

**The Purposes and Effectiveness of
Boarding Education
at the end of the Twentieth Century**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the aims of the education delivered in a small sample of schools in the boarding sector, using qualitative methods of data gathering – analysis of school documents, interviews with the key participants (pupils, heads, staff and parents) and a limited element of participation in the schools selected.

Studies on school effectiveness have proliferated in recent decades, the majority focusing on day schools. In addition, the research has tended to focus on enhancement of achievement in the cognitive area, to the virtual exclusion of other aspects of pupils' development. The present study makes a contribution to the discussion of effective schooling in two ways: firstly, by looking at the practices of boarding rather than day schools, it extends the scope and applicability of effective school research; and secondly, it extends the focus on effectiveness to include the somewhat neglected psychomotor and affective domains, while also addressing academic achievement among the pupils in the sample schools.

Case studies were made of three boarding schools: one state, two independent, drawing on analysis of the material gathered. The research questions were designed to throw light on the purposes, workings and effectiveness of the

schools, as perceived by each interviewee. Analysis of collected data led to an exploration of three themes that emerged as crucial to the realization of each school's aims: curriculum, community and commitment.

The study highlighted the responsibility felt in the boarding sector to enhance potential not only in the cognitive, but also in the affective and psychomotor areas of each individual pupil's development. Many researchers have voiced the need to exploit pupils' all-round skills and aptitudes and this study suggests that further research in boarding schools might well prove to be both fruitful and relevant to the day sector.

DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of this thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed

....Date... June 2006 ..

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CHAPTER ONE

Why Study Boarding Education?

I propose to use this introductory chapter to explain why, at the age of 70, I made a decision to undertake a research study on boarding education. The reasons were threefold; they were and remain compelling and inescapable. Having spent three quarters of my active working career in the boarding sector, I am only too aware that misconceptions about the boarding sector of our educational system abound. Based firmly in the past, these misconceptions have been fed by fictional accounts of boarding school life. They have been fuelled also by the seeming compulsion of a small minority of its former pupils who, finding themselves in the public eye, have seen fit to decry their former schools, not always with scrupulous regard for accuracy. To the majority, the concept of boarding suggests, at worst, schools that are bastions of privilege; at best, schools that supply a supportive mechanism for those with specific 'boarding needs'. The use of the phrase, 'boarding need', has come to have for the majority of people a connotation of something other than normal. While there are indeed boarding establishments that educate children with severe mental and physical impairments also included in the popular conception of boarding schools are those that cater for children of overseas parents, parents who live in isolated rural areas, or children of single parents. The suggestion, rarely considered, is that if good boarding schools do answer the needs of these children, it is because there is present in each school community a strong core of normality, a core supported by united families in open communication and working in confident

partnership with the schools. In making a study of boarding, I hoped to produce a realistic account of present day boarding.

The second reason grew out of the quality time which came with retirement, in which it was possible both to reflect on the past and to study current educational issues. I relished the opportunity to examine some of the conclusions I had formed concerning the purposes and practices of the boarding school. When I took up my first appointment as headmistress, there were no training courses on offer. New heads learnt their skills 'on the job'. Of course one had support. I was immensely fortunate in having remarkably gifted chairmen and governing bodies in both the schools in which I served as head. They gave generously of their wisdom and expertise. I learned so much from them, from colleagues, from the pupils themselves; but the responsibility for decisions made in the course of duty rested with me. In addition to listening to others, it was necessary to dig deeply into one's own resources to resolve dilemmas. I felt a need to think through my personal conclusions about the efficacy of boarding as an effective way to give a sound and well-balanced education.

The third reason sprang from an awareness of my own educational roots. I was educated wholly within the state system. I progressed through primary school to girls' grammar school and on to university to read History and to train as a teacher. Teaching had always been my goal; indeed I regarded it as my vocation, a word rarely used in this context today. After teaching experience in two independent

boarding schools and a maintained grammar school, I took up two successive headships, both in independent boarding schools. Through these years it was impossible to ignore what I swiftly discerned to be 'the great divide' between the independent and the maintained sectors, a division felt very keenly by many members of the teaching profession, particularly those who had experience of only one sector. Although my automatic membership of the Secondary Heads' Association enabled me to meet colleagues from the state sector, inevitably, the agendas were dominated by items arising from state school practices, so that in a practical sense it became increasingly difficult to justify spending time at these meetings. Automatic membership of the Headmistresses' Association was also mine on appointment as head, and this proved a great source of support throughout my years as headmistress. The Association represented both day and boarding independent schools. When I joined links with the Headmasters' Association, which also included both day and boarding schools, were somewhat tenuous. As time passed, the two associations grew closer together, so increasing sources of support from other heads of boarding schools. As soon as I became a head, I chose to join the Boarding Schools' Association, a professional body which all schools with a boarding population, however large or small, are eligible for membership. This Association draws considerable strength from the fact that its members include heads of the maintained and independent boarding schools; indeed it was only at the point of joining that I became aware of the existence of state boarding schools. Debates within the Association emphasised the fact that all schools, whether they be day or boarding, independent or maintained, have a unity of purpose and all schools share similar characteristics. By and large, they claim that

they are committed to the same task: namely, the imparting of academic, social, creative and physical skills and the development of emotional stability and a moral code. Yet the emphasis which a school places on each part of its task differs so that one is unlikely to be able to identify two identical schools. All schools have to ask themselves the basic question, ‘What is the purpose of education?’ Is it simply a means of enabling children to achieve results that will ensure a place in higher education and so give them a very good chance of obtaining a reasonable job? Is it about offering each child opportunities for full personal development? In making a study of boarding schools, I determined to throw some light on these questions which might illuminate the debate in all schools seeking to increase their effectiveness.

Thus, I embarked on a study that I hoped would achieve three purposes:

- the provision of a realistic account of current boarding education by means of an in-depth study of a few schools; and paying regard to research on effective schools and schooling
- a critical appraisal of boarding as a potent and effective method of educating pupils
- the recording of any specific findings with relevance for the whole secondary sector

Some biographical details

My decision to present details about my professional biography was carefully considered. While recognising that what follows is anecdotal, I believe that it sheds light on my personal belief in the efficacy of single sex boarding education as a legitimate option for educating pupils aged 11-18; indeed, any conclusions reached in this section are wholly personal. My own education, both primary and secondary, was provided in day schools in the state sector.

In my loving, Christian home, the idea of sending the children away from home was never considered. I loved my schools, managing even a move at the age of seven from Lancashire to East Anglia, with tolerable ease. The greatest difficulty was changing my accent in order to 'fit in' with my peers. When the time came to leave home to attend university, I suffered fairly painful homesickness, even though I quickly made new friendships and revelled in my new lifestyle. It was only at this stage in my life that I became aware of the existence of boarding schools outside the pages of fiction. I met students who had attended them; when eventually the time came to do a term's teaching practice, a few of my friends opted to go into boarding schools. When the time came to seek first appointments and a number of them decided to remain in the boarding sector, the first stirrings of interest were kindled. I was intrigued by the lifestyle described with some enthusiasm; possibly I was beguiled by the absence of need to find one's own accommodation. My own future at this point was determined by my mother's illness, which necessitated my finding work as near to home as possible. By a

strange quirk of fate the only available post was in a small, girls' independent day and boarding school.

As far as an introduction to boarding was concerned, this was indeed a baptism by fire. I joined a staff which was highly professional and dedicated; but junior members of staff were required to cover the pupils' extra-curricular activities and so the working day was exceptionally long and demanding. After two years, I still felt sufficiently intrigued by the boarding set-up to want to take a post in a long established, full boarding school. In the Berkshire school where I spent the next 10 years, I was appointed to teach history, but because of my interest in music, I was eventually given a small role in the music department, teaching class singing. I also gained some experience as an assistant housemistress. Altogether these were fruitful years for me, culminating in the opportunity to serve as head of the history department in my final two years.

Life in this wholly boarding environment had a profound effect on me. This was largely due to two people: the headmistress and my senior colleague in the history department. The headmistress' somewhat austere manner and appearance belied the philosophy she embraced concerning the nature of the school as she perceived it. The ethos of the school, which she inspired all its members to uphold, was of a community in which every person was enabled to feel valued and useful. Looking back, it was here that the foundations of my own vision of the nature of a school community began to take shape.

One of my abiding memories is of the report writing rituals which occurred each term. This, perhaps, as much as any other factor, underlined the importance of considering each pupil as an individual. At first sight, the rituals appeared long-winded and overly time-consuming; but it quickly became apparent that the process was invaluable, both for staff, pupils and parents. Each term, a report on each girl was compiled in 'the jaw book'. Everyone who had contact with the pupil wrote freely and frankly, so that every aspect of her progress was recorded. Towards the end of term, the headmistress used the 'jaw book' reports as she spoke individually to about a third of the girls. Reports on every girl in the school, expressed in more muted tones than in the 'jaw book', went home. An important feature of the written reports was the General Report. Its compilation was extraordinary. Each term all the staff gathered in the Headmistress' sitting room. This provided a very informal setting which was complemented by the fact that all could occupy their hands by knitting or needlework. As the whole procedure occupied two or three days, this was a welcome concession. Remarkably, as far as possible the school timetable was adhered to, senior girls being assigned to fill the gaps left by staff attending the report sessions. The Headmistress then worked through every pupil's general report. She began by reading aloud the first draft, which had been written by the class teacher. All who had dealings with each girl, whether in or out of the classroom were required to be present and were expected to contest any statements with which they could not agree and to add anything they considered to be of importance. Thus, the finished product gave an accurate and unambiguous portrait of each girl's progress, coincidentally beautifully and skilfully crafted, in elegant and perfectly balanced sentences. It was probably in these sessions that crucial

lessons were absorbed: the need to weigh one's words with the utmost care; the need to nurture each person's self-esteem; the need to show that each person is valued. Moreover, the insights expressed by members of staff confirmed the value of community life that allowed the development, outside the classroom, of staff-pupil relations in a less formal atmosphere. Lambert (1968) records an account of a talk between a sixteen year old boy and his housemaster:

I was utterly depressed and had a long talk with my Housemaster. He knows the whole business of my mother leaving my dad because he is going round with someone else. I am fond of both parents but they try to make me take sides, they talk about it incessantly and ruin any time I have with them. But my Housemaster was kindness itself over coffee and he said I must try to understand that they were both unhappy and didn't mean to upset me, there were many boys at the school facing the same problems – and a lot more. He insisted that when I felt fed up I should go and sit in his study and wait for him to turn up. He'd told me to come down to his cottage in Dorset in the Easter holidays to get away from it all. He's made a lot of difference. *Boy, sixteen, public school* (Lambert, 1968, p. 292).

The delivery of pastoral care is not limited to members of staff. Lambert reports the comments of a twelve year old boy attending a state boarding school:

If I was in any trouble I would talk to one of the senior boys, they can be quite understanding and help you if things go badly. One of them is very kind; he lends you things and takes us on treasure hunts. He hasn't a father so he knows what it's like to be lonely. I would talk to him. *Boy, twelve, state boarding school* (Lambert, 1968, p. 293).

Throughout subsequent years, a statement that the headmistress made when she reviewed my progress towards the end of my first year often came to mind: 'It is as girls get to know you outside the classroom that their respect for your effort in the classroom will grow.' The contrast between life in the classroom and life outside it has particular connotations in the boarding school context. The school's extra-curricular programme is of immense importance. However broad their academic curriculum, schools consider it essential to extend opportunities for pupils to develop work begun in the classroom and also to introduce opportunities to acquire new skills and experiences. The 'coming together' of members of the community of all ages for the sharing of common interests does much to cement relationships and is undoubtedly of mutual benefit. Not only is the feeling of community strengthened, but each individual develops new skills and confidence. An interesting study might well attempt to analyse the relationship between a pupil's involvement in pursuits beyond the classroom and the level of success or otherwise achieved in their study programme. When, later, I moved on into a day school environment, I was readily able to apply the headmistress' words to the new situation. I realised that to present only a 'teacher persona' to classes was not enough; pupils had to be aware of the 'human persona' if sound teacher/ pupil

relationships were to flourish. My senior colleague in the history department was a unique and charismatic character. Small and slight in stature, she was always impeccably dressed in black, relieved by flashes of colour provided by skilfully tied scarves or a carefully placed brooch, and she made an immediate impact on any gathering. Every conversation with her was an invigorating experience for she had a sharp intellect, a depth of wisdom and an extraordinary gift of verbal communication. She was an inspirational teacher. She gave one the courage to be innovative, to get across the excitement and challenge of the subject, while at the same time underpinning the development of rigorous scholarship. Her influence served to cement my developing ideas concerning the meaning and purpose of a school community. If the community were to achieve its purpose, each one of its members must be shown to be highly valued, a conclusion that coloured one's approach to life both in and out of the classroom. It was with considerable reluctance that I decided that, after ten years, the time had come to move on. The state had paid almost in entirety for my own education and I had a burning desire to attempt to 'put something back' into the state system if that were possible. Moreover, I felt a need to gain experience in a day school. Thus I secured a post in a recently created grammar school, which was for the first time about to enter girls aged sixteen for public examinations. Situated in an Outer London Borough, the school had been built in rural surroundings, on the edge of a stretch of common land, yet only some ten miles from the centre of London. The school had been set up just before the implementation of the comprehensive system came into effect and was thus linked with a nearby secondary modern school. This was the era of the 11+ examination. Having entered their respective schools at the age of 11, the

progress of all members of both schools was monitored and successful transfers of pupils between the schools did take place up to the age of 14 and at sixth form level. One might have assumed that members of the school would be in touch with a variety of interests, having the whole of London within easy reach. As the school grew and particularly as a large sixth form developed, it became patently clear that the school was making itself responsible for the task of providing opportunities for girls to expand their cultural and intellectual interests. A comprehensive programme was developed which occupied both curricular and extra-curricular hours. A number of elements designed to give breadth to each girl's course without the pressure of examinations were included in the curriculum for all age groups, but particularly at sixth form level. Additionally, a whole range of extra-curricular activities was provided and though there were considerable constraints imposed mainly by home circumstances and transport difficulties, these were very well supported. While I was in the London area, I was fortunate to be involved in the setting up of the General Studies Association, membership of which was made available to all secondary schools throughout the country. Its purpose was to foster the study, by sixth formers, of topics beyond the normal school curriculum. To this end, it eventually organised under the auspices of the British India Company school cruises to the Baltic, the Mediterranean, West Africa and eventually to the Caribbean. Sadly, the soaring price of oil eventually brought the programme to an end; but not before parties of sixth formers, accompanied by members of staff, drawn from schools throughout the British Isles, independent and state, day and boarding, boys', girls' and co-educational came together to embark on true voyages of discovery. About four ports of call were made on each voyage. Some

