

# Schools and External Relations: Managing the New Partnerships

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# ***The Caring Functions***

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## **Introduction**

In this chapter I aim to address a number of interconnected themes which centre on students (and teachers) as **persons** in our schools, together with a consideration of the ways in which those themes demand that there be relations with a variety of people 'outside' the school. Many of them are themes which teachers discuss under the heading of "pastoral care", especially in the secondary school. It is an unfortunate phrase in many ways, especially for the connotations which are brought to it. The word "pastoral" conjures up for a few religious or rural metaphors, with their respective pitfalls of omnipotence and of paternalism. The word "care" is such a positively loaded word that those teachers who fill posts of responsibility for pastoral care in the secondary school can fall in to the trap of being seen as (or, indeed, viewing themselves as) "the carers", with the attendant implication that other staff somehow are not. This is an absurd and unhelpful view, and can be seen as yet another example of the polarizations which abound amongst staff in such complex busy stressful organizations.

There can be no part of the school which appears to claim a monopoly on caring. This chapter will examine the caring functions of school as whole-school functions, and then go on to examine the position of headteachers in relation to the many external relations which these caring functions generate.

Three main collections of themes will be examined:

- i) caring and the curriculum  
which will refer to the attempts made by schools to explicitly address the personal-social learning of students as a whole
- ii) caring casework  
which will refer to the ways in which schools perform their caring functions toward individual students
- iii) managing the caring  
which will refer to the structures and skills needed to handle the internal and external relations.

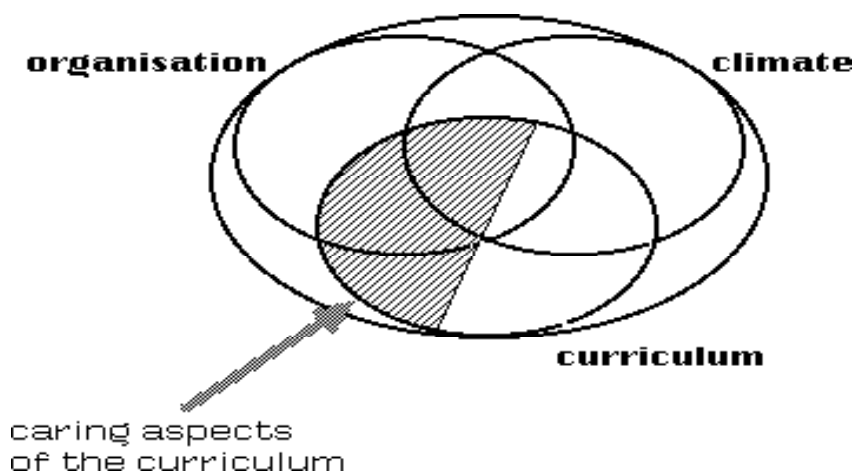
### **I CARING ASPECTS OF THE CURRICULUM**

Under this heading we shall examine the ways in which personal-social learning is explicitly addressed by schools. But where do we start? Which elements (of the curriculum) do we need to examine? It would be all too easy

to fall into the trap of believing that the only important elements to consider are those small chunks of time which schools may explicitly label for these purposes - tutorial periods, personal-social education lessons, and so on. Clearly personal-social education does not only occur in the allocated 20 minutes per week!

Pupils extract a range of social learnings from the major overlapping aspects of school. From the school organisation they learn about status, value, roles, hierarchy, and so on. From the school climate they learn about relationships, emotions, transactions between people. And from the school curriculum they learn the ideas and principles by which to understand their own and other experience, and the skills to influence their own situations.

So when we come to examine the caring aspects, it is clear that we cannot look at curriculum in any whole-school or whole-person sense without also recognising the overlap with organisation and climate.



This whole-school view points up the necessity to consider **all** the facets of school where such learning takes place, and to consider them together. At minimum the following are involved:

- features of school organisation and climate
- subject lessons (all)
- subject lessons with a particular contribution to the personal-social
- any specialist guidance lessons, whatever their label
- tutorial periods
- extra-timetable activities
- residential experience
- work experience
- activity in the community

and an overall view is needed to point up possible conflicts, overlaps, repetitions, and ill-conceived choices. For example, it is of limited use to expend great energy in developing pupils' skills of decision-making during tutorial periods, if the school organisation and climate is such that pupils are kept from making any significant decisions in and about school. It is of doubtful value to give time and energy to guidance for option choice, if the final choices are constrained and massaged by the timetable and the teachers. It may seem inappropriate to believe that the tutor group sessions are the primary vehicle for the development of a positive group culture, if the school's evidence suggests that residential experience makes the major contribution. Further, this overall view reminds us that the personal-social aspects of every classroom are of potentially great importance, given the proportion of their time which teachers and pupils spend in that setting.

This whole-school view on personal-social learning also demands a whole-school approach to thinking about curriculum. Here a further set of potential difficulties enter.

