
education review

**Schools at the heart of
their communities**



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Education Review is produced by the Education and Equal Opportunities Department of the National Union of Teachers.

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Preface

The theme of this edition of *Education Review* is education as a key to the achievement of social justice for each and every pupil. All the articles in the Review affirm schools' integral role in their communities. Teachers are passionate in their determination to make a difference to the life chances of their pupils and give enormously in terms of their time, expertise, enthusiasm and sheer dogged determination to make that difference, often to the detriment of their own work/life balance.

The Government has also focused attention on these issues with the publication of its Green Paper, *Every Child Matters*. While in part a response to another tragic death of a child, what the Government proposes is a genuine attempt to provide integrated services for vulnerable children which span local government areas, mainly education and social services. Margaret Hodge, Minister for Children, outlines the Government's vision, while Alan Parker puts the proposals into the local authority context where changes in areas of responsibility and accountability need to be implemented with sensitivity if the aim of effective integrated service provision is to be achieved.

London schools are a microcosm of the multiple deprivation factors experienced partly or wholly by many schools throughout England and Wales. Tim Brighouse's article on the London Challenge Strategy is characteristically optimistic, but also realistic about the need for sustained commitment and financial support if pupils are to succeed despite the social factors stacked against them.

The relevance of the school curriculum in raising pupil achievement and motivation is crucial for schools to be the centres of the learning community. Ken Boston's article identifies social justice as a significant strand of QCA's work, while Pat Thomson provides case study examples from her research in Australia of how the curriculum and community issues became integrally linked. Ken Jones uses the film, *Etre et Avoir*, to illustrate how teachers should be able respond to their pupils' learning patterns, rather than external values.

Wynne Harlen provides a devastating critique of the research evidence on the effects of the Government's national testing programme on the curriculum, teachers' professional autonomy and on pupil achievement and motivation. The NUT has campaigned consistently for the abolition of National Curriculum tests and for an independent review of assessment in England, similar to those being undertaken in Wales and Scotland. Assessment for learning should take place within the context of a broad, balanced and creative

curriculum, rather than being used as a blunt instrument in the Government's testing, targets and performance tables regime.

Several articles focus on areas of education which are significant in terms of improving pupil achievement. Chief Inspector, David Bell, examines the early signs of progress from the Excellence in Cities and Education Action Zone initiatives. The importance of integrated support during the early years is highlighted in the articles by Gillian Pugh of Coram Family and Betty Hart of the University of Kansas and Todd R Risley of the University of Alaska Anchorage.

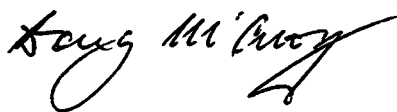
Teaching strategies for pupils with particular needs are explored in articles by Suzanne Mackenzie of NASEN and Nora McKenna of the Refugee Council, while Julie Mellor of the Equal Opportunities Commission examines gender equality issues.

The crucial issues of pupil behaviour and motivation are explored by Susan Hallam of the London Institute of Education, who assesses the DfES's behaviour improvement programme and by Rob Long, who has tutored successful courses on behaviour strategies for the Union's professional development programme.

Examples of schools which have taken the initiative and tackled particular problems in positive and innovative ways are described in articles by ex-headteacher, John Rowling and by Rhodri Thomas of the NUT's Education and Equal Opportunities Department.

A common success factor of many of the strategies described in this edition is the active engagement of teachers, pupils and parents. While some are stimulated by government or local authority initiative, they have been adapted and individualised to meet local needs. The article by Kay Kinder and Anne Wilkin of the NFER on the research into extended schools, which was commissioned jointly by the NUT and the DfES, demonstrates the importance of the services provided by extended schools being grounded in the needs of their communities, rather than as a top-down one-size-fits-all model imposed by government.

The rich assembly of research evidence and good practice examples in this edition of *Education Review* shows that, where they are empowered to do so, schools and teachers can, and do, find the ways and means to make a difference and to reach the hearts and minds of their communities.



Doug McAvoy
General Secretary, National Union of Teachers

Good friends remembered

It is always hard to write about friends who have just died. There is always so much that cannot be packed into a small tribute.

James Learmonth brought a lifetime's experience of teaching, evaluating and managing to the education service. He was the headteacher of a genuine community school in the Inner London Education Authority long before "extended schools" were a twinkle in the eye of Government.

George Green's School, at the bottom of the Isle of Dogs in Tower Hamlets, has always been at the heart of the island's community. When James was headteacher, it was "Bronco Bullfrog" territory with its only link seemingly being the foot tunnel to Greenwich where he lived. James brought total enthusiasm to engaging with what was then a tough, insular, East End community.

Staff who worked with him shared his approach. Maggie Hughes, who later married James, maintained with James, long friendships with families on the island. Many years later, it was a local florist opposite George Green's which supplied the flowers for James' funeral in Greenwich.

He loathed top down imposed initiatives. He was a very good HMI and brought all his experience to promoting school self-evaluation. He wrote one of the best critiques of OFSTED and school inspection there is. He was totally committed to urban education. One of his last achievements was the establishment of CELSI which by picking up the contract for 'Teach First' managed to convince me, at least, that a project which concentrated on attracting young members of the business world into teaching might just show them what an exciting and challenging career teaching is. He was great company and a good friend.

Like James, Caroline St John Brooks was a lover of Greenwich. I got to know her when she became editor of the Times Educational Supplement, the day before the 1997 General Elections. We met at a get-to-know-you meeting organised by the NUT and the TES. The meeting was a success and its intentions worked because Caroline was committed to the TES reporting the truth, however uncomfortable it was for Government or anyone else.

One of her first actions was to sponsor a joint conference with the NUT on future Labour Government education policy at which she was the first to expose the then developing teacher shortage crisis.

She was committed to comprehensive education and sent her youngest daughter to the local secondary school. She simply took people at their face value whether she was interviewing the Prime Minister or attending a parents evening.

Caroline left the TES prematurely because of ill-health but she remained a journalist. One of her great interests was the publication of the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) report in 2000, partly because she had worked at OECD in Paris prior to becoming editor.

Both James and Caroline were good friends to education, and good friends to the NUT; both contributed to *Education Review*. It is appropriate that these memories should appear in this edition; they were both at the heart of their communities; whether it was the education community or the physical community where they lived and worked.

John Bangs, Assistant Secretary, Education and Equal Opportunities

The London challenge

Tim Brighouse

Tim Brighouse is
Commissioner for
London Schools.

Abstract: *In this article Tim Brighouse, Commissioner for London Schools, examines the challenges that schools face when tackling disadvantage and outlines why he believes teachers should feel optimistic about breaking the link between socio-economic disadvantage and educational failure.*

PEOPLE OFTEN SAY that people are attracted to teaching for three reasons – none of them financial. First they are enthusiastic about what they want to teach whether it is a subject and/or a general thirst for learning; secondly they like – some would say love – children; thirdly they want to make the world a better and fairer place. This third motivation can be expressed in a variety of ways: it might be a general belief in the beneficial outcome of an education for society as a whole or it might – indeed often – show itself in an infectious belief in the youngsters they teach having the potential to become someone very special, someone with unlimited potential allied with a sense of responsibility and obligation for other people’s potential and specialness too.

So to say that we are entering ten years when it should be possible through the work of educators to crack the “cycle of disadvantage” will be simultaneously appealing to teachers’ idealism while inviting their weary scepticism too. Teachers however know it is possible: every teacher treasures the memories of the youngsters from challenged backgrounds who have succeeded against all the odds. But they know too the system-wide unchanging statistics which show the correlation between educational disadvantage and educational failure.

But they know it can be done. As the evidence of a black female teacher to an American Commission on Poverty put it:

“I was supposed to be a welfare statistic. ...It is because of a teacher that I sit at this table. I remember her telling us one cold, miserable day that she

could not make our clothing better; she could not provide us with food; she could not change the terrible segregated conditions under which we lived. She could introduce us to the world of reading, the world of books and that is what she did.

What a world! I visited Asia and Africa. I saw magnificent sunsets; I tasted exotic foods; I fell in love and danced in wonderful halls. I ran away with escaped slaves and stood beside a teenage martyr. I visited lakes and streams and composed lines of verse. I knew then that I wanted to help children do the same things, I wanted to weave magic”.

Cause for optimism

There are reasons why one might argue that the odds have now moved in favour of making more of a dent in the correlation between socio-economic disadvantage and educational failure. The first is connected to the context of our present age and its requirement that we finally eliminate the systemic pre-occupation with “failure”.

For present day adults the unspoken assumption, inherited from many generations, has involved the expectation that it was necessary for most to fail. So it was in feudal times, during the agricultural revolution and far into the industrial and service ages when there was the need for millions of people to be content with unskilled and semi-skilled jobs.

Until recently these jobs provided dignity and hope for the next generation. And it is also why we built schools next to factories and churches. But industrial and semi-skilled jobs are now mainly temporary or fixed term – lacking the stability of geography and a “just-beyond-subsistence” wage that the lord of the manor and the factory mill or mine owner appeared to provide. Moreover we live in an age which is generally described as one of information, technology and creativity where developed societies need advanced skills and high levels of education from its working citizens.

Fortunately we have gradually lifted our eyes to wider and more ambitious horizons. My mother died last year at the age of 96; when she was at school only one boy in a 100 and one girl in 2,000 enjoyed higher education. Now the figure is 750 in 2,000 for each sex. And the evidence is that parents’ levels of education are a powerful factor in determining the length of a child’s own education. So the tide of expectation for a child’s education is much wider socially and much stronger.

Secondly we know more about teaching and learning. So, for example, a teacher today would be expected to know more about questioning techniques than was expected of me when I was trained more than 40 years ago. Some cursory mention of open, closed and rhetorical questions would have been mentioned – but nothing about pace, distribution, pause or sequencing much less about the four “orders” of questions – of fact, of inference, of surprise and

of conditional hypothesis; nor of how the use of the seven question words can be linked to an extension of our knowledge of how group work can be more effectively made to work.

There are so many other advances in our knowledge of successful pedagogical practice – the use of formative assessment, the audit of preferred learning styles, the use of cognitive accelerated techniques with teenagers in science and maths, the deployment of accelerated learning strategies both within and beyond the timetabled school curriculum.

None of these were known or practised even 20 years ago; yet all have extended our chances of unlocking the minds of the young people we educate. Moreover the teacher no longer works alone; she rightly expects to work with a paraprofessional. In hospitals we have all been used to the trained nurse and a whole range of other professionals performing vital tasks which a generation ago doctors would have carried out.

But just as a doctor would no more dream of carrying out this vital work without a midwife, health visitor, nurse or psychologist so teachers now rightly expect teaching assistants and others to increase their chances of “unlocking the mind and opening the short chambers of the heart” of their pupils. Observation, diagnosis, and the combination of learning, assessment and a whole range of other key tasks are properly shared activities between teacher and teaching assistant.

The third advance which gives cause for optimism that we might crack the cycle of disadvantage relates to one of the features of the technological age itself – namely the application of the invention of the computer to the world of learning and teaching. There seem to be four strands of ICT each providing aid to the work of educators. There is the computer as a “tool” which overcomes so many barriers to pupils’ learning especially (but not exclusively) among those with disabilities. So whether it is the use of the word processor to help those who are calligraphically challenged or the use of a range of sophisticated equipment which helps those with physical and sensory disability overcome substantial barriers to their learning and fulfilment, the computer as a tool has widened our educational reach and strengthened our learning grasp.

In the field of computer assisted learning software there is much yet to come but the recent application of “Maths Alive” and of Nelson’s History media package are but two examples of what is possible. Meanwhile the development of e-learning whether in individual tutoring or in the early networked distance interactive video links make it feasible potentially to connect the learner to the very best teaching irrespective of location.

The introduction of the interactive white board coupled with enabling teachers to have lap-tops might be the start of a rapid expansion

of the use of those technologies which provide so much. Certainly it would be if it were to be coupled with the deployment of the scarce expert coaching resource in ICT with a focus on learning. In short there is cause for optimism.

The fourth new phenomenon is our knowledge of school improvement and school effectiveness. As recently as the 1970's there had been no research evidence to support the proposition that schools matter. Other social factors

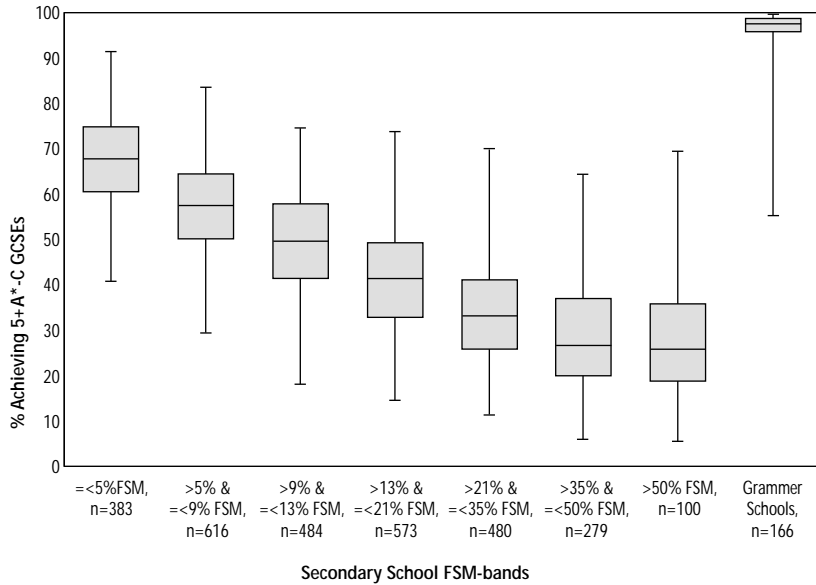
For present day adults the unspoken assumption, inherited from many generations, has involved the expectation that it was necessary for most to fail.

were argued to make the most difference while schools were thought relatively unimportant. While other factors may be important and few would say that poor housing, unemployment, crime, drugs, genes or family support were other than very significant, we now do know more about how to improve the school as an institution and thereby increase its likelihood of performing its main function successfully.

Starting with Rutter, M. Maughan, B., Ouston, J. and Mortimore, P¹ we have witnessed a burgeoning of the literature on school effectiveness and school improvement. Moreover, we have now reached the point where there is much greater clarity – and consequently confidence – in what works in general and in particular. So it has gone beyond a description of characteristics or of general processes of successful schools to a much more refined knowledge of what David Hargreaves calls “high leverage” interventions within different sorts of schools in challenging circumstances. In short, school improvement has moved from the general to the differentiated.

A fifth and final reason for optimism is the sudden availability of rich data about schools. This arises from the introduction of Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) – a national system which enables the performance of youngsters identified by ethnicity, gender and other socio-economic characteristics to be tracked, recorded and compared over time. So, for example, Table 1 illustrates the performance of English secondary schools in respect of the gaining of five or more higher grade GCSEs against the percentage of youngsters on roll, in particular, on free school meal bands.

Table 1
 2002 percentage of pupils in maintained mainstream schools achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs by secondary school free school meal bands



**vertical bar ranges from 1st to 99th percentile
 **all school regardless of cohort size are included

Produced: SDAU
 Source: Performance Table Data

If we wanted to look at the issue in a different way we could rank the 400 plus secondary schools in London around the London average and put schools into “statistical families” – for example according to pupil similarity of ethnicity, prior attainment on entry at 11, gender balance, and eligibility for free school meals. Groups of say 15 to 20 schools would then be able to compare notes where they could see they differed whether in rates of improvement or in absolute scores.

Of course this comparison is one dimensional – namely it concerns academic outcome. But the same comparisons could be made for attendance, for exclusions and for the attitude dispositions and behaviours of students, if student surveys of the sort pioneered by Keele University, Strathclyde University and NFER were systematically deployed by all schools.

The richness and the size of the data base also allow schools to compare and contrast their relative “added value” success. Table 2 shows in a simple way how one LEA, Durham, is using the data to help schools get below the surface to see how they can gather pace during the teenage years in establishing an accepted achievement culture.

Table 2

School: Abbey School²

Mean average at Level 4+ KS2	5+ A*-C Pass Rate	Conversion		
		School	County	National
(1997) 72.1	(2002) 58%	80.4	62.2	80.5
(1998) 73.5	(2003) 59.1% (?) ¹			
(1999) 80.3	(2004) 64.6% (?)			
(2000) 90.0	(2005) 72.4% (?)			
(2001) 87.6	(2006) 70.5% (?)			

1. In reality Abbey School was predicting 66 per cent – i.e. an even better conversion rate – for 2003. [It achieved 70 per cent].
2. It was brainstorming interventions to raise productivity beyond expectations and with the help of its LEA carrying out “Aspirational Audits” to build on capacity and energy. All my examples of the data are secondary based but could easily have been illustrated at primary school.

Moreover we know more about why some schools find it more difficult than others in establishing an achievement culture and crucially how we might overcome those difficulties.

There are other more general grounds for optimism, for example, in the recent expansion of pre-school care and education provision and the improvement in the quality of teachers generally and of primary school practice in particular. Doubtless too the present attention to and investment in the development of school leadership – e.g. the establishment of the National College of School Leadership – will contribute to our increased chance of cracking the cycle of disadvantage.

Nevertheless there are countervailing influences, many of which are systemic. Differing and mutually incompatible secondary schools’ admissions criteria and the application of parental choice exaggerates the “pecking order” of schools. It leads to some schools facing an unequal struggle in trying to establish an achievement culture among pupils and in shifting peer group pressure in a positive direction.

The failure to co-ordinate initiatives affecting housing, employment, health and other infrastructure projects in areas of great disadvantage have only begun to be tackled. Finally it remains the case that persuading the cream of the profession to devote their lives to working in the most challenging urban circumstances in the great conurbations is a difficult task. And it’s here in the cities that the battle with the cycle of deprivation has to be won even though skirmishes occur in every school in every circumstance.

And you are going to say that in London all these problems are magnified. And they are – and made the more difficult to resolve by the present funding problems. But the London Challenge has made it possible to resolve the chronic and sometimes acute teacher recruitment and retention issue. Moreover, we mean to change the approach to schools to back rather than berate those facing the biggest challenge in overcoming disadvantage.

The next decade, therefore, bids fair to be the one where at least in the UK it ought to be possible to make the biggest dent in the correlation between socio-economic disadvantage and educational failure. And London could show the way provided the Government and other London agencies show unwavering financial and other support over the years ahead. Since we are in an age of learning and creativity it is within everybody's interests that this success happens. ■

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1. Rutter, M., Maughan, B., Ouston, J. and Mortimore, P. (1979) *Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools And Their Effects On Children*. Wells, Somerset: Open Books.

Education Action Zones and Excellence in Cities

David Bell

David Bell is Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools.

Abstract: *Poverty, deprivation and disadvantage are the decisive factors associated with low standards, low aspirations and social isolation. In this article, David Bell uses the evidence of OFSTED inspections to examine the impact that Education Action Zones and Excellence in Cities have had on raising the educational performance of pupils in areas of social disadvantage.*

LESS THAN A YEAR after the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) was established, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) carried out an influential survey about the quality of education in urban areas.¹ The report of that survey said that while overall standards were rising in the nation's schools, the gap between the average performance and that of pupils in areas of social disadvantage was growing wider.

Poverty, deprivation and disadvantage were the decisive factors associated with low standards, low aspirations and social isolation. OFSTED concluded that schools in such areas were caught in a trap and, if they were to break free, they would need substantial support which at that time was beyond their reach.

Ten years on, the Excellence in Cities (EiC) programme and, to a lesser extent, the Education Action Zone (EAZ) programme, is beginning to make an important difference to pupils and communities in disadvantaged areas. Considering the amount of money these programmes involve it is only right that we should expect to see significant changes but, in the schools that receive this extra funding, improvements are hard won. It takes time,

consistent hard work and patience to change entrenched and negative attitudes to education and improve attainment.

The most obvious change is that EiC and EAZ programmes are helping teachers to match the needs of disaffected and vulnerable pupils more effectively than before. As a result, the number of exclusions is going down and attendance is improving at a faster rate in these schools than in the country as a whole. These programmes are giving pupils access to a broader range of opportunities and helping to raise the aspirations, confidence and self-esteem of some of our most disenchanted youngsters. There are also other benefits, including greater co-operation among schools in deploying resources and sharing good practice.

Those who live or work in areas that benefit from EiC or EAZ programmes will be familiar with the work they do, but others might wonder what they involve. EAZs are independent bodies administered by a director and overseen by a board. They were set up in areas of disadvantage to tackle underachievement and promote educational inclusion.

Twenty-five zones started in autumn 1998 and spring 1999, and a further 48 were created a year later. EAZs were originally funded for three years, but most have been extended to five. In time, most EAZs will become EiC Action Zones or Excellence Clusters.

The EiC programme was launched in 1999. The first phase involved secondary schools in 25 urban LEAs, mostly in London. Over time the programme has been extended to include primary schools, transition to further and higher education (Excellence Challenge), additional LEAs and smaller groupings of schools serving pockets of disadvantage (Excellence Clusters).

Over recent years HMI have inspected nearly 30 EAZs, using a published framework. HMI have inspected a large sample of schools in EiC areas, looked in detail at 10 Excellence Clusters and inspected 10 of the 80 City Learning Centres (CLCs), in different EiC areas. CLCs aim to provide cutting edge ICT facilities. We also have a wide range of inspection evidence from our Section 10 reports.^{2, 3, 4, 5}

Impact of EAZs

Let me give you a little more detail about the impact of EAZs. The first zones made a slow or faltering start. Remember, these were entirely new organisations without precise ground rules, no example to follow, and yet they were given sweeping powers, including the right to vary teachers' conditions of service. Teachers were, understandably, wary. To add to this, zones were managed by a sometimes unwieldy forum and some headteachers felt they were not sufficiently involved in key decisions and the deployment of resources.

Few zones have found it easy to get to the heart of the issues facing them. Doing so requires a careful and thorough analysis of the weaknesses in zone

schools, a clear idea of how those weaknesses can be improved, and the very focused allocation of resources to rid schools of their shortcomings.

Although the situation is improving, zones still do not give enough attention to the issues that occur repeatedly in OFSTED school inspection reports. Zones have also tended to pursue too many initiatives, so resources are often spread too thinly and are not targeted sufficiently to where they will have the greatest impact.

Developments in EAZ primary schools are better than they are in secondary schools, where progress in raising standards has been slow, especially amongst pupils up to the age of 14.

It would be wrong to give the impression that there is nothing of value going on in EAZs. There are pockets of good practice in most zones. There are several well-led zones where initiatives are clearly making a difference. For example, when we inspected Nottingham Bulwell EAZ a team of well-qualified teaching assistants was engaged in some very effective work to raise standards of literacy and numeracy.

In New Addington EAZ, breakfast clubs were helping pupils start the day ready for lessons. Their breakfast club co-ordinators had developed a quality standard which they use to evaluate provision against agreed criteria. Thetford EAZ was developing parents' skills so they in turn could support their children's development. One of the best features of the management of this zone was that there were written contracts that spelled out exactly what was expected of the school and the zone.

EiC programmes

Let me now turn to the contribution made by EiC programmes. In each of the larger EiC areas (where there may be 20 or more secondary schools) and in smaller Excellence Clusters (some with only three or four secondary schools) the initiative is led by a local partnership representing schools and the LEA. The partnership makes decisions, subject to DfES approval, about strategic planning and the deployment of resources.

EiC partnerships are expected to make additional provision for gifted and talented pupils, introduce mentoring of pupils and provide learning support units. Other strands include City Learning Centres (CLCs) where teachers and pupils have access to state-of-the-art ICT facilities. There is also funding to tackle other work.

Compared with EAZs, EiC programmes so far have had more effect. Amongst the EiC strands the provision of learning mentors has had the greatest impact. Learning mentors have become a highly valued and important part of school provision. They provide vulnerable pupils with adult help to prevent them from disengaging from education. Mentors are expected to help pupils overcome the barriers they face in school life. Primary school mentors

usually help pupils with the transfer to secondary education and often work closely with families and carers.

In schools where learning mentors are having the greatest impact the attendance and behaviour of targeted pupils are improving and exclusions are falling. In primary schools their work is having a positive effect on pupils' progress, especially in English and mathematics. Where mentoring is going well in secondary schools, mentored pupils arrive for lessons better prepared for work. They are more thoughtful about their actions and recognise and avoid situations where they are likely to get into trouble. When faced with work they do not understand they more readily ask the teacher or other adults for help.

Learning support units (LSUs) in secondary schools are also playing an important part. LSUs are school-based centres designed to support pupils with poor attitudes to learning, those with poor behaviour, and those who attend irregularly. Schools are expected to establish clear referral systems that identify what is to be achieved in the centre.

Placements are not expected to exceed two terms and in most cases the intervention lasts two to four months. Placements may be full or part-time depending on the needs of the pupils and the requirements of the school. LSUs in primary schools have not worked as well as in secondary schools.

It has taken time for teachers to recognise what LSUs are supposed to do. In some secondary schools pupils follow mainstream lessons as far as possible and, while they are in the LSU, the teaching focuses on language, behavioural management and independent learning skills. In others, subject specialists teach in the LSU to provide pupils with good quality tuition across the curriculum. There are, however, still schools where, while in the LSU, pupils are expected to tackle work with inadequate specialist support.

The impact of LSUs is most obvious on improving the attendance and behaviour of targeted pupils and reducing the number of exclusions. Teachers report that, as a result of the work of LSUs, they are better able to manage pupils in their lessons, though the re-integration of previously badly behaved pupils can still be problematic.

The implementation and impact of the gifted and talented strand are broadly satisfactory. Improved provision has broadened the range of learning opportunities for gifted pupils out of school hours, and done more for educational inclusion than it has for raising and maintaining high standards.

The identification of gifted and talented pupils is generally good. EIC schools use an increasing range of data and some have developed well-prepared subject-specific criteria to identify able pupils and those who have the potential but are under-performing. Schools are not always careful to check that gifted and talented boys and girls, and pupils from minority ethnic groups are represented with due regard to the proportions in the school.

Most EIC partnerships and many individual schools have organised useful

enrichment activities for gifted pupils, and these have had a considerable impact on raising pupils' aspirations and increased their involvement in out-of-hours learning. For example, participation in outward-bound schemes has developed self-confidence and team working, while various programmes have helped improve public-speaking and debating skills.