preparatory work was done beforehand in each school, but a first-class series of lectures and seminars on board gave the students an excellent grounding, enabling them to get the utmost benefit from their visits. I accompanied groups from my school on all five cruises organised by GSA and found them extremely rewarding. I am reminded of the last two cruises, which visited the Caribbean, for most on board the most exciting venue imaginable. The first group I accompanied there was from the London day school; the second was from the boarding school to which I was appointed Head, after ten years in the day sector. When I arrived at the embarkation port with the London group, I followed what was by this time a well-established procedure. I led the group on board, left them to discover the number and name of their sleeping accommodation and then returned to lead them through a labyrinth of passages below deck to their quarters. I then remained for a time helping them to sort themselves out and eventually, having promised to return to them to show them where they were to eat, felt able to leave them. My experience with the group made up of boarders was entirely different. I followed the same procedure, led them on board and then declared my intention of finding out where they were to go. When I returned, they had disappeared and I discovered them in their quarters, in the throes of unpacking and settling in, assuring me that they were quite happy and needing no further help to find their way about the ship. We spent Christmas Day on board on that particular cruise, on our way from Jamaica to Trinidad. Some severe cases of homesickness among parties from day schools marred the day, something which members of my party found hard to understand. They sympathised with the sufferers; most could recollect the pain of homesickness; but they felt that the chance to experience to the full the opportunity of a lifetime should be relished;

every moment of the voyage should be lived to the full. They found it difficult to accept that people in their late teens could not appreciate this. I remembered the view of parenthood expressed by my sister as her children began to mature. She voiced the belief that parental responsibility demanded that having given children a sense of security and stability, the children should be encouraged, indeed, empowered to become independent. Part of the crucial role of a parent and I somewhat ruefully reflect, of a headmistress, is deciding when and how to 'let them go'. I began to realise that to move into a boarding environment at the age of eleven could well be a positive step in the move to promote a child's well being. The incidence of failure to adjust to boarding school life at this age is remarkably low. In the twenty-one years I spent in boarding schools, I recall only one occasion when a girl failed to settle into her new life. It was noted that after the delivery of the daily post, she became extremely upset. Gentle investigation uncovered the fact that her mother's daily letter included allusions to 'setting the table for three and then realising that only Daddy would be coming home for the meal'. Not unnaturally, the girl found this incredibly hard to bear and when, after three or four days, the mother arrived at the school and removed her daughter, we acknowledged that this was probably for the best. The incident underlined the need for parents and school to work together. I remained in my first headmistress' post for eleven years. The school was an independent girls' school for approximately 380 boarders and 70 day pupils. The school's benefactor was an Elizabethan merchant born in Wales. He died in 1540 and in his will left 12,000 ducats for the education of his daughters and entrusted the Livery Company to which he belonged, to administer the bequest. As years passed, this became increasingly difficult and by the nineteenth century,

the Company was spending an inordinate amount of time and money attempting to sort out genuine, as opposed to bogus claims. A decision was made to set up two schools, one in north and one in south Wales. Thus in 1858, the purpose-built schools were opened, each offering a number of Orphan Foundation places granted to girls who had lost one parent. Each girl received free board and education and, on the occasion of her marriage, a dowry of £100. By the time I took up my headship, the South Wales school had lost its close connection with the Company, though the Company retained the right to appoint two members of the school's governing body. The school in the north, however, retained a very close link. As trustees, the Company appointed 10 members of the governing body; additionally, The Master of the Company was an ex-officio member, along with the local bishop. Two further members represented the county and district councils while three universities, Bangor, Liverpool and Manchester nominated representatives. The Clerk to the Company served as Clerk to the governors. This close connection with one of The Twelve Great Companies of the City of London gave an extra dimension to my role as Headmistress. There is no doubt that the values and comportment of the Company coloured the ethos of the school. The school itself, though having no direct affiliation with any particular denomination, was Christian. Its values and standards were based on the Christian ethic; it was on Christian precepts that the ethics of the school community were based. I was able to identify wholly with these values and standards, for they were those on which I attempted to base my own life and from which I derived strength and support. This school was purpose built, situated in a most beautiful Welsh valley, and though its main clientele was English, it rejoiced in the richness given to its community by the

blending of both English and Welsh cultures that took place within its walls. It was during the years I spent in Wales that the importance of the school community was borne in on me even more forcibly, providing additional support and stability for its members as they confronted the increasing responsibilities of adulthood. As headmistress, an essential part of my work was pupil recruitment; a major factor affecting recruitment was the general economic state of the country. The school's catchment area encompassed the whole of the British Isles, together with a number of overseas countries. It was important to maintain and improve numbers at a time when inflation was rampant. Quickly I realised that one of the main stumbling blocks to progress was the school's reputation for academic excellence. Many parents looking for a school felt that their daughters would not reach the required academic standard to gain a place. So, somewhat curiously, I found myself 'talking down' the school's academic strengths, focussing instead on the holistic nature of the school's aims. As I did so, I recognised that I was fulfilling my own ideals. I was delighted to have the opportunity to shape a school that rejoiced in the ability to develop to the full each girl's potential in a variety of fields. The main curriculum was broad, there was an expanding programme of extra-curricular activities; both were supported by excellent facilities and, of greatest importance, a well-qualified and dedicated staff. Thus, though it was true that an academic girl would thrive, so too would the girl with different abilities. The goal for all was the achievement of excellence. Looking back, it seems extraordinary to remember that a further constraint on recruitment was the entrenched opinion among many parents that the educational needs of their sons should come first. Only when the financial demands of the sons' education were met could consideration be given to funding

for daughters. Fixing the level of fees was a matter of immense importance. To pitch the sum too low might well devalue the product on offer and make prospective parents turn away. It proved invaluable to have at one's disposal scholarships and bursaries to offer those with exceptional aptitude in a variety of disciplines. The 1970s presented many challenges to those living and working in a community that based its moral code on the Christian ethic. The standards of social morality changed rapidly, not least because of the introduction of the contraceptive pill. This removed what had probably been the most effective deterrent to sexual promiscuity in previous years; the threat of an unwanted pregnancy. Pressure on the young to grow up more quickly increased. Young people craved more 'freedom' as they put it; often in fact, they sought freedom to make decisions before they had achieved sufficient maturity to guarantee sound outcomes. However regrettable this might appear, schools had somehow to acknowledge this change and take steps to accommodate it, while safeguarding the vulnerable in their charge. The boarding school community had long been structured to help each girl to advance steadily through adolescence to adulthood. When pupils arrived in school at the age of eleven, they were generally able to take responsibility for themselves. Slowly, as they moved through the school, they began to take responsibility for others. To begin with, girls performed small tasks that added to the smooth running of the community. As they moved through the school, they assumed greater responsibility for others serving as officials in societies, as members of school teams, of the School Council, a part of the student bodies in House and school which worked to shape and improve the community way of life. It was recognised that with responsibility comes privilege. In the girls' eyes 'more privilege' was often

construed as 'more freedom'. The effects of the changing climate in the early seventies were felt most keenly by girls of sixth form age, the 16 –18 year olds. It was this fact that caused schools generally to examine the structure of their community to see the kind of adjustment that would make it possible to meet their needs. In my own case, change came as a result of discussions with sixth formers fairly soon after my arrival at the school. They made it clear that they were feeling the constraints imposed by living in Houses catering for girls aged 11-18. The school sanatorium, a huge edifice built just before the discovery of penicillin, was designed to accommodate simultaneously sufferers from different infectious diseases. Thus each floor was divided up into two or three areas, each one consisting of a small ward, a generous number of single rooms and a large room for convalescing patients. Additionally, there was good staff accommodation. The incidence of illness was very low in the 1970s and it was practical to provide accommodation for the sick elsewhere. The sanatorium was reborn as a boarding house, accommodating all members of the sixth form, with housemistress and assistant housemistress. Its creation was the ultimate step in enabling girls to decide how they wished to manage their leisure and private study time. Pupils had to attend all lessons, academic deadlines had to be met; the staff kept a discreet eye on progress; but each girl decided whether to work through a free period, watch T.V. or to pop into town; whether to remain at school or go home for a weekend exeat and so on. These options were regarded as privileges. All members of the sixth form contributed to the smooth running of the school, whether as a leader of a society, a head of junior house or head of school, as a school or house prefect, the captain or member of a school team; all had a role to play, every sixth former

retaining membership of the junior house in which she had 'grown up', or to which she was assigned if she had joined the school at sixth form level. In fulfilling their roles, the sixth formers helped to cement relationships within the school community, between themselves and girls of all ages, and with members of staff. The ethos of a community, structured so that each one of its members felt known and valued, profoundly affected the life of the school. The school community encompassed not only pupils and staff; it included parents and past pupils and the wider environment of which it was a part. There is little doubt that parental involvement in the school grew during the years I spent as a head. In my earliest years at the school, it was customary for the majority of parents to allow the school to have the lion's share of responsibility for their daughters during term time. As the school began to encourage a greater involvement of parents in various aspects of school life, they began to take a keener interest in school affairs generally. The idea that girls were sent away to school to relieve their parents of caring for them during term time had never held much credence. It is true that in early days of boarding, parents did not expect to see their boarding offspring during term time. The swift growth of girls' schools which took place from the middle of the nineteenth century into the twentieth was prompted in the main by a desire to give to girls the same educational opportunities previously available only to boys. From their inception, it was understood that the changing perceptions of the role of women demanded that this should be so. Many women, following the example of their forebears, continued to make a valuable contribution to society by undertaking voluntary work. In the 1970s an analysis of applications for places in the school showed that the number of families in which both husband and wife were pursuing

careers was increasing. In some cases this no doubt resulted from women seeking greater fulfilment and satisfaction; for many, it was an economic necessity. For whatever reason, many parents who had hitherto not considered boarding education for their children and certainly not for their daughters found themselves exploring the possibility. They discovered that with careful planning, they could spend more quality time with their children during school holidays than was the case if their children remained at home. Parents found increasingly as children moved through secondary school, that their children's commitments placed heavy demands on them in terms of time and energy. Mothers spent time daily ferrying the children to and from school, driving them to multiple out-of-school activities after school hours. It was not unusual to discover that while at day school, girls had rarely seen their fathers during the week and even at weekends had few opportunities to spend time with them. The custom of having family meals had been eroded. Through the day, members of the family 'helped themselves' to food when they required it; the evening meal, more often than not was taken in front of the TV, generally before commuting fathers had returned home from work. It was changes of this nature that persuaded many parents to seek boarding education for all their children, both boys and girls. As the number of parents of first generation boarders multiplied, so parental expectations of the school increased. The new generations of parents wanted to be kept closely in touch with their daughters' progress, a concern that is confirmed by Walford (2003) talking about current boarding generally:

There are now far more weekends at home for students, flexible boarding to cater for parents' wishes, and greater contact between parents and the schools. (Walford, 2003, p.2)

For their part, schools generally, refused to accept any suggestion that sending children away to school meant that parents were abrogating responsibility for them in term-time, began devise strategies to encourage the development of a much closer relationship between parents and school than had once been the case. The responsibility for each child was shared with parents. Regular opportunities were given to parents to attend meetings with all members of staff when progress in all areas of their daughters' lives could be discussed. All important decisions affecting each pupil were taken only after full consultation. Links with former pupils and with the local population enabled the school to enjoy broader community experiences. Both gave current pupils opportunities to cultivate a greater awareness of the world beyond the school gates. In 1979, I became Principal of Europe's largest girls' boarding school. On the roll were 870 girls, of whom 170 were day pupils living within a radius of 10 miles of the school. Though ostensibly called upon to do the same job, I found that the reality was very different. There was far less need to devote time and energy to the task of filling places, for the school is held in high repute throughout the world. Thus, I found myself with far more time to devote to understanding and developing the community I had joined. It was so very different: roughly twice as large as my former school; a town as opposed to a country school; buildings scattered over a wide area of the town; a mainly non-resident teaching staff, the bulk of the residential duties being undertaken by

ancillary staff. In spite of the enormity of the task, my years at the school were fascinating and rewarding. The school opened in 1854, the result of a decision made by a group of local

‘... able and deeply religious men who cared seriously for education and were convinced that, as one of the privileges of Christian liberty, it should not be denied to women’ (Clarke, 1953, p.15).

Their intention was to match the opportunities already enjoyed by boys at the nearby residential school for boys, extending them to the young ladies of the neighbourhood. The first five years were somewhat tentative and hazardous. In 1858 a new Principal took up her appointment. She was charged with the task:

‘not to initiate or change the guiding principles of [the school], but to deepen their spiritual character and in so doing, to raise them to a higher degree’. She identified with the same motives and ideals held by the founders who had recognised that... a girl’s education might need to be different from a boy’s but it should be equally thorough, sound and rational: women had minds to be fed, not starved: and a veneer of ‘accomplishments’, a learning by heart of disconnected facts, or a passive listening to lecturers, was mental starvation of the worst kind (Clarke, 1953, p.15).

When I became a head, membership of three Associations was open to me: the Secondary Heads’ Association (SHA), the Girls’ School Association (GSA) and the

Boarding School's Association (BSA). While in Wales, I had become a member of all three, though particularly active in GSA and BSA. My involvement increased when I moved to the larger school within easier reach of London. I spent many years on the Executive Committee of both Associations; these included four years as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of B.S.A. I was privileged to be part of the network of schools in the independent sector and more especially, with both independent and state boarding schools. It is on this kind of involvement and on my own experience of boarding schools that my credentials to embark on this study rest. I am aware that any conclusions that emerge in this study might be construed as an expression of the convictions of a 'convert' to the system, invariably stronger and less critical, and therefore possibly more suspect than of one with a life long association. I have endeavoured to be wholly scrupulous and impartial in my approach, a circumstance that has been made much easier because of the time that has elapsed since I retired. Settling in to retirement could have presented some problems. I had after all spent the previous 19 years living in the heart of a community, following a profession that provided not merely a job, but a whole way of life. It is an unwritten law that having left a post, particularly a headship, one should 'stay away' for at least a year for the sake of one's successor. I assiduously shunned all contact with my former school and believed that I was surviving wonderfully well. Then one evening, I stopped for petrol at my local garage and another car drew up; out of it emerged three people, a mother and her two daughters, just collected from my former school. The encounter was amazing as they attempted to 'fill me in' with a run-down on school activities. I was on my way to a choir rehearsal, so could not linger. Having said a cheerful farewell and

back in my car, I drove away, only to discover tears pouring down my face as I contemplated all that I was missing.

