technical Colleges

B. C. WHITEHOUSE

Mr. Whitehouse is Principal of the South Birmingham Technical College. Previously he has been Principal of the Selly Oak Technical College and the Garretts Green Technical College in Birmingham. Both Garretts Green and South Birmingham Technical Colleges were new colleges so that the establishment of relationships with industry on the one hand and schools on the other was especially important.

Not so very long ago our colleagues in schools were only too well aware of the existence—indeed the presence—of the technical college. It was those night school fellows who, moving into school accommodation because they had insufficient of their own, polluted the classroom air with their surreptitious 'drags' and fouled the inkpots with the discarded tab end. They disarranged projects and displays which had taken untold man-hours to assemble; by some of the victims this was ascribed to commendable if misplaced curiosity and by others to pure malevolence. If, unhappily, one encountered these fellows on their way to class one was aware that they swapped yarns of dubious propriety in language which was basic but definitely non-U. Shakespeare knew what he was about when he referred to 'rude mechanicals'.

Of course there were exceptions to this gloomy pattern; some of these chaps seemed to pursue their mysterious ends in a normal and civilised manner. Every now and again one encountered a highly respected member of the community who would startingly confess that he owed a great deal to the Tech.

The Head came philosophically to regard the idiosyncrasies of these folk as another piece of the cross he had to bear; the Principal knew that he was held vicariously responsible for all that went wrong in the borrowed premises and that was another of his occupational hazards.

Whatever the price in frayed nerves and stomach ulcers of this system it had, incidentally, one virtue. We in the colleges knew schools existed—we used them; schools knew we existed—they housed and suffered us.

Then the position quite dramatically changed. We find ourselves in the technological age; the era of export or perish; increased productivity or lower living standards, the period of push-buttons, automation and washing machines for all.

Industry becomes respectable and offers worthwhile careers. It requires and attracts an increasing proportion of our most gifted youngsters; it demands that these youngsters shall be properly educated to fit them for these careers; it is prepared to spend money directly and indirectly—in the form of part-day, block, sandwich and full-time release—to ensure that this preparation shall be made. To our school colleagues the effect on the technical education system is immediate and bewildering; vast palaces of steel, concrete and glass arise and before we know where we are here is a College of Advanced Technology, there an Area Technical College, round this corner a Local Technical College, round that corner a College of Further Education. The Principal sighs contentedly: all his empire is under his sole command and he is at the mercy of no man's goodwill. Understandably the Head may not be quite clear regarding the pattern into which all these pieces fit but no more will the nocturnal vandals molest his ancient solitary reign; let them go their own peculiar ways.

Then all is now well? Our previous experience is merely an instance of 'Old, unhappy, far-off things, And battles long ago'?

Also no! If the old causes of misunderstanding and friction have been removed there is no scarcity of new ones and it will benefit us all if we face them squarely. In their own spheres the schools and the colleges have extended their provision in order better to meet present needs and there are now several areas where school and college overlap. It is in these areas where the seeds of discord lie. Let us examine two examples which may be considered typical.

A college student, following a course of study which will lead him eventually to his appropriate professional qualification, requires certain G.C.E. subjects. Thus to obtain corporate membership of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers the appli-

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cant must have G.C.E. at 'O' level in English Language. He looks to the college for help.

It is not uncommon for a pupil, having sat the examinations in a variety of G.C.E. subjects, to leave school, get a job and then learn that he has failed in one or more subjects. There may be alternative routes to his final goal but not unreasonably he feels that having travelled so far along the G.C.E. road he might as well struggle on further and clear these obstacles. He turns to the college to help him do this.

Pupils leave school having studied a variety of subjects which have constituted a liberally conceived and nicely balanced curriculum. They may have sat for and passed all the corresponding G.C.E. examinations. However, when they come to map out the next stage of their careers, they may find that they lack some particular subject. Again they turn to the college for help.

These simple examples show that there is a perfectly legitimate reason why colleges offer a variety of subjects leading to G.C.E. examinations at 'O' and 'A' levels.

New developments

Meanwhile in the schools there has been a quiet but most welcome revolution. In the selective secondary schools increasing numbers stay on for sixth-form studies. Even more remarkable, in the non-selective schools there has been the development of extended courses. For the sixth-former the traditional aim is G.C.E. at 'A' and maybe 'S' levels, but what target should the pupil in the extended course set his sights on? Many head teachers having given long and anxious thought to the problem have reached the decision that here too G.C.E. is appropriate. This is not the place to argue whether, in general, this is the right decision—it has been carefully and sincerely reached. Now not all parents are fired with the conviction that education per se is a good thing. Not all parents can face with equanimity the prospect of supporting a youngster for a further period at school when, at the end, he will apparently obtain the qualification he could get by attending college in employer's time and getting paid for doing so. Yet if the college course is taken the existence of a healthy extended course in a nearby school may be jeopardised.