In part, the lack of improvement in attainment amongst gifted and talented pupils reflects the limited impact of this strand on teaching in everyday lessons. EiC training for teachers is only slowly affecting classroom practice. In primary schools there is a tendency for schools to establish withdrawal groups.

While these give pupils good opportunities to work in different ways and make rapid progress, there is the risk that pupils see this as unrelated to ordinary school work. In a few secondary schools teachers are developing a broader range of strategies to stretch gifted pupils, to give them more varied and demanding work.

There is still a long way to go before the gap between the average performance and that of pupils in areas of social disadvantage disappears. As a result of EiC and EAZ programmes the quality of education is improving, with a broader and richer range of opportunities open to disadvantaged pupils. Teachers find it easier to do their job in ordinary lessons, and learning is more enjoyable.

There are positive signs of improvements in pupils' attendance, behaviour, exclusions and attitudes to education especially amongst those pupils who have been targeted for support. Parents' attitudes to education are also improving. EiC programmes are also beginning to have a positive effect on raising pupils' attainment. Let us hope, however, that it will not be a further ten years before we see further significant closing of the gap. ■

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Social justice, education and the QCA

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Abstract: *A just society seeks equality of educational outcomes in which the range and mean performance scores of minority groups reflect the range and mean performance scores of the whole cohort. Despite the complex interaction of factors which militate against some groups of students achieving equal educational outcomes with others, teachers can and do make a difference. Dr Boston explains how QCA is doing a lot to help them through the National Curriculum, flexibility at Key Stage 4, vocational skills and qualifications, and support for teachers.*

Equality of educational outcomes

IN TODAY'S highly competitive world, equality of opportunity is not enough: we must seek equality of outcome. Differences in the examination and test results of young people from different social classes or ethnic backgrounds or between young men and women are not sustainable in this day and age.

A just society should not continue to accept that because one is born into a particular group, one has a much lower probability than others of entering university, getting a job, earning a high income, enjoying a rewarding career and a good quality of life generally. The test for true equality is that the range and mean of performance scores for minority groups should reflect the range and mean of performance for the whole cohort.

An intelligent society knows that genuine equality of educational outcomes between different social groups will produce a more highly skilled workforce and higher productivity, and a better standard of living as a consequence. It will also appreciate the gains from a rich fund of diverse cultural and social capital to be mined from these different groups.

Yet, as we all know, we do not have equality of educational outcomes in this country. The House of Commons Education and Skills Committee (2003), referring to the recent PISA Report on Knowledge and Skills for Life, observed that “ although the scores of the lowest performing English students compared well with those in other countries, the study showed England to have a wide variation in the performance of the most and least able students.”

We know that there is a complex interaction between socio-economic group, ethnicity and educational attainment, but this is frequently compounded by low expectations and aspirations of parents and pupils themselves, lack of parental involvement in the children’s education and low expectations of teachers. For young people from different ethnic backgrounds other factors may impact on their educational achievement: lack of English language fluency, racial abuse or harassment, lack of role models, unfamiliarity with the education system, and teaching based on unfamiliar cultural norms, histories and points of reference.

Despite the complex interaction of factors which militate against some groups of students achieving equal educational outcomes with other groups, schools and teachers can and do make a big difference: strong leadership of schools, high expectations, effective teaching and learning, an ethos of respect with a clear approach to racism and bad behaviour, and parental involvement have been cited as essential characteristics of effective schools. But the PISA study found that the variation in performance was greater *within* schools than *between* them. If we are to reduce that variation, teachers need all the support we can give them. QCA is doing much to help teachers in this respect.

The National Curriculum

QCA develops, monitors and reviews the National Curriculum. While the National Curriculum itself cannot guarantee equality of outcomes, it does provide a level playing field. It lays down an entitlement for all pupils irrespective of their background and it is the starting point for planning a school curriculum that meets the specific needs of individuals and groups of pupils.

Since its introduction, a lot of work has gone into making it more manageable and clearer in the way that is designed and written. A greater transparency is brought to the curriculum throughout the country that would not be there without it. It provides a focus and a common language for teachers, pupils and their parents to discuss progress towards explicit outcomes and for the DfES, QCA, publishers and broadcasters to provide guidance and materials to support teachers, pupils and parents.

With the introduction of the Foundation Stage in September 2000, this essential dialogue can start even earlier. Studies of the links between performance of the same pupils at ages seven, 11, 14 and 16 show that prior

attainment is clearly the main factor predicting later performance. It is not hard to appreciate that even relatively minor differences at an early age can be exacerbated over time and an early start in preparing all young children for school is important. We cannot afford to have some of our young people left behind at the start.

The National Curriculum contains a statutory inclusion statement on providing effective learning opportunities for all students and indicates how teachers should modify the National Curriculum programmes of study to achieve this by setting suitable learning challenges, responding to diverse learning needs and overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

For example, it is essential that teachers build on pupils' prior learning. They must create an effective learning environment in which stereotypical views are challenged and pupils learn to appreciate and view positively differences in others, whether arising from race, gender, ability or disability. And they need to motivate pupils by planning work that builds on their interests and cultural experiences and by using materials that reflect social and cultural diversity and provide positive images of race, gender and disability.

In all of this, assessment is an essential pre-requisite. We cannot build upon prior achievement unless we have measured that achievement and know where to go next. Without accurate assessment, we lay ourselves open to prejudice and stereotyping, to low expectations and a lack of challenge in the educational experience we provide. If we are to motivate our young people, we cannot allow their experience to stagnate. The National Curriculum, with its clear goals and periodic assessment is an essential framework. In this regard, tests do have a crucial role to play as they clearly help to raise standards and increase accountability.

Without accurate assessment, we lay ourselves open to prejudice and stereotyping, to low expectations and a lack of challenge in the educational experience we provide

The aims of the school curriculum also recognise the need to promote social justice, and some aspects of the curriculum, for example, Religious Education, Citizenship, and Personal, Social and Health Education have a particular role to play.

At the heart of effective Religious Education lies an understanding of social justice, alongside the development of attitudes such as respect, sensitivity and

open-mindedness. It covers, for example, prejudice and discrimination (particularly racism).

Citizenship and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) enable pupils to develop skills to engage with and work-co-operatively with a wide range of other people, to deal with, for example, changing relationships in widening social contexts and to challenge social injustice. PSHE is concerned with qualities, attitudes, knowledge and understanding, and behaviour; abilities, competencies and skills in relation to self and others; social responsibility and morality.

It leads to the fostering of self-esteem, self-confidence, independence and empowerment. It promotes effective decision-making and respect for differences. Citizenship also contributes to pupils' personal and social development although it is specifically concerned with helping pupils to engage with political and public policy issues and play an increasingly active and effective role as members of the diverse local, national and global communities to which they belong.

Flexibility at Key Stage 4

While the school curriculum must include the National Curriculum and other statutory requirements, schools have considerable freedom to determine the character and distinctive nature of their curriculum and play to their strengths – and more importantly, to the strengths of the individual pupils. To this end, the National Curriculum at Key Stage 4 is being revised following consultation on the proposals set out in *14–19: Opportunity and Excellence*.

The main aim is to offer greater flexibility and choice for students by enabling schools to offer programmes that better meet their individual needs and strengths while ensuring that they get the core of general learning and experience essential to later learning and employment.

The revised changes will challenge students to build upon what they have achieved in ways that are designed to motivate them and will encourage schools and other institutions to deliver programmes that are suitable to each student – one size does not fit all.

There are some things that are essential for all, however. From 2004, there will be a statutory requirement that all students, whatever their background or ability, learn about work and enterprise at Key Stage 4. This is part of full preparation for an adult life in which they can contribute to their own and the country's economic well-being. There is an increased focus on those skills that enhance an individual's employability, including literacy, numeracy and ICT. Learners who have not already attained level 2 by the end of compulsory schooling will have an entitlement to study these areas post-16.

At the same time, a new category of national curriculum entitlement areas comprising the arts, design and technology, the humanities and modern

foreign languages will be introduced. The entitlement to these subjects ensures their availability for all and makes the notion of a balanced curriculum explicit. In addition, the greater choice for students in relation to design and technology and modern foreign languages increases flexibility at Key Stage 4.

From 2006, all students will study science, with a new, smaller programme of study, which will be motivating and relevant for all students. And in addition to these curriculum changes, schools are being encouraged to create opportunities for students to progress at a pace consistent with their abilities, into, through and from the key stage.

Vocational skills and qualifications

One of the biggest challenges we all face is in drawing vocational education into our secondary schools. And not just for the few.

Work is in hand to strengthen vocational programmes. The Government is enhancing “vocational and work related learning opportunities for 14–16 year olds of all abilities who can benefit most” through the DfES’s £120m increased flexibility for 14–16 year olds programme.

The increased flexibility programme has already led to the creation of over 270 partnerships between further education colleges, training providers and others to create enhanced vocational and work-relating learning opportunities for Key Stage 4 students within a more coherent 14–19 phase. Early findings from evaluations are encouraging.

New GCSEs in a range of vocational areas have been introduced. We have adopted the term “GCSE” to describe these new vocational qualifications so that it is clear that these qualifications are all of the same family and are all valued equally whether they cover History or Health and Social Care. From September 2005, it is expected that all qualifications in the national qualifications framework will be included in performance tables.

Some of the vocational qualifications this will embrace will attract appropriate point scores reflecting their size and demand. In this way schools and colleges can gain credit for their pupils’ successes in whatever qualifications are most relevant to them, whether that success is in mathematics or motor vehicle maintenance and whether at Entry or Advanced level.

In addition, QCA has already taken action to identify and map high quality alternative provision for GNVQs, and continues to work with the awarding bodies to ensure the development of a wider range of further alternatives. For the last decade, GNVQs have met the needs of relatively small but disparate groups of learners from the most disaffected to the most able, and their withdrawal could potentially leave a gap in provision. By actively seeking alternatives, from construction to performing arts, QCA will continue to support these learners within the education system.

Addressing the issues in the longer term are the Tomlinson Inquiry into 14–19 education, the Government’s Skills Strategy, and QCA’s remit to redevelop the framework of vocational qualifications. The importance of high quality, exciting vocational programmes are central to these longer-term developments and QCA is at the forefront of these developments.

Support for teachers, students and parents

The National Curriculum and the National Qualifications Framework have been catalysts for a great deal of material designed to support teachers, students and their parents. QCA has developed a number of publications, including websites, which are designed to help teachers meet the specific needs of their pupils to enable them to achieve their full potential.

These materials cover the ability spectrum with guidance on planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties to a website providing up-to-date support for those who teach gifted and talented students. We also have specific guidance on designing a learner-centred curriculum for 16–24 year olds with learning difficulties. Our “Respect for All” website provides guidance on addressing issues of race and culture across the curriculum.

Conferences in March and November this year have highlighted the achievements of black and ethnic minority pupils and showcased the conditions and commitment that have gone into sustaining that achievement.

Finally, we have recently been asked to develop materials to support teachers of children newly arrived in England so that they can move as quickly as possible to full participation in all aspects of the school curriculum. This guidance helps teachers overcome the barriers that limit the opportunities of a significant minority of students.

Identifying the causes of inequality in outcomes is only the first stage in tackling the problem. It is no use for teachers to know that girls do better than boys. They need to know what they can do to improve the performance of boys while ensuring that girls also achieve their full potential. Motivation or engagement in learning is reported in PISA as “an important factor that distinguishes high-performing and low-performing students, regardless of their gender.”

The National Curriculum and the flexibilities currently introduced at Key Stage 4 provide a common entitlement for all pupils while increasing the opportunity for schools and individual teachers to identify and address individual needs. Changes in qualifications increase the opportunities for students to pursue relevant courses that motivate them. These measures will not by themselves deliver social justice and equality of outcome, but collectively they move us further down the road towards these goals. ■

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The *Respect for All* site and other inclusion material can be found at www.qca.org.uk/ca/inclusion/.

Children's centres and social inclusion

Abstract: *This article explores the concept of children's centres, drawing on the experience of setting up the Thomas Coram Centre, and on research into the effectiveness of such centres, looking particularly at their role in promoting social inclusion.*

THE CONCEPT of children's centres, bringing together the education and welfare of young children and providing broadly based support for young children and their parents living in disadvantaged areas, is not a new one. Indeed it is as old as the first nursery schools set up by Robert Owen in Scotland in the early 1800s, and was certainly a key to the work of the McMillan sisters, who came to have such an influence on the development of nursery education in England in the early 1900s. But like so many of the proposals in the recent Green Paper, *Every Child Matters* (2003),¹ it is a child centred concept that had lost its way over the years and is only just coming back into focus.

In 1994, at a conference about primary education in the new millennium, I was asked to describe my "vision" for early childhood education. I envisaged a year 2010 in which every child between birth and the age of six would have access to an early childhood centre. Centres would either be part of primary schools or be stand-alone early childhood centres, and each one would form part of a flexible network of services for families and be linked to a child health centre. Every centre would provide continuity for children from as young as a few months old until they started school at six. A curriculum, based on each

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child's needs as an active learner, would be delivered by well trained staff, and there would be adult education classes and parenting groups for parents and carers. Britain, I concluded, would then finally have become a child-friendly society (see TES 1994 for a summary).²

The arrival of a "new Labour" Government in 1997 was the beginning of a remarkable period of expansion in the early childhood field. In a relatively short space of time, and after years of neglect, a National Childcare Strategy was introduced, which included the establishment of Sure Start local

programmes (500 community based schemes providing support for parents and children during the first three years of a child's life); an expansion of nursery education to all three and four year olds (though not always

Simple, relatively inexpensive measures, put into effect early, can save the need for more complex and costly interventions later.

in nursery schools or classes); the Foundation Stage for children aged three to six and the publication of curriculum guidance; additional funding for childcare; and a pilot programme of early excellence centres, followed by neighbourhood nurseries and, most recently, children's centres (see Pugh 2003 for a fuller account of developments in the early childhood field over the past six years³).

The concept of early excellence centres, and now children's centres, looks remarkably like my vision. They are intended to serve children and families in disadvantaged communities and provide integrated nursery education and care for young children, support for families (including day care for children to enable parents to work), child and family health services and support for other services, such as childminder networks, out of school clubs and local neighbourhood nurseries.

Children's centres are also to create links with local training and education providers and Jobcentre Plus and Children's Information Services. They should be integral to the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships in each local authority area, and be linked to local Sure Start programmes. They are to be set up in the 20 per cent most disadvantaged wards in England, and are expected to reach 650,000 children by 2006.

Children's centres: the research agenda

One of the best known and most visited of the new children's centres is the Thomas Coram Centre for Children and Families near King's Cross, described below. In setting up the Thomas Coram Centre we drew on a wide range of research. For example, we know what a high percentage of children's learning takes place during these early years and that this is a time when attitudes are

formed, when first relationships are made, when concepts are developed and when the foundations for all later learning are laid.

This points to the crucial importance of a curriculum which recognises children as the active and powerful learners that they are, and which gives them opportunities for developing self confidence, self esteem and the “mastery” without which successful schooling and adult learning is so difficult. It also points to the importance of highly trained early educators, who understand how children learn through play, and who can structure the learning environment to balance child-initiated and adult-initiated activities.

Brain research, too, has emphasised the importance of the first year of life, when the brain is developing particularly quickly, and when it is most susceptible to environmental influences. Environmental stress has a negative effect not only on how the brain develops, but also on how it functions, and this underlies our capacity to make and sustain relationships. Secure early attachments to consistent, caring and dependable adults are also a critical ingredient of children’s early months.

The role that parents play in their children’s learning and development is thus crucial. As the longitudinal EPPE research study shows so clearly, the educational environment of the home is a key predictor of later educational attainment.⁴ But whilst most parents want to support this learning, many are unsure how to do so, and the importance of supporting parents both in their role as “educators” and in their role as parents, is now much more clearly acknowledged. So our work at Coram has been grounded in research about children’s learning, about adult education and parental support, but also about the value of preventive work with families. Simple, relatively inexpensive measures, put into effect early, can save the need for more complex and costly interventions later. The research suggests that, wherever possible, this support is best provided within open access, mainstream services in local communities. This research has also informed the Green Paper, *Every Child Matters*.

The Thomas Coram Centre for children and families

The Thomas Coram Centre is a unique partnership between Camden Council, which funds the nursery (fully integrated care and education for 106 children aged from six months to five years) and Coram Family, London’s oldest children’s charity which has owned the site since the Foundling Hospital was built by Thomas Coram in 1739. Coram Family runs the Parents Centre, which provides education, support and training for about 400 parents a week, supported by crèche provision. The Centre was opened in 1998, and grew out of the merger of two existing nurseries and a Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) grant to Coram to set up the Parents Centre.

The Thomas Coram Centre is situated on the Coram Community Campus, just south of King’s Cross station, an area of very high need (high levels of

unemployment, and a substantial population of refugees, asylum seekers and families living in bed and breakfast accommodation) and one that is rich in cultural, linguistic, religious and economic diversity, with over 50 languages being spoken in the Centre.

Up to 1,000 children and families a week use the services on the campus which also houses two projects for homeless families, the head quarters of KIDS, a London-wide charity for children with special needs, an autistic school and a small community nursery, as well as Coram Family's headquarters. In recent months a new Sure Start programme has been established in the local area, and this will build on the services already in existence and provide some funding as the SRB grant comes to an end.

The Thomas Coram Centre provides a substantial range of "joined up" services. For children there is:

- The 106 place nursery for children from six months to five years, open all day and for 48 weeks of the year. This includes places funded by social services for 21 children "in need", and five places for children in homeless families.
- Crèche provision for children whose parents are attending groups and classes.
- An after school and holiday play-scheme for five–11 year olds, specialising in supporting very vulnerable children. This includes a weekly Bengali mother tongue class.
- Arts projects.
- Music therapy.
- Baby massage.

Services for parents include:

- A drop in centre five mornings a week.
- Toy library, home loan book and maths scheme.
- Outreach workers, visiting homes and working in the community.
- Curriculum workshops and parents' workshops in three local primary schools.
- A young parents project, working with 130 teenage parents, providing support for the young women in returning to education, as well as care for their children.
- Advice and counselling sessions.
- Parent education course and programmes, from the very informal to more structured behaviour programmes for parents who are experiencing difficulties with handling their children's behaviour.
- Adult education courses – community interpreting, first aid, health and safety, computer training, etc.

- Health visitor and social worker services.
- Training for crèche workers.

And services for the community, which include:

- Student placements (NNEB, PGCE, NVQ, DipSW, speech therapists, paediatricians, nurses).
- Courses for childminders.
- Training for early years practitioners, both in primary schools and in other early years centres.

What have we learned so far?

The centre has been extensively evaluated, both as part of the Government's evaluation of early excellence centres, and as a condition of other sources of funding. There was also an independent evaluation of the establishment of the campus concept.⁵ Along with other research⁶ the findings show that:

- There are substantial benefits for children, including enhanced social competence and cognitive development, early remediation and increased inclusion of children with a wide range of special needs.
- There is a range of benefits for families including improved relationships and well being, improved parenting skills, higher self-esteem and self-confidence, increased access to training and employment, and reduced isolation.
- There are benefits for the wider community, including an enhanced sense of social cohesion.
- Bringing together a wide range of services in support of children and families avoids the problems and stigma associated with segregating children according to perceived need.
- Users are very positive about the quality of the services and feel that they have made a real difference to their lives.
- An integrated centre provides access and opportunity to develop.
- Outreach workers engage with local communities and encourage isolated families to use the centre.

As far as Coram is concerned, in addition to the points above our own experience can be summarised as follows:

- Multi-agency centres need multi-agency staff teams.
- It is difficult to find staff with appropriate qualifications, confidence and flexibility.
- Continuing professional development is essential.
- Bringing services together often highlights difference – in funding streams, terms and conditions of service, priorities and philosophies.

- Shared language may not mean shared understanding.
- There is no “off the shelf” model – each centre must respond to local needs.
- It is important to reflect the local cultural diversity in the staff team.
- Integration is not an end in itself – it must lead to better services for children and families.
- Integration takes time – and above all it takes vision and leadership.

Do children’s centres support social inclusion?

The evidence from the in-depth evaluation of the early excellence centre programme⁶ (a research programme that has now been halted, as early excellence centres have been overtaken by children’s centres), from our own experience of running a children’s centre and from the longitudinal EPPE research^{4,7} shows without doubt that centres which provide a high quality, “joined up” service for children and families in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are successful on a number of levels.

The EPPE research indicates that pre-school can play an important part in combating social exclusion and promoting inclusion by offering disadvantaged children, in particular, a better start in primary school. Disadvantaged children benefited particularly from pre-school experience, in terms of reductions in numbers of children with special educational needs, and reduced risks of anti-social behaviour.

The findings indicate that pre-school has a positive impact on children’s progress over and above important family influences, and that integrated centres, such as Coram, which have a strong educational focus, are the most successful in terms of children’s intellectual and social behavioural development up to entry to primary school.

The EPPE research also points to the separate but significant influence of the home learning environment. Children’s centres, which put such strong emphasis on providing support for parents, are in a good position to support parents in creating such an environment.

But in addition to the benefits for children, children’s centres are also of benefit to families, in providing support and advice, opportunities to learn new skills and access employment and in reducing isolation. As part of the wider strategy of increasing child care for children to enable parents to return to work, children’s centres are also central to the Government’s commitment to eliminating child poverty.

The challenge now is not whether children’s centres are successful, but how they can be extended. Around half of the most disadvantaged children do not live in the 20 per cent most disadvantaged wards so will not be able to take advantage of what they can offer. And it remains to be seen whether primary and secondary schools can take up the challenge of the Green Paper in taking on a broader role in supporting families as part of locally based multi-agency support teams. ■

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Towards the development of extended schools: a scoping study

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Abstract: *This article is based on research undertaken by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in 2002 for the Department for Education and Skills and the National Union of Teachers, examining the extent and efficacy of the "extended school" model in England. The article presents an "audit" of extended school provision and discusses some of the perceived impacts on pupils, their families and the local community.*

Introduction

In the UK there has been growing recognition that schools cannot solve the problems associated with social exclusion and multiple disadvantage on their own. One response to this has been the development of extended schools, which offer a wide range of services and activities, often beyond the traditional school day, in order to meet the needs of pupils, their families and also the wider community.

The concept of the extended school has developed significantly in the UK over the last 18 months through its promotion in guidance from the DfES,

through the introduction of legislation (i.e. the Education Act, 2002)¹ making it easier for governors to provide services for families and the community, as well as through increasing recognition of the relationship between schools and the communities they serve.

The DfES announced recently that funding would be made available for all areas to have at least one extended school by 2005/06, (in addition to the pathfinder projects currently being funded), while Baroness Ashton stated earlier this year that at least one school in each LEA would provide a full range of community services by 2006.

Two hundred and forty full-service extended schools are to be funded over the next three years which will provide childcare, health and social care, lifelong learning opportunities, parenting support, study support and sports, arts and ICT access.

The NFER study,² which began in the spring term of 2002, comprised a review of existing research evidence and literature concerning extended or full-service schools and an audit of schools in England currently offering extended services. Telephone interviews were undertaken with staff from 50 secondary, primary and special schools in England that were cited as providing extended provision, as well as staff from 78 LEAs. This was followed by case-study work in ten schools where a range of extended services was particularly prevalent.

The literature review

USA literature pertaining to full-service, and extended-school service delivery, conveys the message that existing schools and education systems are failing in their contemporary contexts as they can no longer meet the complex needs of their students.³ Schools are thus unable to cope adequately without specialist service delivery in areas such as the social, health, emotional, and cultural needs of young people.

Indeed, the underlying principle behind the concept of the full-service or extended school is founded on the recognition that schooling, for many, can only be approached “*once a range of welfare and health services were in place*”.⁴

Literature from the USA also contends that the full-service school initiative is a product of recent shifts in thinking that have moved away from programmes where agencies, institutions and individuals work in isolation, to an inclusive, more “*holistic*” approach to providing support for educational, social, emotional and physical needs.⁵

A key theme permeating the literature is that needs should not be met in isolation, or by particular institutions or agencies acting alone. Significant elements of USA literature stress that there is no one correct model or blueprint of full-service/extended school service delivery.^{5,6}

There are many interpretations of full-service/extended schools: it has been argued that the diversity surrounding the concept is a major strength. In addition, USA literature would suggest that the full-service school concept is often regarded as a grass roots movement representing a local and popular response to problems, placing school at the centre of the community.

Some full-service school approaches are manifested as initiatives that extend the remit and programmes already existing within particular school environments by supplying additional services and facilities. School-based clinics and Family Service Centres act to support young people and their families in optimising their educational opportunities.

Other full-service school approaches involve the complete re-conceptualisation and re-organisation of the way in which health and education services are delivered. These approaches involve attempts to transform the school site into a central component of its community through the integrated and coordinated delivery of health, education and human services.

Accessibility and inclusion, flexibility and relevance are key features of integrated full-service school delivery. Sites, as well as the curriculum and services on offer, are designed to be as open and meaningful/useful as possible to their intended consumers.

The audit

In the NFER study, nominated staff from all LEAs were approached with a request to provide information on the extent of “extended” school activity within their authority and to supply specific examples of the kinds of activities underway in such schools. Officers from 78 LEAs provided this information by completing a proforma, as well as undertaking a telephone interview, which covered their views on key issues surrounding the model.

Information on 160 schools was received via the proformas. Analysis of these showed distinct and different kinds of activity being referenced as “extended school” provision. In the end, six main types or “arenas” of provision within the concept of “extended schools” emerged, and within these were a number of sub-categories. Figure 1 outlines these major “arenas” of provision.

Figure 1

ARENA 1: ADDITIONAL SCHOOLING PROVISION offering:

- Curriculum (e.g. homework clubs; NOF funded activities; vocational programmes).
- Leisure opportunities (e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme; breakfast clubs; play schemes).
- Wrap around service.

ARENA 2: COMMUNITY PROVISION offering:

- Curriculum opportunities (e.g. adult education; community Learning).
- Leisure opportunities (e.g. leisure centre; community events). Facilities/location (e.g. community drop-in centre; information and advice centre).
- Community links/outreach (e.g. liaison with community groups; outreach worker).

ARENA 3: EARLY YEARS PROVISION offering:

- Crèche facilities.
- Pre-school/toddlers groups (e.g. playgroups; early years centres; toy libraries).