Educators debate the notion of "curriculum" with no consensus on what the word means. Despite creative attempts at whole-curriculum thinking (for example HMI, 1980)<sup>1</sup>, our schools continue to carve up pupils' and teachers' days into traditional subjects, "because of the stranglehold of public examinations, reinforced by subject-specific teacher-training" (Sayer, 1985)<sup>2</sup>. And we now have a "National Curriculum" (DES, 1966—1987)<sup>3</sup> which appears to encourage the listing of subjects with blanket time allocations plucked from the air. Again the learner and the processes of learning are omitted, as is any decent consideration of what we want young people to gain from school experience in relation to the rest of their world.

I take the word curriculum to denote the planned learning offer of the school. This usage is immediately useful in that it does not start from any notion of "subjects". It is in line with that adopted by HMI and highlights straightaway the issue of school **planning**. Indeed it could be taken to say that in those schools where planning has been minimal, there is no real sense in which they have a curriculum - subjects and timetable slots, yes, but not a curriculum.

The notion of an overall learning offer is meaningful to teachers. Even the most committed subject teacher will respond to the question "What should your school be helping its students to develop?" with answers which are not subject-bound. Nor are these of the over-generalised type which some schools generate when attempting to identify their school's "aims" - such as the ubiquitous and hardly useful "to develop the full potential of every individual"! Teachers often answer with mention of personal, interpersonal, moral, cultural and other qualities. Although the extent to which these qualities are clearly understood or expressed is sometimes limited, teachers nevertheless are **including personhood in the curriculum**. Perhaps it is still the case now that they do this to a greater extent than pupils or parents, as was the case in the 1960s (Schools Council Enquiry One - Morton-Williams, 1968)<sup>4</sup>. A further understanding which confirms schools and parents' rationale for devoting school time to such matters is that pupils' other achievements are impoverished without the comparable achievements in personal-social aspects. Even those adults who seem most

attached to the idea of judging achievement in terms of public examination passes can quickly provide examples of young people who have a surfeit of such passes, yet have not developed the necessary personal-social-motivational competence to make something in the world of those academic achievements.

The **themes** which are likely to be addressed may be encompassed under some broad headings, each reflecting an aspect of significant development in adolescents' understanding of themselves:

BODILY SELF, the changing body, bodily care, use and abuse of the body  
SEXUAL SELF, developing sexuality, the sexual dimension of relationships, implications attached to sexual behaviour  
SOCIAL SELF, understanding others, self-presentation, issues in groups,  
VOCATIONAL SELF, adult roles and lifestyles, making a contribution to the wider world  
MORAL/POLITICAL SELF, taking a value position, moral dilemmas, effecting change in one's world  
SELF AS A LEARNER, aspirations and ways of achieving, working with others, learning in one's future  
ORGANISATIONAL SELF, learning and making use of school, taking up a creative role, handling organisational difficulties

When **planning** this learning offer, a common set of difficulties arises in schools. The more difficult-to-grasp qualities start to take a back seat, and talk of subject teaching preempts the discussion again. Some planners resort to the often-defensive "You can't legislate for the personal and social - you just have to wait for these issues to come up from the pupils". But some degree of planning, with the right degree of flexibility is needed if pupils are not to be sold short. These planning difficulties occur for a number of reasons:

**i) the nature of the planning structures in school.** Whole school curriculum committees rarely exist in our schools. On the rare occasions that they are to be found, they most commonly are composed from a starting point of subject representation. This composition (or its softer version based on faculties) cements the very categories which the planning needs to hold in check. Thus the typical processes of competition between the various power-bases in the school are more likely to enter, connected as they are to the *realpolitik* of money, time, and staffing, and the newly elevated *consumerpolitik* of judgment by examinations results.

**ii) the nature of the content of the personal curriculum.** In many ways the themes we hope to address can appear ambiguous, especially to those (among them both teachers and parents) who have not had their own experience of examining such themes in detail. "Interpersonal skills" could mean almost anything. Some themes have been labelled as "controversial", and it seems that there could be a central trend to label more so. These are often the areas where there exist clear differences of opinion, and implications arise in terms of power and its use - gender

and sexuality, political education, and so on. Indeed the very politicisation of such themes can be what sends some schools scurrying back to the supposed security of subjects. Overall the content can be portrayed and perceived as an educational minefield, and when this is the case we may not be surprised that it is inhabited by the few. Alternatively, when a wider view is taken, we can see that the central themes of personhood are crucial to a worthwhile education, especially for adolescents in our society, and that achievement in this area complements and supports achievements of other sorts. But, finally, the nature of relationships between adolescents and adults in our society may also imbue the personal curriculum with some anxiety for teachers. The issues being raised for adolescents may raise unfinished or difficult personal issues for the teachers - this fact cannot be ignored in the training for and management of such curriculum.