The ‘staying away’ from school, I discovered, was a strategy aimed at helping me to adjust to a new way of life. This has proved to be wonderfully rich and fulfilling. Some of my previous commitments continued; I continued to chair the Independent Schools’ Curriculum Committee (ISCC). This was during the period leading to the inception of the National Curriculum in state schools. Though ISCC concentrated its efforts on matters of deep concern to the Independent sector, we were very aware that many of these concerns had equal relevance for maintained schools. I continued to be a governor of a number of independent schools, day and boarding, and this gave me an opportunity to keep in touch with current issues. I did some consultancy work with former colleagues that offered training in headship to members of both independent and maintained sectors. I successfully completed the course, which enabled me to become one of Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Schools. Sadly, time constraints prevented me from taking this any further. I worked occasionally for a group set up by former heads in the state sector, giving advice on schools to parents whose firms had been relocated. After some five or six years of retirement, I decided to attempt a further degree. I discovered that my local higher education institution allowed one to complete a M.Ed. degree, working part time for two years. Thus, I found myself working with a splendid group of people, mainly in their late twenties and thirties, the majority of whom were full time teachers in maintained primary, secondary or special schools. They were fully committed to their teaching and saw the gaining of a further qualification as a

means to enhancing their usefulness. For my own part, I relished this contact with people who were willing to share their insights into the educational scene. I particularly welcomed the opportunity to conduct a research project in a number of local maintained secondary schools, all of which were most welcoming and accommodating. I had some difficulty in reaching an understanding of the demands of the course; but as time passed I began to gain in confidence and found enormous pleasure in 'study for study's sake'. An added bonus was the mastery of word processing and the use of a computer. Although I had fostered the development of computer technology in both schools in which I served as head, the possession of superb administrative staff had made it unnecessary for me to have much 'hands on' experience of computers. The mastering of word processing alone has given incredible satisfaction and pleasure; opening up the Internet has provided a further initial motivation to embark on this research project.

Summary

When I began to write this introductory chapter, I intended to use it to describe my motivation for embarking on this research project. Biographical details were included to establish my credentials for tackling the subject. As I presented the material, it became clear that the presentation of biographical details provided an account of my own personal acknowledgement of the efficacy of boarding education as a means of delivering a total educational programme that would enable pupils to realise their full potential. Moreover, the account confirmed the contribution made by two aspects of the boarding experience to the fulfilment of the educational aims:

- The provision of a combined academic and extended curriculum, the latter covering extra-curricular activities
- The provision of residential accommodation which allows all members to experience community life.

These themes recur in the next chapter, which looks at the developing aims and structures of boarding schools from their inception to the present day.

CHAPTER TWO

The Structure of the Boarding Sector

The Oxford dictionary describes a boarding school as one in which pupils live during term-time as distinct from day school. Chambers' English dictionary (1992) goes a little further: a boarding school is 'a school providing living accommodation for some or all of its pupils'. Neither definition is particularly satisfactory. There is no suggestion of the diversity, which characterizes the boarding sector of our educational system; there is no hint that apart from the provision of living accommodation, schools within the sector have distinctive qualities. The huge impact that the boarding sector has had on the educational development of the country is rarely acknowledged. This impact is out of all proportion to the size of the boarding sector that educates only a small minority of the nation's children; yet most people have a view about boarding. Writing in 1968, Lambert provided a useful rationale for this phenomenon:

Of the many unique features of our educational system, there is none that has attracted so much controversy, passion and fascination as our boarding schools. Other countries have boarding schools too, and some have more children in them, but they attract no such interest or discussion. The reason is that only in England has boarding rather than day school been the style of education long favoured by the ruling classes. 'Public schools', the schools in which for over a century the

governing elite in our society have been educated, are largely boarding schools (Lambert, 1968, p.1).

The independent boarding sector

The majority of boarding schools belong to the independent sector of the country's educational system. Independent schools are those day and boarding schools that are independent of local or central government control. The term embraces nursery, junior and senior schools, the age range being catered for being from 2-18. They are sometimes referred to as fee-paying schools because their survival is dependent on parents' willingness to pay fees for their children's education. The boarding sector, which includes public schools, caters for the age range 8-18. Many schools within this group are Christian in ethos, tradition and observance. They include Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist, United Reform, and Quaker foundations. Some cater for children of faiths other than Christian. Other independent boarding schools cater for children with special needs; others are choir, music, or ballet schools for those with special gifts. The freedom from local or government control has allowed some schools such as Summerhil, reacting against traditional education, to pioneer 'progressive' teaching methods or to experiment with relaxed forms of discipline based on trust and friendship between pupils and staff (see p. 26).

Lambert draws a clear distinction between independent and public schools:

The term ‘public school’ describes the boys’ boarding schools in membership of the Headmasters’ Conference. To be elected to HMC, schools are required to have a certain academic standard, a sixth form and university entrants, as well as other attributes. Though the 84 boarding HMC schools are varied in many ways, as a group they are remarkably alike in values, style and structure (Lambert, 1968, p. 3).

The maintained boarding schools

Lambert was writing in the 1960s, a time when the whole future of the independent sector of education, which included a high proportion of existing boarding schools, was under serious threat. Its abolition, were it to have taken place, would have heralded the demise of far more than the ‘public school’ group. In fact, had a decision been made to strip the country of all independent schools, most, though not quite all boarding schools would have disappeared. Only maintained boarding schools would have remained.

Even within the educational world, few people are aware of the existence of state boarding schools. There are 39 state schools that offer boarding, with varying proportions of day and boarding pupils. Eleven have a substantial proportion of boarders and function as predominantly boarding establishments. In the remainder, boarders are in the minority; but though the general timetable is set up to satisfy day pupils’ needs, the boarders’ presence appears to influence the provision of wide ranging extra-curricular activities. A number of these maintained schools have a long and significant history, being rooted in Christian tradition and

observance. One of these schools can date its foundation to the twelfth century; two to the fifteenth. Nine were founded in the sixteenth, five in the seventeenth two in the eighteenth and three in the nineteenth century. Some more recent state school foundations are rural schools set up to meet the needs of a scattered population while others are community colleges. Two of the schools are for sixth form students and both may admit pupils from outside the European Union. All set out to provide high quality boarding at low cost to parents. UK and other European Union nationals, and others with the right of residence in the UK, pay only the cost of boarding. The educational costs are borne by the state.

Lambert's preoccupation with the public schools can readily be explained. Within the boarding sector can be found many schools, boys', girls' and co-educational, independent and state maintained, that reflect the same values, style and structure as the public schools; indeed, within the independent sector, schools can be found that refer to themselves as 'public schools'. Hence, in exploring the long heritage of the boarding sector to determine how its values, style and structure have evolved, it is pertinent to begin with the public schools that have helped to mould its culture.

The early years of the 'public schools'

In medieval England, education grew up as part of the work of the Christian church. In the later middle ages, it became fashionable for laymen to found schools by an 'endowment', a grant of money or land. Many were chantry schools, each founder appointing a priest to say mass for his soul, and to teach deserving local boys. Wealthier patrons provided a building, or made their schools free to 'poor'

boys. Among this latter group were William of Wykeham's Winchester, founded in 1382 and Eton College founded by Henry VI in 1440. By the end of the fifteenth century, both were gradually approximating to the character of public schools in the English sense of the words: 'schools where the sons of the gentry were educated' (Trevelyan, 1978, p.77). From their earliest years, the schools had sought to nurture their pupils' minds, bodies and spirits.

From the first, Winchester was 'public' in the sense of being in contrast to the private tutor favoured by many aristocratic families for the education of their sons. It was public also in the sense that its entry was open to 'poor scholars' and to the 'sons of noble and influential persons'. It soon became clear that the poor scholars were not of the labouring class; but they were relatively poor, the sons of small gentry, yeomen and burghers who rose through these schools to take part in the government of the land. Winchester was, from its earliest years, a national, not merely a local grammar school, drawing its boys from all over the south, the midlands, and even from Cheshire and Lancashire. For this reason, parents had initially to find living accommodation for their sons in the neighbourhood. As numbers grew, it made better economic sense for the school to provide accommodation for the boys. They were placed in houses that were wholly organised and administered by staff employed by the school.

Eton's development into a great public school for the upper classes and the aristocracy appears to have been hastened by the Wars of the Roses that plunged the school into great financial difficulties. Its appeal to the upper classes grew

steadily; while paying nothing for their education, they were prepared to pay large sums for boarding in the houses of fellows, and in the town of Eton. Again, as numbers grew, the decision was made to take all the boys into school boarding houses, placed in reasonably close proximity to the teaching area and supervised by school employees. The two schools, together with Westminster, re-founded in 1560 by Elizabeth I after the second dissolution of the Benedictine monastery, held a dominant position among the public schools until the second half of the eighteenth century. With the charitable institutions such as Christ's hospital and the Charterhouse, a handful of grammar schools such as Harrow, Rugby and Shrewsbury, all of whom had developed a national, not merely a local reputation, they formed the core of the public school system in the nineteenth century. Decisions to add the residential factor by moving boys, and later girls, into houses under school control, were based largely on expediency, for the money previously paid to individuals was transferred to the schools. However, the creation of House communities was to have considerable impact on the ability of schools to implement their developing philosophy of education which required them to nurture the development of each pupil's mind, body and spirit.

Entrance Criteria

The growing need for accommodation was fuelled by the schools' decision to restrict the intake of pupils to the aristocracy and upper classes, which made it inevitable that pupils would be drawn from a very wide catchment area. The English concern about issues of social class prompted persistent debate on the entrance criteria for public schools. It was argued that many were ignoring their founders' intention to provide

education for boys from different social classes. John Rae (1981) refers to a discussion that took place in 1540 between the Commissioners led by Lord Rich and Archbishop Cranmer on the future of the grammar school at Canterbury. The latter maintained that merit, not birth, should be the criterion for entry. The Commissioners, on the other hand, insisted that:

‘it was more meet for the ploughman’s son to go to plough and the artificer’s son to apply the trade of his parent’s vocation, and the gentleman’s children are meet to have the knowledge of government and rule in the commonwealth’ (Rae, 1981, p.22).

It was Cranmer’s belief in equality of opportunity that prevailed in Canterbury, but it was the commissioners’ view of ‘opportunity dictated by class’ that increasingly prevailed in the public schools at large. The better the schools became, the more they were in demand and the more difficult it became for the ploughman’s and artificer’s son to gain entry. Indeed, efforts on the part of schools to extend their social mix led to fierce criticism. In 1727, Dean Swift wrote that the public schools, ‘by mingling the sons of the nobleman with those of the vulgar, engage the former in bad company’. Some hundred years later, the sons of the vulgar had been effectively excluded and many of the new schools founded in the first half of the century explicitly restricted their entry to the ‘sons of gentlemen’. Neither the Clarendon (1864) nor the Taunton (1868) Commissions did anything to alter the class basis of the schools. Thus it is hardly surprising that the schools began to be regarded as élitist.

The ‘élite’ public schools

(a) The emerging value of the house system

It was the determination to educate ‘the sons of gentlemen’ and the consequent change in character from neighbourhood to national schools, together with the appeal of commanding lucrative fees that led to the creation of boarding houses. Within the schools themselves, the creation of house communities changed the lives of pupils and staff. In 1861, a royal commission chaired by Lord Clarendon, was set up to examine the administration and the curriculum of the nine ‘élite’ schools. Seven were boarding establishments: Winchester, Eton, Harrow, Westminster, Charterhouse, Rugby and Shrewsbury; two were day schools; Merchant Taylors’ and St. Paul’s. When investigating administration within the boarding schools, the Commission acknowledged the consequences arising from the setting up of a House system. The separation of the school community into smaller, albeit linked units, gave increased opportunities to instil the values and skills required of the sons of gentlemen, using the opportunities offered by living together in a community to achieve moral and social goals. This involved the acceptance and practice of Christian faith, service to the community, the ability to manage others, the exercise of and submission to legitimate authority, physical and emotional self-reliance and loyalty to the group more than oneself. Community life, moreover, gave additional opportunities to members of staff to develop their pupils’ individual strengths. The Clarendon report (1864) referred obliquely to the efficacy of the House system by paying tribute to the qualities engendered by the schools; the Commission referred to pupils’ ‘capacity to govern others and control

themselves, their aptitude for combining freedom with order, their public spirit, their vigour and manliness of character, their strong but not slavish respect for public opinion, their love of healthy sports and exercise'. The report continues:

These schools have been the chief nurseries of our statesmen; in them, and in schools modelled after them, men of all the various classes that make up English society, destined for every profession and career, have been brought up on a footing of social equality, and have contracted the most enduring friendships, and some of the ruling habits, of their lives; and they have had perhaps the largest share in moulding the character of the English gentleman (1864, p.56.Cited in Hyndman, 1978)

(b) The developing curriculum

It was not until shortly before the publication of the Clarendon Report that some amendments were made to a curriculum that hitherto had been heavily biased in favour of Latin and Greek. Hake's account of Christ's Hospital around 1820 read:

The school was purely classical; nothing whatever was taught but Greek and Latin. History, Geography, English, and its grammar were unheard of But what is more remarkable than all the other omissions in the school is that the boys were never, individually, taught a word of religion (Hake's Memoirs of Eighty Years, 1892, p.143, cited in Hyndman, 1978).

By 1864, changes to the curriculum that had preceded the Clarendon Report enabled it to record that in the nine public schools with which it was dealing:

The school course at every school now includes arithmetic and mathematics, as well as classics. At every school except Eton it includes also one modern language, either French or German. At Rugby (and practically, as it seems, at the Charterhouse) languages are not studied by those whose parents prefer that they should study natural science (Clarendon Report on nine principal public schools, 1864, p.13: cited in Hyndman, 1978)

These changes had come about in large measure because of the near explosion in the nineteenth century of new boarding schools for both boys and girls. The new boys' establishments aimed at extending the educational advantages enjoyed by the aristocracy to middle class boys, the sons of rising middle class professionals and merchant families. The rising middle class formed newly-powerful social groups, intent on securing places in schools that could give their sons the necessary training to enable them to meet the changing national needs consequent upon the advent of the Empire.

Modelled on the Public Schools, the new boarding establishments, initially, continued to justify their élitist status, educating an élite that encompassed the sons of the most influential people in the country. Indeed, the alumni of the schools were

virtually guaranteed secure and socially prestigious careers, thus re-enforcing class divisions.

The schools, all independent boarding ones, formed a consciously sustained system, which aimed to inculcate established religion, conventional scholarship, manliness and skills of responsible leadership and good administration (Lambert, 1973, p.21).

However, as the century progressed, a number of social and economic changes affecting society generally demanded the re-definition of the term 'élite'. Wakeford (1969) draws attention to the 'threats to the homogeneity of the national élite produced by industrialisation and modernisation, and the consequent insecurity in the Church of England'. The new élite included all who received a common education at an established school of high national, rather than mere local repute. Within the schools attended by the new élite, a consciously sustained 'public school' system prevailed, adhering unfalteringly to its aims expressed by Wakeford (see previous page). To attain these ends, a method was adopted by which the whole of a pupil's existence was controlled by the institution. Many of the new girls' schools grew up on similar lines.