ARENA 4: FAMILY/PARENT PROVISION offering:

- Parental involvement (e.g. parents' fundraising club; home/school Partnerships).
- Family: specialist services (e.g. family support worker; family link Outreach worker).
- Family: specialist learning (e.g. IT for parents; family literacy and numeracy)

ARENA 5: OTHER AGENCY PROVISION offering:

- Health Services (e.g. doctor on site, health visitor; baby clinic).
- Youth Services (e.g. youth workers on site, youth club).
- Social Services (e.g. drop-in centre).
- Voluntary agency (e.g. Barnardo's).
- Connexions (Connexions worker on site).
- Police links (police officers on site; police forum).
- Multi-agency initiatives (e.g. Sure Start; YOT; Children's Fund).

ARENA 6: OPEN/SPECIALIST FACILITIES offering:

- Arts (e.g. artist in residence; performing arts days; dance Festivals).
- Sport (e.g. sports centre; fitness suite; public squash courts)
- Library
- IT (e.g. IT suite; UK Online)
- Business centre (e.g. training and conference centre; local business links).

Source: LEA proforma returns

It is important to stress that the six arenas did have considerable overlap: for instance, family learning provision could easily extend to embrace the wider community, and early years provision could have a support role for adult learning opportunities or overlap with more specialist agency provision. Nevertheless, the arenas do help depict the rich variety of facilities, provision and focus flourishing in different ways in these extended schools.

The impact of extended schools

All interviewees were asked for their perceptions of the impact that the extended school approach could have on pupils, parents and families, and the local community.

From these interviews, it was evident that extended school delivery was believed to impact positively on **pupils** in terms of their: attendance; attainment and educational standards; behaviour; and motivation. Such an approach aimed to foster and develop relationships between the school and its

wider community, encouraging a broad range of people through its doors and thus affording greater degrees of inclusion and engagement to pupils, families and community members.

As a result of the increased and diversified use of the school, it would be viewed more positively by others and become accepted as a place that people, other than school-age pupils, could also access. Modifications to the school day and the curriculum to make it more attractive to pupils (particularly those at risk of becoming disaffected) and the use of learning mentors and other non-teaching professionals were seen as advantages of the approach.

Multi-agency input on site was also felt to meet more readily a range of pupil and family needs. The development of a more inclusive, supportive ethos and approach was said to support pupils' learning better and develop a more positive culture of learning in the school, based on encouragement and motivation through the provision of extended activities.

The extended school approach was felt to impact positively on **parents and families** in terms of increases in: involvement with the school; involvement in children's learning; and in skills and empowerment as a result of the greater opportunities afforded them. The latter, combined with increases in self-esteem and confidence was regarded as providing parents with the chance to improve the quality of their lives, as well as leading to enhanced and increased employment opportunities.

Attitudinal shifts were said to have taken place as parents developed a sense of ownership towards the school thus becoming more willing to engage in dialogue, as well as more supportive and pro school. Breaking down the barriers between school and parents was also believed to have positive implications for the take-up of services and provision. Early identification of particular issues and problems faced by families, and the subsequent specialist intervention put in place to address them was identified as a key element in the promotion of family cohesion.

Similarly, it was suggested that **community** cohesion could be increased through the implementation of an extended school approach. The community-based ethos of an extended school and the ways in which its facilities were offered to the local community, especially in multi-cultural areas, was seen as a direct way in which the school could act to bring together elements of the population that otherwise may have little, or no, positive contact. Multiple use of school buildings and facilities was thus said to increase the symbolic and actual role of school as a core, or focus, of community activity.

Community groups and organisations were believed to benefit from the focus that location on a school site gave them, contributing to the development of community identity.

Notwithstanding this, certain reservations were expressed: that the

relationship between community organisations and the school could become too successful, reflecting a “*magnet approach*” thus attracting too many, and possibly inappropriate, organisations; or that there was potential for particular community organisations to become a dominant presence, thus exerting considerable influence over the provision, as well as discouraging other sections of the community from participating. There was felt to be a need for careful monitoring and management of all the groups and services associated with the school.

In conclusion

The research attempted to plot the enormous range and richness of activity actually underway in English schools and confirmed how they can, and do, function as far more than providers of a mainstream curriculum to their pupils on roll during the school timetable. The categorisation of six additional “arenas” of provision was an attempt to convey this variety of opportunity, although it is important to acknowledge how holistic and intertwined these arenas often are felt to be in practice.

The variation within an “extended school” model captured by the research is no doubt underpinned by the array of traditions and also new funding streams or initiatives of which schools are now a central part. From the pre-war Community Schooling movement, through to current innovations around the Inclusion and “joined-up service” agendas, Community Regeneration initiatives, Lifelong Learning and specialist schools, this study has shown how schools are already significant – indeed crucial – resources for whole communities.

The enterprise, vision and energy that has gone into these developments, often in schools in difficult circumstances, has perhaps not always been fully appreciated. Fragmented funding opportunities have been seized upon and moulded into single visions by dedicated school, LEA and other agency staff. In this way, it could be said that extended schools, like their US counterparts evidenced in the literature, have been a genuine “grassroots” “bottom-up” movement. A quiet revolution has perhaps indeed been in operation. ■

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Evaluation of the DfES' Behaviour Improvement Programme

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Abstract: *This article assesses the impact of the DfES's Behaviour Improvement Scheme (BIP) on pupil behaviour and attendance. It highlights the wide range of interventions adopted by LEAs and looks at the factors that have affected the programme's success.*

Background

As part of the Government's Street Crime Initiative, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has funded 34 local education authorities (LEAs) to support measures to improve pupil behaviour and attendance in two to four selected secondary schools and their feeder primary schools. Over 700 schools have been involved in Phase 1 of the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP). The LEAs were selected on the basis of an indicator combining truancy and crime figures. The objectives of BIP are to improve standards of behaviour; reduce unauthorised absence; reduce levels of exclusion; ensure that there is a key named worker for every child at risk of truancy, exclusion or criminal behaviour; and to ensure the availability of full-time, supervised education for all pupils from day one of either permanent or temporary exclusion.

At the outset of the programme, the DfES set out a menu of measures based on existing good practice for LEAs and schools to choose from as well as allowing them to develop their own ideas. The menu included Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BESTs), Behaviour Audits, Lead Behaviour Professionals (LBPs), provision of full time education on the first day of

exclusion, Police in Schools, Skill Force, extended or full-service schools, a range of measures to improve attendance and the introduction of alternative curricula.

The Institute of Education, University of London, was commissioned by the DfES to evaluate the effectiveness of Phase 1 of the programme. The aims of the evaluation were to:

- map out the nature and type of the interventions adopted in each LEA;
- explore the allocation of funding between interventions;
- establish how the programme had been implemented and the nature of the management structures;
- establish how schools were selected to take part in the programme;
- explore how effectively the clusters of schools were working together;
- consider the operation and effectiveness of the behaviour audits;
- establish which aspects of the programme were successful and working well;
- establish what, if anything, had created difficulties for implementing the programme;
- explore what LEA BIP co-ordinators perceived to be the long term risks to the programme;
- evaluate the effectiveness of the DfES team in the setting up of the programme; and
- examine the first set of termly data provided by LEAs to consider the impact of the programme on exclusions and attendance and ratios of key workers to pupils at risk.

Methodology

The evaluation is taking place in three phases. This report is based on the findings from Phase 1 and the visits to LEAs which have taken place to date in Phase 2. In Phase 1 of the evaluation, interviews and e-mail conversations were undertaken with BIP co-ordinators in all participating LEAs. In Phase 2, 18 LEAs representing a range of different implementations of the programme at various stages of development, are being visited and interviews undertaken with a range of key personnel. Each term, the evaluation also analyses data provided by participating LEAs relating to attendance, exclusions and at risk pupils.

Findings

The analyses revealed that LEAs were adopting a wide range of interventions. These were more or less successful depending on a range of factors relating to their implementation rather than the nature of the intervention themselves.

Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BESTs): Most LEAs had BESTs. They were organised in a variety of ways, with a range of management structures. The

make up of the teams varied and they were at various stages of development. Many had experienced difficulties in recruiting staff. Where they were fully operational they appeared to be having a positive impact on pupil behaviour.

Lead Behaviour Professionals and Behaviour Audits: Most schools had appointed Lead Behaviour Professionals. This role was undertaken by individuals with a range of different prior experiences. At secondary school most were members of the senior management team with extensive responsibilities, which sometimes left them overloaded. The work of LBPs and the undertaking of the behaviour audits played an important part in raising the status of behaviour management and pastoral work in schools and contributed to improvements in pupil behaviour.

First day provision for excluded pupils: All LEAs were committed to this although it was often difficult to implement. LEAs adopted a range of strategies for making provision, many of which involved schools developing facilities on site for the first few days, with some central provision being made for the medium term. PRUs remained the providers for longer term excludees although some had also developed strategies for coping with first day excludees.

Safer school partnerships and police in schools: Police were involved in BIP in most LEAs in a range of ways. After initial difficulties their work was appreciated and valued by schools and played an important role in improving pupil behaviour and attendance.

Tackling attendance issues: LEAs were adopting a range of strategies to improve attendance. None were new. Positive results were reported in some schools.

Skill Force: Where Skill Force was in operation it was viewed favourably by pupils and teachers and had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour, attendance and long term aspirations.

Alternative curricula: Where alternative curricula were adopted, e.g. not.school.com, they provided a useful means of maintaining educational opportunities for pupils who would otherwise have been denied access. There was evidence of examination success for these pupils.

Supporting at risk pupils: LEAs had developed a range of criteria for designating pupils "at risk". These were interpreted differently by schools. Few LEAs had criteria for signing pupils off.

Key workers: A range of personnel undertook the role of key worker. There were differences between LEAs in the extent to which the role was regulated and guidelines for monitoring pupil progress were provided.

Learning Mentors: These were a valued resource, particularly in primary schools where they contributed to improved behaviour and attendance, reduced teacher stress and released head teachers to engage in other activities not related to pupil discipline.

Support for parents: In most LEAs support for parents was provided alongside support for pupils. Early indications suggested that parental involvement was beneficial in improving pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Early intervention: Nurture groups provided much needed support and training for pre-school and early years "at risk" pupils with very severe problems. The impact on individual pupils was profound.

Extended or full-service schools: In most LEAs these were not well developed and LEAs reported difficulties in financing them having not allocated funding in their original plans for this purpose

Other initiatives: LEAs had developed a range of small scale initiatives, often in conjunction with charitable organisations, to support pupils. Many of these were having a substantial impact on the children involved.

LEA management: Relationships between schools and LEAs were generally positive. LEAs had devolved most funding to schools to give them a sense of ownership of the programme. As school budgets were stretched there were fears that funding would be spent for purposes outside BIP.

There were generally positive working relationships between staff working in BIP and EiC. Few problems had arisen as a result of the new relationship between BIP and EiC.

Perceived impact: The field visits to LEAs revealed positive outcomes of BIP for individual pupils, parents, teachers and schools. Schools saw it as raising the status of behaviour management and pastoral care.

Attendance and unauthorised absence: The findings from the termly analyses of attendance and unauthorised absence data suggested that at secondary and primary levels there had been no significant improvement in mean attendance or reduction in unauthorised absence over the year. However, these findings

need to be interpreted with caution as not all LEAs had submitted data for the Summer term.

Exclusions: At secondary level the proportion of permanent exclusions remained static with no significant differences reported across the year at LEA or school level. There was a statistically significant drop in the number of fixed term exclusions across the year for those LEAs supplying data, a finding which was supported in the school level analysis of the data. At primary level there were no statistically significant changes in permanent or fixed term exclusions across the year whether the data were considered at LEA or school level.

“At risk” pupils: In secondary schools, the data for pupils identified as at risk of exclusion showed variability across the spring and summer terms across LEAs, which may indicate different practices in identifying and signing off pupils. When the data were examined at school level there was a highly significant increase in the numbers of “at risk” pupils in the summer term. This suggests that schools are identifying more pupils as “at risk” in their attempts to reduce exclusions. The number of pupils identified at risk in secondary schools was considerably greater than in primary schools. There were no significant differences in the number of pupils identified as being “at risk” in primary schools between the spring and summer terms in either LEA or school level data.

Issues arising from the evaluation

Recruitment of staff has been a major problem. Some LEAs have been unable to staff BESTs and appoint BIP co-ordinators and other key personnel. The extension of the programme to other LEAs is exacerbating this problem.

There has been unevenness in the development of BIP in schools with particular interventions working well in some schools but not in others. In some schools senior staff are overloaded, preventing them from committing sufficient time to BIP initiatives.

Waiting times for accessing the support of outside agencies continue to give cause for concern. There were also examples of continuing communication problems between different elements of the provision, particularly relating to outside agencies.

There were concerns about the sustainability of the programme unless substantial funding continues to be made available.

Conclusions

The analyses to date reveal a complex picture with LEAs and participating schools adopting a wide range of strategies within BIP with variable success. The same intervention adopted in different schools within the same LEA may be more or less successful depending on the way in which it is implemented,

the length of time it has been in place, the extent to which it has become embedded in practice and whether it has the support of staff, particularly those at a senior level in the school. There is evidence that where interventions are working well they are having a substantial positive impact on individual pupils, their parents, teachers, headteachers in primary schools and on the learning environment in the school. What the initiatives have in common is that they provide a high level of support to individual “at risk” pupils which has not previously been available.

Although, the data suggest that, to date, the implementation of the programme has had little impact on attendance at either primary or secondary level the evidence at local level indicates improvement in some cases. Where the initiatives have been implemented with commitment they seem to be having an effect.

While there has been no change in average permanent exclusions at LEA level at either primary or secondary level some schools have shown considerable improvement over the period BIP has been operational. The reduction in fixed term exclusions at secondary level has been substantial, as has the increase in the number of pupils identified as “at risk”. This suggests that secondary schools, in their attempts to reduce exclusion, are identifying cases earlier with a view to taking preventative action. This change has been sufficiently large to impact on the overall, average LEA statistics.

Although the findings from the analysis of the termly data must be interpreted with caution because data are missing, taken together with the case study examples from the interviews, there are indications that BIP has the potential to have a major impact on “at risk” pupils with long term implications for their futures, educationally and socially. The concerns raised by head teachers regarding short falls in overall funding need to be taken seriously if they are not to result in the funding designated for BIP being used for purposes not related to the continuing improvement of behaviour and attendance. ■

The inequitable impacts of high stakes testing

Abstract: *This article explores the impact that summative assessment and testing can have on pupil achievement. It argues that the high stakes attached to testing can have a detrimental effect on pupils' performance and attitude to learning.*

WHEN, IN 1997, the Assessment Reform Group (ARG) obtained funding from the Nuffield Foundation to conduct a review of research into classroom assessment, we invited Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam to carry out the work. The outcomes of the resulting review are now, five years after publication, becoming widely known. One of the major findings was that enhancing effectiveness of the way that assessment is used in the classroom to help learning can raise pupil achievement to a greater extent than any other educational intervention.¹

A further significant finding was that the potential gain was particularly large for the lower achieving pupils and thus changes in assessment practice could reduce the gap between the lower and higher achieving pupils. But the changes that are required to implement formative assessment are considerable. In summary they are:

- the provision of effective feedback to pupils;
- the active involvement of pupils in their own learning;
- adjusting teaching to take account of the results of assessment;
- a recognition of the profound influence assessment has on the motivation and self-esteem of pupils, both of which are crucial influences on learning;

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- the need for pupils to be able to assess themselves and understand how to improve. ²

However, there is also a body of opinion that pupils' achievement is raised by summative assessment and testing. This is the view, widely embraced by politicians, many parents and some teachers, that is behind the enormous increase in testing, notably in the USA and in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and to a lesser extent, Scotland, during the 1990s.

It appears to be supported by the increase in test scores following the introduction of tests. If this were so, then we would have a way of raising standards to an even greater extent by combining the impact of formative assessment and of summative testing. Unfortunately the evidence is that current assessment policy and practice means that this is far from reality.

There are two chief reasons for this. First, that the claims made for testing are hollow; increase in test scores is not the same as increase in achievement. Research into testing programmes shows that increase in scores is due to greater familiarity of teachers and pupils with the tests rather than increase in real learning.

Second, that summative testing, particularly when the results are used to make important judgments about pupils, teachers and schools, that is, are "high stakes", drives out formative assessment. Teachers under pressure to reach goals expressed in terms of increase in test scores tend to focus their teaching on what is required in the tests, spend time on practice tests and, often unconsciously, value test performance rather than genuine learning.

The evidence for these counter-claims comes from a second review of research, initiated by ARG and also funded in part by the Nuffield Foundation. This review was undertaken to identify evidence as to the impact of testing on pupils' motivation for learning. The focus on motivation was in recognition of its role in learning and in particular that "lifelong learning" – on which the government places much emphasis – requires that outcomes of schooling must include enjoying learning and knowing how to learn.

It is not difficult to realise that test-oriented classrooms are not conducive to enjoyment for the majority of pupils. Whilst the effect of statutory high stakes tests on teaching and the curriculum has been well researched and reviewed, less is known about their impact on pupils' affective response to school and to learning. The review begins to fill this gap.

Research evidence of the impact of tests on motivation for learning

The review of research on the impact of summative assessment and tests was conducted using the procedures developed by, and partly funded by, the DfES-funded EPPI-Centre (Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-

ordinating Centre). These procedures lead to the selection, extraction and synthesis of data from the most relevant and methodologically sound studies from a larger number found from as wide a search of the literature as possible.

Motivation is a complex concept, embracing several aspects that relate to learning, such as self-esteem, self-regulation, interest, effort, self-efficacy, a person's sense of themselves as a learner. An important feature is goal orientation; that is, whether the learner is oriented towards learning to understand or towards performing well in a test.

An orientation towards either learning goals or performance goals is related to the distinction between intrinsic motivation (finding satisfaction in the learning) and extrinsic motivation (engaging in learning to achieve a reward or avoid a penalty). None of the research studies that were found dealt with all of

Repeated practice tests made some pupils all too well aware of what they could achieve and this led to very low views of their own capabilities.

the aspects of motivation, but they could be grouped according to the outcomes they investigated. Some of the findings are briefly outlined in the following sections. The full report by Harlen and Deakin Crick (2002)³ is available on the website given in the references.

Self-esteem

There was evidence from several studies that an impact of testing on those who do not do well is to lower their self-esteem. For example, studies of children aged seven before the introduction of national tests showed no correlation between self-esteem and achievement, indicating the lower achieving children could have the same level of self-esteem as their higher achieving peers. After the introduction of national testing, however, there was a positive correlation, indicating that the self-esteem of the lower achieving pupils was lower than that of the higher achievers.^{4,5}

The same finding was reported by Reay and Wiliam (1999)⁶ from observing and interviewing 11 year olds at the time of the Key Stage 2 tests. Repeated practice tests made some pupils all too well aware of what they could achieve and this led to very low views of their own capabilities. The researchers found a class climate in which the tests became the rationale for all that was done and the levels they expected to achieve were the criteria by which pupils were judged and judged themselves. Studies of the impact of the 11+ tests in Northern Ireland also reported the devastating impact of the tests on the self-esteem of those who did not match up to their own or others' expectations.

Self-efficacy and the role of feedback

The feeling of self-efficacy, the extent to which learners judge themselves as capable of succeeding in a particular task, is related to feedback from earlier work of a similar kind. Learners' judgements of their work are based on criteria communicated implicitly or explicitly and used by their teachers. Feedback that focuses on how to improve or build on what has been done is associated with strengthening the feeling of being capable of what is required and understanding how to improve. Feedback that emphasises, through marks or grades, comparison with others, encourages a focus on how to get better grades rather than better understanding. Research shows that self-efficacy is related to the effort that pupils put into work that offers a challenge. There is also evidence that, beyond the practices of individual teachers, the general atmosphere of encouragement in the school and the informal culture of expectations built up over the years is important to pupils' feelings of self-efficacy.

Goal orientation and self-regulation

An experimental study carried out in the USA⁷ tested the effects on learning in mathematics of goal orientation. Pupils were randomly assigned to work in learning-goal oriented or performance-goal class conditions. In addition, half of each of these groups worked with self-assessment and half without. So there were four conditions, in which the pupils were compared for self-efficacy, motivation and achievement in the aspects of maths being taught.

The results showed that self-evaluation was associated with higher levels of achievement and of self-efficacy and swamped the effect of goal orientation. Only in those groups working without self-evaluation did the performance differ between the goal-orientation conditions, in favour of learning goals. So the study was repeated with self-evaluation held constant. Then the results of the group working towards learning goals were significantly higher than those of the performance-goals groups on all measures.

Other research showed that pupils with learning goal orientations tended to have lower test anxiety and to use a wider range of both passive and active learning strategies. By comparison, those embracing performance goals had lower self-efficacy and used a limited range of passive learning strategies. These findings are important in the light of the performance-goal ethos in classes where high stakes testing dominates.

Test anxiety

Research conducted in Northern Ireland relating to the 11+ tests showed that the majority of pupils approached the tests with fear and anxiety.⁸ Those confident of passing were more likely to be positive about testing, but even for them the initial excitement and novelty of taking practice tests soon wore off. Similar results were found in the PACE project⁹, which followed the same

cohort of pupils from their entry to school just before the introduction of the Key Stage 1 national tests throughout their primary school career.

The study revealed a change in the regular day-to-day classroom interactions. Teachers' regular assessment interactions were interpreted by pupils in the early 1990s as helping them to learn, that is, as formative assessment, whilst in later years they were interpreted as summative in intent. Pupils realised as they became older that whilst effort was encouraged, it was achievement that counted and the pupils reported anxiety and tension about their teachers' assessment. The researcher concluded that this change was arguably a consequence of performance becoming more important to the teachers. All studies reporting on test anxiety found higher levels of anxiety in girls as compared with boys.

Issues of equity

Bringing together the evidence relating to differential impact of testing on pupils according to age, ability and gender, the review revealed evidence that:

- in comparison with younger pupils, older pupils are more likely to have a clear understanding of grades and to attach importance to them, but they are less likely to consider them fair;
- older pupils are more likely to focus on performance goals rather than learning goals;
- lower achieving pupils are particularly adversely affected by results of tests that have high stakes and lower achieving older pupils are more likely to minimise effort and respond to tests randomly or by guessing; and
- girls express greater test anxiety than boys; they are also more likely to attribute their success or failure to something within themselves, whereas boys may attribute it to circumstances outside themselves.

None of the studies included in the review specifically investigated the impact of pupils' ethnicity, but two earlier reviews of research from the United States reported on the impact of testing on minority and economically disadvantaged children.^{10, 11} They concluded that "high stakes tests do not motivate the unmotivated" and that "high stakes testing programs have been shown to increase high school drop-out rates – particularly among minority student populations."¹⁰ Both reviews showed that the curriculum was virtually replaced by test preparation: "a regular education has been supplanted by activities whose sole purpose is to raise test scores."¹¹

What can be done to reduce the negative impact?

The evidence from the review is that much of the negative impact arises from the high stakes attached to the tests. In England this pressure arises from using

national test results as a basis for league tables. So a key step would be to support Alan Wells' call for league tables to be abolished.¹² This is not only on account of the impact on teaching and pupil motivation for learning but because the tests *do not give valid information*.

There are three main reasons for this, substantiated by research evidence. First, the intense teaching to the tests, through practising tests and coaching in giving answers that will gain marks, even if the answers are not understood by the pupils, means that the results do not indicate what pupils really know and understand. Second, the information gained through the tests is limited to a narrow range of outcomes that are easily and "objectively" marked and so nothing is known about pupils' wider attainments. Third, the differential impact on some pupils' motivation and anxiety about the tests, particularly the less able and girls, means that the tests do not accurately reflect what these pupils can do.

The impact of testing on motivation for learning has to be taken seriously for, as the review has shown, outcomes of education that relate to the components of motivation, are needed for learning to learn and to create the drive and energy to continue learning. In support of this there is not only an argument based on what might happen to learners in the future, but on empirical evidence that these aspects of motivation are positively related to attainment. For instance the OECD PISA project has found a positive relationships between pupils' achievement and pupils reporting using active learning strategies and having some control over their own learning.¹³

Other actions that could be taken by policy-makers to reduce the negative impact of tests include providing professional development for senior school management, that enables schools to develop a range of assessment strategies for both personal development and achievement, and to use summative information of different kinds for improving the learning, rather than focusing on the use of test scores for accountability and target setting. Schools should be helped to develop self-evaluation practices, thus reducing the role of external accountability procedures.

A further step that could be taken would be to ensure that the criteria used in school evaluation, including self-evaluation, make explicit reference to a full range of subjects, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural as well as cognitive aims and an appropriate variety of teaching methods and learning outcomes.

Much of the negative impact of summative testing on pupils could be avoided by testing pupils when their teachers judge them to be ready to show their achievement at a certain level, as in the Scottish system for national testing in the 5–14 programme, thus avoiding repeated experience of failure.

There would be greater faith in teachers' assessment if more resources were made available for developing their assessment skills through targeted

professional development. The resources released by reducing the enormous expenditure and time spent on testing and marking would be better spent on improving classroom assessment practices. For tracking national standards, testing a sample of pupils rather than whole cohorts enables the use a wider range of test forms and items, as the APU showed.

Meanwhile, even within current policies, teachers can reduce the impact of tests by avoiding the actions that research shows to be detrimental and adopting practices that favour development of pupils' self-esteem, interest, learning-goal orientation, etc.

These better practices include: giving pupils some choice in their learning to encourage responsibility, self-assessment and self-regulation; discussing with pupils the purposes of their work in terms of learning outcomes; providing feedback related to these goals and that will help learning; emphasising collaboration and avoiding competition and comparison among pupils based on marks.

These actions reflect some of the principles of using assessment for learning, set out by ARG.¹⁴ So we have come full circle to reinforce the conclusions of the Black and Wiliam¹ review that assessment should be used to help learning. It can only do so effectively, however, if we remove the conditions that lead to using it to label, rank and limit the opportunities of both pupils and teachers. ■

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Tackling conflict and promoting equality

Abstract: *All schools and members of the school community have a role to play in tackling discrimination and promoting equality. Schools should be proactive in this area in order to support students, send out the wider message that discrimination will not be tolerated and prepare all their students for life in a diverse society. This article outlines one school's experience of tackling racial discrimination.*

THIS ARTICLE is based on research carried out in George Green's Secondary School between February and March 2003. George Green's is a mixed 11–18 comprehensive located on the Isle of Dogs in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The school is situated in an area of high social and economic need and there is a history of racism in the area.