Let us go one stage further. Suppose the technical college, to supply existing demands, offers full-time or extended part-time courses or suppose its range of subjects is such that by appropriate selection it is possible to build up for a prospective student a course which is virtually full-time.

A head teacher may well consider that a particular lad would gain immensely by a further period at

school: that he is not yet sufficiently mature to partake of college life; that his recreational and cultural interests would be better served at school; that a period of modest responsibility as prefect, would yield handsome dividends.

On the other hand, the parent may take the view that the youngster should be thinking specifically in terms of his future career; the word 'technical' has a certain glamour about it these days and this may prove a great attraction; the lad may be tempted by quite frivolous considerations—the wish to toss his school cap over the windmill and adopt the less formal garb of the student.

School or college? Here is a pretty demarcation dispute and who shall arbitrate?

Next let us consider the situation where G.C.E. is not the qualification to which extended courses lead.

In my area an examination which is attracting the attention of an increasing number of schools is the Secondary Schools Certificate of the Union of Educational Institutions. Syllabuses are imaginatively conceived, the teaching requires a practical approach, and emphasis is laid upon the idea of a broad course of study. Among the subjects available are those which form an essential foundation for a subsequent technical career—mathematics, science, English language, etc.

Now in some areas a prospective student may not enter the college until he is sixteen years of age. In others it is considered better to retain the youngster in the educational system and not allow a gap between secondary and further education. My authority was one which took this view and for nearly twenty years part-time day preliminary technical courses have been available for the young person who leaves school at the earliest permissible age. Originally these courses lasted two years so that the successful student passed into a senior course at the appropriate age of 16+. When the school leaving age was raised the duration of these preliminary courses was reduced to one year but the broad general pattern still persisted: the young person could pass from school to a senior college course without a break in his studies or without having to attend in his own time at night.

Whatever the demerits of this system it was at least clear-cut, but the heartening growth of extended courses with their technical content—whether this be incidental or deliberately 'built-in'—running on converging lines with college courses, poses again for the 15 year old the question: school or college? Nor can the question be looked at in purely educational terms. Having completed an extended course a young man may be nearly 17 years old and he may experience some difficulty in obtaining a suitable

apprenticeship, because some companies are reluctant to take on as an apprentice one who cannot complete his formal training before the age of 21. In areas where this attitude is widespread heads may well feel that the scales are unduly weighted against them.

Extended courses

Let us now consider the question of extended courses in the light of the recent White Paper, 'Better Opportunities in Technical Education'.

For our present purpose we can concentrate on just two aspects of the scheme which is outlined in it. Firstly, there is to be a pattern of National Certificate, Technicians', Craft, and Operatives' Courses in that descending order of academic content. Secondly, entry to National Certificate courses will be limited to those who reach a certain academic standard and any discretion which a Principal was able to exercise in the past has completely disappeared.

In engineering, the variety of preliminary courses which previously existed has gone and in their place is a general engineering course of two years duration for the school leaver of 15+. Throughout, the course has a diagnostic element and at any reasonable time a student may be advised to transfer to another course more suited to his talents. If he survives this weeding out process he then sits an external examination (G2) which he must pass in the four subjects, Engineering Drawing, Workshop Processes and Materials, Engineering Science, and Mathematics, with credit standard in the last two, before he may proceed to a National Certificate Course. He may sit this examination only once and any performance below that stated means his transfer to a Technicians' or a Craft Course.

Where a pupil has followed a suitable extended course he may enrol at College for a special one-year course (G*), at the end of which he must sit the G2 examination.

An alternative entry qualification to National Certificate is four G.C.E. 'O' level passes in appropriate subjects.

At present this scheme applies only to Mechanical and Electrical Engineering but there are reliable indications that it will be extended to other technologies.

Two implications are immediately apparent.

- (a) What is likely to be the effect on former pupil, parent, the prestige of extended courses, and college, if a pupil enters a career for which National Certificate is the right training—and fails to qualify for entry to that course? If the employer is a large organisation, it may be possible to offer a satisfying alternative, but if

a small firm is involved the position may be very different and the repercussions on the young man can be serious.