**iii) the perceived nature of teaching in personal education.** On some occasions the teaching methods employed when addressing personal-social themes explicitly are portrayed as though they are clearly and fundamentally different from teaching methods at large. On such occasions a proportion of teachers hesitate in their approach, and two types of problem follow. First, when we are seeking to develop the particular occasions in which these themes are deliberately raised (for example tutorial periods and P.S.E. lessons) staff may feel de-skilled. And second, when we are seeking to develop the personal-social aspects of all subject lessons (for example through more activity-based learning) staff may feel we are asking for something new or special or different in kind. Given the considerable levels of complexity and ambiguity which teachers regularly handle in classrooms, any area of the curriculum which appears to ask them to handle more could expect difficulties. Indeed, those curriculum development projects which in recent years have put a heavy stress on particular teaching methods and skills of groupwork may have inadvertently contributed to a view that such work is only carried out by special people using special methods after special training. Fortunately it remains the case that there is more than one way to generate reflective and personal educational occasions with adolescents. Therefore we may take a flexible and developmental approach, while recognising that teacher's sense of 'ownership' of the themes they are raising may not have the same security as on other occasions: the style of relationship with learners may appear different: changing approaches to classroom organisation may be properly and creatively brought on to the agenda.

### **So What Are The Implications for Heads and for External Relations?**

Given this background, curriculum leaders such as headteachers need to bring considerable care to the planning processes, to the way in which themes are portrayed, and to the way in which teaching processes are portrayed. Heads have an important role to play in ensuring that there are appropriate internal structures for the planning, co-ordinating, and reviewing of the caring aspects of the curriculum and the school. Indeed their new conditions of service explicitly state that one of the professional duties shall be "determining and ensuring the implementation of a policy for the pastoral care of the pupils"<sup>5</sup>. This means much more than the setting up

of a single role with a title such as “Pastoral Curriculum co-ordinator” - a single individual will only mirror the isolation which is possible in this area of work unless a well-resourced whole-school mechanism of policy, meetings and other communications are also instituted.

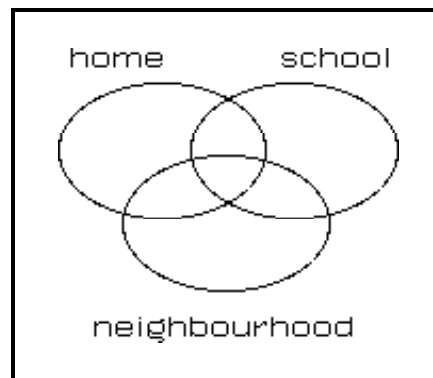
**There is a clear need for well-developed 'external relations'.**

Personal-social education which takes place in a vacuum will be an impoverished affair for three fundamental reasons.

First, parents continue to be a major influence on most adolescent decisions, including those about school. School and teachers do not effect a simple or independent influence upon adolescents' decisions or behaviours. Adolescents (like everyone else) are influenced by a range of people around them. Such influence does not operate in random ways: it depends on who are the salient sources to the young person at any particular time, and for different issues different people are salient. . On many social behaviours peers are influential. But generally speaking teachers are not a ready-made source of credibility on personal-social themes: they may become more credible with care, but there remains a fundamental need to make connections with the sources who are salient, particularly parents or other adults that students find significant.

Second, the overlapping influences in our students' “lifespaces” often need to be the focus of the personal-social education in school, and one of the goals of such education is that

the young person will become more competent at taking a perspective on her/his life. School will not be able to achieve this if it plays a highly bounded role, cutting itself off from the other aspects in true monastery style. Rather, there need to be permeable boundaries, where the realities of home and of neighbourhood are brought into the school experience. This needs to happen even in the face of the fact



that some adolescents wish on occasions to maintain high boundaries between the various areas.

Third, the range of learnings implied by the pastoral aspects of the curriculum also imply learning about life, work, and social issues as they occur in a range of contexts. School may do its best in trying to import resources which describe and reflect these contexts, but there is hardly a substitute for real experience in the real setting.

**Three forms of external relation are identifiable and desirable:**

- 1) Bringing significant people in to school
- 2) Engaging the influence of significant others
- 3) Organising learning outside school

and there are worthwhile developments in each which mark the way for future achievement.

**1) Bringing significant people in to the school.** Visitors in school have been effectively used in social education, health education, tutorial programmes, and so on. Given preparation, the role that parents, governors, community representatives, local welfare workers, and so on can play is very valuable. Small discussion group formats are needed, and here there are extra payoffs which come from the group preparing how the occasion is best to be handled. It is possible to slip into a fairly predictable list of potential visitors: students' own choices can help to avoid this (Bazalgette, 1971)<sup>6</sup>, and the community of the school has an important range of adults with whom it could be both unusual and profitable for young people to meet in a discussion context (Watkins, 1988)<sup>7</sup>. In furthering pupils' understandings of multicultural communities, visitors from a range of cultural experience not only allow a direct insight on local or wider issues, they also may generate a worthwhile reflection on how visitors are invited, greeted, and entertained, and our assumptions about social customs. An extended version of the notion of the visitor is that which has been exercised in the "Transition to Working Life" scheme<sup>8</sup>. Here a working coach comes to meet with a small number of pupils in school, but soon extends this to weekly meetings in and around the workplace. Numerous examples within this scheme have given evidence of the way that young people who had previously acquired difficult reputations in their school careers can take significant strides in the company of an adult who becomes salient and credible. The mature atmosphere generated on such occasions is a highlighted example of the general effect which follows from having an increased number of adults in the school context (rather in the same way as the introduction of more than one teacher can have an effect on classroom life). Adolescents are given wider experience of how adults may interact with each other, and how any issues which may crop up can be dealt with. In this way, programmes which encourage "AOTs" - adults other than teachers- into school are to be prized.