The research looked at a project the school put in place to take 40 Year 10 and 11 pupils to Northern Ireland to learn about conflict resolution and the effects of discrimination. The project was established following violence between different racial groups in the school in November 2001.

The school faced a particular challenge as the racism it had to deal with was not white pupils versus other minority ethnic pupils but white, black and other minority groups versus the Bangladeshi pupils. The research involved interviews with the Senior Management Team, classroom teachers and support staff. Observation work was also undertaken and the views of students involved in the project were sought through a questionnaire and discussion group.

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A whole school approach

Whilst the research focused on the conflict resolution project put in place by the school, it is essential to place the project in the context of the whole school approach to equality in George Green's. Celebrating diversity and promoting equality are central to the ethos of the school. A number of policies are in place, which are implemented and promoted in every aspect of school life.

The importance attached to equality is advertised throughout the corridors and classrooms of George Green's with posters displaying the diversity of students at the school. All posters carry the slogan "all different, all equal". The "Message from the Principal" at the beginning of the school prospectus and governors' report to parents states that: "Our Equal Opportunities Policy informs everything that goes on in the school."

The school also promotes integration between different racial groups through seating plans for lessons and for buses used in school trips and visits. The seating plan mixes students by gender and ethnicity.

The activity

The pupils spent a week in Northern Ireland and were divided into different houses with each house having a gender and racial balance. The pupils lived with one another, cooked food for each other and engaged in sporting activities such as rock climbing and canoeing. The issue of racism and its effects were discussed and pupils were encouraged to talk openly about their views and feelings.

The pupils also met other school aged pupils from different sides of the religious divide in Belfast. On the pupils' return from Northern Ireland the school established a young adult peer network, known as the "Unity Cru" in which the pupils were given responsibility for tackling conflict in the school.

The activity was extremely popular amongst students who went to Northern Ireland. In the questionnaire students were asked to record whether they enjoyed the activity on a scale of one to ten, with one being "had a brilliant time" and ten being "didn't enjoy it at all". The average score was two with 58 per cent of pupils rating the activity one and 92 per cent of pupils giving the activity a one, two or three.

The selection of the pupils was important to the success of the project and its perception amongst the wider school community. The youth and community worker explained how the selection procedure worked:

"We look out for kids we think have influence in the school. Recommendations come from tutors and heads of year. We want kids that will make an impact and we take kids who are both positive and negative role models in the school. We currently take pupils from year 10 and 11 but we are looking to involve pupils from year 9 in the future."

The pupils said that the trip was viewed positively in the school community and that there was kudos in being selected to go. Pupils had quite a high awareness of why they were chosen; some said they were asked because they were the “trouble-makers” and others thought that the ones who were asked were the “popular ones”.

The success of the activity

The evidence gathered from pupils in both the questionnaire and the discussion group showed that they viewed the activity as successful. The discussions with the members of the senior management team, classroom teachers, the youth and community worker and the team leader of the school supervisors also showed that the activity was seen as beneficial to the school and the pupils who took part in it. The successful effects of the activity can be grouped into the following categories:

- reduction in racial conflict and fighting in the school;
- positive effect on the culture of the school;
- greater integration between pupils who went to Northern Ireland;
- positive effects on the behaviour of students who were chosen to take part in the activity; and
- a change in the attitudes of students who took part in the activity towards racism.

Reducing conflict

The data and information collected through the pupil questionnaire revealed that the pupils who had attended the trip to Northern Ireland felt that the activity had helped to reduce racial conflict in the school. Comments included:

“Well everything’s calm nowadays so it’s had a good impact.”

“Not as many racial fights as there was.”

“Stopped a lot of racial conflict.”

The pupils in the discussion group said they had noticed a palpable change in the atmosphere around the school and that there was less fighting and racial tension.

Changing the culture of the school

The atmosphere and culture within the school were said to be changing for the better. The fact that pupils who were once at the centre of the racial conflict

were playing a role in trying to resolve conflict was one of the positive changes in culture and behaviour that had occurred as a result of the trip to Northern Ireland. The assistant head (social inclusion) stated in the interview that:

“We’ve moved the culture on so that it is good to be a person who can help people resolve conflict. So there’s kudos in that now.”

In the discussion group pupils said that they made an effort to pacify racial tensions and that large-scale fights between rival gangs were less likely. The students said that they were now more vocal in promoting tolerance and were actively involved in preventing conflict. The assistant head (social inclusion) gave the following example when asked about the benefits of the activity, supporting the points made by the students themselves:

“there has been a massive difference. Nobody sat together, talked together or anything like that ... Generally, somebody will come shooting down when there’s trouble and then we’ll pull them in ... But if it’s been brewing, we usually know. A came to me two days ago and said can I talk to you. He said it’s brewing with B. Then A went to see D who’s one of the leaders in the room next door, and said can you help me sort it out. It’s unheard of before.”

Another important factor to come out of the discussion group and questionnaire was that the school had been successful in developing the confidence and ability of the pupils to be positive role models in the school. It was clear in the discussion group that many of the young people saw themselves as role models and did not want to let themselves, the teachers and the fellow members of the “Unity Cru” down by behaving badly. Comments included:

“Yeah some of them can go back and become a role model for the younger generation.”

“Everyone else now looks up to you and then you’ve got to be a good example to everyone else.”

Integration

The trip to Northern Ireland helped create some friendships that previously had not existed and even where friendships were not formed helped create a better understanding of different cultures and racial groups and improved team working skills amongst the pupils. The improved integration and understanding between pupils took place as a result of the racial and gender mixing in the different houses during the trip.

The assistant head said:

“the work you do is so intense that you have to confront your feelings about it and they have to say how they feel in front of people and, by the end of the week, you’ve got pupils saying ‘I never thought I’d say this about ...’ .”

The mixed houses had a positive effect on the pupils’ views of other students. It also led to greater levels of trust and understanding. The pupils in the discussion group said that they had learned a lot from the trip to Northern Ireland and that the experience had impacted considerably on their personal attitudes towards people of different ethnic groups.

By living and socialising with people from different backgrounds, pupils said they overcame their own personal prejudices and that the similarities rather than the differences between the individuals from different racial groups were highlighted. Comments included:

“Now when you are living together, you don’t have much of a choice you have to [get on]. It comes naturally.”

“Everyone was helping each other ... we went from handing out the plates ... never even argued or nothing, just handed out the plates, putting them all down nice and neatly. He was going, do you want help with the food? I thought, yeah, wicked man.”

Positive effects on the behaviour of students

As well as helping to promote integration the trip also had a positive effect on the individual pupils who were chosen to go to Northern Ireland. The staff members who had been involved in the day-to-day management of the activity were able to point to individual students who were seen to have changed. The assistant head said that:

“One of the boys is well into the sixth form now. He used to be terrible but he’s completely changed.”

Evidence for the positive effects that the activity has had on pupils also came from the students themselves:

“Yeah because before I went on the trip, I was like going downhill and now I’m just gradually going uphill.”

“We were quite trouble makers before, so we’ve sort of got that reputation and now we’re trying to make amends as it were.”

The trip also helped with the personal development of the pupils. Students in the discussion group noted that the experience had made them more confident and assured about their cultural identity. New experiences during the trip allowed the students to discover qualities in themselves, such as leadership and team-working skills. Comments by people in the discussion group reflected the fact that pupils don't want to be seen as letting themselves and staff who have invested time in them down:

“It keeps yourself on track as well, because you know you've got that sense of responsibility. You can't let someone else see you doing something stupid because you're part of the “Unity-Cru” so it keeps yourself in check as well.”

Change in attitude towards racism

The pupils were most emphatic about the change that the trip had upon their attitude towards racism and discrimination. In the questionnaire when asked “Did the trip to Belfast improve your understanding and ability to get along with different groups of pupils in the school?” 100 per cent of pupils responded positively. Comments made by pupils about their understanding of racism and discrimination included:

“It's silly to fight over people's skin colour.”

“It made me realise that fighting don't solve nothing, and that racism upsets everyone not just one person.”

The factors that made the activity successful

A whole school approach

The whole school approach to equal opportunities in George Green's has enabled the school to have the secure foundations on which to work to improve the behaviour and change the racist or prejudiced attitudes of some of its pupils. The equal opportunities activity that has been discussed in this study has built upon these secure foundations with a small number of some of the previously most troublesome pupils.

The pupils were perceptive and saw the multi-cultural workforce in George Green's as significant. The fact that the school was actually practising what it preached was recognised by the students.

Investing in pupils

From the evidence collected one of the main factors that has led to the success of the activity was the investment made in the pupils by the school and the staff involved. Many of the students selected had been involved in fights, had

poor behaviour records and were academically underachieving. The activity was successful because relationships were established between students and staff.

Secondly, the pupils have seen that the school recognises that they have the ability to be positive role models and that the school believes that they have something good to contribute to the school community. Thirdly, the mix of activities that the pupils undertake in Northern Ireland and the areas in which the “Unity Cru” have been involved in increased the confidence and self-belief of these students.

Learning through experience

Students participating in the discussion group and questionnaire recognised that living with people from different backgrounds helped break down misunderstandings and ensured a greater awareness and understanding of different cultures. The living arrangements ensured that pupils learned to work together and also that they socialised in their own informal environment away from the supervision of adults.

During the trip pupils saw that united and integrated communities could work. This practical approach to the problems faced by the school was one of the reasons why the activity has been successful.

The adults involved in the activity were also recognised by the pupils as being people who were approachable and prepared to listen to them. The individual contribution of the staff involved in the project was undoubtedly a core reason for its success.

Pupil ownership

The discussion group with students revealed a real sense of enthusiasm for and ownership of the trip to Northern Ireland and the “Unity Cru”. The projects appeared to instil an enthusiasm for tolerance and integration in the students themselves.

The majority of pupils said that they were initially attracted by the prospect of a week off school and missing lessons. However, it was clear from the discussion group and interviews with the school staff that a process of conversion occurred in which pupils felt they are making relationships on their terms and taking ownership of the issues involved through a high level of participation.

Conclusion

George Green’s is a school situated in an area of East London with a history of racism and racial problems. The school has made equal opportunities central to everything that it does. Equal Opportunities is not seen as an “add on” to

the work of the school but is seen as a way of raising standards, ensuring that its pupils are able to live in a multi-cultural society and have a prejudice-free environment in which to learn.

The staff members at George Green's who took part in this study are aware that they have a long way to go until they have a school with complete integration between the different ethnic groups. However, this study has shown that the enthusiasm and dedication of the staff in George Green's to tackling discrimination is affecting and changing the attitudes and the behaviour of students.

The staff members at George Green's when faced with rising violence and racial conflict did not brush the problem aside and allow a vicious cycle of violence and negativity to damage the school. Instead it sought to tackle the issue head-on with an innovative and different approach to the issue. The approach taken by the school has been successful and this is seen in the comments and views of the students.

The approach taken by George Green's provides an insight into how a school can mainstream equality issues and put in place projects which successfully change the behaviour of individual students and the culture of the school as a whole. ■

This article is based on research carried out by the NUT as part of the "Create Equality in Education" (CREE) project which is funded by the European Commission. The CREE project aims to evaluate the factors that make schools successful in tackling discrimination and promoting equality. The NUT is working with partners in Denmark, Germany and Spain.

Inclusion:

concepts, capacity building and the (rocky) road to consensus

Abstract: *One of the problems of moving towards a more inclusive system is a lack of shared understanding about what “inclusion” actually means. This article discusses the measures that need to be taken if schools are to implement inclusive practice in education and devise new ways of overcoming barriers to participation and learning.*

Concepts

Recent developments in the field of special educational needs in the United Kingdom make it an exciting time for all those working in the field of inclusion. Staff working in schools largely support the new duties, and changes in the SEN and Disability Act (SENDA) are to be reinforced and developed in the new SEN Action programme. Certainly, the National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN) subscribes to early intervention, effective and equitable support, an inclusive educational system and enforceable civil rights for disabled pupils and students.

The area of inclusion is, however, fraught with both conceptual confusion and political controversy. This article will touch on these issues, but for reasons of space will take a broad-brush approach to focusing on the areas that NASEN feels are most salient.

Provision for children with special educational needs has come a long way in a relatively short time. Only 30 years ago it was common to talk about the “dull” child. It was as recently as 1971 that one group of learners, those categorised as having “severe learning difficulties”, was deemed to be even worthy of education.¹ Twenty years ago the descriptor “maladjusted child” was in common use, and less than ten years ago, there was no nationally agreed, statutory guidance governing SEN procedure in mainstream schools (Garner 2000).²

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Provision for children experiencing difficulties within mainstream schools grew as a result of a gradual recognition that some pupils were marginalised within and sometimes excluded from existing arrangements for the provision of education. As provision developed during the latter part of the 20th century, there was an increased emphasis on notions of integration. It has been argued that the current emphasis on inclusive rather than integrated education is another step along this historical road. For Ainscow (2000),¹ it is, however, a major leap, as the aim is to transform mainstream schooling in ways that will increase its capacity for responding to all learners. In this way, much of the status quo will be challenged.

One problem in moving to a more inclusive system is a lack of shared understanding about what this means. The problems of defining “inclusion” have been discussed many times.³ I do not wish to revisit such debates in detail here, suffice to say that inclusion has been seen as an issue amongst other things of placement; as social inclusion related to issues of social justice; and as educational inclusion. The problem of an “inclusive” school within a system where schools are already “exclusive” by way of geography has also been noted, as has the contradiction of educational inclusion whilst measures of “excellence” are valued.

LEA reviews of SEN provision often reveal substantial parental and teacher support for the retention of special schools.

This lack of conceptual clarity has made it difficult to gain some coherency in the debate, and has also exacerbated the difficulty in identifying the success of “inclusive” systems when a plethora of studies are examining different dimensions of the concept. Inclusion is a notoriously difficult concept to operationalise.

These differing understandings also lead to a challenging and often contradictory context within which leaders within special educational are working. An example of the effects of such confusion is of one headteacher who expressed the view that the logical extension of some versions of inclusion is the eradication of special education and therefore his own school.⁴

Another challenge is to develop a research agenda that can examine the effectiveness of inclusive practice.⁵ It has been argued that there is a lack of studies demonstrating that the outcomes of inclusive programmes significantly improve the lives of young people with SEN. There have been a number of studies that have examined the evaluation of inclusion, and overall they are not positive endorsements of the efficacy of inclusive systems.³

This lack of conclusive evidence is partly down to the lack of conceptual clarity around inclusion, making research studies difficult to compare, although it has been argued that empirical evidence is either inconclusive or unnecessary, because the issue is one of rights, not evidence.⁶

Professional development

Significant expertise does already exist in schools, which could form the basis of a more inclusive pedagogy. Ainscow¹ believes that in most schools, the expertise needed to teach all pupils effectively is usually available amongst the teaching staff. The task is one of finding ways of making better use of existing knowledge and skills, including the skill of working together in order to devise new ways of overcoming barriers to participation and learning.

Models of professional development do not always meet this vision, however. The problem with current perceptions of professional development for leadership is that they are based on a top-down model in which the leader is visionary and everyone else follows.⁴

This is problematic for special education where the emphasis has traditionally been on bottom-up approaches, focusing on individual children and how their particular needs can be met over time, and networking approaches promoting inter-agency work that cuts across organisational barriers. In short, special education professionals are clustered around the child as the unit of analysis and support, rather than organisational goals.

Capacity needs to be built through in-service continuing professional development and attention to the reform of initial teacher training. There is a need for professional development that enables and supports an examination of the implications of inclusion for schools. However, the “modernisation” agenda is making demands around officially approved knowledge and tasks, and so interest in the area of SEN may not be determining choices in professional development courses. Professional development needs are being redefined in terms of short-term technical and behavioural training about how the reform proposals can be implemented.

Research demonstrates that teachers greatly value training that is context-specific and that is tied to their present role. The implications of this are that current generic continuing professional development (CPD) for performance management should more generally be located in SEN (Powers et al, 2001).⁴ Many respondents in Powers’ study indicated an interest in professional development that is instrumental in developing professional expertise, rather than being aimed at fuelling further career development. One respondent said that:

“Currently, I feel that there is insufficient availability of professional development in leadership and management which focuses on practitioners in special education. My role as head of a PRU (Pupil Referral Unit) and the

complementary services attached to it is a demanding one, but also seemingly an unusual one. I feel quite isolated at times and the ability to share experiences with others in a similar position would be helpful” (quoted in Powers et al, 2001).⁴

Another headteacher wrote, “...although the work of a headteacher in a special school is very similar to the work of a headteacher in a mainstream school, there are differences and these are not recognised or valued!” (quoted in Powers et al, 2001).⁴

The marginalisation of special education seems also to apply to headteachers, and suggests a degree of separateness that exists within the educational system.

Initial teacher training

Despite the revised QTS standards, special needs and disability issues still receive only a cursory mention within programmes of initial teacher training. It is widely acknowledged that student teachers receive an inadequate preparation regarding SEN. Evidence continues to point to the “conceptual and practical unpreparedness of many newly qualified teachers (NQTs)”.² This is especially worrying, as they will form the future workforce that will implement inclusion initiatives in education.

Garner also points to a failure to address widespread shortcomings in SEN-focused teacher education. He points out the reality that “even peripheral coverage of practical SEN issues (let alone debates on the complexities of inclusion per se) in teacher education is conspicuously absent in many ITE programmes, both undergraduate and postgraduate”. This has led, in Garner’s view, to the concept of inclusion becoming demeaned and discredited.

Within the previous standards, there was even a tacit acknowledgement that NQTs will be unable to meet the requirements of school based intervention (as outlined in the SEN Code) by the comment that:

“...those to be awarded QTS must...demonstrate that they...plan their teaching to achieve progression in pupils’ learning through (v) identifying pupils who have special educational needs...and knowing where to get help in order to give positive and targeted support” (quoted in Garner, 2000).²

A shift to school-based training is also an area of concern when considering the development of a more inclusive system. Less time is now available for the consideration of important conceptual issues in SEN, including debates on the efficacy of inclusive approaches. Students now have to rely on picking up

substantive information and messages from the ethos of a school within which they are training.

If, as it has been argued, schools and teachers have differing understandings of inclusion or even SEN, then it follows that students will pick up a variety of messages. In addition, the quality of this input is likely to vary from excellent to minimal. The “permeation” of SEN into the subject-based courses has meant that it is very much left to individual course teams or tutors to specify the extent of the emphasis on SEN and inclusive education issues.

To rectify this situation, Garner recommends, amongst other things, that school-based programmes must place greater emphasis on SEN/inclusion issues and that adequate time has to be made available for them, as well as appropriate funding to ensure that all students can receive structured input from SENCOs and others.

Special schools and the issue of placement

The DfES Working Group report on special schools⁷ has re-invigorated the debate around the future of special schools. The Government will give its response to this report through the SEN Action programme. The SENCO Forum debates reflect the existing lack of consensus around this emotive issue.⁸ Understandably, many parents would wish to have their children educated alongside their friends in community schools.

LEA reviews of SEN provision often reveal substantial parental and teacher support for the retention of special schools, however. This does not mean that parents, pupils and professional workers do not welcome attempts to develop more inclusive arrangements in mainstream schools for children with special educational needs. Complete closure of special schools, however, will only lead to further high profile campaigns to save them (see, for example, Waltham Forest, where Iain Duncan Smith, the former Conservative Party leader, recently intervened in the debate).

One participant on the Forum found out that the provision within a special school or unit was not always as effective as it should be as teachers and additional staff did not always have specialist qualifications, and were consequently liable to have limited expectations of pupils’ progress.

The opposite view expressed was that staff in special provision usually had extensive and relevant experience, which enabled them to respond more appropriately to pupils’ needs and to some of the challenging behaviour presented. Also, as part of a team of experienced teachers they had access to mutual support and advice. In some instances of special provision, some very positive outcomes for pupils were achieved. In particular, some pupils were helped by intensive, initial, segregated provision, which enabled them to participate more effectively when transferred to the mainstream sector. In principle,

SENCO Forum participants maintained that, while the principle of inclusion was valid, it was crucial to consider whether it always met an individual pupil's needs.

NASEN recognises that inclusion is not a simple concept restricted to issues of placement, and believes that special schools have a valuable place in assisting the further development of inclusion. The DfEE (now DfES) CD ROM and video package "Connecting Schools for Inclusion"⁹ which DfES and NASEN promoted at nation-wide conferences in 2001, gives many examples of mainstream and special schools working together with good practice case studies on outreach, dual placement and effective inclusion.

Supporting inclusion

The effective use of teaching assistants* is a key factor in developing inclusive schools. The deployment of TAs, however, needs careful thought and consideration. Effective use of TAs within the classroom can be down to the personal relationship between the teacher and the TA, but planning can facilitate such good relationships.

Schools need to provide opportunities for all TAs to develop the necessary skills of collaboration and understanding to enable them to provide effective support for pupils.¹⁰ One single model of classroom support is not appropriate for all settings and will depend upon factors such as the needs of pupils, the requirements of a particular task and the skills of the TA.

Although one single model of support may be difficult to agree, Ainscow¹ has outlined his view of the best use of TAs to promote inclusion. He recognises that the constant presence of an assistant may be socially reassuring for a student, and this can also facilitate interactions between students. However, Ainscow documents many instances where assistants' actions acted as a barrier between students and their classmates, particularly where assistants elected to group supported students together.

As a consequence, these students were encouraged to talk to and seek help from the assistant rather than from their classmates or the teacher, resulting in the teacher spending little time with some students with special educational needs. In effect, this means that the teacher may carry less responsibility for some members of the class than might otherwise be the case.

The way forward is the development of a school policy on working with assistants that avoids such problems. One significant element of good practice is that teachers and support assistants establish prior agreements on how their contributions would be made in such a way as to offer maximum support to all members of the class.¹

* The debate around this term is recognised, and I use it also to mean learning support assistants and teacher assistants.

To fulfil their role adequately, it is clear that TAs need systematic on-going professional development. Hopefully, the Government's vision for TAs will help to clarify the training needs of TAs and ensure a more consistent system of professional development. It also remains to be seen whether the controversial proposals for Higher Teaching Assistants will ensure that TAs become an even more significant part of developing inclusive education systems.

The future: earlier, joined-up and supported intervention?

Whatever the debates around definition and the evaluation of evidence, the policy framework is based around inclusion. Part of the current DfES review of the SEN Action Programme will focus upon improving the identification of and support for children with learning difficulties and disabilities and their families from birth, in early childhood and during school and promoting early intervention and consistent practice in meeting children's needs.

The DfES guidance, *Together from the Start*,¹¹ takes a practical and thorough holistic approach to meeting the needs of young disabled children and their families, and systematically reviews the delivery of services to families from health, social services and education.

Another exciting development is Children's Trusts, outlined in the Green paper, *Every Child Matters*.¹² Children's Trusts will enable local partners to jointly plan, commission, finance and deliver services for children. As these initiatives bed down, we will ideally see a greater focus upon earlier intervention, better joined-up working between agencies, and a more consistent use of support staff in meeting the needs of children with SEN. The skills and experience of early years workers will be vital in making this vision a reality, and need to be a focus of CPD initiatives.

The SENCO Forum is a reminder of the challenge facing teachers in mainstream schools of responding to pupils' particular learning needs in the midst of the many current pressures. The Forum found that meeting special needs could only be achieved if teachers and other staff saw it as their obligation to increase their teaching repertoire accordingly.

If teachers felt inadequate to meet pupils' needs, the guilt engendered often led to a perception that these needs were "special". Therefore, one of the most important considerations related to the attitudes of staff in schools and their responses to individual needs. Such commitment benefits all pupils, of course.⁸ Despite such staff commitment, without concerted attention to the shortcomings of initial teacher training, equitable funding and a coherent SEN CPD strategy, the pursuit of inclusion will be a major challenge.

It is a challenge for policy makers also. If the policy framework is firmly in favour of (a particular version of) inclusion, what is also needed is an

examination of the interpretation and implementation of inclusion in practice. A focus on the rights of children is necessary, but underpinned by an analysis of the effectiveness of their education.

The sterile debate around settings needs to move to look at outcomes and experiences, both qualitatively and quantitatively, in an attempt to identify causal relationships.³ We also need an examination of the descriptive case studies that are seen as “good” practice to examine whether or not such a label is correctly applied. A rigorous research programme that can demonstrate the effectiveness of inclusion, together with a coherent policy strategy, will further the issue of children’s rights to mainstream places. ■

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Putting children first

Abstract: *Children's life chances remain unequal with vulnerable children caught in a cycle of poverty and crime. In this article, Margaret Hodge, Minister of State for Children, outlines how the reforms proposals in the Children's Green Paper will help to protect vulnerable children and enable them to lead fulfilled lives.*

Margaret Hodge

Margaret Hodge is Minister of State for Children in the Department for Education and Skills.

TRAGEDIES like that of Victoria Climbié should never be allowed to happen again. The new Children's Green Paper *Every Child Matters*¹ offers us the hope that we can both protect children more effectively in the future and enable vulnerable children to live more fulfilled lives.

Victoria's death underlined a collective administrative, managerial and professional failure by those charged to protect our most vulnerable children. There were 12 missed opportunities by the social services, police and the health services to save her. One council's practice guidance was ten years out of date. Another gave her five "unique" reference numbers. Retrieving files was like playing the national lottery.

Haringey, which had responsibility for her welfare for seven months, lost key parts of her file, and its social worker hardly spoke to Victoria. The police failed to see her. Hospitals did not assess her needs fully. An NSPCC centre failed over six months to follow up a referral. She was in contact with plenty of protection services, but all failed her.

Between 50 and 100 children a year die from abuse or neglect. Some have been the subject of inquiries, others not. Every child should get the right help at the earliest possible occasion.

But a lack of help – sometimes – is not the only way in which vulnerable children are let down by the system. Only eight per cent of children in care receive five good GCSEs, compared with half the population as a whole. They are far more likely to truant and far less likely to remain in education post-16.

Such statistics explain why vulnerable children too often end up in a cycle of poverty and crime.

Lessons learned

Important practical steps are proposed which put in place the lessons from our inquiry. Professionals should share information with each other about children with whom they work. We have to have clear accountability in our system. The buck has to stop with somebody. Too often this does not happen. So, any legal or technical barriers to pooling data must be quickly removed.