- (b) It is necessary to correlate, at least to some degree, the work in the 'technical' subjects of the extended course and the G* Course which is to follow. If this is not done the college may face the need to establish as many G* courses as there are feeder schools—an impossible squandering of facilities and staff. Is this correlation an obvious requirement of reasonable individuals or is it an unwarranted intrusion upon the academic freedom of the schools?

Here again are some nicely troubled waters for those who really want to fish in them.

Unfortunately, extended courses with an engineering content and G.C.E. courses are not the only possible sources of friction between schools and colleges. There are plenty more if we really look for them: secretarial courses in schools, secretarial courses in colleges; pre-nursing courses, full-time courses for 15+ operatives, and so on.

These sources of difficulty and apparently opposing interests are there and no useful purpose is served by trying to deny their existence. What is necessary is a constructive approach so that the secondary and the further education systems are seen in their true light as complementary parts of one education service. Expressing only my own personal view, I hold the following general principles.

1. A young person should stay at school as long as he is able to profit by that system and here is meant not only the syllabus content of the subjects studied but by all the factors that make the school society.
2. The community has the right to expect that the money spent on education shall be wisely used and that the various parts shall engage smoothly. Literally and figuratively we cannot afford to leave awkward gaps or to indulge in senseless rivalry.
3. One of the great problems of further education is not to find students but to secure suitable accommodation, equipment and staff for the ever-increasing numbers who come into the system. It is foolish to waste our resources on a job which schools are better fitted to do. Conversely, it seems pointless for schools to try to cope with courses and with students both of which would be better dealt with in the college milieu.

Therefore, is it unreasonable to suggest that Heads of schools and Principals of colleges should get together and learn about their respective problems; see where and how they can help each other? Where there is overlap or duplication let us face it squarely

—if we can't solve the problem it will at least be better for the airing. Let us bring in the Youth Employment Officer and the Authority's Inspectors or Organisers; they are vitally concerned with our difficulties. This co-operation could take place at a variety of levels from the respective nation-wide organisations to the Heads and Principals in a particular locality getting together. It might blow away a number of cherished misconceptions: 'Technical College education has a conveyor belt outlook that threatens human values' or 'Heaven knows what they teach 'em in the schools these days; they can't write, they can't spell . . .'

We might find that the other person is an ordinary mortal like ourselves, doing his best for those in his charge. The ultimate test of the education system is what it provides for a particular individual with his abilities, weaknesses, aspirations and fears. Cannot we Heads and Principals evolve to the point where we can discuss our respective contributions over a cup of tea and a cigarette? Where it has been tried it yielded a handsome return. Could this not become the general pattern? Of course, it won't work in every case: you can't make people co-operate, otherwise the world's literature would be poorer by all the tales of unrequited love. But it's worth a try!

Harold Ellis Hopper, B.A.

Harold Hopper, a founder member of the editorial board of FORUM, died suddenly on 22nd May, 1962, after a very brief illness. This tribute to his memory is contributed by Mr. E. Harvey, of the FORUM board.

Looking back on the many years I knew Harold Hopper, I find no difficulty in accounting for the very great regard in which he was held by a host of friends, professional colleagues and pupils. He evoked admiration from all who knew him.

Born in Beverley, Yorkshire, he was educated at Hymer's College, Hull, and entered Westminster College in 1933. He took his B.A. degree in 1936, and after securing his Teacher's Diploma in 1937, he was appointed to the staff of Drax Grammar School, near Selby.

His service at Drax was interrupted by the war, but on leaving the forces, he returned to the school, where he was to stay for seven years. The years at Drax, with its fine traditions and happy staff, gave much to Harold, and in return he identified himself with every facet of school and local life. He was a most successful schoolmaster, but equally as important, he gained a measure of esteem from his pupils

Book Reviews

that was quite exceptional and equalled only by the high regard in which he was held by parents and by his colleagues. He will long be remembered by the Old Boys' Association for his enthusiastic support of all their activities. He still found time to serve as a Parish Councillor in the neighbouring village of Camblesforth, where he lived, and for three years he was Choirmaster at Drax Parish Church.

In 1952 he left Drax to take up an appointment at Greenhill Grammar School, Oldham, later moving to Bradford Grammar School and then to Coventry, where he became Housemaster at Caludon Castle Comprehensive School.

It was at this time, in 1958, that Harold joined the editorial board of FORUM, attending the first meetings that decided to launch the journal, and from that time consistently attending every board meeting, often taking the chair, always contributing fully to the discussion and planning of successive issues, and giving the journal in every way his full support and co-operation. There is no doubt that FORUM owes a great deal to the enthusiasm, energy and drive that he devoted to it.