As Lambert (1973) records, the nineteenth and early twentieth century saw the emergence of boarding schools serving special sub-cultures. They served the particular interests of religious groups, Catholic, Congregational, Quaker and Methodist. Others were vocational schools: naval, military and agricultural. Some

of these schools, recruiting those who fitted into the new 'élite', were absorbed into the public school system. Others, pursuing their aims regardless of social class, remained outside the system. Among the latter was a group of schools that emerged in the same period, the 'progressive' boarding schools, founded to pursue much broader aims by 'ostensibly more liberal, less total and non-authoritarian methods'. Most were co-educational and their aims, regardless of social class, remained outside the system. Among the latter was a group of schools that emerged in the same period, the 'progressive' boarding schools, founded to pursue much broader aims by 'ostensibly more liberal, less total and authoritarian methods'. Most were co-educational and, though drawn generally from the same socio-economic groups, they catered for a 'different élite' of non-conformist, professional, creative intelligentsia. Although, as later reported, the radical measures they advocated to achieve their objectives were resisted by schools within the public school system, the more radical thinking served both to challenge and strengthen the more traditional schools.

The reforming heads.

The 'new' boarding establishments that had adopted the public school system produced a number of reforming Headmasters and some inspirational Headmistresses, all of whom made significant contributions, confirming the philosophy of boarding schools and identifying and further developing particular characteristics of boarding that enabled schools to achieve their aims. Among the reformers, notably, were Arnold of Rugby, Thring of Uppingham, Sanderson of Oundle and Dorothea Beale of Cheltenham.

Arnold of Rugby

On becoming Headmaster in 1828, Arnold had declared his intention to form 'Christian men', for he considered that without sound religious principles and a sense of gentlemanly conduct intellectual attainment was valueless. Indeed his list of priorities was, 'first, religious and moral principles; second, gentlemanly conduct; thirdly, intellectual ability.' He contributed little to the reform of the curriculum, but by example showed how the status of his staff could be enhanced by placing masters in charge of boarding houses, thus giving each 'a horse of his own to ride'; and by passing some authority to members of the sixth form, asking service to the school community in return, he extended the usefulness of the house system as a tool to promote responsibility and commitment among both staff and pupils. This had a widespread and lasting effect on boarding schools. Lambert's (1973) study of boys' and co-educational schools referred to the impressive breadth of the 'Arnold tradition', preparing boys to become responsible, tolerant, intellectually competent, physically healthy and Christian leaders or administrators. Its greatest stronghold could be found in the public schools and those that followed their model; schools which were characterized by a concern with character, physical well-being, extra-curriculum life and pastoral care.

Thring of Uppingham

The reforming zeal of other members of the new breed of heads was beginning to shape one recognizable characteristic of contemporary boarding schools. The Clarendon Report issued in 1864 had pronounced that the curriculum was too

narrow and urged that modern subjects should be included. An article in the Illustrated London News (1861) commented:

No Latin or Greek may make Jacky a dull boy; but Latin and Greek without anything else go far to making master Jacky a very dullard. Parents are beginning to feel this, and to ask whether a skinful of classical knowledge, with a little birching thrown in for nothing, be an equivalent for the two hundred a year they pay for the education of a boy at Eton (Cited in Martin, 1979).

Despite this criticism, Latin and Greek continued to dominate public school studies, and it was left to Edward Thring, headmaster of Uppingham (1821-87), himself an old Etonian, to bring about the recommended changes. He was convinced that:

Every boy is good for something. If he can't write iambics or excel in Latin prose, he has at least eyes and hands and ears. Turn him into the carpenter's shop, make him a botanist or chemist, encourage him to express himself in music, and, if he fails all round, here at least he shall learn to read in public his mother tongue and write thoughtfully an English essay (Thring, 1883).

Thring's reforms anticipated the elaborate timetabling and organisation – marked by school clubs, badges, uniforms and colours – that changed the public schools of the 1970s and 80s. There was less insistence on the classics, but more attention to

science, and more practical work for the boys who were less able academically. Thus, at Uppingham, he provided gardens, craft shops, a swimming pool and England's first proper gymnasium. It was in Thring's time that a fine musical tradition was established at Uppingham, half the boys playing musical instruments. The school rapidly earned the reputation of being a practical, caring school. But it was inevitable, as additional facilities were added, that in order to maintain the school's solvency and prestige, the recruitment of pupils had to be based on the criterion of parental wealth, a fact that added credence to the exclusivity of public schools generally. Schools were forced to concentrate on attracting boarding pupils whose parents could afford to pay fees; thus pupils were recruited from a much wider catchment area. This in turn led to further alienation from the local population. Weinberg, writing about the public schools describes the situation as the nineteenth century drew to a close:

They had broken their links with the local community even to the extent of building their own chapels and not using the village church. Organised games now restricted the boys to school grounds during their leisure time, whereas formerly they often used to roam the countryside at will, there was now no reason why the boys should leave the total institution either for work or leisure... the total institution became a powerful device for insulating and socialising an elite, and for protecting the values of aristocracy, moral fervour and gentlemanliness (Weinberg, 1967, p.52).

It was these characteristics of isolation and élitism that coloured the perceptions of boarding schools generally, and of boys' public schools particularly, that were held by the general public almost to the end of the twentieth century. However, the very isolationism from the local community heightened the sense of belonging to a school community and enabled the school more easily to promote the ideals and values to which they were committed.

Sanderson of Oundle

It was the inspiration and work of such outstanding headmasters as Arnold and Thring that resulted in public schools being held in high esteem in the 1870s and 80s. But by the last decade of the 19th century, they tended to rest on their laurels and it was the work of Sanderson, appointed headmaster of Oundle in 1892, that shook them out of their complacency. Described by H.G. Wells as 'the great schoolmaster', (cited in Martin, 1979), he was perhaps the first public school head to take science seriously. He believed that education should be fitted to the boy; not the boy to education. He regarded classrooms as 'tool sharpening rooms', where basic learning was acquired, which was then applied in projects in laboratory, workshop, library and art room. He believed that the school should be a place where a boy comes not to learn but:

... to create mathematics, languages and the elements of science. These are not ends but tools, and these tools a boy must accustom himself to use.... Schools should be miniature copies of the world we should love to have (Sanderson, 1924, cited in Martin, p.73).

When Sanderson was appointed, pupil numbers at Oundle had dwindled to about 100. At the time of his sudden death in 1922, the school had grown to over 500 pupils. As the school grew, so too did its material equipment. To additional classrooms and boarding houses were added workshops for joinery and engineering, a machine shop, a forge, a foundry, and an experimental farm. Laboratories for physics, chemistry and biology, art rooms, an observatory, a large library and a museum were also provided. He visualised the school as preparing the boy:

for complete living, not merely for making a livelihood, but for entering into the work and life of the world with wide and active interests and in the spirit of progress and service (Curtis, 1948).

Sanderson believed in providing each boy with training in the subjects best suited to his abilities and tastes. He approved of examinations only in so far as they acted as an incentive and a test of thorough learning, but if a school produced nothing else but examination results, the learning was empty and profitless.

While not succeeding in breaking down the élitist perception of the public at large, Sanderson maintained that schools should be in close touch with the life and work of the larger community beyond the school gates, a concept that began to permeate the boarding sector. As he said, ‘work in schools should be for service and should

be turned to the practical and social needs of the community' (cited in Curtis, 1948, p.364). He was not afraid of the word 'vocational'. He saw vocation as:

the centre about which a boy's interests were moving and he wished to seize this natural interest and turn it to good account, to develop it in the right atmosphere into a right spirit of true work in the service of the community (Curtis, 1948).

Sanderson's ideas had considerable impact on his fellow boarding headmasters.

The cult for Sport

Another development in the last decades of the century was the cult in schools for sport. It assumed a place of increasing importance both in the daily curriculum and in extra-curricular activities. Marlborough, for example, set up a well-organised sport programme which, it is said, drew the boys away from their hunting and poaching. A poem appeared in the school magazine, *The Marlburian* (1864):

One athletic rage
Has seized Marlburians of every age.
Now filled with frenzy, cricket all will play:
Now, all absorbing football rules the day.
Where'er you go, the topic is the same,
And all out talk at table is 'the game'
(Cited in Martin, 1979, p.66).

Particularly strong in boys' schools, sport also flourished in girls' establishments. The inclusion of more sporting activity was not due merely to the general desire of headmasters and headmistresses to absorb the spare time and energies of their pupils; rather, it formed part of commitment of schools to provide each pupil with the widest possible opportunity to develop their individual strengths. The headmaster of Marlborough, Cotton, chose to preach in the college chapel on the desirability of combining intellectual and bodily excellence to produce 'the whole man'. The reforms of the 'new' nineteenth century boys' school headmasters show their commitment to the task of nurturing each pupil's body, mind and spirit, thus providing each pupil with the widest possible opportunity to develop their individual strengths, a commitment replicated in the 'new' girls' school foundations.

Girls' boarding schools

The Taunton Commission's (1868) terms of reference also included consideration of girls' secondary education, marking a considerable advance for girls' schools. The aim of the founders of the new girls' schools was to enable girls to enjoy the same educational opportunities as their brothers. But this was not all. As Emily Davies, the founder of Girton College, Cambridge wrote:

We are not encumbered by theories about equality and inequality of mental power in the sexes. All we claim is that the intelligence of women, be it great or small, shall have full and free development and

we claim it not specifically in the interest of women, but as essential to the growth of the human race (Davies, 1864, cited in Ollerenshaw, 1967, p.18).

For centuries, marriage and domestic life had been considered the only roles suitable for women of upper and middle classes. Any education they received had been to fit them for these roles. It is true that in brief periods in the sixteenth century the female scholar had attracted some admiration. Martin (1979) refers to Mary and Elizabeth Tudor who were accomplished linguists and reminds us that Lady Jane Grey asserted that 'sport in the park is but a shadow of the pleasure that I find in Plato'. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, 'accomplishments', ladylike skills that would 'increase a young lady's chance of a prize in the matrimonial lottery', became the focal point of female education. In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there were some boarding schools in existence, but though they taught some reading, writing and scripture, their main efforts were concentrated on music, dancing, domestic skills and 'curious works of the needle', the latter becoming very fashionable. A London Chronicle writer noted that in villages round London:

There are one or two little boarding schools with an inscription over the door, 'young ladies boarded and educated'....hither the blacksmith, the ale-house keeper, the shoemaker etc. sends his daughter, who, from the moment she enters these walls, becomes a young lady (Cited in Martin, 1979).

As in the boys' schools, there was great variety among these schools. Among the best were schools such as that described in Jane Austin's *Emma* (written in 1816), a small business venture where a dozen girls were boarded. There Mrs. Goddard kept:

A real, honest, old-fashioned boarding school, where a number of accomplishments were sold at a reasonable price, and where girls might be sent out of the way and scramble themselves into a little education without any danger of coming back prodigies (Austin, 2003, p.29).

The appointment of the Schools Inquiry Commission of 1868, chaired by Baron Taunton, which included in its brief the task of looking into 'the much neglected subject of female education', was considered by many to be long overdue. The findings of the commission did not make comfortable reading.

The picture brought before us of the state of female middle class education is unfavourable....want of thoroughness and foundation, want of system: slovenliness and showy superficiality; inattention to rudiments; undue time given to accomplishments; want of organisation these may sufficiently indicate the character of the complaints we have received (Taunton Report, 1868).

The drive towards better schooling for middle class girls inevitably became part of the movement towards the emancipation of women. If women's place in the world were to be recognized, it was clearly necessary for the educators to establish the academic capabilities of women in competition with men. The work of headmistresses such as Frances Buss and Dorothea Beale affected all girls' schools, both day and boarding. Both created schools in which girls were able to enjoy a curriculum which was practically identical with that pursued by their brothers. Commenting on this fact, Newsom reflected:

As far as I can gather from their own evidence and that of their biographers, the learned ladies.... never stopped to think whether the educational opportunity for which they appealed had been designed to meet the needs of women (Newsom, J., *The Education of Girls*, cited in Ollerenshaw, K., *The Girls' Schools*, 1967, p. 16).

However, there is no doubt that the pioneer headmistresses were intent on securing for their girls an opportunity for development such as that enjoyed by the boys. They were concerned with one thing and one thing only – to make available for girls the best education then known. They wanted to learn, and to enable other girls and women to learn, Latin and Greek and mathematics, not because the boys learnt them, but because they were themselves good things to learn (*The Year Book of Education*, 1932).

Miss Dorothea Beale

Miss Beale's aspirations largely conformed to those of both her progressive male and female colleagues. She had a simple and profound view of education which she

owed partly to the religious teaching of her youth. She believed that the work of the educator was to provide an environment where light with its life-giving power could flow freely and energize the whole personality; each person's special field of service was then decided by vocation. She saw every child as entitled to opportunities for this full fruition and every teacher as opening the doorways of light for the child. All pupils were encouraged to develop wide interests and a varied curiosity. Translated into practical aims, this resulted in a broad curriculum, linked with an extra-curricular programme; together, they provided a programme that aimed at giving to each pupil a balanced education of body, mind and spirit.

Seizing the opportunities of a residential setting, Miss Beale was able to oversee the creation of many beautiful buildings that broadened opportunities to nurture each of these aspects of boarding pupils. The inclusion in the building programme of pictures, windows and statues, deliberately chosen as reminders of 'the life of God in the soul of man', was supportive of Miss Beale's wish that pupils should not live in a 'mere material' atmosphere; included also was an observatory dome and a library. However, books were not considered to be the only source of knowledge. Above the library, a museum was created which housed a fascinating collection of exhibits from all over the globe.

Physical training, music and art were all regarded as important.

Societies flourished, not least the field club which branched out into various sections, archaeological, botanical, zoological. It was 'an

endless source of interest, outdoor activity, and intelligent fun' (Clarke, 1954, p. 57).

Clarke concludes:

Visiting lecturers, too, helped to widen the girls' outlook and balance their interests. It was a happy, varied life, and the rule of silence in work hours – which seems to have been relaxed, very merrily, sometimes at mid-morning break – gave it an underlying peacefulness and concentration (Clarke, 1954, p.57).

Miss Beale's philosophy of education with which other pioneers of girls' education could identify had a profound influence on girls' education and particularly on boarding schools. The breadth of approach encompassing both the normal and extra-curricular activities took root. Due weight was given to academic subjects, but these were balanced by classes and activities designed to broaden and enhance understanding.

A further effect was the degree of commitment required of heads of boarding schools and their staff if they were to achieve their objectives. This was no doubt re-enforced by the marriage bar in teaching, which incredibly was still in force in some parts of the country until the Second World War. Educated women had to make a harsh choice between marriage and career. Those who chose the latter made

their work their life, thus giving a degree of commitment to their tasks that became part of the boarding school culture.