A wider programme

But these vital reforms are only part of a wider programme to improve children's services. As well as seeking to improve procedures in children's services, the Green Paper seeks to develop Sure Start and children's centres, where parents can access childcare, toy libraries, medical support and education under one roof. There is recognition, too, that preventing things from going wrong in young people's lives requires intervention at the earliest stage.

The new Children's Green Paper has two main goals – the first is to protect children, and the second is to ensure that every child can fulfil their potential. And it recognises that the important practical steps it proposes to address the lessons from our inquiry should not be seen in isolation from a wider programme to improve children's services.

How will the reforms help?

There are five aspects to the reform programme. The first is prevention – tackling those aspects of a child's upbringing that cause later problems. While the Government can claim some credit for lifting half a million children from poverty and improving education and childcare, the Green Paper reminds us that children's life chances remain unequal.

There is a long way to go before child poverty is eliminated. The importance of better support for parents and families is vital. Parents must not be lost in the system or forced to jump through needless hoops to find the support they need.

Tackling these inequalities means addressing the causes of poverty. The new children's centres, where a range of services are brought together on a single site, or the Sure Start programme with its 500 centres, which has been a model internationally for such provision, are starting to make a real difference to the lives of families in disadvantaged circumstances. Providing better support for parents is a crucial part of this process.

The second goal is to intervene early. We must reach children before problems become a crisis, particularly in cases of child abuse and neglect. But such early intervention can also reduce truancy and crime in later life. Services

should pool information about children in their care. Each agency involved with children can benefit from a common assessment framework, where a child's case notes follows him or her. One person should have overall responsibility for the welfare of individual children at risk. By working in teams which bring together the range of services, based where possible in schools or children's centres, there should be a more coherent and rapid response when teachers, childcare workers and others working with children express their concerns.

The third goal is to improve specialist services. It is no good identifying children with more acute needs if we don't have the therapeutic services or the foster carers who can give them the help they need. There is more money being spent on children's and adolescents' mental health services and the number of training places for speech and language therapy has increased by over 30 per cent since 1997. By next year, only in emergencies should homeless families with children be placed in bed and breakfast accommodation, and local authorities must now prioritise accommodation for those leaving care and other vulnerable teenagers. These are welcome first steps, but more is needed.

In its fourth goal, the Green Paper recognises the need for services to work together to work effectively. The Climbie report revealed not only a failure to act, but also a failure to pool information, assessments and resources. The proposal to introduce a new Children's Director to take overall responsibility for local authority education and social services provision can improve accountability. I want Children's Trusts, which integrate several different children's services, to become more widespread once the current pilots have run their course. The new duty to protect children should increase the priority with which child protection is seen by local services, and their ability to work together will be inspected under the leadership of OFSTED.

A fifth and vital aspect of the Green Paper is its recognition of how important it is that the right people are doing the job. Sometimes, people argue that

what happened to Victoria amounts to a general condemnation of those working in our public services. I don't agree. We need to invest more in recruiting and training the best people to work with children, particularly in social work. The Green Paper recognises that work needs to be done to improve career structures and to introduce better training to improve professional skills and team working, so that they work better together. The Green Paper proposes a new Children's Workforce Unit and a Sector Skills Council for children to bring together employers.

It is no good identifying children with more acute needs if we don't have the therapeutic services or the foster carers who can give them the help they need.

Victoria's death could have been avoided. We must put in place the procedures, the support, the resources and the trained staff that are needed to avoid such a tragedy recurring. ■

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Making a difference

Abstract: *If schools are to raise standards for all pupils they need to reject the concept of uniformity of provision and instead adapt provision to meet the different needs of pupils. This article examines one school's attempts to raise performance and close the gap between the highest and lowest achievers.*

IN MICHAEL FULLAN'S brilliant book, *Leading in a Culture of Change*,¹ he outlines five themes necessary to bring about significant transformation. One of these themes is "Moral Purpose", which Fullan defines in five ways:

- Being deeply passionate about improving life;
- Being intensely committed to betterment;
- Making a difference in the lives of students;
- Improving the quality of how we live together; and
- Anchoring practice in beliefs and values.

It is this desire to make a difference that characterises so many teachers and is their motivation for taking on the challenges of working in some very difficult situations. David Hopkins spoke to a meeting of headteachers in 2002 about his ambition to "Raise the Bar – Close the Gap", namely the desire to lift standards overall but at the same time to reduce the difference between the performance of the best and those at the other end of achievement. This is not easy to do but it is a worthy aim.

In the early days of my teaching career I had little idea about such matters. Pleased to have interest expressed in me by a fine direct grant grammar school in Newcastle I gladly accepted their offer of a teaching post where I had 11 wonderful years. It was unmistakably high performing, but so it should have been, with selection procedures demanding and sophisticated skilfully sifting out the most able students. I have no doubt they received an excellent education but it was a far cry from the experiences of so many only a mile or two away.

John Rowling

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From there I went to Ashington in Northumberland, to a new school formed by amalgamating two secondary modern schools to form one new comprehensive school. It was as different as chalk from cheese to The Royal Grammar School, Newcastle. Frankly, I had not realised how far apart educational establishments could be. It was a great challenge to make a difference but maybe even more necessary there than in Newcastle. I attempted to make a difference for 11 years in Ashington before taking up headship in Nunthorpe School, then part of Cleveland LEA but now in Redcar and Cleveland.

In some ways we are all products of our environment and personal history and I was able to bring to Nunthorpe the collective experiences of life at the top with life nearer the bottom of the academic scale. It has never been a case of *either* one *or* the other but at Nunthorpe it has always been a matter of *both* one *and* the other. Two years ago there were three students at this school who achieved 37 A* Grades at GCSE between them – impressive they were too – but in the same cohort were two students who came here each in the lowest three per cent according to NFER scores when they were 11 years old. One achieved nine GCSE grades at C or higher and the other five. If anything, their achievements pleased us more than those brilliant performances from the brightest and best.

I am sickened by the demeaning of student performance every August. It may be that the exam system for the brightest students does not differentiate sufficiently well on its own for the top universities but there are thousands of young people who are not in that elite group whose achievements are perfectly capable of being measured by GCSE. These students need to have something worthwhile to show for their efforts. At Nunthorpe we have planned to give all students the opportunity to do their best so that the outcome of their performance is that their life chances are enhanced and they feel a sense of self-esteem.

We take great delight in seeing students and their families enjoying personal success, whatever level of ability they are, and have learned the value of celebrating with them. Life is made up of people of vastly varying abilities but it seems to us that each has a right to be given support, encouragement and guidance to make the most of what they have got. This desire to make a significant difference – to raise the bar and close the gap – was the attempt of one institution to address a problem but led to a variety of ideas which have been implemented over several years, changing inevitably year on year as we reflect on practice; sifting the best and dropping the ineffective processes.

Mentoring

It is important to think before we act. The comfort of off-the-shelf solutions can be delusory. Some time ago we consciously decided at Nunthorpe that we

would work out what we believed about an issue before we initiated actions. As far as student achievement was concerned, we worked out that girls needed separate and different approaches to boys and that more able students needed a variation on approaches used with less able students.

The concept of uniformity of provision was rejected; rather we embraced the notion of equality of opportunity. This equality was interpreted as an entitlement to the best we could offer but would mean different provision for different groups of students each according to perceived need. We gave students what we believed would work best for them. This was taught to students and parents specifically as our philosophy and was widely accepted as fair.

We believed that every student would be better off with personal support, and formed groups of teachers whose role would be to mentor individuals. Students were mentored individually (for more able and talented) and in groups of five or six (boys at C/D borderline). With gifted students, attention was paid to maximising the benefits of time spent, we rarely found that these students did not give considerable effort.

Sometimes, with girls in particular, they were indiscriminate in the time they sacrificed to work, often putting in far more hours than the commensurate benefits warranted. We spent time developing students' ability to interrogate, think deeply and research. Mentors acted as advocates for these students on occasions and discussed progress and problems with teachers on their behalf. We set targets and worked to help students achieve them by spending quality time discussing work with them.

As for C/D borderline boys we believed that they worked best competitively in teams, to short term targets, needed regular and close monitoring with accountability procedures built in and responded to specific kinds of praise and reward. Because generally speaking boys have a great sense of fun we called the teams we created silly names and published league tables showing how these teams were performing. The rewards were tangible, and became highly regarded by boys.

There was considerably more to it than that, some of which is recorded in *Heading Towards Excellence* (2002)², all of which contributed to a major leap in the performance of boys in the school. What we discovered is that when boys decide to learn, girls improve! It seems odd but it is really obvious that if boys decide to apply themselves for some reason the classroom atmosphere will change, which in turn will enable girls to learn better.

It seemed clear to us too that performance in a school can be detrimentally affected by a relatively small number of unruly students for whom school is more about social life than learning. School is about social life, but that must not be at the expense of learning and need not be. We found that two things were important: first, we decided to identify who these difficult students were, and deal with them with a monitoring scheme of their own.

As with C/D borderline students, we concentrated on rewarding the effort made by these students, believing that if effort changes so will performance. We explained that we would be measuring their effort on three separate occasions each week during lessons but did not tell them which lessons.

Over a three-week period we gathered in these scores and then met the students to discuss the findings. These were compared after the subsequent three weeks and rewards offered for progress. It did not work for everybody but there were a considerable number whose horns were pulled in because they got undivided attention for supportive rather than disciplinary reasons. In fact, I mentored over half of these students myself so that the importance of the initiative was obvious to students and the staff.

The second issue is that if these matters are important, money should be spent on them. Possible areas of helpful expenditure are:

- Smaller classes in year 11;
- Time allocated to mentors in lieu of their commitments to students outside curriculum time;
- Senior appointments paid for overseeing mentoring schemes; and
- Prizes and awards for interim successes chosen to offer maximum motivational potential.

Too much has been expected to be done voluntarily, on top of all the other things a teacher has to do. Why should work of this kind be dependent on goodwill?

It is of paramount importance to appoint the best, most dedicated and committed staff to lead mentoring initiatives. Too many schools use their best staff to troubleshoot and not enough on finding creative, energising, and inspiring ways to lead and motivate young people and staff. Team leaders

...performance in a school can be detrimentally affected by a relatively small number of unruly students for whom school is more about social life than learning.

should be dynamic, reflective forward thinkers driven by a deep moral purpose, intent on making a difference.

Such people exist in most schools and need to be used and appropriately paid for such an exciting and demanding role. It is my view that headteachers should be actively involved in activities of this kind because promotion of

standards is amongst our most important roles. Leaving an issue of this magnitude to others conveys the wrong messages.

Dealing with leaders

It came as something of a surprise to find that in some schools teachers do not know what you have to do to achieve an A*. No wonder then that the gap is not closed nor the bar raised if the teachers seeking to help young people to reach the highest grade are not clear what you have to do to achieve it. Similarly it is true at the C/D borderline. We spent a considerable amount of time with all our teams in the early days of the emphasis on individual achievement dealing with this basic issue.

Heads of department have known for years that boys gain poorer coursework grades than girls. In fact, by the time the exams come round boys are under-performing girls by an insurmountable amount. The reason seemed obvious to us:

- Boys do not draft and redraft
- Boys do not prepare fully
- Boys do not take care over presentation
- Boys rush through in order to get it done
- Boys are last minute.

These matters are obvious but so are ways to put the problems right. All our faculties agreed to set interim deadlines not merely leave it to the end and be disappointed by the responses. At each deadline all boys were seen individually and coursework discussed so that advances could be made, and the final deadline met. In addition, a senior member of staff decided to co-ordinate the collection of all coursework to stop students playing off one teacher against another.

It was a mammoth job, easing the load on class teachers no end, but demanding great organisational skill. However, it meant that problems were flagged up early so that corrective action could be taken and it also meant that students knew they would be found out if they defaulted.

As in most cases with students, if they know they will be found out they do what they are supposed to do! In each year we have over 280 students. It is easy to imagine how much coursework that involves, but for two years the amount incomplete, or inadequately done, has been less than 20 pieces. That must make a difference to student achievement if coursework marks count as they do.

These are just two of the many ideas that staff have devised over the past five years to improve the performance of all students at Nunthorpe. Others include withdrawing students from selected lessons and devising a monitoring

programme, with inbuilt accountability and reward using the time released and most recently, the introduction of what we called private coaching for students.

We formed the view that in more affluent areas results achieved in some schools owe as much to private coaching undertaken in the community as to the quality of the school. This is particularly true in core subjects where the results of a department may well be significantly higher because parents buy in support to cover the inadequacies of the school. Teachers do not like it a lot but acknowledge that it happens. In 2003 we worked out what we believed about this and what the school could do about it. The 2003 examination results have confirmed the value of the private tuition scheme.

Many schools have devised schemes similar to these. There are very few new ideas but that does not matter – what is important is that schools care enough to want to raise the standard and to close the gap. Creating an enthusiastic group of teachers and then giving them autonomy, direction and support will lead any school forward.

At Nunthorpe a brilliant team of teachers worked miracles for our students. In five years GCSE results at five Cs and above have gone from 59 per cent to 79.1 per cent in 2002. Moral purpose is the great energiser but the sheer joy and exhilaration of exam results day counts for so much. In 2001 we started taking pictures of the celebration, the hugs and kisses, the excited phone calls and the togetherness of students and staff. These were the lead contribution to the first morning's staff meeting. What a place to start and what a hope to foster for the fruits of next year's endeavour. ■

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Gender: still an equality issue

Abstract: *While men and women's roles in society have changed significantly over the last seventy five years inequalities still remain. This article details the work that the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) is undertaking to challenge gender inequality. It also highlights the role that schools can play in ensuring that all children fulfil their potential.*

SEVENTY FIVE years ago women won the vote on equal terms with men. It was a landmark in progress towards equality for women and men. But in many other ways society was still very far from offering women and men equal opportunities. Your educational prospects were certainly linked to your sex – only 27 per cent of university students were women. Clearly we have come a long way since then, with more women than men now going on to higher education, and the question of boys' underachievement often dominating the educational agenda.

There have been many other significant changes in society since the 1920s too. In 70 per cent of couples now both partners are in paid work. Attitudes have changed. Very few people nowadays believe that women should have to stay at home and look after the house and the children. And this is reflected in the reality of women's lives: 73 per cent of women with dependent children aged five or over work, as do 53 per cent of women with children under five. Fathers are increasingly involved with the care of their children, now taking on a third of parental childcare.

Remaining inequalities

The EOC's research suggests that today there is a widespread belief in the importance of creating a fairer, more tolerant society. Nonetheless people do still experience unfairness in their daily lives. Last year there were more than 24,000 sex discrimination and equal pay cases at employment tribunals, and the real extent of discrimination is likely to be much greater than this, as many people do not want to risk rocking the boat at work even if they have been treated unfairly, or they feel it is something they just have to put up with.

Julie Mellor

Julie Mellor is Chair of the Equal Opportunities Commission.

The remaining inequalities are very clear. Women working full-time earn on average 19 per cent less than men working full-time. Women who work part-time can expect to take home 41 per cent less than a full-time male worker for every hour they work. Women are less likely than men to reach senior positions at work and they hold less than 10 per cent of the top positions in FTSE 100 companies, the police, the judiciary and trade unions.

The fact that women still take on the bulk of responsibility for childcare is a key cause of inequality. There is a dire shortage of affordable childcare – only one place for every five children under the age of eight, which means many women feel they have no choice but to take whatever job they can get to fit in around their caring responsibilities.

Meanwhile, although many employers have accepted that they need to give women more flexibility about their working hours and arrangements (albeit often in low paid jobs with little prospects), many men fear that similar requests from them will be frowned upon. So even though men express frustration at the long hours they work – the longest hours in Europe – and say they want to spend more time looking after their children, many feel it is not a real option for them. New rules on flexible working that require employers to consider these kind of requests from parents of young children should help bring about the change of culture that is needed, but it will take time and employers need to send out positive messages about their approach to flexible working to give employees who need it the confidence to ask. If the managing director is known to leave early a couple of times a week to collect his kids from school then others are more likely to talk about their own childcare responsibilities.

This has implications for the teaching profession too. Despite having a high proportion of female staff, the profession is actually very traditional in its work patterns. Fewer than 10 per cent of teachers work part-time, compared with 25 per cent of people in employment generally. Increasing the availability of part-time teaching has to be one of the most important steps that could be taken to increase the numbers of women returning to work after maternity leave.

As the population ages and the pool of people who provide care is shrinking, there is also an urgent need for employers to address the needs of people who care for older or disabled adults. Existing flexible working policies and services are primarily designed for parents of young children and rarely address the needs of employees with other caring responsibilities.

The role of education

So what can the education system do to help reduce inequality between women and men, and ensure that every individual has the opportunity to fulfil their potential?

Tackling boys' underachievement is clearly a pressing issue for Britain's education system and some excellent projects are underway. Making sure girls

also have the opportunity to fulfil their potential presents a different kind of challenge. They may be passing more exams than the boys, and according to new OECD research they are also more ambitious when planning their future careers, but unfortunately many of them will be denied the opportunity to fulfil their aspirations when they enter the labour market.

Women still work in a far narrower range of jobs than men. Three quarters of working women are still found in just five occupational groups – associate professional and technical (e.g. nurses), administration and secretarial work, personal services (e.g. caring for children or older people), sales and customer service and non-skilled manual work. Jobs which are classified as women's work command lower wages than men's work even when they require similar qualification levels, leading to inequalities in pay and income.

The EOC's Equal Pay Task Force Report identified occupational segregation as one of the key causes of the gender pay gap. Women aged between 18 and 20 are already earning 10 per cent less a week than men and that gap keeps on getting wider as they get older. Getting a degree helps, but women graduates still get paid less on average than their male counterparts.

This is partly because there are still such enormous differences between the choices of young women and young men. While women are increasingly moving into law, medicine (where women's applications for medical school now outnumber those from men) and accountancy, there is no similar movement into science, engineering, ICT and the skilled trades. At the same time, industry is experiencing major skills shortages. It is significant that those sectors which have the lowest numbers of women are also the sectors which are experiencing severe skills shortages.

Skills shortages are beginning to be recognised by the Department of Trade and Industry and by employers as key drivers on the demand side for widening recruitment into traditional sectors. There is currently no agenda on the supply side to widen subject and career choices. That's why the EOC recently launched *No more "jobs for the boys" or "jobs for the girls"* – an investigation into occupational segregation, which will focus on modern apprenticeships in five sectors: construction, plumbing, engineering, ICT and childcare.

The differences between women's and men's choices of modern apprenticeship are particularly stark: men still account for 99 per cent of modern apprentices in construction and 96 per cent of apprentices in engineering, while 97 per cent of childcare apprentices are women. When Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, welcomed the EOC's investigation, she highlighted the economic cost of occupational segregation: "The success of our economy depends on our ability to use the talents of all our people. Yet too many women are still trapped in low paid, low-skilled jobs."

The investigation will explore the relationship between gender segregation in training and at work and the skills and pay gaps in the UK. During the

investigation we will gather evidence from young people, schools and employers about the experience of making career choices and the kind of advice and support available.

The Commission also wants to hear about women's and men's experiences of training or working in a sector dominated by the opposite sex. We aim to create a wider understanding amongst key organisations and practitioners of the significant links between subject and training choices, occupation segregation, skills gaps and pay gaps.

In 1999 a small survey of Training and Enterprise Councils (now Learning and Skills Councils), highlighted the link between female-dominated Modern Apprenticeship sectors and low pay. The survey results showed, for example, that engineering and plumbing apprentices can earn twice as much as

Women aged between 18 and 20 are already earning 10 per cent less a week than men and that gap keeps on getting wider as they get older.

hairdressing and child-care apprentices. The EOC's investigation will explore this issue further with a survey of all 47 Learning and Skills Councils to identify how choice and equality are promoted by the system, including rates of pay. We are also carrying out a statistical overview of occupational segregation, skills gaps and pay gaps.

In 2004 we will examine the effectiveness of current initiatives to challenge stereotyped choices and carry out qualitative research, including focus groups, with young people, employers and training providers. We believe there may be need for improved advice and guidance on non-traditional career choices because of the increased focus on vocational training in the curriculum, which will require girls and boys to make choices, including vocational GCSEs at 14. Without intervention, it is highly likely that these early choices will be stereotyped and that the planned vocational routes into work via Modern Apprenticeships will continue to be characterised by overt segregation.

At the end of the investigation the EOC will publicise its recommendations for action to end this segregation. As we said when we launched the investigation: "The day that no-one gives it a second thought if the plumber who turns up on their doorstep is a woman, or if the nursery worker they leave their child with is a man will be the day we know women and men really do have an equal range of choices."

Education also has a key role to play in ensuring young people are aware of their rights and responsibilities. Citizenship classes are an ideal opportunity to make sure young people have a basic grasp of the discrimination laws and

know where they can find out more if they have questions. They should be given the chance to learn about why these laws are necessary, how they came into being, and how society has changed since they were introduced.

Other parts of the curriculum can also be used to encourage young people to think about equality issues. Personal, health and social education classes should offer a chance to challenge assumptions about women's and men's roles. There is still a widespread belief that childcare and domestic work is primarily women's work.

This means that many women nowadays are effectively doing two jobs – one outside the home, for which they get paid, and one at home, for which they do not. This is unsustainable and some end up leaving the labour market altogether, if they can afford to do so. At the same time, although some men do more than they used to our research found that most play a supporting role in the home and many feel pressure to work longer hours in order to support their family.

Young people should be challenged to think about what they want out of life in future, at work – ideally having the opportunity to gain work experience in non-traditional areas of work – and also at home. Although young women may think about their potential future role as a parent, young men are less likely to do so. They should be encouraged from an early age to understand the responsibilities of parenting and to view them as being shared between women and men.

The fact that society as a whole undervalues the role of the carer, or takes the caring women do for granted, is fundamental to many of the injustices that remain in today's society. It is one of the key reasons for women's lower pay and reduced opportunities in the labour market. It lies behind Britain's dire childcare shortage, and it affects women's ability to build up a decent pension, which means many spend their retirement living on the breadline.

Breaking the cycle of inequality that traps many people from a very early age is the biggest challenge we face, and education has a crucial role to play in achieving that goal. ■

The EOC wants to hear your views and experiences on the issue of occupational segregation. Why do you think women's and men's choices about education, training and work are still so different?

Please e-mail anne.madden@eoc.org.uk or write to: Anne Madden, Equal Opportunities Commission, Arndale House, Manchester M4 3EQ

Just curriculum work

Pat Thomson

Professor Pat Thomson is based at the University of Nottingham. She teaches Masters courses and supervises PhD candidates.

Before coming to the University of Nottingham in May 2003 she directed the professor doctorate in education on an offshore PhD programme at the University of South Australia.

Abstract: *This article describes how teacher-led change can raise educational standards and re-engage children in their local community. It argues that the National Curriculum needs to be flexible enough to allow for teacher input and to be varied if local circumstances require.*

TO ITS CREDIT, while campaigning for election, the Blair Government was not afraid to say that some students were not receiving sufficient benefit from their schooling. “Third way” inspired politicians were prepared to connect this lack of educational success with poverty, race and gender. Post election, Labour policy makers worked towards an educational entitlement for all children regardless of their life circumstances. The National Curriculum constitutes the entitlement. The Blair Government now claims that “doing better” in the incremental stages of the National Curriculum is the key to improved equity, quality learning, higher standards and better schools.

In a bitter irony, it seems that the rhetoric of social justice has been the rationale for the development of a highly centralised and coercive educational regime, in which English schools are now some of the most centralised and surveilled in the world. And, since the development of the National Curriculum, any further discussion of social contexts in connection with student learning is dismissed as excuse making.

In this article I will ignore the naming and shaming, inspecting and testing, counting and accounting that are the hallmarks of the English education policy agenda. The counterproductive effects of these strategies are already well documented – to little effect it seems. I want to return to the National Curriculum, on which this entire architecture rests. For indeed, the whole system and its equity rationale only makes sense if the National Curriculum lives up to what is claimed for it.

I will raise some issues pertinent to social justice that might be relevant to any curriculum anywhere. This is a short article and rather than indulge in a

protracted polemic, I want to tell two stories about classroom teachers in Tasmania, the small island at the bottom of Australia that often gets left off the maps! I tell these two stories knowing that readers will find resonances in them that I do not have space to explore. These two stories¹ come from an involvement I had with 20 schools that successfully applied for funding to develop stronger connections with their local communities. As a consultant, my job was to support teachers to undertake action research projects to develop approaches to school-community relationships. Here already is an important point: teachers in Tasmania are seen as capable of developing innovative professional knowledge and practice² that will then inform the wider system – not as “best practice” to be transferred, but as narratives of change that will inform and inspire.

To begin, I want to draw attention to two important assumptions that underpin this article; what I mean by curriculum and what I understand about the needs of students who traditionally miss out on the benefits of schooling.

Assumptions

Firstly, I have very deliberately titled this piece as “just curriculum work”. I have talked about both social justice and curriculum as work, as practice – not as abstract or concrete things, as products that can be shared out, measured, and against which the performance of teachers can be found wanting or successful. Rather, echoing views that go at least as far back as John Dewey, I see curriculum as a set of *practices* that are historical and political, constructed in a particular time for particular purposes, and working in particular interests and with particular effects.

The knowledges codified as *explicit curricula* are the result of a deliberate selection from a vast archive of possibilities, while the *implicit curricula* are a deliberate fabrication which includes system and school governance, organisational systems, and staffing practices.³ Both the explicit and the implicit curricula are heavily implicated in the systematic production of the patterns of inequalities that see students of working class and minority race and ethnic backgrounds kept firmly in their place by virtue of their school “performance”.^{4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9}

Similarly, social justice is a process not a thing. It is about working democratically and inclusively to counter the unfair effects of social, economic and political processes that produce exploitation, marginalisation and misery for some people – while others thrive and profit.¹⁰

Secondly, I write with particular views about the purposes of public education. I suggest that students need to develop sophisticated understandings of who they are, how the world works and how they can act ethically, as individuals and collectives, in it. In the current rapidly changing and challenging environments in which we live, today’s children and young

people must engage with particular and contextualised (local, community, traditional and popular) and abstract universalised knowledges. They need to build concepts and understandings that allow them to act and think.

The key pedagogic task is to develop the habits of – and meta-linguistic and cognitive repertoires for – critical and reflexive thinking, problem posing and problem solving, systematic theory building and meaning making. “Back to basics” approaches are absolutely inadequate to this task.