On the occasions that parents are invited to visit school **in their roles as parents**, an extra set of considerations arise. The over-structured and ritualised cattle markets which are sometimes referred to as parents' evenings are seldom likely to create educational opportunities for the adolescents. It may seem at first peculiar to judge such events by this criterion, but unless meetings with parents do something to enhance the achievement of the pupil their purpose will remain confused. There are still schools which discourage pupils' attendance at these events (often a mark of teachers' communications insecurity), and thus collude with the notion that it's the adults who hold power over adolescents' learning. We need to develop further the steps which have been made toward a very different form of meeting - something that is smaller, more personal and more social in that it recognises the potential value in parents talking with each other. Here the notion of the **Tutor Group Association** (ILEA, 1984)<sup>9</sup> is useful: it is intended to convey the idea that a more meaningful size of group and the more meaningful, ongoing contacts that this generates, are likely to lead to profitable outcomes in terms of communication and thence perhaps pupil progress. A similar dynamic lies behind the idea of **Parent Curriculum Events**: these meetings take the aim of conveying to parents some of the teaching approaches and subject developments which their children are experiencing, and achieve



the aim by giving parents a sample set of such experiences in small groups such as the Tutor Group Association. Those caring aspects of the curriculum which are stimulated and highlighted by particular teaching occasions can be very effectively communicated to parents in this manner. Very successful examples have included those which address sex education, aspects of health education, and aspects of educational guidance such as subject choice.

So this first form of external relation is one aspect of building a well-traversed and well-permeated boundary between the school and its context, and might go some way to reducing the possibility that the additional teaching occasions for the caring aspects of the curriculum are seen as “just another silly subject” (Carnell, 1983)<sup>10</sup>

**2) Engaging the influence of significant others.** The activities which teachers and tutors use in tutorial periods, personal-social education lessons and the like need also to recognise the influences of significant others outside the school. All too often this does not occur, and the activities become encapsulated events, with the possible corollary that other significant people (especially parents) are only engaged in a minor policing role for the school. When pastoral aspects of the curriculum do not address those other significant influences, there is a risk of falling into the trap of believing that the activities themselves or the tutorial occasion itself are the powerful features in learning and change. Worse, the activities can degenerate to a position where teachers appear to believe that they have some simple direct influence over the adolescents' views and behaviour in these personal-social themes: these are the occasions when activity-based guidance degenerates into teachers moralising, cajoling, and “persuading”.

Instead of falling into these distortions, activities can attempt to engage the real influences in pupils' lives in a number of ways.

First they can ask pupils to identify, discuss, and reflect on the range of views held by their parents and peers on the themes being addressed - this can be achieved quickly and effectively through structured tasks and structured group discussion.

Second, activities can encourage the sharing and development of new strategies towards those “outside” influences, with active practice where necessary<sup>11</sup>. For such transfer of learning to take place toward the “outside” world, effective guidance on good action-planning and goal-setting is required.

Third, activities can prompt particular communications between pupils and their parents or the adults they live with, providing a stimulus to the communication, and perhaps a structure for discussion. These can be especially valuable on themes which address the pupil's approach and strategy toward school, where they may unwittingly be adopting an approach similar to their parents'. Talking this over can create the space for the young person to develop something which is more clearly her/his own.

Fourth, activities can set up investigations in which pupils are assessing evidence for new ideas and understandings in their relations with significant others

Thus we have four elements; reflection, new action, new communication, new meanings.

This adds up to what I would call caring curriculum on a cybernetic/ecological model (see Watkins, 1988, for examples)<sup>12</sup>. The role of the tutor is not that of persuading or influencing, but of facilitating the class, the tasks, the investigations and so on. The tutorial and other occasions become events with a focus on the “outside” world, rather than events which focus on themselves. This latter possibility is the one which unfortunately leads to teachers thinking of tutorials and personal-social education as strongly emotional events with activities to stimulate such emotion, or as influence events when the teachers generate concerns about the “imposition” of values (not very likely in reality).

**3) Organising learning outside school.** External relations which are required to stimulate personal-social learning with significant others **outside** school vary according to the facet of personal-social development being addressed. Clearly many examples of residential experience come to mind, when social relations with significant peers can develop apace. Similarly we are now used to thinking about work experience and similar arrangements in a flexible way. Work shadowing, “mini-enterprises”, school-industry projects, and the like develop a potentially effective set of contexts for learning about aspects of adult working life. Community work and community experience which is organised by the school can be another powerful element, even though the 1980s may have witnessed a decline in this area, alongside its old tendency to be provided for “lower-ability” pupils. The focus of these examples may be described (from the terms of the list given above) as clustering in the vocational and social areas of this curriculum offer. What is noticeable also is that there are few examples of the school organising for its pupils learning with **parents** in contexts outside the school. Little wonder that the notions of “being sent for by the school” and “going **up** to the school” are still prevalent with some parents. A few examples from community education have demonstrated that meetings with parents which are held on sites other than the school itself can develop a much more fruitful atmosphere, but they have also demonstrated what a considerable length of time it takes for both teachers and parents to modify their view of teacher-parent relations in this direction.