He left Coventry in the same year to take over the headship of the new Wilby Carr Secondary School, Doncaster. Here he gathered round him a devoted staff whom he inspired with his own great enthusiasm and forward looking ideas, so that in the short space of four years he had established a school that was held in the highest regard by pupils, parents and Education Committee alike. To visit his school was to know at once that its course was plotted by one who intended, and knew how, to realise the best potentialities of the non-selective secondary school.

During the last ten years of his life, Harold's health had not been robust. He had, characteristically, accepted this without allowing it in the least to affect his spirit. Only his close friends realised to what extent he had drawn on his reserves in maintaining the pace he had always set himself. On Sunday, 20th May, 1962, he was taken ill when returning from a visit to his widowed mother. He set out for school on Monday morning, but was so ill that he had to return home. In the early hours of Tuesday morning, Harold Hopper passed away, for he had no more reserves to draw on.

The deepest sympathy of all Harold's friends and colleagues goes out to his wife and to Pat, his 17-year-old daughter. They are facing their bereavement with a fortitude that must owe much to the example of Harold, and Pat is continuing to attend Doncaster High School for Girls as her father would have wished. They will remember with pride and gratitude, a husband and father who tried to do so many good things, and who, in spite of adversity, did them so well.

A Cure of Delinquents, by Robert W. Shields.
Heinemann (1962), 191 pp., 21s.

London County Council gave Dr. Shields the opportunity, at Bredinghurst residential school for maladjusted children, to set up a total therapeutic community, a planned environment in which the severely disturbed child is encouraged to 'act out' his internal conflict. His aggressive and destructive signals for help are understood, met, and 'contained'. Within the steady embrace of the adult community around him, the child feels he is safe enough to allow his hatred to erupt, and to be interpreted back to him. In this way Dr. Shields unfroze the boy's numbed trust and love, and so made it possible to restore him to society.

Although Aichhorn, Homer Lane, Bettelheim and A. S. Neill (with whom Dr. Shields picks a cogent quarrel) have already convinced us of the power of unqualified love in the cure of maladjusted children, and although the book adds little to the theoretical structure erected by Melanie Klein, John Bowlby and D. W. Winnicott, this is nevertheless an important and compelling book, both for what it manages to communicate, and for the clear account it gives of the immense problem involved in making the healing process intelligible, even to those involved in it.

Synthesis, integration, and so, inevitably, communication is the core of the problem. Dr. Shields had to overcome the distrust of administrators, staff, and children, for him, and for each other. The book itself is another attempt to communicate and bring about a synthesis of conventional social resources and clinical skills. It is because a 'middle language', to mediate between layman and expert, is so urgent that every attempt at it must be welcomed; but one is forced to add that, although Dr. Shields appears to have converted his staff with little difficulty, this book is not accurately aimed at either layman or specialist. The layman will be arrested by the stark, harrowing case histories and startled into interest by the many casual paradoxes—e.g. 'to the child running away is a sign of hope in the school rather than a symptom of revolt'—but technical discussions are scattered throughout the book which make no allowances for the layman and assume a knowledge which it is their chief duty to create.

Dr. Shields helps us to see that in dealing with maladjustment, adjustment is needed on all sides; that just as the child needs to be put in contact with his own creative forces, and is prevented by fear and distrust, so well-meaning common-sense (which fails with these children) needs to be helped to see the bizarre logic of the distressed mind.

M. F. WELFORD.

Unwashed children running wild and swearing horribly . . .

Experimental or progressive schools have in the past caused a good deal of eyebrow-raising and tongue-wagging in studies and common rooms—and the market place—not all of it based on the most accurate information. 'The word *progressive*', writes H. A. T. Child, 'has developed a mildly derogatory connotation in some quarters, conjuring up a vision of unwashed children running wild and swearing horribly.'

Mr Child, Joint Principal of Dartington Hall School, has edited

THE INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE SCHOOL

in which the Heads of 14 progressive schools describe their aims and achievements.

Several of the schools described in *The Independent Progressive School* contributed to a 1934 publication called *The Modern Schools Handbook*. Since then many of the principles introduced by these schools and regarded at the time as revolutionary have come to be generally accepted. The new survey suggests a narrowing gap between progressive and other independent schools. Yet the progressive schools, if they have lost some of the glamour of disreputability, remain centres for experiment, fostering individuality among the educated as well as the educators, and providing homes for causes which have yet to be won.

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