If official curriculums fail to support all students to produce and reconfigure knowledges and skills appropriate to changing citizenships, globalising cultures and technologically mediated social relationships, then those students who are already networked into powerful and advantaged families, neighbourhoods and economies will be further advantaged.^{11, 12, 13} New times require new curriculums and savvy and well supported curriculum workers – that is, teachers – to build them as practice in schools.

I now move on to my two stories from Tasmania.

The Papermill agricultural show

Papermill is a regional city whose major industry is the subject of sporadic but heated state and national environmental protests. Trucks of logs wheel into town and container loads of paper products are sent out for domestic use and export. Most days Papermill is a sleepy place with an aging population many of whose male members enjoy social time together in the colonial pubs in the main street. Papermill is also an important regional centre for the outlying farms whose major products are dairy products and wool. Papermill has one district high school, which struggles to cater for its diverse range of students, some of whom intend to study at mainland universities, while others simply see that there is no work for them and no point to school.

In 2002, local media carried the story that Papermill’s annual agricultural show was dying. The show committee, made up of the town’s senior men, were convinced that 2002 would be its last year. But the principal and one of the teachers at Papermill District High had other ideas. The teacher applied for funds to allow her class – the school’s most unsuccessful and “difficult” students – to repair the fencing and animal pens at the show ground.

She equipped a trailer as a mobile workshop. She contacted the local committee and the aged showmen agreed, somewhat reluctantly, to work with her boys. They were far from convinced that the town’s young troublemakers – interested as far as they could see only in loud music, fast cars and late night drinking – were up to the task.

Because the showmen were too infirm to tackle hard physical work, and because they came from the “old school”, their mode of working with the boys was far from gentle. Yet the boys not only accepted having orders barked at

them, they also worked hard and established friendly and respectful relationships with men who they previously would have dismissed with a string of four letter epithets. The showmen, for their part, rapidly grew to like and respect the boys. The show ground was repaired.

After further discussion about the gloomy prospects for the show, the boys developed a publicity strategy which involved designing, printing and distributing leaflets far and wide. They worked with their peers at school on a display and stall, and they were the backbone of a team of school volunteers who worked before, during and after the actual show. Headlines in the local paper the day after the show attributed directly the first profitable event for many years to the efforts of the class.

The class did not stop there. They began work with the local police, previously the sworn enemy, to repair and repaint public toilets and the local youth club.

The boys in the project became different people in their local place. Papermill boys were designated as “at risk”, exhibiting a range of what might be called in the UK “emotional and behavioural disorders” at school, or “criminal behaviours” by police everywhere. Through their activities with the showmen, and a connection with a particular kind of “decent” working class Australian masculinity, they literally changed their social position in the town.

From being part of the youth problem, they came to be seen, justifiably, as the youth solution. And on the boys’ part, from seeing the town as an old-fashioned out of touch place only good enough to get away from, the boys shifted to value and work for the preservation of its agricultural heritage. Whether this is a life altering intervention remains to be seen. What can be fairly claimed is that this was a very significant disruption to the production of educational disadvantage and “other” identities.

Wallaby Wander comes to Rocktown

Rocktown is located in a relatively remote part of Tasmania adjacent to a significant world heritage wilderness area and is the site of a large internationally owned mine. The mine has been the subject of green-politik and state and national scrutiny. It is surrounded by high mesh fences and heavy security procedures. Most of the children in the local primary school are from families whose livelihood is based in local small businesses, tourism and farming. Like many of their parents, the bulk of students are interested in environmental issues and are overtly committed to a “clean, green Tasmania”.

A primary teacher decided to apply for funds so that her class could restore a patch of native bush which was badly degraded by introduced plants. The plan was to build an interpretive area, which the children named, hopefully, Wallaby Wander. The children researched the local vegetation and worked with the local council and parks and wildlife officers to plot what to plant and what

to remove. They designed a snaking pathway and grew tiny seedlings from seed collected from their patch of scrub.

They did not, however, have enough money in the grant, nor enough labour to do what they wanted. So, together with their teacher, they began to contact local businesses. A local earthmover donated his services. Another loaned wheelie bins for the collection of rubbish. Many school parents and community members volunteered time for working bees. A local landscaper offered substantial discount on gravel and sand for the path.

But the teacher was determined to get something from the biggest employer in town – the mine. She talked her way into the Director's office, who like many of the mine's workers, was from out of town. The Director was shocked that the teacher had not been sent to the public relations manager who usually dealt with requests for donations, but was convinced as she listened to the teacher explain the Wallaby project that there were things that the mine could do. She organised for the children to meet employees responsible for land restoration, now a legislative requirement on all mining ventures in Tasmania.

The children were then invited behind the security fences to join environmental staff replanting an area of land with endangered plants – known as RATS – rare and threatened species. They were also given a quantity of RATS for Wallaby Wander.

The class managed a mass tree planting day involving 300 children and adults to coincide with a national conservation day. This garnered considerable publicity for Wallaby Wander. The students' class record of this part of the project comprising dairies, stories, student-produced newsletters and press articles, was awarded a state literacy prize. Then, on one weekend in late 2002, and with the participation of large numbers of helpers, the pathway was finally laid. Wallaby Wander was officially launched in early 2003.

Through these encounters students were helped to both re-read important local/global debates and also to work in and with tensions integral to contemporary Tasmania.

They did not begin their projects as blank slates but were already in networks of debate, which were not just local but also national and global. In their meeting with miners, Rocktown students muddied formerly simply held attitudes pro- or anti-environment. Their projects produced, as a local reality, green Realpolitik. Students forged new relational links with a range of community members and institutions that provided different resources for enriched school meaning-making in science, literacy, history, geography and mathematics.

Just curriculum work

These two stories illustrate different but overlapping aspects of *doing justice* for students. I want now to tease out a few important principles from them – my question here is what these two stories can tell us more generally about just

curriculum work in schools, not how these projects might be duplicated in other sites.

Doing just curriculum work means:

■ learning with a serious purpose

In part, the success of these two projects (and others like them) is that they require students to work together, to sustain a disciplined effort, over a period of time, in order to produce a high quality and tangible product, which they and others see as worthwhile. This is quite different from the kind of projects in which students go to the library and copy out slabs from encyclopaedias which are presented, accompanied by colourful pictures, as individual or group “Projects” or “Thematic Units”.

In these activities, students were involved in making important decisions and there were high stakes attached to their timely completion. Too often, students designated as “at risk” are seen as being incapable of organising, dealing with deadlines and acting responsibly. Yet the consistent evidence is that when learning is meaningful and relevant, the vast majority rise to the occasion.¹⁴ Is the National Curriculum relevant, meaningful and rigorous in such ways?

■ a provisional approach to curriculum

If all of the outcomes and the sequencing of outcomes in the curriculum are predetermined then there is no possibility of change. Wallaby Wander students were able to learn about rare and endangered species when the opportunity arose. Their teacher was able to build an integrated approach to curriculum that produced high levels of literacy by using language in the real life context of the project.

Papermill boys were able to concentrate on a particular set of activities that allowed them to hang in at school rather than just leave. They worked on building tasks that required a range of numeracy operations which they learnt from men skilled in what in Australia is called “bush carpentry”.

A curriculum which works on a “core plus” can be varied if local circumstances require. It is amenable to regularly revisiting in the light of professional experience and research, and is much more likely to engage higher numbers of students than a static syllabus. There should be no backtracking from the notion of a mandated common set of learnings for all students, but this should not be at the expense of locally developed activities. How much flexibility is there in the National Curriculum?

■ a focus on building positive identities

If, as Stuart Hall¹⁵ suggests, identity is formed through everyday activities, Rocktown students experienced, through their project, some disruption to

their customary ways of being and doing. Papermill boys described themselves as “no hoppers” and were not well regarded by the local community. Because the Show required them to involve themselves in community building (active citizenship) they formed new relationships which allowed them to see themselves and to be seen as different people.

Students who are continually failed by school often required dramatic interventions such as the Showground project in order to disrupt ongoing patterns of misbehaviour and alienation. But all students benefit when their learning programs allow them to extend their networks and affirm their capabilities. This does not mean engaging in low level entertainment any more than it means a steady diet of tedious drill and skill. What identities are built by the National Curriculum?

■ time and support for teachers to build better practice

The persistent correlation of social class with differential academic results indicates that there is still a need to build professional knowledge about inclusion and equity. Since mandating from above has demonstrably failed to produce significant changes in the negative and inequitable statistics of students' results, and since the changes required must occur in classrooms, it seems fairly obvious that it is time that teachers were brought centre stage and supported to engage collectively with the challenge. Practitioner research and school based inquiry are the policy directions that will produce change and increase momentum. This was the case in Tasmania – what of England?

■ links with international reform movements

While current policy makers have favoured a policy borrowing approach, a more generative avenue is to promote dialogue with professionals in other countries involved in similar reform. English teachers need to scrutinise things that are routinely taken for granted¹⁶ and these are often thrown into relief when seen in comparison to other localities. As well, teachers benefit enormously from sharing experiences and learnings. In turn this results in more innovative and creative teaching and greater opportunities for students. Will English policymakers support teachers to make the difference they say they want?

Conclusion

Doing just curriculum work requires something other than setting out a grid of curriculum and then pressuring schools to follow it, sheep like, step by step. Making a difference for those children and young people who have historically been pushed to the edges of schooling requires the hearts and minds of the teaching profession.

They in turn require time and support, opportunities to exchange ideas and

to work systematically on this most obdurate educational “problem”. Evidence suggests that pedagogies that require students to undertake significant real world tasks that make substantive cognitive and emotional demands hold out the most hope for making real differences.

The National Curriculum was a first step towards codifying the knowledges that might be important for children and young people in the future. It is surely time it was revisited in the light of experience and the evidence. Teacher-led change is the next step in doing justice. ■

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Prevention before intervention

Rob Long

Rob Long is an educational psychologist who has worked for a number of years as manager of a primary behaviour support team as well as supporting Secondary schools in reviewing their behaviour management policies and practice.

Abstract: *This article examines the factors that can cause children to develop social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in school. It explores how problem-solving skills can be used in the classroom to prevent difficulties that disrupt the learning process.*

AS A PROJECT WORKER I have had the privilege of working with a wide range of school staff. I have come to believe that there is much more to working with and supporting young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties than just interventions.

At the heart of it is an “attitude”. The best attitude is one that enables school staff to have some kind of “psychological distance” between themselves and the behaviour. This attitude is strengthened when it is informed and supported by a range of theoretical models as to why this “problem behaviour” is happening. This does not mean that there are not times when rude behaviour is nothing more than rude behaviour. If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck and sounds like a duck, it probably is a duck! But, for many children their behavioural difficulties are persistent and pervasive. These difficulties become a barrier which prevents the young person successfully engaging with learning and will hinder or prevent the teacher teaching and other children learning.

The ideas presented below are applicable at different levels within schools, that is classroom/group and individual. The three areas focused on self esteem, social skills and problem-solving skills will benefit all children. Most children learn these skills almost intuitively and will only need a “whole-class” approach to ensure they are mastered. Those “at risk” of developing behavioural difficulties will benefit the most but will need individual support as well as class/group.

Research into the nature and causes of disruptive behaviour in schools has greatly increased our understanding.¹ We can now fully appreciate the

complexity of the problem. A child’s “problem behaviour” in the learning context can be caused by many reasons. Some of the core ones are:

<p>Within the child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ temperament ■ low self esteem ■ learning difficulties ■ communication problems ■ organic disorders ■ loss and bereavement ■ abuse – physical, emotional, sexual ■ being in care 	<p>Within the family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ abuse ■ neglect ■ family breakdown ■ mental illness ■ drug/alcohol abuse ■ reconstituted families ■ anti-educational attitude
<p>Within the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ gang culture ■ crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ lack of resources ■ drugs

The more of these factors that children experience, the greater the risk of them developing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in school. Evidence shows that children with these “at risk” factors are more likely to develop delinquent behaviours and for some to develop criminal tendencies.²

Pathways to disruption

The consequences of “at risk” factors can lead children to take one of several pathways. The first pathway is that many children who are challenging and defiant towards authority at a young age can, in their teenage years, become those young people who display disruptive tendencies and/or truant willingly from school. Many children are prone to this pathway. The “at risk” factors are worsened by the naturally growing need of all young people to increase the amount of control they have over their lives. Consequently, for many, following the requests of school staff is anathema.

A second pathway is taken by those who are more covert in their challenge towards authority. These students will be more at risk of lying and stealing at a young age. If this behaviour pattern becomes established they are more likely to demonstrate anti-social behaviour such as damaging property, or ultimately carrying out more serious theft.

The third pathway is where the young person is overtly aggressive – maybe becoming the playground bully. There will be a readiness to engage in more physical fighting and such behaviour will be viewed as a positive attribute. This individual is more likely, as an adult, to engage in serious acts of violence and even rape.

Clearly the issues we are exploring here have extreme consequences for us all. There are many young people whose life experiences mitigate against them achieving their true potential. Due to the many interrelated factors involved, predicting which children will take which pathway is extremely difficult. Just as with dyslexia, there are many children who find reading difficult, but only a minority are actually dyslexic. When we meet pupils who display clear social, emotional and behavioural difficulties it is not hard to look into their early experiences to identify the “probable” causes of their present behaviour. Postdiction is not difficult. Rather, it is predicting which children will face the same difficulties that presents the challenge.

What is to be done?

Through our current knowledge and understanding of behaviour it is possible to pinpoint those skills that seem to be at the heart of enabling children to succeed in the learning environment and to become socially responsible citizens. The three main skills are:

- self esteem;
- co-operative interaction skills; and
- problem solving.

While most children develop all three traits through their everyday interactions, many do not. By considering each of these skills and the ways in which they can be developed, an action programme can then be devised that not only enhances the success of all children but mitigates against the negative influence of the “at risk factors” for those who have had fewer opportunities to gain them. Being successful in school and later life depends on three core factors:

1. Children need to feel good about themselves and others.
2. They need the skills to mix.
3. They need the ability to deal with problem situations in an acceptable non-confrontational way.

More specific attention will be given to problem solving skills as this is often an area which is less emphasised.

Self-esteem

The concept of self-esteem seems to be something that we all profess to understand but that few can define. We must start from the assumption that all children are susceptible to developing an “inferiority complex” purely through being helpless and dependent on others. This can result in feelings of inadequacy. As children grow older they can mask their negative feelings of self

through their behaviour. For example, in school a pupil's surface behaviour of disruption can actually be masking an inability, real or imagined, to do the work set.

Sadly, from a young age, many children develop a core belief that they are "stupid", or "thick". This core belief leads to the protection of fragile self-esteem by the avoidance of tasks that could test this belief. There is such a strong "fear of failure" that the action of learning is not risked. These negative "tickets" that young children carry need to be actively challenged at the earliest stage to prevent them becoming an automatic negative influence.

A useful model for developing self-esteem is to focus on three elements:

- Competency – helping children to recognise their existing skills;
- Value – spending time to let the child know that he is valued for just being himself; and
- Control – giving choice and control at an age-appropriate level to enhance self-esteem.

Co-operative interaction skills

Children who either lack a range of interaction skills or fail to recognise when to apply them are at risk of developing negative peer relationships. Other children will understandably withdraw from peers who play aggressively or over dominate. This rejection alone can cause anger in the unskilled child and result in increased aggressiveness – "Be my friend, or I'll hit you". A very useful guide when increasing a child's co-operative interaction skills is to ask the following two questions.

- What skills would the child need to be successful in this context?
This can often be identified by observing a child who is successful. What skills does that child possess that makes interaction successful? The smaller the skills can be broken down into the easier they can be taught. The guiding principle is to break down the task or skill to be learnt into its smallest manageable parts in order to ensure success.
- How can the child learn these skills?

A basic but effective approach is to:

- Set a target – a skill that needs to be learnt;
- Explain the need for the skill to the child;
- Let them see examples of the skill in action – show them the need for the skill;
- Let them practice the skill – in safe unthreatening situations, where the emotional challenge is low;
- Monitor progress – the more involved the child can be the better;

- Consequences – allow the child to choose from a menu of positive outcomes when the skill has been achieved;
- Attribution – spend time helping the child see that progress has been made and that her efforts have paid off.

Problem solving

A child's brain at birth is a collection of millions and millions of cells, the vast majority of which are unconnected. Some networks are already programmed to expect certain kinds of experience. For example, the ability to acquire a language is already pre-wired, but requires the stimulation of language in the environment before a child learns to speak. The language that is acquired is, of course, dependent on the country and culture of the child.

With the exception of these pre-programmed areas most brain cells are unconnected. They are ready to make trillions and trillions of connections through the different stimuli that children experience. This process is the foundation to a skill which is at the heart of human nature – the ability to adapt to diverse settings through problem-solving. Piaget's study³ into the reasoning skills of young children concluded that there was a limited use of reasoning in the young. This view has since been challenged.⁴ Piaget showed that children were unable to cope with unfamiliar concepts, but further study by Thornton⁴ has shown that if asked to reason with the familiar, children are much cleverer than Piaget assumed. For example, if a young child is posed the following problem:

“If A is true, then B is true.
A is true.
What follows?”

The child will be puzzled and fail to answer the question. However if the same situation is posed in the following manner:

“If you are good in the Supermarket you will have an ice cream.
You were good in the Supermarket.
What follows?”

This scenario is set in terms which are familiar to the child and the answer “I'll get an ice-cream” will be forthcoming.⁴

Many children who exhibit behavioural difficulties can be seen as possessing a limited repertoire of problem-solving skills. If a problem is challenging they can overreact with anger and can hit out; a fight defence. This has probably proved effective in other situations. Conversely, they can face a problem that overwhelms them and the solution is to run away; a flight defence.

They have failed to acquire a range of problem-solving skills and so they fall back on reactions that are innately programmed into the nervous system – fight or flight. By teaching these children a range of problem-solving skills they are better equipped, thereby benefiting themselves, their peers and school staff.

Teaching problem solving skills

Children who use problem solving skills are more popular with their peers and receive more positive feedback from adults. They seem to be able to regulate their own behaviour through having such skills as:

- foreseeing outcomes;
- delaying their responses; and
- monitoring their own behaviour.

Children who have learning difficulties or who suffer with attention deficit disorder or hyper-activity will find mastering such skills hard. They will benefit from having problem-solving skills broken down into the component parts with many opportunities provided for them to over learn these essentials.

These skills are seen by many as being at the core of children becoming responsible citizens. Children's successful development into adulthood and into democratic society is dependent on their ability to use critical judgement, effective decision making skills and perspective taking, regardless of their innate ability and cultural or family background. The teaching of these skills early in life can serve to protect against or prevent the onset of problem behaviours such as drug abuse, pregnancy, school drop out and suicide.⁵

When we are trying to help children and young people solve problems we are doing two things at the same time:

1. Helping them make decisions about a single problem. For example, "My friends will not let me join in with them."
2. We are trying to teach them how to make decisions and solve problems effectively. "An ordinary person almost never approaches a problem systematically and exhaustively unless he has been specifically educated to do so."⁶

There are essentially two types of problem solving techniques.

1. Convergent

Convergent problem solving is a logical and deliberate approach to solving problems. It moves slowly but determinedly towards a solution. It is the approach most used in scientific investigations. These steps are explored in more detail below.

Worked example of a child using the convergent problem solving approach

STEP ONE Define the problem

The child sitting next to you plays with your hair, kicks you under the table and is generally annoying.

STEP TWO Think of possible solutions

Ask to be moved to another seat

Ask the child to stop doing it

Ask to have a meeting with the teacher and the child

Ask your Mum and Dad for help

STEP THREE Choose a solution

Ask to meet with your teacher and the child to discuss matters

STEP FOUR What will help you use this solution?

You get on well with the teacher

The teacher is aware that you are being distracted

STEP FIVE What will hinder you using this solution?

The child will think you're a "tell tale"

STEP SIX Can you live with this solution?

STEP SEVEN What will be the gains to solving this problem?

There will be less distractions and more work can be done.

A better relationship with the pupil

STEP EIGHT How will you reward yourself?

I will tell my parents that I successfully sorted a problem out.

2. Divergent

Divergent thinking is far less structured and tends to be more creative. It draws on intuition, innovation, visualisation, humour and the absurd. This approach encourages spontaneity. As Caroselli⁷ puts it "The creative approach diverges from the straight-and-narrow path that convergent thinking requires you to follow."

The divergent problem solving approach

The Janusian Technique – named after the Roman God of beginnings and endings – encourages thinking from two different directions.

A worked example of the Janusian Technique could take the following form:

WRITE THE PROBLEM DOWN

Someone has been on the computer for a VERY long time and you have some work you need to do.

DIRECTION ONE

ASK THESE QUESTIONS

Who could most likely solve this problem?

Sharon

How have similar problems been solved?

Going to the teacher

Telling the teaching assistant

Explaining to the pupil why you need to use the computer

What skills are needed to solve this problem?

Being assertive, staying calm, avoiding confrontation and being determined

DIRECTION TWO

ASK THESE QUESTIONS

Who is least likely to solve this problem?

Ben

Why have similar problems not been solved?

Arguments about turn-taking and the computer

Not telling anyone about the problem

What skills have not been used to solve this problem?

Politeness, compromise and patience

NOW WRITE DOWN THREE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM

1. I explain my needs politely.
2. I arrange a time when I can have the computer.
3. I tell an adult about the problem and ask for help in sorting it out.

Lateralised thinking

The most successful problem-solvers are those who are able to use both approaches – becoming lateralised thinkers. The most suitable problem-solving approach is chosen in any given set of circumstances. It is also worth noting that the convergent approach is similar to decision making. That is,

logical steps are followed to reach a rational plan of action which any other reasonable person would have made in the circumstances. However, we are not just rational beings and there are times when we are also irrational. What is psychologically rational for one person may not be for another because problem-solving involves an individual's feelings, preferences and values. Therefore, a lateralised approach is preferred.

Which approach is to be taken?

The more skilled a young person is in both techniques the better equipped he/she will be to cope in a variety of circumstances. Everyone has a preferred style and this can, at times, be a weakness. It is best, therefore, to use a combination of methods to demonstrate and enable young people to appreciate that problem-solving involves both head and the heart.

A proactive approach to the challenges faced by all children enables education to be effective in preventing difficulties that disrupt the learning process. Some children face considerably more challenges than others but a proactive approach reduces the chance of these problems becoming serious barriers which prevent young people being successfully included in their communities. ■

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Thoughts on the Children's Green Paper: *Every Child Matters*

Abstract: *This article examines the main themes of the Children's Green Paper, and analyses the positive aspects, as well as the contradictions in policy. It looks at the likely effects of the proposals on local authorities, including the implications of having one officer responsible for both education and children's services.*

A "GREEN PAPER" used to comprise text only official prose. Its green paper cover identified it as a discussion document inviting debate in advance of the Government making up its mind on a policy issue. These days "Green" papers rarely come in green covers and include photographs, diagrams and shaded boxes with case studies and other illustrative material. Their subject matter has also diversified.

When a Green Paper is published we can now expect: a rehearsal of past achievements, an aspirational statement of policy objectives and an outline of what the Government is intending to do. The consultative aspect is more carefully structured than it used to be. Views are invited on specific questions which sometimes seem to be directed more towards assembling support for what has already been decided than stimulating open debate. In a blind test, many would now be hard pressed to distinguish extracts of a Green Paper from a political manifesto or a White Paper.

All this is perhaps inevitable given the political, social and technological

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changes that have taken place. Governments fear opposition from the media more than parliament and, in an environment where presentation is everything, ministers under pressure try to leave as little as possible to chance.

This autumn's Green Paper on child centred policy superficially conforms to the stereotype – but there is also evidence of a genuine desire to address the central question, “how can the full range of public services be better coordinated to place children at the centre?”

Complex issues

The long delay between its announcement in October 2002 and publication of *Every Child Matters* in September 2003 has been variously attributed to the resignation of John Denham (former Minister for Children) over the Iraq War, and press hostility to Margaret Hodge's appointment in June.

In fact, the major factor was the scope and complexity of the issues the paper seeks to address, and the difficulty of achieving agreement across so many departments of state as to its content. This is clear, not only from the subject matter, but from the large number of other documents published in parallel or cited in the text. The Government might therefore be credited for taking the time to try to get things right, as much as criticised for dragging its feet.

It is also not surprising that, being the work of many hands, there are distinct differences in style and approach (in terms of policy if not language) in different chapters. The early parts of the document contain the obligatory trumpeting of past success, so most of the specific policy changes put forward for consultation occur in the last three chapters. These differ significantly from each other.

The final chapter on workforce issues may be characterised as adopting a centrally led “partnership” model. It is well established that differences in culture, training and styles of working amongst the professional groups who have contact with children can militate against cooperation across services.

Previous attempts to unify structures or rationalise service delivery have often run into difficulties over the same issues which gave rise to the desire for change in the first place. Sooner or later tensions have emerged over pay and conditions of service between the different professional groups in unified teams. “Why am I paid less and work longer hours than my team mate who seems to be doing much the same things?”

Despite principled opposition from the NUT, and subsequent anxiety over funding the initiative, the Government was pleased with the agreement on rationalising the school workforce. Buoyed up by this early success a similar approach is now proposed to cover all professional groups concerned with supporting children.

Whilst taking responsibility for initiating and leading the process, the Government recognises success will depend on a substantial majority of stakeholders being kept on side.

Children at risk

Chapter four, “Early Intervention and Effective Prevention”, is even more hands-off. It builds on substantial work already underway on systems for the identification, referral and tracking of children at risk (IRT). *Every Child Matters* gives little prominence to this terminology in recognition of the lessons learned during the first year of work by the “Trailblazer” partnerships.

The focus has moved away from mechanistic systems for exchanging large volumes of data, towards the changes in professional practice which will be needed to facilitate appropriate communication across service boundaries in the interests of individual children. There is a clear recognition that this must be a “bottom up” process and that change is best driven by the considerable support for the idea that exists on the ground.

The role of the Government will be to settle decisions (after collaborative work and consultation) on the minimal number of issues where national consistency is required. For example, the use of common unique identifiers so that records can follow individual children when they move around the country, and brokering agreement on a core assessment instrument to avoid wasteful duplication.

Integrated services

By contrast, Chapter five, “Accountability and Integration – Locally, Regionally and Nationally” is centralist and prescriptive. Children’s Trusts are to be the new model even though pilot areas have only just been announced. Views are not solicited on the proposed requirement for local authorities to have a single officer and a single member responsible for children covering both education and children’s social services.