### **Current Development Needs**

**1. There is a need for skills.** Skills to make good use of the external relations. First, with regard to pupils, this means the skills of teachers in being able to help pupils extract and develop new meanings from the experiences which have been set up for them. The most important time in connection with visits and visitors is often the session following: this is where the reflection and analysis occurs, especially in areas of learning about themselves - how they perceived the event and the people, how they reacted, similarities and differences across the group, and so on. Second, with regard to parents, many teachers value the chance to assess and develop their skills in parent-teacher relations. Clarifying and developing their view of the goals of meeting with parents, and extending the approach to planning and handling group events will lead to teachers reflecting on crucial issues concerning external relations<sup>13 14</sup>.

**2. There is a need for ideas in teaching materials and resources.** The stock of available resources which teachers adapt and modify for use in tutorial periods, personal-social education, and other contexts where the caring aspects of the curriculum are raised deserves extension. Specifically there is a need for more developed resources which engage and reflect on the range of significant others in the adolescent's lifespace, and thus move away from the view that the individual and their tutor group is of necessity a potent context.

**3. There is a need for experiments and support.** "Crossing the boundaries" develops well when teachers have experience of the positive outcomes which follow. The gloomy, stereotypical, and sometimes downright defensive predictions which some teachers make of developing external relations are often the ones which are not based in active evidence. Thus we need small scale projects. A difficulty to be anticipated is that of finding the necessary catalytic and support personnel: most of the sources we turn to are still fundamentally organised on a subject-like basis. There are still too few examples of advisers, inspectors, consultants, trainers in this field.

**4. There is a need for good information systems for a school's contacts.** In the area of contacts with the local world of work and adult life, schools need extensive and accessible information. Data on firms, organisations, and people in the community, which is stored and retrieved in a user-friendly fashion is a real possibility. Perhaps the development of such a system could form the basis of a useful IT project in any school. In the area of contacts with parents, a different accessibility is required.

### **Caring Aspects of the National Curriculum?**

The development of a National Curriculum might raise important issues in developing the caring aspects which are described here. But on the other hand it might not. The history of curriculum change (i.e. stability) in this country could be interpreted as supporting a view that it is difficult to change schools from the outside. Hence, perhaps, the extreme, rhetorical and unworkable nature of many contemporary government proposals. But they could, paradoxically, have their intended effect in the present climate - this would be most easily achieved if teachers were to accept them as a *fait accompli*, taken in by the rhetoric. Instead we need to remind teachers of their consummate skill in domesticating and adapting such interventions.

Early reactions to the "Consultative Document" on the National Curriculum (DES, 1987)<sup>15</sup> have taken the proposals to mean that secondary schools will be required to generate a **timetable** with listed **subjects** in given percentages - this could be merely a narrow reading, and amendments made to the Education Bill may confirm this. If percentages were prescribed, they could be distributed across any sort of timetable arrangement a school cares to make: *in extremis* a fully integrated timetable could be encompassed under percentage time requirements, given that the school with such an approach also has some (notional) way of clarifying the amounts of time spent on various activities. A pamphlet distributed to schools makes this explicit: "The National Curriculum ... will not lay down how a school will organise its timetable"<sup>16</sup>. Thus those who have gloomily predicted that the National Curriculum spells the end of timetabled teaching of personal-social education have jumped into talking about **subjects** again. Perhaps this reflects the reactive, disempowered state in which we presently find many teachers.

The challenge now lies in developing the caring aspects of the curriculum within a changed framework of pressures. In the present climate it is clear that aspects such as English and Mathematics will attract central attention first, but a thorough examination of cross-curricular issues must surely develop soon thereafter. The composition of the National Curriculum Council will be crucial here, given the Secretary of State's multiple references to the importance of cross-curricular themes.

What will be demanded of curriculum planners at all levels is that they work with:

- i) the personal-social aspects of pupil development, to which every subject has in the past made its contribution
- ii) the fact that any achievement in school is underscored by personal-social development
- iii) the highlighted themes which have not fallen easily into school subjects of the past, but which attract concern (including that of central government in the case of AIDS education and sex education).

Here again fragmentation will be a risk. At national level it remains to be seen whether these changes **do** turn out to develop a curriculum worthy of the title, or whether they will serve to give a regressive support to the subjects of the grammar school. And in the personal-social areas it remains to be seen whether there is a genuine commitment from central government: early examples of the DES creating direct teaching materials for the first time in its history (AIDS video), and of censoring the work of established authorities in the area (the Health Education Authority) could suggest that the authoritarian rhetoric of "family life" and "moral frameworks" might be aggressively pursued. It remains an open question whether central government has the necessary machinery to do this in detail: the revelation that Clause 28 of the Local Government Act does not apply to schools demonstrates the blunderbuss nature of many recent pieces of legislation.