The twentieth century

The impact of the nineteenth century reforming heads undoubtedly coloured the culture of both boys' and girls' boarding schools at the beginning of the twentieth century. As schools moved into the twentieth century, their purposes were clear. Within each school, efforts were directed towards expanding pupils' opportunities to develop their abilities and talents to the full. Attention was focussed on the development of the individual pupil. Moreover, schools had harnessed the boarding structures to enable them to realise their aims: the opportunities within the house community for instilling sound values, for nurturing each pupil's growing ability to accept responsibility; the broadening of the curriculum and the inclusion of extra curricula activities. This approach fitted well with the new educational thinking. Spawned by philosophers working in America, Germany and Russia, the British progressive educators were conscious of their membership of an international fraternity.

'Progressive' schools

The views of John Dewey served as a starting point for the English thinking. His aim was to promote individuality and he believed that education should view growth in young people as an end in itself. He firmly asserted that the experience of pupils must be real; learning must be by doing. In 1920, the New Educational Fellowship was founded, an association pledged to bring together all who were

dedicated to a more radical view of education. A number of new boarding schools owed their foundation to this movement: Bedales (1893) and Bryanston (1928) both dedicated to the objective of 'wholeness' and a large measure of self-disciplined activity and learning: Summerhill was opened in 1921 by A.S. Neill who wanted to provide an education that was free of the authoritarian overtones which he had discovered even in some of the new schools: Dartington Hall, a co-educational school, followed in 1925, part of a wider social experiment to revive rural life and the arts. Though intent on promoting the best interests of each individual, the more radical, progressive tradition represented by these schools was resisted by established secondary boarding schools. Though having to overcome the disruptions widely experienced in the two world wars, they held firm to their more traditional approach.

The impact of two world wars

Because of the considerable contribution boarding schools had made to the war effort, their popularity had generally increased in the First World War. The workshops at Oundle were sufficiently well equipped to take a valuable part in the manufacture of munitions. Cheltenham Ladies' College installed workshops to make sandbags, sun shields and periscopes, much of the work being done by girls in their free moments. Part of its premises was adapted to serve as a hospital to receive the wounded. Free places were given to daughters of officers killed serving in the field and children of Belgian refugees. Similar activities, replicated in boarding schools throughout the land, did not go unnoticed. The schools continued to be popular between the wars, however, the economic slump in the 1930s resulted

in falling numbers and some smaller boarding establishments were forced to close. The Second World War exacerbated these problems; costs soared and the schools, many evacuated and therefore in makeshift premises, appeared unattractive to prospective parents. Yet the merits of boarding schools were undoubtedly gaining some recognition by those outside the boarding sector.

Attacks on exclusivity of public schools/boarding schools

During the war, in 1942, the Fleming Committee had been appointed 'to consider means whereby the association between the public schools and the general educational system of the country could be developed and extended'. A scheme was produced that proposed a minimum of 25% of places in public schools to be offered to pupils from grant-aided primary schools. This plan was subsequently rejected. Of more concern to boarding schools was the election in 1964 of a Labour Government pledged to alter the public school system. The Party's election manifesto declared: 'Labour will set up an educational trust to advise on the best way of integrating the public schools into the state system of education'. Critics of the public school system maintained that they represented all that was wrong with British society. Thus, in a vitriolic attack, John Morgan described the public school system as:

the greatest single source of the present British malaise which, as we all know, takes the form, Centaur-like, of amateurism at the top and a lack of opportunity below (New Statesman, February 1964).

Certainly, the public at large identified boarding with the public schools. In the public perception, the chief characteristic of all boarding schools continued to be their exclusivity; they were regarded as bastions of privilege, forming a closed system that few maintained school pupils could enter. They continued to identify with Tawney's view of boarding.

The existence of a group of schools reserved for the children of the comparatively prosperous....is or is not, as the world is today, in the best interests of the nation. It cannot be described by the venerable device of describing privileges as liberties (Tawney, 1943).

The threat to the public schools posed by the Labour Party was not fulfilled. In 1970, their manifesto stated that the education system must not perpetuate educational and social inequalities. In 1974, the party pledged to remove 'all forms of tax relief and charitable status from public schools', a policy that, if implemented, might well have led to the closure of a number of boarding schools. The effect of threats to their continued existence did, however, serve to make schools face their critics and to respond to the criticisms in a positive manner. Lambert, writing in 1975, drew attention to the uncomfortable paradox which boarding schools faced in respect of their history.

Because the boarding society is closed and total in its scope, the goals and values of the school can deeply impregnate and shape the structure of the institution and its way of life that in some schools abstract ends

and concrete ways are fused into one. This makes for a high effectiveness in realising such ends, but equally, it may make the task of changing goals so deeply embedded or altering structures so validated all the more difficult to accomplish (Lambert, 1975, p. 49).

Reply to the critics

In fact, so concerned was the Headmasters' Conference about its unfavourable image that it drew up a 'Programme for Action' which listed ten 'popular myths that needed to be scotched. These myths were that public schools:

- (a) Are a refuge for the brainless and the philistine
- (b) Are consecrated to Latin and teach no science
- (c) Are uninterested in sending their boys to the new universities and redbricks
- (d) Have privileged access to Oxbridge places, for example through closed awards.
- (e) Monopolize the City, Sandhurst, Whitehall and the bar
- (f) Do not send boys into industry and are disdainful of modern technology
- (g) Foster bullying and sadism, particularly through corporal punishment and fagging
- (h) Have barbaric living conditions
- (i) Enjoy an unfair high staff-pupil ratio
- (j) Promote homosexuality (Rae, 1981, p.31)

Commenting on the ten points, Walford (1986), found that while some are completely unfounded, others contained some underlying truth; thus supporting his contention that myths are not to be taken at face value, but are to be analysed for their deeper underlying meanings. He still maintained that though the schools were less closed and isolated from the community at large than was once the case:

The social life that develops among peers, with its own joys and trials, norms, regulations and even language, is still heavily influenced by the constraints of history, architecture and tradition (Walford, 1986, p.233).

Nevertheless, his analysis of the myths demonstrated that public schools were gradually adapting to change. Headmasters in membership of the Headmasters' Conference, increasingly aware of the need to improve public relation, followed the lead of the Incorporated Association of Preparatory School (IAPS) which had retained the services of a public relations consultant from 1957 and appointed their own individual public relations consultant. In 1962, HMC appointed its own public relations consultant and a year later turned its existing somewhat ineffective Publicity Committee into a Public Relations Sub-Committee. In the following year, their consultant advised them on the first steps to be taken:

I believe that now is the time to take more positive action in providing the public with a straightforward and up-to-date picture of the public schools. In my view the matter of first importance (and urgency) is the

collection of factual information on all aspects of HMC education. The lack of such a 'Brief' is a serious handicap not only in refuting the published arguments of critics, but also in initiating positive action (Rae, 1981, p. 63).

He specifically advised that the most common criticisms of Public Schools; that they were divisive, privileged, expensive and still addicted to corporal punishment, should be answered. In the next five years, the foundations of public relations expertise were undoubtedly laid, helping to convince those schools in the independent sector, notably, girls' schools, that there were positive benefits to be had from professional help. The reluctance of schools within the independent sector to present a more united front was unsurprising. All schools are in competition with one another as they seek to fill their places. As Rae comments:

While no headmaster (or headmistress) would gladly see another independent school go under, he (or she) may sometimes recall de Rochefoucauld's maxim, 'In the misfortune of our best friends, we find something which is not displeasing to us. His (and her) first duty is to see that his (and her) own school is full; if he is confident of doing that, his (and her) interest in a national information service is likely to be polite but cool (Rae, 1981, p. 73).

The Independent Schools Information Service

In October 1972 the Independent Schools Information Service, (ISIS), now known as ISCIS, was launched. The need for such a body had been clearly stated in a policy statement circulated to all schools in the previous year:

The independent schools have not in the past been their own best advocates. They have had little common organization and have left prospective clients to find out about them individually as and when they could. This is a weakness that should be remedied....Information about independent schools must, if it is to be up-to-date and reliable, be supplied by themselves and this points to the need to provide an Information Service to cover schools of all kinds.....it would enable us to deal with press and public relations on a secure basis of information (Future Policy for Public Schools, 1972, cited in Rae, p.74.)

The ISIS central office was to handle public relations; regional offices were to provide information for all its members. All independent schools recognized as efficient were eligible to join. The launching of ISIS was described by Rae as marking the move by independent schools into the twentieth century so far as relations with the outside world were concerned.

Certainly ISIS proved to be an invaluable source of support for the schools. In the second half of the twentieth century, the culture of boarding schools underwent

gradual changes which served to break down this seemingly indestructible social barrier which coloured popular conceptions of the boarding sector. At the end of the Second World War, boarding schools entered a fresh period of prosperity. Liberal parents seeking the best schooling for their children set aside political considerations. John Strachey, a member of the communist party, put his son's name forward for Eton, believing that given the existing society, it was the best education. Within the social structure of the country, considerable wealth passed into the hands of hardworking people whose roots were embedded in the middle classes. Increasingly, as the century progressed, 'first-time' boarders made up an increasing proportion of boarding school pupils. This inevitably 'opened up' the social life among peers, within the constraints of history, architecture and tradition enhancing the school experience which was now extended to a more diverse social group. A further effect of this change in the intake of pupils was that though some schools continued to enjoy a national reputation, drawing pupils from all over this country and overseas, the tendency was for others to become neighbourhood schools, drawing pupils from a considerably smaller catchment area. This in turn had a decided impact on each school's definition of the school community. Both school and parents developed a much closer relationship than had been the case hitherto; parents who wanted to be involved making an increasingly valuable contribution to the life of many schools.

Meanwhile, the earlier whole-hearted response of HMC members to the challenge set by their own Public Relations consultant had undoubtedly influenced other heads within the independent sector.

Attacks on public schools in the press were quickly answered; information was provided for politicians and journalists who were disposed to be favourable; above all the public schools themselves, by going into the public arena and being prepared to give as good as they got, not only gained in confidence but also won the respect of many people whose attitude towards them was at best neutral (Rae, 1981, p.67).

A definition of boarding

Of considerable significance to all boarding schools were two statements made in the 1960's, the first issued by HMC in 1967, which listed boarding as 'one of the positive things the public schools have to offer'. Wakeford (1969) reported that boarding was defined by HMC as:

whole time education with the whole time of the teaching staff devoted to it. Within this system staff can maintain 'firm but sensible discipline, character-building and training in a sense of responsibility' (p. 36).

which led him to conclude that 'the boarding principle has been developed into a fundamental part of the ideology of the public schools'..

The second statement, made by The Master of Marlborough, Dancy (1963 and 1966), claimed that it was boarding schools, together with their independence of the State that provided the main justification for the public schools. Moreover, he posed the question:

What do public schools ultimately stand for? The first answer is boarding education...The public schools stand for quality with a difference. The difference is the philosophy of boarding education. I emphasize philosophy because the great independent and Direct Grant day schools in fact accept the same philosophy, *even though they have not the same opportunities of implementing it*. Their headmasters (and headmistresses) and staff set before themselves as an ideal that concept of *total* education which was first formulated and is still most consciously applied in boarding schools (Wakeford, 1969, p.37).

Dancy maintained that boarding schools gave boys the opportunity of being educated by experts. He referred to the public boarding school as:

a purpose-built community – built community – and the purpose is the education of the adolescent. The home is a community, but it is multi-purpose. The day school shares much of the purpose of the boarding school, but it is not, in anything like the same sense, a community (cited in Wakeford, 1969, p.37).

A former Headmaster of Eton claimed that:

In very few cases do parents have the temperament, the knowledge and experience or the time to be ideal mothers and fathers. It is better for a boy to spend the schools term in a house dedicated to meeting his needs than in a home where emotion may warp judgments, inexperience of the young may lead to mistakes, while pressure of business and social commitments may lead to neglect (McConnell J.D.R., *Eton: How It Works*, 1967, cited in Wakeford, 1969, p. 37).

Taken together both statements are definitive, relating the aims of boarding education to the concept of total education, and, moreover, drawing attention to the fact that boarding schools possess some characteristics that enable them more readily to achieve their aims than day schools.

Summary

At every stage during its long history, schools within the boarding sector have clearly defined their purposes. In doing so, they sought initially to make it clear that the education they offered was suitable for the governing élite; their pupils were destined to take part in the government of the land. With the proliferation of boarding schools which took place in the nineteenth century came gradual change. The determination to raise Christian gentlemen and, as girls' schools emerged, Christian ladies, remained; but the expansion of opportunities within the schools grew out of the resolve to focus on the nurturing and development of each pupil's

individual abilities. This was the purpose which schools attempted to sustain throughout the twentieth century and up to the present day. By the end of the twentieth century, embodied in the boarding system, in part a legacy of the early public schools, but owing much also to the inspiration of outstanding nineteenth century heads of both boys' and girls' schools, three characteristics appear as fundamental to the successful achievement of the school's purposes.

1. A purpose – built community. Summed up in the words of Charles Pascoe, a Victorian commentator, each community is 'a complete social body ... a society, in which we must not only learn but act and live'.
2. A strong sense of commitment on the part of every member of the community to the successful fulfilment of their roles.
3. A broad curriculum, encompassing both the academic curriculum and a programme of extra-curricular activities.

CHAPTER THREE

Effective Schooling: A Review of Literature

The third research question deals with school effectiveness: ‘How effective are boarding schools in achieving their purposes?’ In this chapter I propose to summarise aspects of the prolific and complex body of research dealing with school effectiveness which began to appear in the 1960s and continues to the present day. When attempting to evaluate the research findings, it will be necessary to set them in the context of national educational policies that were developed during the same period. The chief criticisms levied at the research findings will also be examined.

The main body of research was largely directed towards improving students’ performance in the cognitive area; improvement in this area could readily and positively be assessed. Though indisputably of value to all educators, throughout the period, a significant number of researchers have acknowledged the need to widen the basis of their studies by considering factors which enhance students’ development not only in cognitive but also in affective and psychomotor domains.

Characteristics of the research

Research literature on effective schools has proliferated since the 1960s, attracting a vast amount of interest both at home and internationally. At home, it is a research field that has involved work mainly in state day schools catering for young people aged 5-18, and though, in the context of my study, my particular interest lies with the secondary age group, I have found that the whole body of research has

relevance. There is also a considerable amount of research that has been conducted in other countries. Though much can be learned from both from international and comparative studies, it is now generally acknowledged that 'the results of such studies are unlikely to be directly transferable to other contexts' (Wimpleberg, Teddlie and Stringfield, 1989). For example, Creemers, Reynolds and Swint (1994), investigating primary mathematics achievement, find indications of differences between five countries in the impact of pupil background factors and the effect of certain aspects of teacher behaviour. Though the sample size was severely limited, the research also suggests that the proportion of variance in achievement attributable to schools and classes may vary in different countries. In his international review of school effectiveness, Reynolds (1994) found that interest in studying school effectiveness in the Netherlands grew out of research traditions concerning matters such as teaching, instruction, curriculum and school organisation, while in Australia the strong field of educational administration provided the stimulus. Differences such as these, in traditions and findings, underline the necessity to have an awareness of the importance of the dimension of the national educational context. Though as Firestone (1990) concluded:

there is a core of consistency to be found across a wide variety of studies here and abroad with a wide range of methodological strengths and weaknesses ... and considerable support for the key findings in related research on organisational behaviour in a variety of work settings and countries, it is the results of British school

effectiveness research that are the chief concern of this review
(Firestone, 1991, p.9).