Whilst there are recent examples of this model being adopted, other authorities have previously tried but later abandoned it. Earlier this year the *Guardian Society* published an article¹ celebrating Liz Railton’s role “as a ‘supremo’ to take over both as director of social services and chief education officer” in Essex.

However, less than a fortnight before, the *Times Educational Supplement* reported: “There is general agreement [amongst secondary heads] that at a strategic level Essex LEA is in disarray”.² While it is clear such arrangements can be made to work (as indeed can almost any form of organisation), there is little convincing argument as to why placing half to three quarters of a multi-functional authority in one portfolio would be universally beneficial.

It seems to be felt that local authority chief executives will be unable to get two of their senior colleagues to cooperate without the posts being forcibly merged; and yet the holder of that new post will be expected to be able to negotiate and manage pooled budgets across other services which are accountable to entirely separate political entities. At the same time as

coherence is achieved with a focus on children across education, health and children's social services, the proposals pose awkward questions about other areas – notably adult social services.

Are adult services to remain within the super department or be hived off elsewhere? Since most children live with adults in families, there is a risk of building new silos as quickly as the old ones are dismantled.

Although it is sensible to avoid stigmatising support services for vulnerable children by association with the criminal justice system, leaving the Youth Justice Board (YJB) outside the loop will leave the new structure less comprehensive than it purports to be. The Home Office underlined the separateness of their position by publishing their own proposals for the YJB as a “companion document to *Every Child Matters*”.

Local political roles

Similar arguments apply to the forced merging of political roles. Some authorities have adopted cabinet structures with cross cutting political portfolios whilst retaining a traditional officer structure.

Breaking up the one-to-one correspondence between political leadership and departmental interests has forced officers to work with more than one leading politician and exposed members to a wider range of officer advice. Although this has brought its own problems, the undoubted benefits would be undermined by a requirement to match the political and professional oversight of the new children's responsibilities. The role of local councillors in relation to the health service, where there are no direct equivalent elected representatives (the proposed quasi democracy associated with Foundation Hospitals not withstanding) is likely to become more problematic than it is already.

The proposals on inspection and intervention can be seen as extending a tried and tested education model into the area of social services. But again, “naming and shaming” and compulsory outsourcing of schools functions have been both controversial and of mixed efficacy, and the DfES is increasingly moving towards “softer” approaches to service improvement.

Inquiry outcomes

Why are the chapters so different? A clue may be found in the companion document, *Keeping Children Safe: the Government's response to the Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report* and the *Joint Chief Inspector's Report – Safeguarding Children*. The latter included some 30 recommendations and Lord Laming's report makes 108, most of which were detailed procedural issues for health, police or social services management – consistent with his conclusions that Victoria Climbié died because “basic good practice [was not] put into operation”.

He did not conclude that there were significant problems with the legislative or organisational framework of services. Instead he laid emphasis on a failure

of accountability that allowed shortcomings at the front line to persist, apparently without the responsible politicians and senior officers being aware of the problems. It was slightly odd, therefore, that the first dozen or so of his recommendations outlined a very specific new national and local structure for managing children's services from the creation of a new cabinet rank minister down through boards, offices and agencies.

The formal response to both documents is contained in a separate publication *Keeping Children Safe*³, jointly badged by DfES, DoH and the Home Office. Sensibly the main text deals with the issues on a thematic basis with tabulated annexes indicating the specific response to each recommendation in order. For the most part, Lord Laming's recommendations are "accepted" by

Whilst taking responsibility for initiating and leading the process, the Government recognises success will depend on a substantial majority of stakeholders being kept on side.

the Government and reflected in new regulations and guidance for relevant services. However, the structural recommendations are only accepted "in principle" – which appears to be a euphemism for "rejected", as the creation of a new Children's Directorate General within the DfES and other changes proposed in the Green Paper bear little resemblance to Laming's prescription. It is, of course, politically impossible for a government to appear complacently to accept a failed status quo and therefore we are to have legislative change to address "accountability".

Symbolic change

Although the specific measures represent neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the improved accountability sought, their function is symbolic – to register the Government's commitment to promoting appropriate change. It will, therefore, be enough if these prescriptions do not actually obstruct what people wish to do locally. Within the overall context of sensible partnership working on taking forward procedural and professional change, there is likely to be acquiescence, if not universal enthusiasm, for the new structures.

As with all change, this presents threats and opportunities. Those authorities that have already implemented unified structures, or who were previously thinking along these lines, will enjoy the national endorsement of their foresight. Others will happily go along with it. However, any who take

exception to the interference with their autonomy will find ways of complying with the formal requirements whilst carrying on as they always have done.

Legislative change will, therefore, not absolve the Government from doing all it can to win the hearts and minds of those on whom it depends to implement policy. Winning hearts and minds may not be too difficult to achieve – if only because “doing better for all our children” is a rallying cry that few can resist – provided the means chosen to reach that end are not overly prescriptive or cut across other policies.

One aspect of this question which is so far undeveloped is how all of this will play in schools. It is axiomatic that a policy with a “universalist” approach to children will have schools at its centre. Appropriate links are made within *Every Child Matters* to existing policies on community engagement, for example through “full-service schools”. However, all these previous initiatives have operated piecemeal with a minority of schools participating on a voluntary basis (invariably with extra funding).

The success of the strategy outlined in *Every Child Matters* would require a significant change in the way all schools relate to other public services and (at least as presently advised) without additional earmarked funding. Given the travails of the last expenditure round, this may be a tall order.

The policy – which can be understood as “social inclusion for children writ large” will also suffer from the familiar problem of conflicting performance indicators. Where substantially autonomous schools are driven by league table success there is a strong disincentive to “do the right thing” by high cost/ low achieving pupils. It is a remarkable tribute the commitment and dedication of education professionals that so much good work is done under the present system. It is, however, asking a lot to expect a further step change without the Government seriously addressing the fundamental contradictions in the wider policy framework. ■

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Time, space and teachers' work

Abstract: *Current education policy has led to a culture of conformity where teaching and learning are subject to increasing regulation. Such an environment has led to schools becoming culturally disconnected from their own communities. Rather than representing and drawing on a rich variety of cultures and experiences, schools have to conform to an external set of norms and values.*

NICOLAS PHILIBERT'S 2002 documentary, *Être et Avoir*, is set in a small, mixed-age, single-class school in the Auvergne. It covers six months – winter and summer – in the lives of the pupils and of their teacher, Georges Lopez. It is a film about the time and space of teaching and learning.

Time in the film is complex and discontinuous: the children sometimes seem stuck at a particular point in the learning, beyond which development is difficult; at others, they make enormous intellectual and emotional leaps.

M. Lopez follows their learning intently, questioning and authoritative. The space of the classroom is beyond doubt a space of teaching: seldom has the intellectual aspect of the teacher's work been more strongly portrayed. But the film is also attentive to the families from which the children come: the educational space extends beyond the gates of the school, into the farming community beyond.

At the explicit level, *Être et Avoir* has nothing to say about educational change and the political arguments that attend it. But, like another recent film – Tavernier's 1998 *Ca Commence Aujourd'hui*, it works at a deep level of critique: it asserts the complexities of learners and learning, and in doing so suggests an agenda which sits uneasily with the demands of current policy, in France and England alike. Thus to watch Philibert's work is to be prompted into thinking about the time and space of our own educational system(s), reshaped as they have been by years of accelerating change.

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In what follows, I aim to respond to the film's prompting. I want to reflect on the ways in which national policies have affected the daily experience of learners and teachers; and I want to question whether the pursuit of social justice has thereby been served. The evidence I draw from comes largely from current research into the teaching of English in urban secondary schools in London.* The extent to which it is generalisable to other locations in Wales and England I will leave for readers to decide.

Managing time

One of the most striking things about Conservative education policies was the way in which they declared war on the past, angrily attacking an entire post-war era of change. New Labour, likewise, has a politics of time. This, too, involves a determination to break from an educational past seen in strongly negative terms: the Labour governments of Attlee, Wilson and Callaghan presided over a supposedly static society in which there was no strong demand for certification and there was a "general acceptance that only a minority would reach the age of 16 with significant formal skills and qualifications".¹

Comprehensive reform had not done enough to challenge this acceptance and by setting "social" rather than "economic" goals it had contributed to stasis. (ibid.) Teachers are particularly implicated in this failure; as Tony Blair's

Teachers become the model for the "life-long learner", whose continuing education is supported so long as it conforms to what are defined as national priorities.

frequent references to "forces of conservatism" suggest, they are people from another time. The corollary of this break with a static past is a stress on the dynamism of the present. As the OECD puts it, "Globalisation makes change everywhere seem more urgent."²

The deadlines for change are always short; the price of conservatism – of hanging on to outdated practices – is said to be failure in global competition. New Labour time is thus the time of permanent emergency. The state school system, created over 130 years, is to be reconstructed in less than ten. The

* 'The Production of School English' (ESRC 2000–2003). My colleagues on the project are Jill Bourne, Anton Franks, John Hardcastle, Carey Jewitt, Gunther Kress and Euan Reid. The ideas presented in the article have been much discussed with them, but the responsibility for their development here is my own. I have written at greater length on these themes in the works cited below.

work of teachers must likewise follow a programme of crash modernisation.

Looking at the detail of these processes, we can begin with the “daily time” of teachers. Here, the victories of the Conservative government of the 1980s have had a lasting effect. The 1987 Teachers Pay and Conditions Act in effect placed teachers’ time at the disposal of school managements: that was the significance of the requirements for lesson cover and attendance at meetings. The curriculum provisions of the Education Reform Act in 1988 began a still-increasing regulation of classroom time, of which the famous clock diagram – precisely delimiting the sequence of teaching – in the National Literacy Strategy is the most spectacular example and the Key Stage 3 National Literacy Framework is the latest stage.³

The requirement that classroom practice should relate strongly to externally-set targets and procedures creates alongside the well-documented workload pressures on teachers a further tendency to make the pace of students’ learning conform not so much to individual need as to the normative expectations of policy: one tempo rules the classroom. Yet this does not mean that teachers are asked only to focus on a single set of tasks.

Specification has not resulted in simplification. On the contrary, one of the consequences of multiple, short-deadline requirements is a state of distraction in the teacher. Nothing can ever be done properly. Multi-tasking does not make the minute more productive; it rather reduces the worth and compromises the outcome of the work the teacher does. It might be concluded here that burnout is not just a matter of overloaded time, but of time that is unfulfilled and no longer under personal control.

“Career time” is equally the object of management. Ever since the 1998 Green Paper, *Teachers: Meeting the Challenge of Change*, government frameworks for teacher development have ensured that teachers’ learning “needs” are defined in terms of the requirements of policy for curriculum and pedagogy. Pay thresholds and performance management likewise mean that the longer rhythms of teachers’ lives are shaped by the requirements of policy. Teachers become the model for the “life-long learner”, whose continuing education is supported so long as it conforms to what are defined as national priorities. In other words, if professional development has become a right, it is only in strongly conditional terms.

Reorganising space

Educational reconstruction also involves the transformation of educational space. In some ways, this reconstruction is immediately visible. Doing our research, we observed classroom layouts, ways of grouping students and types of wall display that would have been uncommon before 1997. In all these respects the influence of government – on pedagogy, on thinking about “ability”, on the explicit setting of objectives for pupils – was evident. But I

think one should also speak of a deeper reconstruction of space, that concerns what might be called the cultural work of the school. Here, too, there is a national agenda: the school is designed as a place where a narrow set of norms and values obtain.

In explicit contrast to the school of the immediate post-war period – much criticised by New Labour for its ideological looseness – the school of the future is intended to possess a culture defined by the priorities of leaders, at school and national level. We can speak here of school cultures as *managed* cultures.

We can contrast this with the experience of a relatively recent past, focused on one particular school subject, English. In 1961, the NUT organised a major conference entitled “Popular Culture and Personal Responsibility”. The conference – an initiative which one might think well worth repeating – brought together politicians, opinion-makers, academics and teachers. One of the teachers, John Dixon from Walworth Secondary School in South London, suggested that “culture” needed to be broadly interpreted, and that teachers were already in the act of doing it. Culture was not a single set of values, guarded by the great and the good. “There exists,” he said, “not merely this sort of elite culture ... but some different kind of culture which it is necessary to seek out by going into other people’s experience”.⁴

In the decades that followed, such seeking-out became commonplace in many English subject classrooms, enabled by the partial autonomy that teachers possessed, and by the growth of a movement of teachers connected to networks attuned to issues of cultural diversity, creativity and conflict among pupils. Grace⁵ suggests that the core of this movement was adherence to a principle of radical dialogue, that “dignified the student and the status of his or her language, theorising and culture”, and that hoped to see the school become an “arena for the representation of a rich variety of cultural patterns, forms of communication and levels of consciousness”.

To put it another way, there developed in a few parts of the state system an educational culture which questioned traditional values and worked on other kinds of practice, that were to some extent sympathetic to the experiences and cultural meanings of neglected social groups. We can speak in this context of a certain *cultural positioning* of the school: the curriculum and pedagogic resources on which the school relied were supplied in part from material that existed in the cultures of learners.⁶

The boundaries between the school and other forms of cultural activity were seen as porous. This kind of positioning I would term the *cultural connectedness* of the school, a connectedness exemplified by Georges Lopez. One of its preconditions was a certain level of professional autonomy, sufficient to allow the discovery exploration and development of new ground-level practices.

Connectedness is not the kind of relationship towards which contemporary managerial practice is working. On the contrary, despite the many connexions

that are established between the school and other agencies, a commitment to cultural exploration is not highly valued. The contemporary school is in this sense culturally disconnected, and in its disconnection is subject to the persistent attempts of policy to replace dialogue and open-endedness with conformity to a particular set of cultural norms.

Futures

It is in the light of these kinds of pressure and procedure that the recent campaigns of teaching organisations take on a fuller sense. The campaign of teacher unions against excessive workload, and the growing movement (once again) against SATS are signs of a defence against managerial attempts to govern educational time and space, and of an assertion of other kinds of priority, and other kinds of teacher identity.

To object to workload is not to object to educational work: on the contrary, it is to demand that the conditions exist for essential educational work to be done. The same is true of the movement against SATS: its impetus is positive not negative: it points towards a different kind of education, one that is geared to the time of learning, not to the “emergency” time of national and local target-setting. Watching *Être et Avoir* is a reminder of the conditions which are necessary for education, and an encouragement to establish those conditions more securely in our own classrooms. ■

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The early catastrophe

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Abstract: *Early intervention programmes do not always forestall the effects of poverty on children's academic growth. There continues to be a disparity between the vocabulary growth of children from professional families and those from families in poverty. This article details the authors' attempts to understand how and when differences in development trajectories begin and whether they can be overcome.*

DURING THE 1960s' War on Poverty, we were among the many researchers, psychologists, and educators who brought our knowledge of child development to the front line in an optimistic effort to intervene early to forestall the terrible effects that poverty was having on some children's academic growth.

We were also among the many who saw that our results, however promising at the start, washed out fairly early and fairly completely as children aged.

In one planned intervention in Kansas City, in the USA, we used our experience with clinical language intervention to design a half-day program for the Turner House Preschool, located in the impoverished Juniper Gardens area of the city. Most interventions of the time used a variety of methods and then measured results with IQ tests, but ours focused on building the everyday language the children were using, and then evaluating the growth of that language. In addition, our study included not just poor children from Turner House, but also a group of University of Kansas professors' children against whom we could measure the Turner House children's progress.

All the children in the program eagerly engaged with the wide variety of new materials and language-intensive activities introduced in the preschool. The spontaneous speech data we collected showed a spurt of new vocabulary words added to the dictionaries of all the children and an abrupt acceleration in their cumulative vocabulary growth curves. But just as in other early intervention programs, the increases were temporary.

We found we could easily increase the size of the children's vocabularies by teaching them new words. But we could not accelerate the rate of vocabulary growth so that it would continue beyond direct teaching; we could not change the developmental trajectory. However many new words we taught the children in the preschool, it was clear that a year later, when the children were in kindergarten, the effects of the boost in vocabulary resources would have washed out.

The children's developmental trajectories of vocabulary growth would continue to point to vocabulary sizes in the future that were increasingly discrepant from those of the professors' children. We saw increasing disparity between the extremes – the fast vocabulary growth of the professors' children and the slow vocabulary growth of the Turner House children. The gap seemed to foreshadow the findings from other studies that in high school many children from families in poverty lack the vocabulary used in advanced textbooks.

Rather than concede to the unmalleable forces of heredity, we decided that we would undertake research that would allow us to understand the disparate developmental trajectories we saw. We realized that if we were to understand how and when differences in developmental trajectories began, we needed to see what was happening to children at home at the very beginning of their vocabulary growth.

We undertook two and a half years of observing 42 families for an hour each month to learn about what typically went on in homes with one and two year old children learning to talk. The data showed us that ordinary families differ immensely in the amount of experience with language and interaction they regularly provide their children and that differences in children's experience are strongly linked to children's language accomplishments at age three. Our goal in the longitudinal study was to discover what was happening in children's early experience that could account for the intractable difference in rates of vocabulary growth we saw among four year olds.

Methodology

Our ambition was to record "everything" that went on in children's homes – everything that was done by the children, to them, and around them. Because we were committed to undertaking the labour involved in observing, tape recording, and transcribing, and because we did not know exactly which aspects of children's cumulative experience were contributing to establishing rates of vocabulary growth, the more information we could get each time we were in the home the more we could potentially learn.

We decided to start when the children were seven-nine months old so we would have time for the families to adapt to observation before the children actually began talking. We followed the children until they turned three years

old. The first families we recruited to participate in the study came from personal contacts: friends who had babies and families who had had children in the Turner House Preschool. We then used birth announcements to send descriptions of the study to families with children of the desired age. In recruiting from birth announcements, we had two priorities.

The first priority was to obtain a range in demographics, and the second was stability – we needed families likely to remain in the longitudinal study for several years. Recruiting from birth announcements allowed us to pre-select families. We looked up each potential family in the city directory and listed those with such signs of permanence as owning their home and having a telephone.

We listed families by sex of child and address because demographic status could be reliably associated with area of residence in this city at that time. Then we sent recruiting letters selectively in order to maintain the gender balance and the representation of socio-economic strata.

Our final sample consisted of 42 families who remained in the study from beginning to end. From each of these families, we have almost two and a half years or more of sequential monthly hour-long observations. On the basis of occupation, 13 of the families were upper socio-economic status (SES), ten were middle SES, 13 were lower SES, and six were on welfare.

There were African-American families in each SES category, in numbers roughly reflecting local job allocations. One African-American family was upper SES, three were middle, seven were lower, and six families were on welfare. Of the 42 children, 17 were African American and 23 were girls. Eleven children were the first born to the family, 18 were second children, and 13 were third or later-born children.

What we found

Before children can take charge of their own experience and begin to spend time with peers in social groups outside the home, almost everything they learn comes from their families, to whom society has assigned the task of socializing children. We were not surprised to see the 42 children turn out to be like their parents; we had not fully realized, however, the implications of those similarities for the children's futures.

We observed the 42 children grow more like their parents in stature and activity levels, in vocabulary resources, and in language and interaction styles. Despite the considerable range in vocabulary size among the children, 86 percent to 98 percent of the words recorded in each child's vocabulary consisted of words also recorded in their parents' vocabularies. By the age of 34–36 months, the children were also talking and using numbers of different words very similar to the averages of their parents (see the table below).

Families' Language and Use Differ Across Income Groups

Measures & Scores	Families					
	13 Professional		23 Working-class		6 Welfare	
	Parent	Child	Parent	Child	Parent	Child
Protest score ¹	41		31		14	
Recorded vocabulary size	2,176	1,116	1,498	749	974	525
Average ² utterances per hour	487	310	301	223	176	168
Average ² different words per hour	382	297	251	216	167	149

1. When we began the longitudinal study, we asked the parents to complete a vocabulary pre-test. At the first observation each parent was asked to complete a form abstracted from the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT). We gave each parent a list of 46 vocabulary words and a series of pictures (four options per vocabulary word) and asked the parent to write beside each word the number of the picture that corresponded to the written word. Parent performance on the test was highly correlated with years of education ($r = .57$).
2. Parent utterances and different words were averaged over 13–36 months of child age. Child utterances and different words were averaged for the four observations when the children were 33–36 months old.

By the time the children were three years old, trends in amount of talk, vocabulary growth, and style of interaction were well established and clearly suggested widening gaps to come. Even patterns of parenting were already observable among the children. When we listened to the children, we seemed to hear their parents speaking; when we watched the children play at parenting their dolls, we seemed to see the futures of their own children.

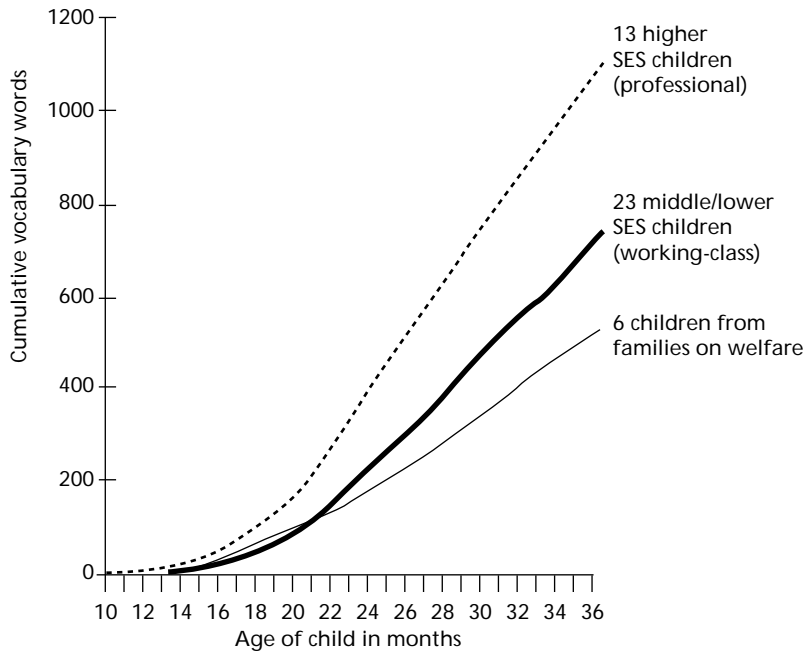
We now had answers to our 20-year-old questions. We had observed, recorded, and analysed more than 1,300 hours of casual interactions between parents and their language-learning children. We had dissembled these interactions into several dozen molecular features that could be reliably coded and counted. We had examined the correlations between the quantities of each of those features and several outcome measures relating to children's language accomplishments.

After all 1,318 observations had been entered into the computer and checked for accuracy against the raw data, after every word had been checked for spelling and coded and checked for its part of speech, after every utterance had been coded for syntax and discourse function and every code checked for accuracy, after random samples had been recoded to check the reliability of the coding, after each file had been checked one more time and the accuracy of each aspect verified, and after the data analysis programs had finally

been run to produce frequency counts and dictionary lists for each observation, we had an immense numeric database that required 23 million bytes of computer file space. We were finally ready to begin asking what it all meant.

It took six years of painstaking effort before we saw the first results of the longitudinal research. And then we were astonished at the differences the data revealed.

Children's Language Differs Greatly Across Income Groups



Like the children in the Turner House Preschool, the three year old children from families on welfare not only had smaller vocabularies than did children of the same age in professional families, but they were also adding words more slowly. Projecting the developmental trajectory of the welfare children's vocabulary growth curves, we could see an ever-widening gap similar to the one we saw between the Turner House children and the professors' children in 1967.

While we were immersed in collecting and processing the data, our thoughts were concerned only with the next utterance to be transcribed or coded. While we were observing in the homes, though we were aware that the families were very different in lifestyles, they were all similarly engaged in the fundamental task of raising a child.

All the families nurtured their children and played and talked with them. They all disciplined their children and taught them good manners and how to dress and toilet themselves. They provided their children with much the same toys

and talked to them about much the same things. Though different in personality and skill levels, the children all learned to talk and to be socially appropriate members of the family with all the basic skills needed for preschool entry.

Test performance in third grade follows accomplishments at age three

We wondered whether the differences we saw at age three would be washed out, like the effects of a preschool intervention, as the children's experience broadened to a wider community of competent speakers. Like the parents we observed, we wondered how much difference children's early experiences would actually make. Could we, or parents, predict how a child would do in school from what the parent was doing when the child was two years old?

Fortune provided us with Dale Walker, who recruited 29 of the 42 families to participate in a study of their children's school performance in the third grade, when the children were nine to ten years old.

We were awestruck at how well our measures of accomplishments at age three predicted measures of language skill at age nine–ten. From our preschool data we had been confident that the rate of vocabulary growth would predict later performance in school; we saw that it did. For the 29 children observed when they were one–two years old, the rate of vocabulary growth at age three was strongly associated with scores at age nine–ten on both the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R) of receptive vocabulary ($r = .58$) and the Test of Language Development-2: Intermediate (TOLD) ($r = .74$) and its subtests (listening, speaking, semantics, syntax).

Vocabulary use at age three was equally predictive of measures of language skill at age nine–ten. Vocabulary use at age three was strongly associated with scores on both the PPVT-R ($r = .57$) and the TOLD ($r = .72$). Vocabulary use at age three was also strongly associated with reading comprehension scores on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS/U) ($r = .56$).

The 30 million word gap by age three

All parent-child research is based on the assumption that the data (laboratory or field) reflect what people typically do. In most studies, there are as many reasons that the averages would be higher than reported as there are that they would be lower. But all researchers caution against extrapolating their findings to people and circumstances they did not include.

Our data provide us, however, a first approximation to the absolute magnitude of children's early experience, a basis sufficient for estimating the actual size of the intervention task needed to provide equal experience and, thus, equal opportunities to children living in poverty. We depend on future studies to refine this estimate.