At school level, the need for whole-school coordinating mechanisms will again be demonstrated, alongside the need for staff development on cross-curricular themes. Paradoxically again, the DES<sup>17</sup> pamphlet gives a clear indication: having described the core and foundation subjects, the question is raised "What about other topics?", to which the answer is given: "Many important themes and skills will have key places in attainment targets and programmes of study for the core and foundation subjects. Examples are personal and social education, careers education and guidance, economic awareness and information technology skills. What is learnt in this way can be brought together and consolidated, where necessary, in the time available outside the national curriculum". Such bringing together and consolidation would clearly require a whole-school whole-curriculum coordinating mechanism.

## **II CARING CASEWORK**

We now turn attention to those occasions when the caring functions of the school are not focussed on the **general** needs of its pupils and their personal-social development, but are focussed on **particular** needs of

individual pupils. In describing this under the heading of casework, I am not intending to invoke any medical or quasi-medical views of such work. Rather, the aim is to discuss the work which is undertaken by a particularly important and often underdeveloped aspect of the teacher's role.

### **The Tutor**

The whole point of having a person in every secondary school that every pupil might come to perceive as "for her" or "for him" is that the tutor might develop some whole-pupil perspective. This means that they would have not only a cross-curricular view of their tutees, but they would also have a view which extends beyond the school gates, to family and to neighbourhood. Many schools have in the past distorted the role of tutor into an administrator of attendance data and school communications, or some indirect policer of their colleagues' classroom discipline problems. Inadvertently perhaps, too little time and resource has been dedicated to generating the sort of information flow which will help the tutor develop a holistic picture of the tutees. In a similar manner there are still many occasions when tutors are not engaged in discussion of individual pupils, and the particular knowledge which they may have gained is lost to an important discussion of a pupil. All this is contrary to the ideas which have been circulating since the wider introduction of comprehensive schools, for example Marland's description of "tutor ascendant"<sup>18</sup>.

Yet various research studies demonstrate that the effective engagement of tutors in the first instance may de-escalate some of the problems which are perceived by teachers, and which would otherwise have been referred up the hierarchy (or "referral funnel") of Heads of Year, Deputy Heads etc. For example Galloway's (1983)<sup>19</sup> analyses of four secondary schools with particularly low reported incidence of disruptive behaviour, suggested that the form tutor was used in a proactive way in these schools, whereas in another ten schools this use was defeated by lack of a policy of continuity of tutors, lack of time to meet the tutor group, and a lack of teaching contact between tutor and tutor group. Similarly Reynolds and Murgatroyd (1977)<sup>20</sup> report a study of 76 schools where the stated responsibility for dealing with problems - in their example, truancy - was investigated. There was an association between the dealing with problems by middle and senior management (at the expense of the form tutors) and the seriousness of the perceived problem: dealing with problems at middle-management level was associated with higher levels of perceived problem.

Again it may be paradoxical to many educationists that we could now be entering an era when the support of the tutor's role is developed at last. The new teachers conditions of employment give second mention to the following duties of every teacher (second only to their responsibility to organise classroom teaching):

- || (a) promoting the general progress and well-being of individual pupils and of any class or group assigned to him
- || (b) providing guidance and advice to pupils on educational and social matters and on their further education and future careers, including information about sources of more expert advice on specific questions: making relevant records and reports

- (c) making records of and reports on the personal and social needs of pupils
- (d) communicating and consulting with the parents of pupils
- (e) communicating and cooperating with persons or bodies outside the school
- (f) participating in meetings arranged for any of the purposes described above"

Already in response to these requirements there are examples of schools where tutors now have a timetabled time for contacting parents, welfare network professional, and so on. And in response to developments such as profiling and records of achievement, there are examples where tutors have timetabled time to meet with individual tutees and review progress. Early evidence suggests that pupils and tutors alike attach significance to the tutor role under these conditions.

### **What are the implications for Heads and for External Relations?**

First, the senior management of any school should evaluate how effectively the tutor role is supported and resourced. This starts with the time made available, for individual and outside contact as well as for group contact. Here directed time can be an ally in that it allows a clear message to be given that this work is a priority. With time we evaluate the tasks: does the school inadvertently give organisational messages which trivialise and marginalise the tutor's contribution to casework, either by flooding the tutor with less relevant tasks, or by diverting casework to overburdened and undermanaged Heads of Year/House? And then it is important to think about the skills of the tutor: these are insufficiently addressed at initial training level<sup>21</sup>, and often remain unaddressed in-service, since the team leaders themselves are untrained to do this in-house, and there are still too few out-house trainers to meet the considerable need. If tutors are to give guidance and advice effectively, and to facilitate students' reviewing, then time must be available for training in the necessary skills and understandings [for a more developed analysis see NAPCE 1986<sup>22</sup>].