The political alliance

As researchers in this country pursued their intention to identify schools that were effective in achieving set goals and targets particularly relating to specific assessments and examinations, it is perhaps unsurprising that they attracted the support of governments and bureaucrats of different political persuasions. This concentration on the identification of effectiveness correlates in the cognitive area was wholly in keeping with the 'pursuit of excellence' approach to education, manifested in policies that produced the national curriculum, attainment tests, and league tables. Politicians' intentions to raise standards were strengthened by their alliance with industrialists and entrepreneurs who persistently voiced the need to equip the young with particular skills to enable them to contribute to the technological society of the twenty-first century. It was to schools that the government looked to provide society with young people suitably equipped to secure their country's sound economic growth. In pursuing this end, schools could to some extent be regarded as production lines; given the right mix of policy and resource inputs, performance indicators that focused on ever-higher test and examination results could give proof of effectiveness. Though a neat and apparently simple formula, this served to confirm the concentration on the development of cognitive skills, strengthening the idea that the idea that students' affective development had little bearing on the issue.

This alliance between researchers and government appeared to be of mutual benefit. It brought with it some tangible financial support for research, and appeared at a time when the general perception of educational research was that it was, if not entirely useless, certainly suspect and therefore not to be taken too seriously. Studies such as that of Hargreaves (1996) which criticised educational research as giving poor value for money, being remote from educational practice and often of indifferent quality, sparked off considerable debate. But such criticisms appear not to have affected the views of politicians or researchers striving to improve educational standards. To some extent, they shared a common purpose; but the loose alliance formed between them tended to confirm that studies should focus primarily on raising *academic* standards. In consequence, it was almost inevitable that the bulk of the evidence produced by researchers should concern academic outcomes in terms of basic skills in reading and mathematics, or examination results; evidence that could give solid and immediate proof of improving educational standards. Thus, only a minority of studies paid attention to other factors that their authors considered had a direct bearing on standards; for example, important differences in social/affective outcomes such as attendance, attitude or behaviour (Reynolds, 1976; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore and Ouston, 1979; Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis and Ecob, (1988). Small wonder that Slee and Weiner (2001) refer to the invention of school effectiveness as:

...a specific curriculum and pedagogic discourse that has captured not only the hearts and minds of an illustrious body of educational

researchers but also of policy-makers and politicians from different parts of the political spectrum (Slee and Weiner, 2001, p.83).

The early studies

The early studies had a limited and specific focus. The majority in the UK, as in the US, were conducted in inner-city schools, researchers being intent on proving that children from poor urban families could succeed in school and that the school would help them to do so. As Clark *et al* (1984) reported; work in the 1960s and 1970s focuses on measures of student achievement. Researchers sought primarily to highlight strategies and processes adopted by schools that directly affected student outcomes. The earliest studies incorporated explicit aims or goals concerned with equity and excellence but by the 1990s, researchers had moved away from particular equity issues and had widened their scope to focus on the achievements of all students, not merely the disadvantaged. They also included a wider range of outcomes, though these remained predominantly in the academic domain.

It is generally recognised that school effectiveness research in both North America and Britain developed as a reaction to the research findings of two groups of U.S. researchers: Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfeld (1966) and Jencks, Smith, Ackland, Bane, Cohen, Gintis, Heyns, and Michelson (1972). Their interpretation of their findings about the possible influence of schooling on students' achievement was somewhat pessimistic for

they reached the conclusion that schools had little effect on students' achievement when compared to the effects of family background and socio-economic status (Jencks *et al*, 1972).

Some ten years later, Purkey and Smith (1983) took this conclusion further, arguing that:

Easily measurable difference (class size variation from 20 to 30 pupils, existing differences in teacher presence, teacher training, teacher experience and salaries, number of books etc.) have little consistent relationship to student achievement (Purkey and Smith, p.48).

These conclusions were reached at a time when researchers, particularly in Britain, were wrestling with the need to discover the sources of effectiveness. If schools were to be 'written off' as having no particular effect on pupils' achievements, they had perforce to consider the fundamental question, 'Do schools matter?' One effect of this serious questioning of school effects resulted in researchers broadening their approach and looking with increased sensitivity at the relationship between 'school resources and the quality of education' (Clark *et al*, 1984, p.45). Individual students were used as the unit of analysis; progress rather than achievement was used as a measure of effectiveness and a more complex estimate of school resources and their delivery within the classrooms was developed. But the central focus of the research remained, enabling them to conclude that:

... schools matter, that schools do have major effects upon children's development and that, to put it simply, schools do make a difference (Reynolds and Creemers, 1990, p.1).

But though determining that schools do matter, the researchers were able only to report on 'what worked' in particular schools. By the early years of the 1980s, a body of literature had emerged that set out to describe the properties of unusually effective schools in a way that some hoped could be used as a blueprint for school improvement. For example in 1979, Edmonds, working in the US, produced five factors attributable to effective schools:

- strong administrative leadership
- school climate conducive to learning
- high expectations for children's achievement
- clear instructional objectives for monitoring student performance
- an emphasis on basic skills instruction

There is little to criticise in Edmonds' findings and they had considerable influence, providing pointers helpful for practitioners anxious to improve standards. However, in 1983, Purkey and Smith were led to conclude that:

characteristics (of an effective school) happen to be. Each (school) has its own characteristics which are shaped by such factors as its location,

pupil intake, size, resources and most importantly, the quality of its staff (Purkey and Smith, 1983).

Their findings concurred with those of Reid, Holly and Hopkins (1987) who had acknowledged that every school is unique; therefore there can be no blueprint to be successfully used by all. It was soon widely recognised that there is no simple combination of factors that can produce an effective school (Willms, 1992) and Reynolds and Cuttance (1992). Though as noted earlier, Edmonds' (1979) conclusions had a wide-ranging impact, Firestone (1990) draws attention to the fact that the Edmonds' (1979) study belongs to the early research which was primarily concerned with issues of equity and excellence. As the basis of studies broadened, researchers began to focus on the achievement of *all* students, rather than those suffering a measure of deprivation; and they showed a concern with the concept of progress over time rather than cross-sectional 'snapshots' of achievement at a given point of time. Mortimore (1991a) defined an effective school as one in which students progress further than might be expected from consideration of its intake. Together with his colleagues, he studied the progress of 2,000 pupils in 50 randomly selected London primary schools. Attention was focused on the achievements of all students and on the concept of progress over time rather than cross-sectional 'snapshots' of achievement at a given point in time. As a result, an effective school was deemed to be one that adds extra value to its students' outcomes in comparison with other schools serving similar intakes. By contrast, in an ineffective school, students make less progress than expected given their characteristics at intake. The research findings, though unable to indicate a strong

link, give recognition to the fact that a pupil's progress can be affected by his or her non-cognitive development.

The 1994 study: eleven key factors for effective schools

In 1994, OFSTED (the Office for Standards in Education) commissioned the International School Effectiveness and Improvement Centre to summarise current knowledge about factors identified in research literature as important in gaining a better understanding of effectiveness. The study, undertaken by Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore, involved an analysis of over 160 publications and was based on studies conducted in a variety of contexts and countries. Sources of information included the work of Purkey and Smith (1983), Reid, Holly and Hopkins (1987), The United States Department of Education (1987), Gray (1990), North West Regional Educational Laboratory (1990), Firestone (1990), and Mortimore (1991a; 1991b; 1993). As a result, OFSTED (1995) felt able to identify certain common features concerning the processes and characteristics of more effective schools. They stressed that however valid their conclusions might be for one school, it was impossible to produce a blueprint or recipe for the creation of more effective schools. However, to introduce a note of optimism, attention was drawn to the findings of Firestone:

There is a core of consistency to be found across a wide variety of studies conducted here and abroad with a wide range of methodological strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, there is considerable support for

the key findings in related research on organisational behaviour in a variety of work settings and countries (Firestone, 1990, p.9).

The writers of the OFSTED document hoped that it would provide a useful summary for those interested in three decades of school effectiveness research; but they insisted that the findings must not be seen as a panacea and cautioned against prescriptive interpretations. They acknowledged that by reviewing research in order to inform policy-makers, practitioners and lay people could be regarded as controversial in a climate in which education is often treated as a political football. They asserted that in carrying through the task, they were demonstrating the virtue of research, ‘mobilising rational argument, empirical advice, critical debate and creative insights’. They argued that by disseminating the findings not only to fellow researchers, but to practitioners and policy-makers as well, they were avoiding the danger of viewing research as something suitable only for the academic élite, and instead, capturing the very essence of democracy. The review of school effectiveness research by Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore (1995) identified 11 key factors or correlates of effectiveness. These are set out in Figure 3.1. They did not intend tilts to be exhaustive but hoped it would provide a useful background for those connected with the promotion of school effectiveness and improvement.

Figure 3.1 ELEVEN FACTORS FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOLSAdapted from Sammons *et al* (1995) p.8

1	Professional leadership	Firm and purposeful A participative approach The leading professional
2	Shared vision and goals	Unity of purpose Consistency and practice Collegiality and collaboration
3	A learning environment	An orderly atmosphere An attractive working environment
4	Concentration on teaching and learning	Maximisation of learning time Academic emphasis Focus on achievement
5	Purposeful teaching	Efficient organisation Clarity of purpose Structured lessons Adaptive practice
6	High expectations	High expectations all round Communicating expectations Providing intellectual challenge
7	Positive reinforcement	Clear and fair discipline Feedback
8	Monitoring progress	Monitoring pupil progress Evaluating school performance
9	Pupil rights and responsibilities	Raising pupil self-esteem Positions of responsibility Control of work
10	Home-school partnership	Parental involvement in their children's learning
11	A learning organisation	School-based staff development

Conclusions drawn from the Sammons et al review

The eleven factors described above are some of the key factors (or correlates) of effectiveness identified by the review. The writers pointed out that these factors should not be regarded as independent of each other, for patently, there are various links between them. Factors 1-8 are clearly centred on academic areas: they concern the development of pupils' cognitive skills. However, the introduction of the need to build pupils' self esteem, to enhance relationships between pupils, parents and teachers and to portray the school as a learning organisation (factors 9-11) signals recognition of the interdependence of cognitive and affective areas of learning. It goes some way towards confirming the need to pay attention not only to the development of each student's cognitive skills but also to their affective skills. Indeed, implicit in the inclusion of factors 9-11 is an acknowledgement of the overlapping influence of both cognitive and affective development on pupils' progress. The report itself goes on to state quite clearly that 'further research on the ways effective schools influence social and affective outcomes including student motivation and commitment to school would be desirable'. The review quotes the HMI report, *Ten Good Schools* (DES, 1977), which suggested that:

Success does not stem merely from the existence of certain structures of organisation, teaching patterns or curriculum planning, but is dependent on the spirit and understanding that pervades the life and work of a school, faithfully reflecting its basic objectives (Sammons *et al*, 1995, p.25).

The report, moreover, draws attention to the work of Reynolds, 1976; Rutter *et al*, 1979; Mortimore *et al*, 1998a which provide evidence of important differences in social/affective outcomes such as attendance, attitudes and behaviour. Reynolds (1976) had put forward the case for researchers to pay more attention to the sociology of the school in order to advance understanding of why certain children fail and others succeed. He concluded:

Instead of continually merely treating the deviant and delinquent children, we should perhaps begin to look and see if the reason for their rebellion lies squarely in the nature, process and operation of some of the schools that we offer them. If the reason does lie there, then perhaps we ought to seek changes in some of our delinquents' schools (Reynolds, 1976, p.229).

Rutter *et al* (1979) set out to compare the progress of children in twelve secondary schools in inner London. They found that variations in the outcomes in schools were systematically and strongly associated with the characteristics of schools as social institutions. The pattern of findings suggested that though pupils were undoubtedly influenced by the way they were dealt with as individuals, there was a group influence resulting from the ethos of the school as a social institution.

The presentation of the eleven factors provided a useful tool of immediate value for schools. It also clearly signalled the need for researchers to explore more

thoroughly the influence of social and/or affective factors on pupils' overall progress.

Criticism of school effectiveness research

As school effectiveness research enters its fifth decade, it cannot be denied that it was attracting much criticism, largely for being 'a socially and politically decontextualised body of literature' (Thrupp, 2001). Reynolds and Teddlie (2001), as proponents of school effectiveness research, felt impelled to defend it, claiming that researchers in the field had made three considerable contributions:

1. the setting up of a field which exhibits the characteristics of mature, normal science
2. the generation of a considerable volume of research on numerous important topics
3. the combatting of societal and professional pessimism concerning the prospects of educational advance

Additionally, Reynolds and Teddlie asserted that school effectiveness researchers have improved the prospects of productive change because:

- Firstly, they have convincingly destroyed the belief that schools can do nothing to change the society around them, and have also helped to destroy the myth that the influence of family background is so strong on children's development that children are unable to be affected by school.

- Secondly, in addition to destroying assumptions of the impotence of education, and maybe also helping to reduce the prevalence of family background being given as an excuse for educational failure by teachers, they have taken as their defining variables the key factors of school and pupil outcomes from which they ‘back map’ to look at the processes which appear to be related to positive outcomes.
- Thirdly, they have continuously in their studies shown teachers to be important determinants of children’s educational and social attainments and have therefore hopefully managed to enhance and build professional self-esteem.
- Fourthly, they have begun the creation of a ‘known to be valid’ knowledge base which can act as a foundation for (teacher) training. Thus, they conclude, the necessity of the endless reinvention of the ‘teaching wheel’ can be avoided and they can move teachers to an advanced level conceptually and practically (Reynolds and Teddlie, 2001, pp.103-04).

Reynolds and Teddlie also state that:

School effectiveness researchers are engaging with and learning from new paradigms in the field of learning and instruction. They are also learning from, and debating with, ‘those who argue for a new range of social or affective outcomes to be introduced that are relevant to the highly complex, fast-moving world of the early 21st century in which

personal qualities become of greater importance, because knowledge itself is easily accessible through information technology (p.111).

The acquisition of 'knowledge' referred to by Reynolds and Teddlie clearly refers to the acquisition of 'factual' knowledge, rather than to the deeper, more philosophical concept of knowledge which engages the development of all sides of a pupil's personality. The admission that researchers have, by and large, ignored social and affective issues confirms the conclusion that by focusing attention on cognitive outcomes, they have failed to consider the need to assess the overall development of each student. One explanation for this perceived weakness is undoubtedly linked with the previously explored political climate of the time. In seeking to achieve proof of improved educational standards, politicians, and to some extent researchers, have paid scant attention to the literature emanating from those responsible for formulating national educational policy, in which a number of allusions to the need to take a broader approach can be found.