Because the goal of an intervention would be to equalize children's early

experience, we need to estimate the amount of experience children of different SES groups might bring to an intervention that began in preschool at age four. We base our estimate on the remarkable differences

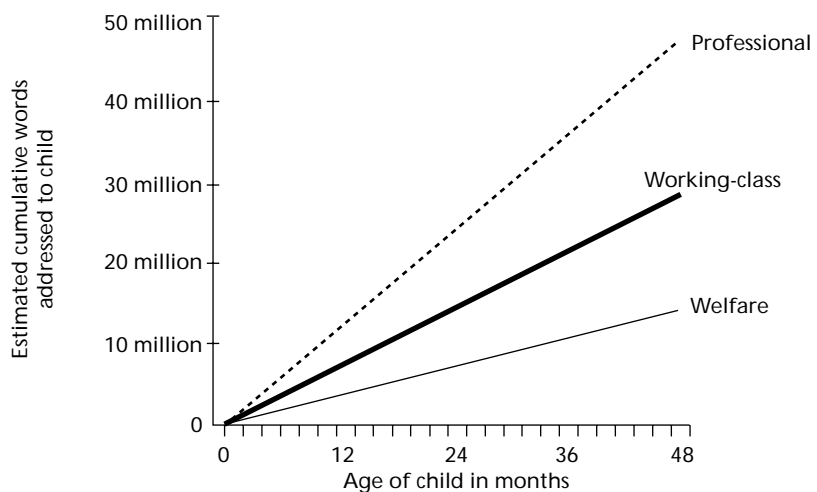
Our data showed in the relative amounts of children's early experience: Simply in words heard, the average child on welfare was having half as much experience per hour (616 words per hour) as the average working-class child (1,251 words per hour) and less than one-third that of the average child in a professional family (2,153 words per hour). These relative differences in amount of experience were so durable over the more than two years of observations that they provide the best basis we currently have for estimating children's actual life experience.

A linear extrapolation from the averages in the observational data to a 100-hour week (given a 14-hour waking day) shows the average child in the professional families with 215,000 words of language experience, the average child in a working-class family provided with 125,000 words, and the average child in a welfare family with 62,000 words of language experience.

In a 5,200-hour year, the amount would be 11.2 million words for a child in a professional family, 6.5 million words for a child in a working-class family, and 3.2 million words for a child in a welfare family. In four years of such experience, an average child in a professional family would have accumulated experience with almost 45 million words, an average child in a working-class family would have accumulated experience with 26 million words, and an average child in a welfare family would have accumulated experience with 13 million words.

By age four, the average child in a welfare family might have 13 million fewer words of cumulative experience than the average child in a working-class family. This linear extrapolation is shown in the graph below.

The Number of Words Addressed to Children Differs Across Income Groups



But the children's language experience did not differ just in terms of the number and quality of words heard. We can extrapolate similarly the relative differences the data showed in children's hourly experience with parent affirmatives (encouraging words) and prohibitions.

The average child in a professional family was accumulating 32 affirmatives and five prohibitions per hour, a ratio of six encouragements to one discouragement. The average child in a working-class family was accumulating 12 affirmatives and seven prohibitions per hour, a ratio of two encouragements to one discouragement.

The average child in a welfare family, though, was accumulating five affirmatives and 11 prohibitions per hour, a ratio of one encouragement to two discouragements. In a 5,200-hour year, that would be 166,000 encouragements to 26,000 discouragements in a professional family, 62,000 encouragements to 36,000 discouragements in a working-class family, and 26,000 encouragements to 57,000 discouragements in a welfare family.

Extrapolated to the first four years of life, the average child in a professional family would have accumulated 560,000 more instances of encouraging feedback than discouraging feedback, and an average child in a working-class family would have accumulated 100,000 more encouragements than discouragements. But an average child in a welfare family would have accumulated 125,000 more instances of prohibitions than encouragements. By the age of four, the average child in a welfare family might have had 144,000 *fewer* encouragements and 84,000 *more* discouragements of his or her behaviour than the average child in a working-class family.

Extrapolating the relative differences in children's hourly experience allows us to estimate children's cumulative experience in the first four years of life and so glimpse the size of the problem facing intervention. Whatever the inaccuracy of our estimates, it is not by an order of magnitude such that 60,000 words becomes 6,000 or 600,000.

Even if our estimates of children's experience are too high by half, the differences between children by age four in amounts of cumulative experience are so great that even the best of intervention programs could only hope to keep the children in families on welfare from falling still further behind the children in the working-class families.

The importance of early years experience

We learned from the longitudinal data that the problem of skill differences among children at the time of school entry is bigger, more intractable, and more important than we had thought. So much is happening to children during their first three years at home, at a time when they are especially malleable and uniquely dependent on the family for virtually all their experience, that by age three, an intervention must address not just a lack of knowledge or skill, but also an entire general approach to experience.

Cognitively, experience is sequential: Experiences in infancy establish habits of seeking, noticing, and incorporating new and more complex experiences, as well as schemas for categorizing and thinking about experiences. Neurologically, infancy is a critical period because cortical development is influenced by the amount of central nervous system activity stimulated by experience.

Behaviourally, infancy is a unique time of helplessness when nearly all of children's experience is mediated by adults in one-to-one interactions permeated with affect. Once children become independent and can speak for themselves, they gain access to more opportunities for experience. But the amount and diversity of children's past experience influences which new opportunities for experience they notice and choose. Estimating, as we did, the magnitude of the differences in children's cumulative experience before the age of three gives an indication of how big the problem is.

Estimating the hours of intervention needed to equalize children's early experience makes clear the enormity of the effort that would be required to change children's lives. And the longer the effort is put off, the less possible the change becomes. We see why our brief, intense efforts during the War on Poverty did not succeed. But we also see the risk to our nation and its children that makes intervention more urgent than ever. ■

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Myths and realities

Abstract: *This article outlines the difficulties that refugee and asylum seeking children face when trying to access the education system and looks at the important role that schools can play in promoting community cohesion.*

Nora McKenna

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READING ABOUT refugee and asylum-seeking pupils is of interest only to those who work directly with this group. *Wrong.* We live and work in a climate where “asylum seeker or refugee” is the new term of abuse. Racism and xenophobia, where asylum seekers and refugees are demonised, have been mainstreamed and made socially acceptable by the media and politicians.

Morally and professionally, it is essential that all adults who work with young people inform themselves in order to be able to challenge more effectively public perceptions. If the Government's vision of community cohesion is to become reality and the disturbances in Oldham and Burnley become history, the integration of refugees and asylum seekers needs to take place.

However, it is wrong to put the onus entirely on the newcomers. The Refugee Council argues that the process has to start when asylum seekers first come to the UK. The European Council on Refugees and Exiles stipulates that the host community has to be willing to accept asylum seekers and refugees as equals, help them access resources and help them play a part in decision-making.

Do we challenge racist taunts and remarks in the playground? Do we consciously incorporate refugee and asylum issues within our teaching, when appropriate? Do we use the citizenship curriculum as a means of educating the host community? If we work in a community that hosts asylum seekers and refugees, is this reflected appropriately in our staff, volunteers and governing body?

Accessing education

In 2002 it was estimated that there were approximately 82,000 refugee children in school in the UK and they made up 6.04 per cent of the total pupil population in London. David Blunkett's interpretation of the situation was that schools were being swamped.

A secondary school in London, where approximately 25 per cent of the students are asylum-seeking children, sees it differently; they raise standards, are high achievers, and are an integral part of school communities. The presence of these young people is an asset that enriches the cultural and educational life of their schools, and provides a practical exercise in inclusion and diversity training.

For many asylum-seeking children, especially those aged 14 to 16, the key problem is accessing full-time, mainstream schooling. The estimate in 2000 was that there were approximately 2,200 refugee/asylum-seeking children out of school and it is unlikely that the situation has improved. The problem is most acute in urban areas, where the pressure on school places by all parents is an issue.

However, these children and their parents or carers face multiple disadvantages: geographical mobility; varying levels of English language proficiency; understanding differing processes of applying for school places in LEAs; lack of responsibility by some social workers or carers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and last, but not least, overt or unconscious discrimination.

The role of LEAs

Some LEAs (and schools) are not aware of their legal duty to provide education to all children in their LEA – including asylum seekers – nor of the right of these children to mainstream education, irrespective of their immigration status.¹

Furthermore, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000² places a duty on all schools to make race equality central to their policies and practices which must be monitored and assessed. This includes admission procedures and asylum seekers/refugees. In addition, schools are under pressure to improve examination results and their position within league tables and perceive this group of children as undermining their goal.

They are often not aware of the fact that the examination results of pupils who have been in the UK for two years or less do not have to be included in these statistics. Some schools, who have little or no experience of working with pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, with children who have English as an additional language or with highly mobile pupils like Gypsy Traveller children, may feel inept. And no less importantly, there are misconceptions about funding issues.

Refugee children in school are funded through the education formula spending, as are all pupils. In addition, there is support through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant whose purpose is to support minority ethnic children at risk of underachievement and to support children for whom English is an additional language. For asylum seeker children dispersed outside the Greater London area, there was an additional allowance of £500 per pupil, which was not available to London schools.

However, from April 2003, a new source of funding, the Vulnerable Children Grant, aims to incorporate the large numbers of small grants available, including the £500 National Asylum Support Service (NASS) funding. The disadvantage, as far as one can see, is that there is scope within an LEA for there to be a scramble for a share of the cake and unless there is a particularly strong advocate for the needs of refugee and asylum seeking children, they may lose out to other groups.

Myths and stereotypes

There is an inherent danger of making assumptions when categorising people and conversely, a need to challenge myths and stereotypes. Refugee and asylum-seeking children are not a homogeneous group. For some, such as those from Sierra Leone or Liberia, English is probably their first language; others will have a command of several languages in addition to English. Many children come from professional, prosperous families.

Some children will have had a continuous education since the age of six or seven and will be ahead of their age cohort in maths. Others, like many from Somalia, will never have been to school and are illiterate, even in their first language. Not all refugee and asylum-seeking children will have directly witnessed extreme violence nor be suffering from traumatic stress syndrome.

Some children will be unaccompanied, travelling on their own or with a relative or friend. Others, like the Roma, will have faced discrimination, marginalisation, and racial violence in the countries where they lived permanently. However, all asylum seeking/refugee children share experiences of loss – of home, of friends and/or family, of identity – uncertainty, and cultural adjustment.

The reality of the refugee experience

Government guidance, training, Refugee Council briefings, and academic research, however, do not even begin remotely to communicate the reality of the refugee experience in the UK. What are some of the issues, from the asylum-seekers/refugee point of view?

Initially people are housed in emergency accommodation, theoretically for

no more than a few weeks, but often for months. This can be in small hotels, bed and breakfast accommodation or large buildings; it can be clean, well run and friendly or dirty, threatening and with large numbers of complete strangers – different nationalities, languages, religions, and cultures. It can mean a family of five in a room, with a bathroom and kitchen shared with other families. Or food can be provided. In fact, all essentials (including sanitary towels and paracetamol) can be provided, in which case asylum seekers receive no cash; no cash for a newspaper; or some sweets for a child; or the bus.

Finding a school at this point is extremely problematic. However, for everyone concerned, the lack of social contacts, boredom and inability to participate in everyday life, places additional pressures upon vulnerable individuals.

The National Asylum Support Service (NASS) is responsible for the accommodation and income support of destitute asylum seekers and takes over next. Often dispersed at two days' notice, to anywhere in the country, asylum seekers may be forced to leave friends, refugee community organisations and their legal advisers.

For some children this means another change of school, for others it provides the first opportunity (if they are lucky). They receive support to the value of 70 per cent of income support levels, i.e. approximately £36 a week for an adult. Asylum seeking children are entitled to free school meals when supported by NASS or social services but LEAs or schools may be ignorant of systems to claim money back or there may be difficulties in obtaining documents, for example when asylum seekers are in full-board emergency accommodation.

There is no legal obligation on anyone to provide school uniforms, although many LEAs and schools do so. However, recurrent moving and children's growth means that uniforms have to be replaced regularly.

When children access full-time, mainstream education, it is often in schools that are far away from their residence and especially in the case of younger children, parent(s) will want or have to accompany them. Although the children will have their fares paid, parents will not.

At the same time, the legal process of claiming asylum proceeds. The first hurdle may be the completion of a long document, a self-evidence form – in English – in which one provides the evidence for one's claim and which has to be returned within ten days.

There is a formal interview with the immigration service to complete and then the endless waiting. Waiting for decision letters; signing on weekly, or if you're lucky, monthly, at the nearest office which can be miles away; finding the money for fares for the whole family; waiting for information from the solicitor; waiting for a date for the Appeal; waiting for the decision; dreading the final negative decision.

And the loud bangs at six o'clock in the morning when immigration officials give you half an hour to pack three years' worth of belongings before you're taken in a minibus from Birmingham to Dungavel detention centre in the north of Scotland. Being deported to a country that you have not seen for years, where you never went to school, whose language you cannot read or write, to a home that no-longer exists.

Or, if you are an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child, the loneliness and terror of being placed with a British family with whom you are unable to communicate.

The frustration and uncertainty of being age disputed, when you insist that you are 14 and both immigration and social services insist that you are 16. And the implications: living in a hostel with older, working women from all over the world, not being able to go to school or college because your date of birth means that you are unable to access post 16 provision and schools cannot meet your needs in the final year of Key Stage 4 and GCSE examinations. And although you've been given status until your eighteenth birthday, what is going to happen after that? Re-application, dispersal, deportation?

The fact is that, unless an asylum seeker is granted refugee status or indefinite leave to remain, they will experience uncertainty and insecurity and evidence suggests that even mental and physical health deteriorate. Therefore, it is particularly astonishing that many asylum-seeking children make "unusually and often remarkable" academic progress.³

This is not surprising if one considers that for most asylum-seeking and refugee pupils (and their parents), and in most cultures, education is a high priority and has high status. Although children are very keen to learn and parents are supportive, the impact of poverty and poor housing include difficulties in completing homework because there is no space and no money to buy extra books or a computer.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking pupils are less likely to have a supportive adult who will provide continuous firm care; 14 year old boys who live in a house with a group of young men aged 18 to 20 need positive reinforcement to make sure they come to school every day, in uniform, as well as continuous monitoring of homework and occasional chiding when they get a detention.

A stable environment

For most asylum-seeking children, school is the only safe and stable environment that they experience. It is also, for most, the only opportunity they have to interact with the host community and where they learn not just maths and English, but also the hidden rules and behaviours that make it possible for foreigners to navigate comfortably and successfully

within our society. How and when to say please and thank you, how and when to queue (in the local newsagents yes, in the dinner queue at school no, unless the Headteacher is present). This makes these young people the builders of bridges between their families and communities and us.

The Community Cohesion Review Team's Cattle Report⁴ acknowledges that children and young people are integral to the success of integration policy and practice because "...they are more receptive to change and their early views will shape their future lives." That is true of British children as much as it is of refugee and asylum-seeking children.

We may teach about the values of tolerance and equality in citizenship lessons; we may inspect our schools for inclusion and diversity; we may talk about multiculturalism and anti-racism but unless children and young people experience these norms and values, they are unlikely to internalise them. And this matters whether in ten years' time they will live in Birmingham or Basra. ■

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Book reviews

CONFLICT, RESOLUTION, COMMUNICATION: PATTERNS PROMOTING PEACEFUL SCHOOLS

Melinda Lincoln

Scarecrow Press 2002 £20.00 ISBN 81084264-5

Beginning with her own universal declaration of communication principles, Melinda Lincoln makes a strong case for all schools to be more pro-active in training youngsters in new behaviour patterns in order to resolve many types of conflict by negotiation and communication. "The choice to fight seems the unfortunate first choice of many when responding to situations that stem from differences."

By learning coping skills, students (and staff) are more able to diffuse situations and handle stress more effectively. These include communication strategies, understanding non-verbal clues, anger and crisis management and narrative communication such as telling the story through the viewpoint of an observer rather than as a participant. Where this has been done, Dr Lincoln says, pupils will use negotiation in their own spheres of engagement rather than resorting to physical behaviour, as previously. The different skills are covered in detailed individual chapters.

Admittedly she writes from an American standpoint using many US examples, including that in 1993, 100,000 students took guns to schools and 160,000 secondary students skipped school because they feared physical harm. However, we need not feel complacent here. The increase in violence, research suggests, is related to the increase in class sizes, overcrowding, anonymity and a sense of alienation, and a useful list of early warning signs compiled by researchers is included with comments.

There is also a useful chapter on communication techniques for parents as schools cannot be given all the blame – nor all the means of solving any problems. "Whether at work, at home or at school, or in the community, mutual agreement is an essential ingredient in improving relationships between friends, family, co-workers or acquaintances and in reducing the perceived need for violence and inappropriate measures". Getting along, Dr Lincoln says, is perhaps more rooted in human nature than fighting to the finish.

The afterword by Dr Jonathan Black-Branch, course tutor in international law at Oxford Brookes University and who holds mediation conferences in the Middle East, supports the model given by Melinda Lincoln. He says there is a need for all schools to find new ways to deter and prevent social injustices that build up into the causes for bullying and other anti-social behaviour patterns.

Students need consistent and effective role models in holistic approaches by schools to help them break the pattern. Practical examples of policy and practice are offered.

Although it is not the first book in this area, it is a convincing body of research, which needs to be more widely read.

JAN JAUNCEY

BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Alma Harris and Linda Lambert

Open University Press 2003 £14.99 ISBN 0335-21178-X

Professor Harris is Director of a Leadership, Policy and Improvement Unit and Professor Lambert is Director of an Education Leadership Centre, the former in England and the latter in the United States of America.

The publication omits to make any reference to governors and the important role that they play in schools. This is surprising, particularly as there are references to parents, pupils, university personnel, retired educators, community members, etc, and how they can be involved in supporting, and working with, head teachers and teachers. That this omission may reveal an unawareness of the existence, let alone the role, of governors, is indicated by references to the local education authority appointing head teachers and teachers.

The suggestion for involving "the teachers' association" also indicates ignorance of the numerous teachers' professional associations in Britain. An American author may not be aware of these omissions and inaccuracies, but English contributors, and the publishers, should be.

The purpose of this 156 page book is to analyse the relationship between school leadership and school improvement and to emphasise the need for all teachers in a school to be involved in, and contributing to, leadership within their own areas and abilities, with the head teacher shaping an environment and setting a tone in which all within it feel they can contribute.

Various case studies and successful and unsuccessful models are discussed, as are personalities and styles of head teachers, and ways of encouraging teachers, all of whom have their own individual attitudes, perspectives and skills to be enthusiastically committed and involved.

It is an interesting book and aspiring and practising head teachers could find its contents of some value, including as a basis for discussion in training sessions with other heads. Unfortunately, enlightened heads may not learn much they do not already know and practise and unenlightened heads rarely change.

GORDON O THORNHILL

SO WHAT'S A BOY? ADDRESSING ISSUES OF MASCULINITY AND SCHOOLING

Wayne Martino and Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli

Open University Press 2003 £18.99 ISBN 0335-20381-7

All of us, whilst in the classroom, have been made aware of the many subcultures that are operating alongside our scintillating lesson. I remember one occasion when the students were very animated and excited. Thinking they loved the poem we were studying I asked one what he was thinking. The reply was, "Billy's nicked my Smurf!" Chastening stuff – but a useful lesson.

This book gets into the world of those subcultures by examining boys' experience of school and how schooling shapes masculinities and behaviour. The researchers allow their subjects to speak for themselves and then overlay the boys' perspectives with theoretical analyses.

The boys are diverse in every sense and include those who are brash and macho, homosexual or disabled as well as boys from a range of black or ethnic minority backgrounds. They are also at all ages and stages. Some are reflecting on their past lives at school whilst others are still experiencing it.

What emerges is that all these boys can articulate clearly the effect that an insensitive, oppressive and mono-cultural school system has on them. The researchers describe this as, "a dominant, Anglo, able-bodied, racialised and heteronormative culture". In denying their diversity and failing to meet their needs, the boys are marginalised to a "borderland" where they feel their self-worth and self-esteem is undermined. The result is that certain behaviours are generated. Through this process, boys may become disruptive and loud or simply give up and stay away. The research also uncovers inconsistencies in, say, the way in which pastoral care is talked about in schools and how it operates in practice – at the receiving end!

The book is divided in three sections covering an exploration of the subject, descriptions of diversities and suggested interventions supported by quotations from the boys. Each chapter has a helpful conclusion and some suggested responses to problems highlighted by the research. The fact the work took place in Australian schools does not detract from the lessons learnt – especially since the researchers draw on similar work by colleagues from both the UK and the USA.

This book is powerful and thought provoking, although, for practising teachers it is dense and sometimes impenetrable. However, it will tell you how this group of very different boys responded to the researchers' key questions:

- What does being a boy mean to you?
- What is school like for you? Do you experience any problems?
- What do you like about school?

Book reviews

- Can you talk to us about your friends, teachers, family and their influence on you?
- What subjects do you enjoy/dislike? Why?
- Are you experiencing any pressures in your life at school?

Through this book you will undoubtedly gain a great deal of insight into what is happening in your own classrooms. It certainly put that Smurf into perspective for me!

CAROL KAY

THE MORAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH: KNOWLEDGE, INQUIRY AND VALUES

Pat Sikes, Jon Nixon and Wilfred Carr (Eds)

Open University Press 2003 ISBN 0335-21046-5

What is educational research? What is it for? Is it only valid if its findings can be replicated? And what has this got to do with real life in the classroom today?

Educational research is about more than you might think. In the opening essay in this collection, Wilfred Carr makes the link between the current mania for data – for numbers, for levels and league tables and performance indicators of all sorts – and the 19th century utilitarian obsession with value for money, for efficient systems of production that underpinned the imposition of payment by results.

The legacy of this particular strand of educational research is not hard to find: performance-related pay, PANDAs, the DfES autumn package and so on. Within the fields of curriculum and pedagogy, equally, there is an insistence on a notion of Best Practice – allegedly evidence-based; but definitely delivered from on high, rather than emerging from colleagues' shared experiences (as its distant cousin, Good Practice, might have seemed to have done).

Best Practice goes hand in hand with a model of the relationship between teaching and learning that is positively Fordist in its simplicity. Objectives determine what is taught and what is learned: carefully monitored inputs determine easily measured outputs.

What this collection of essays does is to insist on the place of values within the apparently data-rich, value-free world of much that goes under the heading of educational research. It challenges the positivist assumptions of governments and their advisers who have frequently used research as a blunt instrument with which to beat teachers. It locates research in the real, subjective, lived experience of our schools and classrooms. And it puts a concern for social justice back where it belongs: bang in the middle of the picture.

JOHN YANDELL

THIS IS CITIZENSHIP STUDIES: FOR KEY STAGE 4 AND GCSE

Terry Fiehn, Julia Fiehn and Andrew Miller

John Murray 2003 £12.99 ISBN 0 7195 7723 3

This text is a major new course book for citizenship education at Key Stage 4. It provides a very useful resource of flexible learning activities within a structured programme of work. Skills, as well as knowledge and understanding, are a feature of the book, which should meet the GCSE short-term specification for AQA, OCR and Edexcel.

Topics include national and European citizenship, government, power politics and the media. The material is well laid out and interesting to read. Many students, for example, will no doubt enjoy reading about David Beckham and the amount of money he earned as a Manchester United footballer. This may be slightly out of date but nevertheless the context in which it is written, that of high and low pay, makes interesting reading.

Other topics such as comparing the diet of an adult in South Africa with that of an adult in the USA should make equally interesting reading. The layout of the text, which includes good graphics and photos alongside activities and clearly presented factual knowledge, combine to give a good resource. A very useful section on key words at the end completes a text which could be used in a variety of situations.

The authors have not been afraid to tackle volatile areas such as race and the police, giving clear definitions on what is meant by institutional racism and then inviting the reader to consider what it means. There is a very important section on how the law affects us as individuals using up to date examples. A good attempt has been made by the authors to present the key citizenship material in an interesting as well as informative way.

The reader is regularly invited to formulate thoughts and ideas leading to some response on important issues. The response should be an informed one as facts and knowledge are provided. In some cases alternative decisions are provided, prompting the reader to be aware of alternative ways of thinking through a situation. The major topics needed in a citizenship course are all present in the text. Through active learning and investigation students will gain knowledge and understanding of a wide range of issues. Suitable for all abilities this text provides a very useful tool in an important area of the curriculum.

DAVID LENNOX**BIOLOGY AT A GLANCE (2nd EDITION)**

Judy Dodds

Manson Publishing 2003 £9.95 ISBN 1-84076-031-1

This book is designed to be used by students of both the foundation and higher levels of the new GCSE double science syllabus. However, it is broad

enough in its content to also be of use to those studying the separate biology and human biology GCSE courses.

It is, essentially, the course rendered into annotated diagrams without many large blocks of text. The diagrams are simple, use colour effectively and are clearly and concisely labelled. Photographs are also used (sparingly) to good effect. Most subjects are covered in a single page. There are self-testing questions at the foot of each page; no answers are supplied, but they can all be found within the text above.

I liked this book. It was very comprehensive, dealing competently with the newer parts of the syllabus such as genetic engineering, tissue culture and fish farming, as well as the more usual topics like gaseous exchange and the structure of the heart. I would use it as a revision aid for brighter students. At £9.95 a copy, perhaps they would be willing to buy their own.

JUDY GRIFFITHS

**PROBLEM PAGES 11 TO 16: A PHOTOCOPIABLE BOOK OF
THOUGHT-PROVOKING MATHEMATICS PROBLEMS FOR
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

B. Cullingworth and S. Drape (Eds)

The Mathematical Association 2003 £7.00 for members £10.00 for non-members

ISBN 0 906588 52 9

This will be a useful addition to the resources of many maths departments. It is an A5 sized, photocopiable book with 64 problems aimed at the earlier stages of secondary mathematics. Each problem uses a double page spread with the problem on the left hand page and the solution(s) on the right. There are three levels of difficulty and many of the problems will be familiar but occasionally they have been re-worded into a new context.

However, it is not all good news. On the plus side, each problem is clearly set out and unambiguously worded with good clear diagrams where necessary but this is spoiled by some rather predictable and boring illustrations. It also tends to be a little heavy on the use of words and this may be off-putting for some students but overall, I think this little book is well worth adding to your library.

ROD BRAMALD

Reviewers

Jan Jauncey, head of religious studies and philosophy at King James's school, North Yorkshire

Gordon O Thornhill, chair of governors of a primary school and governor of a secondary school

Carol Kay, Southwark education business alliance manager

John Yandell, EMAS coordinator and lecturer in education

David Lennox, retired teacher, currently works part time in theological education and undertakes cross curricular work for examination boards

Judy Griffiths, head of environmental science at New College, Pontefract

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