**Again there is a need for well-developed 'external relations'**, and again the three headings used above will order the points:

- 1) Bringing significant people in to school
- 2) Engaging the influence of significant others
- 3) Organising learning outside school

**1. Bringing significant people in to school.** On the theme of caring casework, the first people we are likely to think of are **parents**, and this is often appropriate. On many of the occasions when an individual pupil is puzzling us or concerning us, it is useful to understand the family perspectives on the issue. But the number of occasions when we seek to explain pupil behaviour by reference to some aspect of the family is generally more than is appropriate: "family" is a well-worn explanation, to the extent that it almost verges on scapegoating in that it diverts attention from causes in school. To reduce this tendency we must ensure that our understanding of pupil behaviour has been thoroughly investigated in the

school context first: pupils' behaviour varies in systematic ways across the various situations they meet in school, just as any person's behaviour varies. On most occasions an investigation structured along these lines will help us see the key explanations in the school context. It also helps us specify the conditions under which we will turn our attention to the family for explanation: they are:

- when patterns of behaviour across situations show little variability, i.e. there is similarity across school situations
- when there is no discernible pay-off for the behaviour in the immediate situation i.e. something else is being brought to our attention
- when it is already known that parental involvement has been important in the past for similar sorts of difficulties in school [see further development of this approach in Watkins & Wagner, 1987<sup>23</sup>]

On these occasions it is fruitful to remember that the family is and always will be a more potent environment than the school. Recognizing this has important implications for the ways in which we engage parents over their children - it means we do not invite them to become adjunct enforcers of school concerns, we do not belittle them with pseudo "contracts" of doubtful use: instead the school engages with parents and other significant family members in a joint problem-solving way over the difficulties which school is experiencing. Caring casework of this sort requires some understanding of families and of family processes<sup>24</sup> - it is intellectually demanding if it is effective. If schools take on this sort of approach some other issues may be highlighted, in particular the way that parents are received into the school: the messages (explicit and implicit) and the resources (space and facilities) may need attention.

Other people whom the school may bring in are of course **colleagues in the welfare network**. It is straightaway interesting that such colleagues are still referred to in many school as "outside agencies", and their experiences of working with school are not characterized by feelings of being brought in. Rather the biggest difficulties are thrown outwards at them, usually in the form of pupils. This state of affairs highlights the lack of shared understanding of the different roles and responsibilities which the different professionals enact<sup>25</sup>. It takes time for this sort of understanding to develop, but time alone may not be enough: school and others could continue to treat each other in stereotyped ways. Therefore some means of accelerating the development of shared understanding could be important. Discussions which explicitly address the various workers' conceptions of their and others roles have often proved very useful as one element in developing cooperative practice. A constructive stimulus can be generated by asking all to share their views through some structure such as that given below:

**Schools and External Relations: The Caring Functions**

	Social Worker in School	Teacher with Pastoral Care Responsibility	School Counsellor	Educational Psychologist in school	Education Welfare Officer
What are Primary Tasks?					
What Tasks are Unique to this role?					
Variously Overlapping Tasks (tick those which you think apply under each column)					
Assessing childrens' educational needs					
Devising educational programmes					
Carrying out educational programmes					
Communicating with the family					
Intervening with the family					
Counselling children					
Carrying out social education programmes					
<u>Consulting with teachers and receiving referrals on:</u>					
Children's social-emotional problems					
Children's learning difficulties					
Family social problems					

(based on Wagner 1983<sup>26</sup>)

Development of understanding and cooperation will take time, and will often be severely tested by the different professional perspectives of the various parties. It is also tested by the nature of some of the cases, child sexual abuse being the clearest example. Here the destructive communications which exist in the family are often mirrored in the team of helpers who become involved: teachers are excluded (yet they are important “case-finders”<sup>27</sup>), others take up various power positions, and so on. This may be overcome with a much stronger background of **joint** development in practice, procedure and policy.



## **2. Engaging the influence of significant others.**

Casework needs to be based on a model of the young person as the focus of a network (as discussed in the section on curriculum), This means that when tutors are working with individual pupils their approach will include consideration of the pupil's lifespace and transactions with significant others<sup>28</sup>. Whether the theme is one of learning, or option "choice", or job search, or a sexual issue, it will be important to understand and examine the network of perspectives, pressures, and transactions of which the young person is central focus. This is a much-needed antidote to a pitfall which arises in casework - the tendency to focus on the individual in an individualistic fashion and to veer towards introspective counselling as an intervention.

The practical outgrowth of this approach will be seen in such things as the tutor using life space diagrams with the pupil, the help having an explicit focus on relations with significant others (rather than on the intra-personal), practice in developing new strategies towards them, and so on. It is not possible to know in advance the aspects of a pupil's lifespace which will be significant for a particular issue, but this approach will be appropriate for relations outside and relations inside school.

## **3. Organising learning outside school**

The first point to make here is that effective tutoring often involves learning outside school. The tutor who works with an individual pupil will often help the young person develop a strategy to try out and report on at a follow-up occasion.

A second aspect is that the pastoral staff of any school should recognise that they are not necessarily the people that pupils will turn to for help, by dint of their formal role. Pupils may turn to a range of people, some of whom are outside the school, and some of which are helping agencies such as **community counselling centres**, family support, and so on. The school should be playing its part in ensuring that pupils know of such facilities and how to best use them.