Literature emanating from the policy makers

The Education Act of 1988 laid down that schools have a responsibility to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of each pupil. Unsurprisingly therefore, publications on cross-curricular themes of the national curriculum such as that produced in 1989 drew attention to the broad, balanced whole curriculum to which every pupil in maintained schools is entitled and which:

...promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (1989, National Curriculum: From Policy to Practice 2.1).

Dearing (1993) who brought the concept of a common curriculum for all schools to fruition wrote in the report outlining the final amendments to the National Curriculum:

Education is not only concerned with equipping students with the knowledge and skills they need to earn a living. It must help our young people to: use leisure time creatively; have respect for other people, other cultures and other beliefs; become good citizens; think things out for themselves; pursue a healthy life style; and, not least, value themselves and their achievements. It should develop an appreciation of the richness of our cultural heritage and of the spiritual and moral dimensions to life (Dearing, 1993, 3.11, p.18).

In the light of this evidence, it is surely surprising that the role of schooling in relation to behavioural development remains less than fully explored by those seeking to increase school effectiveness. Reynolds and Teddlie (2001) defend this omission by accusing their critics of failing to enunciate clearly a more radical approach to school effectiveness:

It is not always clear what their more radical alternative to school effectiveness is, unless the critics think that talking about outside school factors is change producing. School effectiveness believes not only in maximising outcomes – it believes that the generation of more highly qualified young people is likely to produce a revolution of rising expectations that will change the outside school factors (Reynolds and Teddlie, 2001, p.111).

The suggestion that the most radical key to improvement in school effectiveness put forward by its critics is that attention should be focussed on outside school factors appears to serve only as a ploy to take attention away from the classroom. Scant attention was paid to the work of educators such as Passow who wrote in the interests of urban schools and particularly gifted children. In 1994, when attempting to define the responsibilities of every school, Passow enunciated his belief that all schools should assume:

...varying degrees of responsibility for different aspects of student growth. – intellectual, social, emotional, aesthetic, moral and physical – but it is the individual as a whole whose development is or should be of concern. As nurturers of talent, educators are or should be concerned with the ‘whole’ child or the ‘whole’ person (Passow, 1994, p.5).

It appears that there is considerable evidence to be found in official documents relating to the National Curriculum, in research findings and in the developing philosophy of educators such as Passow to make a strong case for the critics of the school effectiveness movement. That their criticism has made little impact appears to be because they have failed to combine their efforts to present cohesive argument in support of a more far-reaching policy.

The ineffectiveness of school effectiveness research

Instead of producing a more radical approach, it seems that critics of the work of school effectiveness researchers such as Gorard (2001), possibly one of the most vociferous, have chosen instead to produce evidence of falling standards in British education. Cox and Dyson (1990) had described standards in 1969 as lower than in 1929, indeed lower even than in 1914. In 1996, Barber claimed that:

There is indeed a crisis in education today as it faces the twin threats of global competition and local moral decline manifested in a growing gap between the best and worst performing students (Barber, cited in Gorard, 2001, p.280).

Gorard (2001) cites the claims of Mudie, made while he was Minister for Lifelong Learning, that in any other industry a performance level like that of British education 'would result in the companies concerned going out of business'. Porter (1990) refers to the educational system as 'a major barrier to ... sustaining competitive advantage in industry' (p.7). Bentley summarising the state of British

education (1998) describes the full malaise of limited literacy skills among students, large numbers of school leavers with no qualifications, an increasing performance gap between girls and boys, and growing indications for truancy and exclusion from school (p.) Gorard (2001) comments that even where examination outcomes have improved over time, as evidenced by an increasing number of A grades or the introduction of A* grade at GCSE, this can be attributed by 'crisis' commentators to a simple lowering of standards (or 'dumbing down' as it has become popularly known). For example, the mathematical ability of A-level candidates and entrants to higher education has been reported as being in decline over time, even when candidates are matched in terms of their A level grades (Kitchen, 1999), thus showing that equivalent-sounding qualifications are now worth less than in previous years, not only in exchange value but also in actual fact.

One unintended result of school effectiveness studies, with their emphasis on outcomes, has been the exaggeration of the importance of examination results. They present as easy to measure and monitor and though researchers have often been scrupulous in pointing out that results only measure some of the activities of a school, this has meant, nevertheless, that more complex issues have been ignored. 'A good school has come to mean one with good exam results' (Ouston, cited in Gorard, 2001, p.287) even though this is only a small part of what families look for when they choose a new school (Holt, 1981; Gorard, 1997).

If schools are to be judged by examination results, there will be great pressure on schools to reflect this bias in their teaching. And the fact is

that although ... results are generally esteemed by parents and employers, they measure only a small part of what teachers would regard as desirable educational outcomes. They place a premium on propositional knowledge ... so evidently does the public at large, to judge by the popularity of games of the 'mastermind' type. But what is more important is to use this knowledge procedurally ... (and) ... there still remains the whole area of a pupil's personal and social development which parents and employers rightly expect a school to foster (Holt, 1981, p.18).

Summary

This chapter has followed the quest for the constructs of school effectiveness as pursued by researchers in the field. The conclusions reached by the main body of researchers and upheld by government as supportive of their aim to strengthen the economic prosperity of the country, have dictated educational policy, particularly in the latter half of the twentieth century. Yet many in the educational world have been critical of both the conclusions and the resulting policies. Though based not on statistical evidence, but rather on the perceptions of a wide number of heads, it can be argued that the increasing number of 'first-time' parents using independent schools have chosen them because they have the freedom from strict government control that allows them to pursue broader educational goals.

In trying to explain the reasons why the criticism has been largely ignored, Gorard (2001) advances the theory that school effectiveness has become a kind of cult and

is therefore difficult to argue against. He reports that several of its most devoted adherents have become government advisors and so the movement itself is becoming more and more part of the official discourse mixed with an economic vocabulary about targets for lifelong learning, and market-driven performance indicators. When set against a background of declining educational standards, this alliance between the school effectiveness movement and politicians and bureaucrats appears less secure. Though critics of the movement express their belief that it is showing some willingness to include factors other than school effects into its search for the sources of effectiveness, this concession does not in itself inspire confidence. It is surely time that the present widely-held theory of school effectiveness, albeit backed by government, should be challenged by a fresh look at the nature of each school's responsibility for its pupils, and by working out how this might best be realised.

The next chapter examines the boarding schools approach to effectiveness that, ironically, is based on the belief laid down in the Education Reform Act (1988), that schools have a responsibility to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of each pupil.

CHAPTER FOUR

The boarding school approach to effectiveness

As noted in Chapter Two, the aims of boarding education have been clearly defined at various points throughout their history. Perhaps, surprisingly, as their story stretches over six centuries, there is considerable unanimity in their statements. In the twentieth century, various educationalists began to probe more deeply into the practical implications of the developing philosophy of education. Among them was Passow who, as reported in the previous chapter 1994, believed that every school should concern itself with the nurture of the ‘whole’ child.

Passow was writing in the interests of particularly gifted children, but his pronouncement accurately sums up the responsibilities that boarding schools assume for their pupils. The reasons for this emerged in the chapter on the structures of the boarding school. It is only in comparatively recent times that parents have had regular contact with their boarding sons and daughters. Up to the middle of the twentieth century, parents customarily relinquished their children to their boarding houses for two to three months at a time. It was imperative that the schools, in the absence of the parents, should assume responsibility for the overall development of each child. The notion that researchers examining factors to increase effectiveness should give priority to securing the cognitive development of pupils, as described in the last chapter, becomes immediately less defensible.

The need for educators at all levels, pre-school to post-secondary, to accept a wider responsibility for their pupils is endorsed by the work on the subject of learning carried out by Bloom and his colleagues working in Chicago, from 1948 to 1953. Their recognition of the interdependence of body, mind and spirit in learning gave further weight to the approach to learning adopted in traditional boarding schools. The analysis of Bloom and his colleagues went further. In 1956 they identified three overlapping domains or categories of learning – cognitive, affective and psychomotor. They went on to produce an elaborate compilation for the cognitive and affective domains, though none for the psychomotor. Others however, including Simpson (1972) and Dave (1970) have filled the gap. Each compilation divides the three domains into subdivisions, starting from the simplest behaviour to the most complex. Other systems or hierarchies have been devised in the educational and training world, but Bloom's taxonomy for the first two domains is easily understood and probably the most widely used. The compilations for the third domain by both Simpson and Dave have proved popular.

- The cognitive domain breaks down the processes involved in the acquisition of knowledge and the development of intellectual skills.
- The affective domain is concerned with growth in emotional areas, including the way in which feelings, appreciation, enthusiasms, motivations, and attitudes are dealt with.
- The psychomotor is for growth in manual or physical skills (physical). It includes physical movement, co-ordination and use of motor skills.

Bloom and his colleagues identified three domains of learning, whilst recognising their separation to be artificial: they went on to conceptualise the acquisition and development of intellectual skills as having 6 levels:

1. Knowledge
2. Comprehension
3. Application
4. Analyses
5. Synthesis
6. Evaluation

These levels are arranged from the simple recall or recognition of facts (Knowledge) as the lowest level, through increasingly more complex and abstract mental levels, to the highest level that is classified as Evaluation.

Using the same format, the affective domain encompasses emotions, attitudes, appreciations, values and feelings. Five major levels are listed.

1. Receiving
2. Responding
3. Valuing
4. Organising
5. Conceptualising and Characterising by Value or Value Concept

The psychomotor domain encompasses manipulative or physical skills. Following the same format, Dave (1975) developed five major levels:

1. Imitation
2. Manipulation
3. Precision
4. Articulation
5. Naturalisation

Significantly, Bloom emphasised that the domains of educational activity overlap one another; each is not exclusive but relies to some extent on the others. Although particular set tasks might be said to fall within one particular domain, there is little doubt that, almost invariably, knowledge, skills or experience acquired when working in other domains will contribute to the successful accomplishment of the set tasks. The three learning domains complement one another. Thus it is important that the learning process in schools should take place in all three domains, cognitive, affective and psychomotor.

Unsurprisingly, the taxonomy of the cognitive domain that deals with the six levels of learning has been widely applied, for it clearly relates to education, which typically stresses the acquisition of knowledge and intellectual skills. It is the domain that has been at the centre of school effectiveness research. The affective domain which deals with outcomes such as interest, attitude and appreciation has

not received the same level of interest. Nor indeed has the psychomotor domain, the development of the physical and motor skills. However, as increasingly, recognition is being given to the notion that the acquisition of knowledge and associated skills means little without a corresponding set of dispositions to use them, so the level of interest has increased. As reported in Chapter Two, by the end of the nineteenth century, the notion that the completion of the learning process involves not only the cognitive and affective domains, but also the psychomotor, had become firmly established as central to the boarding sector's approach to learning. The work of Bloom and his colleagues, recognising the nurturing of mind, body and spirit as an *integrated* activity, lent weight to the strategies used to enable pupils to realise their full potential.

The value of this analysis has received widespread recognition. The belief that by developing and accepting the complexity of human potential, schools will increase their effectiveness appears to be attracting increasing support. By acquiring the characteristics of a true learning community, a school can offer the operational means to help every pupil to realise his/her potential.

It was acknowledged in the previous chapter that effective schools research was in some respects driven by political motives and that this supported a concentration of efforts into raising standards within the cognitive area. The chapter also drew attention to the fact that improvement in the area might readily be measured by using examination results and that this heightened the appeal of the strategy. The boarding school sector, dominated by fee-paying schools, has had quite different

motives for seeking constantly to improve not merely its ability to maintain its academic standards, but rather to uphold its overall standards. Particularly from the mid-50s, with few exceptions, it has been necessary for each school to take its place in the market place and to 'sell' itself. This has proved a very powerful motive. To succeed, schools recognised that they had not only to offer all that colleagues in the state sector were providing and more; they had also to compete with one another. Their efforts were wholly directed to the successful fulfilment of their purposes and these extend beyond the improvement of standards in the cognitive area of pupils' experience, which can be measured according to the dimensions commended by researchers. Further evidence of the schools' efforts is pragmatic: it is drawn partially from the legacy of the past, but also from the determination of practitioners to inaugurate policies specifically directed to the promotion of their pupils' individual gifts.

Though expressed in different terms, boarding schools assume responsibility for the education of the whole person. Given the residential setting of each school, it is a responsibility that in one sense has been thrust upon them. Up to the middle of the twentieth century, parents customarily relinquished their children to their boarding houses for two or three months at a time. It was imperative that the schools, in the absence of the parents, should promote each pupil's whole development. It is only in comparatively recent times that parents have had regular contact with their boarding sons and daughters.

There are now far more weekends at home for students, flexible boarding to cater for students' wishes, and greater contact between parents and the schools (Walford 2003, p.2).

Today, the time a pupil spends in the boarding environment is dependent on their boarding status. In most schools, full, weekly and day boarders can be found. It is necessary for school and parents to work in partnership, to ensure that *in every case*, the whole child is nurtured so that each one is given the opportunity to realise his or her potential to the full.

Judging the effectiveness of boarding

The conclusion that each school is unique has won universal acceptance. Boarding schools also regard each one of their pupils as a unique person. Each has different gifts and abilities and it is the responsibility of the school to enable each pupil to realise his or her full potential. To succeed is dependent on promoting all the overlapping domains of learning: the cognitive, affective and psychomotor, outlined by Bloom. The comparative ease with which improvement in the cognitive area can be assessed has been noted. To assess whether schools are meeting pupils' needs in the affective and psychomotor domains is more problematical. As a means of assessing whether a school is addressing each student's needs in the three domains; cognitive, affective and psychomotor, Passow proposed the division into six areas of learning which would, between them, cover the 'whole' development of each pupil. The first of the six points deals primarily with matters within the

cognitive domain; points 2-4 cover the affective domain; point 6 deals primarily with the psychomotor domain.

1. Intellectual
2. Social
3. Emotional
4. Aesthetic
5. Moral
6. Physical

As seen in the work of adherents to the school effectiveness research movement, the assessment of developing intellectual gifts is comparatively straightforward. Schools in the boarding sector that set before themselves an ideal of total education believe that they have opportunities to implement the integrated activity covering all six areas listed above that will achieve their ends; opportunities that are not readily available in day schools. The most striking difference is the ‘whole-time’ education they offer. The realisation of this offer is dependent on three factors. First, the delivery of education is not restricted to the classroom. As the headmaster of Gresham’s School maintained, boarding schools show ‘the way to educate outside the classroom’ (1969, Wakeford, p.37). In consequence the school curriculum includes not only the time-tabled academic classes; it also provides an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities. Secondly, accompanying the whole-time education on offer is ‘the whole time of the staff devoted to it’ (1969,

Wakeford, p.36). Thirdly, the school is a community. As Dancy writes, the boarding school is:

A purpose-built community – and the purpose is the education of the adolescent. The home is a community, but it is multi-purpose. The day school shares much of the purpose of the boarding school, but it is not, in anything like the same sense, a community (cited in Wakeford, 1969, p.37).