A third aspect to consider in this section is that of **home visiting by tutors**. It seems important to mention this under a heading of "organising learning outside school" so that it raises the questions "Who learns?" and "About what?" These are important questions if home visits are to become more than enjoyable social occasions (which may have their own positive impact in an indirect way) and are to develop a stronger rationale in the minds of the majority of teachers. The purposes of having parents learn more about the school's understanding of their child's progress, in a context which is under their control, and of having the tutor learn more of the family's understanding of that progress is an important purpose, well achieved through semi-structured visiting. It is debatable however whether present resourcing policies will encourage development in this area, and the rhetoric of "improved parental choice" will mean more distant consumers making irregular once-and-for-all choices, while the general picture of home school relations remains one of the least developed in Europe<sup>29</sup>. Once again the school's challenge is to fill the gap.

### **III MANAGING THE CARING**

The preceding sections have included a number of points which have implications for the management of school resources, the management of teacher teams, and indeed for personal management. Some general points remain.

**1. Facilitating the conditions for management.** In many schools the pastoral system is severely under-managed. Heads of Year/House do not really undertake any meaningful middle management tasks, and the tutor teams are teams in name only. This state of affairs is not the simple responsibility of those members of staff: it is a statement about the whole school system. On these occasions the first task is to make the caring manageable. This is always a difficulty for systems which are partly demand-led: they can become excessively so. Thus an early task must be the development of policy and practice which puts the demand-led aspect in appropriate perspective. Matters involving "discipline" are regular examples of this: in the most under-managed set-ups, middle management colleagues are overloaded with requests to "deal with" difficulties which have arisen in classrooms, no doubt on a regular patterned basis, and they do not have the policy backup to suggest that this sort of "referral" is inappropriate. Neither are there the mechanisms for reviewing the patterns of behaviour<sup>30</sup> nor the means of supporting better classroom practice. Policy is needed in order to free middle managers for other duties.

Development of caring aspects of the curriculum has on some occasions allowed the management of the pastoral system to take on a more pro-active style. But here too there are examples of severe under-management. Important themes become trivialised when this aspect degenerates into Heads of Year/House dishing out worksheets ten minutes before the teaching begins. What is needed is a managed plan, with time for team development, materials development, and review, together with a means of coordinating the various locations of the pastoral curriculum. This means is unlikely to be a "pastoral curriculum coordinator" - secondary schools seem to be receiving recommendations for appointing a surfeit of coordinators in recent years, to address their cross-curricular themes - they can become very lonely roles without the appropriate means for coordination. This is likely to be a whole-school curriculum committee, as mentioned in section I.

#### **2. Recognising the issues in pastoral management**

It is important to recognise some particular features which make pastoral management different from managing other aspects:

- initial training of teachers in this area is poor. This point applies to team members and also to team leaders, who have commonly not experienced any in-service training. What in-service training is available has to serve both functions.
- team leaders in pastoral care do not have such control over team composition/selection as do subject managers. Thus the processes of team building and team leading are affected.
- the high focus on interpersonal themes and issues can be unsettling for some, and can lead to teachers feeling unskilled. The wide theoretical and knowledge base to this work can be daunting.

- much of the work with pupils carries more ambiguity and unpredictability than some of teachers' work in their subject teams. Teachers' sense of "ownership" of the work needs careful development.

### **3. Managing the external relations**

The caring aspects of school have many tasks to manage in their external relations, some of which have been mentioned in earlier sections. Over and above these there is another task of great importance; the **public portrayal** of the caring aspects. This includes:

- explaining to parents what the pastoral system is for, and how to best use it<sup>31</sup>
- ensuring that any school statements carry a positive description of pastoral care
- conveying to parents and others some of the benefits which develop from personal-social-health education (in clear examples, rather than the theoretical)
- Engaging those with new responsibilities in the area, especially governors on sex education, in training discussions about the approaches which a school adopts.

### **In Conclusion**

As recently as 1987 it was being said that pastoral care was less affected by change attempts initiated outside the school than was the academic<sup>32</sup>. This hardly seems the case in 1988. Records of Achievement, TVEI, GCSE, National Curriculum, Sex Education and other initiatives all have major implications for pastoral care and for external relations. No doubt the structures we have inhabited in secondary schools will be subject to experiment and change, as we come to see that the goals of the pastoral system can be achieved through more than one route.

Meanwhile for Heads the pressures mount to become a manager of a "push" style, with greater emphasis on financial management and on public relations/marketing. The trap for heads would be that of holding on to these aspects too tightly and generating a new sort of "gatekeeper" role. The message of this chapter is that when teachers take the pastoral aspect of their role seriously they have to face outward from the school. An implication is that Heads will have to support the development of their teams in this field, and this will demand of them those abilities which are key to leadership roles in education today:

**i) the ability to hold on**, to fundamental purposes in education, to the importance of care, in a changing and ambiguous context

**ii) the ability to let go**, of others to develop, of practices which are proving ineffective, with the aim of **really** improving schools at a time when it might seem most difficult.

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