Building on these theorists and drawing on my professional experience, it appears to me that the three characteristics or elements, as described in Chapter Two that emerged by the end of the nineteenth century and have influenced the structure and culture of all residential schools are:

1. a broad curriculum
2. a strong sense of commitment
3. a purpose-built community

Curriculum

As noted in Chapter Two, the nineteenth century witnessed a considerable broadening of the curriculum.

The life of the school is defined by the curriculum, what is taught, and the life of the student is defined by what is learned. But the issue is

more than a published syllabus, a list of textbooks and lesson plans.

The 'true curriculum' of any school has two dimensions, one visible, the other invisible (Doyle, 1987, p.15).

For purposes of definition in this thesis I refer to the 'academic' curriculum, (Doyle's 'visible'), which is concerned with the activities connected with the prescribed courses of study, and the 'extended' curriculum, (Doyle's 'invisible'), which embraces the extra-curricular activities

It is generally acknowledged that when dealing with curriculum matters, to declare oneself against breadth and balance is as unlikely as a preacher declaring himself for sin (Curriculum Report, 1987, p.6).

A national curriculum for state schools in England and Wales was introduced in 1988. Many independent schools, though not required to adhere to the national curriculum, nevertheless made the decision to do so. Until the recent changes introduced in 2003, the pursuit of the national curriculum courses and public examinations occupied most of the visible curriculum. Following the introduction of the national curriculum the annual publication of school success in public examinations (commonly referred to as league tables) had an inevitable consequence: as the pressure on schools to achieve ever-higher 'placings' in the various tests that were applied increased, constraints of time alone inevitably resulted in the curtailment of the extra-curricular programme in day schools.

But my experience, shared with many of my colleagues, indicated that it did not necessarily inhibit the pursuit of breadth and balance in boarding schools. My professional experience of boarding schools suggests that all areas of learning and experience can be accommodated, particularly if integrated studies and/or the modular approach are used. The longer hours available to boarding schools make it possible to maintain both the prescribed courses and the extra curricular activities, enhancing each school's ability to achieve their learning goals.

The inclusion of extra-curricular activities in the full curricular programme of the boarding school also provides valuable additional time and opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge, skills and experience. Though in the interests of definition, researchers may separate the academic and extended curricula, they are in fact inextricably bound together. The extended curriculum has considerable importance for, in part, it is concerned with the signals sent out by adults to students, telling them what the school really stands for, what it represents. It answers such questions as:

Is it (the school) a home for inquiring minds, or is it fundamentally anti-intellectual? Does it stand for discipline, hard work, high standards, intellectual integrity? Or does it stand for sloth, and disdain intellectual standards? Is the school authoritarian or libertarian or does it fall somewhere in between? Does it purport to develop independent

thinking ability or simply transmit skills? The differences are real and have meaning (Doyle, 1987 p.15).

Commitment

Commitment to the community of all its members, at every level, is a primary key to effectiveness. It is demanding in terms of time and energy for all concerned, particularly for head and staff, pupils and, albeit to a lesser degree, parents. In a review of an article on effective schools, Bamburg (1990) recalls a discussion in which he was involved about whether the successful development of an effective school was more dependent upon having a commitment or possessing the knowledge and skills to develop such a commitment. I have a good deal of sympathy for his hunch that for most educators, commitment (his colleagues call it 'having a fire in your belly') is more important. Bamburg goes on to emphasise the need for continual training opportunities for educators if they are to be equipped to make the kind of changes that are needed. In a rapidly changing world, it is surely important to make such opportunities readily available to enable staff in all departments to acquire increased knowledge and experience. It must be acknowledged that both preparing for and effecting change take their toll on those charged with the task, requiring a huge measure of commitment. A readiness to respond positively to fresh challenges dictated by changing circumstances thus becomes an important adjunct of commitment.

These three elements, community, curriculum and commitment together provide a nurturing environment, in which development in each aspect of individual growth: intellectual, social, emotional, aesthetic, moral and physical, can be pursued. Establishing the presence of these three elements would appear to provide a valid and practical starting point for a school intent on increasing its effectiveness

Community

Doyle maintains that what the school stands for and what it teaches determine the connections between school and the local community. The interaction between members of the school community certainly has an important part to play in upholding the invisible curriculum. In my experience, the school's ideals and values are continually reinforced by all the component parts of the community: i.e. by the staff, the pupils, the parents, former pupils and the wider community beyond the school gates. This in part explains the important role of the school community in fulfilling the learning objectives.

Most schools refer to themselves as communities, but it is difficult to define what is meant by this description. In seeking to identify the facets of the school community that support growth in every aspect of a pupil's development, I turned to the philosophical debate on communitarianism that flourished at the end of the last century. The communitarian movement was concerned specifically with the teaching of values and the development of responsible citizenship; but the exploration by researchers of the movement's possible implications for education

generally, I am loath to dismiss the shared sense of place, common memory, and the belonging and significance from the concept of community. Nevertheless, the addition produced some interesting insights into the concept of community. Among these was the suggestion, put forward by Bell (1993), that there are three basic types of community that can be identified as constitutive of Western culture: a community of place, a community of memory and a psychological community.

1. The community of place is seen as a geographical location. The lives of those who live in this community are centred on this place. They have a sense of belonging to it.
2. Communities of memory have a history 'in the sense of being constituted by their past'. Such communities carry a moral tradition that helps to provide the narrative unity of our lives, and which entails an obligation to sustain and promote the ideals and aspirations embedded in their history through memory and hope, linking our destiny to that of our ancestors. If individuals fail to nurture their communities of memory, they lose a source of meaning and hope in their lives and very serious harm is done to their self-esteem and sense of personal competence, not to mention the consequences for the future generations when a moral tradition is lost (Bell, 1993, p.126).

3. A psychological community is a group of persons who participate in common activity and experience, having a psychological sense of 'togetherness' as shared ends are sought. Such communities, based on face to face interaction, are governed by sentiments of trust, co-operation and altruism in the sense that constituent members have the good of the community in mind and act on behalf of the community's interest (Bell, 1993, p.170).

Bell acknowledges that overlaps occur between the three kinds of community. I would suggest that the characteristics of all three kinds are present within a boarding school community that embraces the head and the staff, the pupils, their parents, former pupils and the wider community beyond the school gates. It is a community of place, its members having a real sense of belonging. It is a community of memory, each having a history in the sense of being constituted by its past. This is reflected in the ideals and aspirations of each community, and these in turn help to point the way forward. The psychological sense of 'togetherness' is very real. It is a caring community and there is no doubt that there is an almost tangible connection between its members, a concern for one another's well being that continues into adult life. The characteristics of all three communities, when rolled into one, give to each of its members a sense of identity, increased self-esteem and confidence. The community also provides a nurturing environment that promotes individual growth in every area of human development. A goal for educators should be to develop a learning community.

The importance for schools of the concept of community was reaffirmed by Fielding (1997), as drawing on the work of Macmurray, he took what he describes as a radical look at three key issues central to the debate taking place at the turn of the century about the nature of education and schooling. When attempting to describe what a learning community might look like, Mac Murray put forward four main strands:

1. Persons in relation
2. Two fundamental forms of human unity
3. Community and society
4. The necessity of freedom and equality

Persons in relation

Mac Murray argues that to be a person, to become human, is essentially a relational rather than a solitary process.

We need one another to be ourselves. The complete and unlimited dependence of each of us upon the others is the central and crucial fact of personal existence (MacMurray, 1961, p.211).

Two fundamental forms of human unity

Macmurray suggests that there are two forms of human relationships: functional and personal relations. Our well being is dependent on both, but the latter are far more important than the former. Functional relationships are those relationships

which we enter into with other people for particular purposes. Those relationships are defined by our respective roles and intentions. We are not entering more open, personal relationships in which other aspects of our lives and hopes are revealed or asked for. Personal relationships are quite different. We do not enter them for any particular reason, but just to be ourselves. Good examples of personal relationships in this sense are friendship or family. Fielding concludes that it is personal relationships that are at the heart of Macmurray's understanding of the nature and the possibility of the human condition. It is for personal relationships, relationships in which we can be and become most fully ourselves, that all else exists or matters.

A personal relationship is not instrumental: it has no purpose beyond itself: purposes are expressive of personal relationships, not constitutive of them. In a functional relationship, if you change the purposes, you dissolve the unity. In a communal relationship of friendship on the other hand, the change of purposes both maintains and enriches the unity, rather than dissolving it (Fielding, 1997, p.70).

Community and society

In the same way as he draws a distinction between functional and personal relationships, Macmurray differentiates between community and society. In a society, people co-operate in a range of ways to achieve common purposes. Their unity is a functional unity; people are members of a society because of the jobs they do. Society is an organisation of functions. In contrast to society, community is not about common purposes and the way in which our roles, tasks and functions relate

to each other, but rather about a shared way of life. Community is essentially about the quality of relations between persons as persons.

Community is a relationship in which we 'associate purely for the purpose of expressing our whole selves to one another in mutuality (Macmurray, 1936, p.98).

The necessity of freedom and equality

Macmurray suggests that there are two fundamental philosophical principles of community; the principle of freedom and the principle of equality. His view is that:

Equality and freedom, as constitutive principles of fellowship, condition one another reciprocally. Equality is a condition of freedom in human relations. For if we do not treat one another as equals, we exclude freedom from the relationship. Freedom, too, conditions equality. For if there is constraint between us there is fear; and to counter the fear we must seek control over its object, and attempt to subordinate the other person to our own power. Any attempt to achieve freedom without equality, or to achieve equality without freedom, must, therefore be self-defeating (Macmurray, 1936).

Freedom for Macmurray is freedom to become ourselves, something that we can only do in and through our relations with others, and only in certain kinds of relations. Friendship or community reveals the positive nature of freedom,

providing the only conditions which release the whole self into activity and so enable a man to be himself totally and without constraint. In the same way, equality is enriching rather than diminishing:

It is precisely the recognition of difference and variety amongst individuals that gives meaning to the assertion of equality (Macmurray, 1936, p.74).

Fielding believes that Macmurray has deepened our understanding of the principles of community. He maintains that in the end:

Community is not fundamentally about a shared sense of place, common memory or even the belonging and sense of significance found in close relationships. Rather, community is the reciprocal experience people have as persons in certain kinds of relationships.... Community is a way of being, not a thing. Community is a process through which human beings regard each other in a certain way, for example through care, love and concern for the other, and in which they relate to each other, acting together in mutuality as persons, not as role occupants. Furthermore, that mutuality is informed by the values of freedom – freedom to be and to become yourself - and equality – equal worth. These two values condition each other reciprocally (Fielding, 1997).

It is this definition that captures the essence of the boarding school community. It is not achieved without a certain cost, though it is a cost willingly met by members of the community

Summary

Having addressed existing research on effective schooling and on effective boarding schools, in particular, I now turn to discussing my own research. The next chapter sets out the research strategy and methodology used in the development of three case studies of selected boarding schools. Chapter 6 introduces the schools, in particular concentrating on aims, characteristics and structures; Chapter 7 approaches the material on the schools in a more analytical way through the themes of curriculum, community and commitment.

CHAPTER FIVE

Methodology

When I first made the decision to embark on this study, it was my hope that the knowledge and experience I had acquired while working in both boarding and day schools would be an asset. Insider's knowledge has meant that I was able to make an informed choice of schools to study, without the preparatory work that an outsider would have had to undertake. Being an insider has also meant that I have been able to gain fruitful access to schools in a way and in a timescale that an outsider might not. It was only as I was writing the previous chapter that I realised that my professional knowledge and connections could also pose a number of problems. My personal history reveals that I was a 'convert' to the boarding sector and fully convinced of its merits; so there was a very real danger that this would colour my approach to the extent that my project would become an uncritical, not to say biased, study. Mindful of the very real need to maintain some social and personal distance from the norms and values of those I would be researching to be able to analyse them objectively (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994), I have endeavoured throughout to be wholly scrupulous and impartial in all my judgements, a circumstance that has been made much easier because of the time that has elapsed since I retired. Confident that my experience was decidedly 'dated', I was able to approach the study with a keen sense of anticipation, relishing the opportunity to explore afresh boarding school education. Certainly I was anxious to discover ways in which boarding school education might have changed since I was a serving

head, and very ready to accept change; indeed I welcomed the opportunity for my assumed knowledge of the sector to be challenged.

The research questions

The three objectives recorded in the previous chapter prompted the formulation of three research questions:

1. What are the purposes of boarding education in the views of schools, parents and pupil?
2. How do different boarding schools go about achieving their purposes?
3. How effective are they in achieving their purposes?

In order to clarify my ideas about the most relevant and appropriate methodology to employ to reach my objectives, I realised that I needed to undergo some training in aspects of qualitative research. Thus, I took advantage of the then Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education's courses on offer, finding the residential summer school in Turkey on research methods particularly valuable. With the accumulated new insights gained from training, reading and discussion, it became clear that the most appropriate research strategy would be to develop a case study; a strategy to be preferred 'when circumstances and research problems are appropriate rather than an ideological commitment to be followed whatever the circumstances' (Yin, 2003, p.13). Yin defined a case study as an empirical inquiry that:

- Investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when
- The boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

Moreover, the case study enquiry (Yin, 2003):

- copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result,
- relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion , and as another result,
- benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.

In other words, the case study as a research strategy comprises an all-encompassing method, covering the logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis. It includes both single and multiple case studies and can include both qualitative and quantitative evidence. When presenting more than one case study, the cases can be used to make broader generalisations. Primrose (2005) concludes that:

The purpose of case study research in general is to collect and present data which create detailed pictures of each unique case. From these

pictures, common threads become clear and unique contributory factors are identified In addition to providing explanations and descriptions of specific cases, case study research may also be used in an exploratory way to test out *a priori* hypotheses.

The research design

Next came the need to design the proposed case study. A comprehensive catalogue of research case study designs has yet to be developed, and producing a study design is often viewed as the most difficult part of case study research. Undoubtedly helped, in this instance, by my inside knowledge of the boarding sector, I confess that I arrived fairly swiftly at my conclusions. As I sought to build up an accurate account of the prevailing boarding scene I recognised that in order to create an up-to-date picture of what was happening in the current boarding school world, I needed to get onto 'the shop floor'. I needed to talk to the current providers and consumers of boarding education. Thus, I decided that the unit of analysis was to be 'the school' and I proposed to make a study of a sample of three schools. I decided on this number since it would enable me to incorporate schools of different types within the sector; allow me to make some comparisons between schools and would be achievable within the time frame. I wished to determine:

- the purposes of each establishment
- the ways in which each school set out to achieve its aims
- the degree of success achieved by each school.

I decided that a series of semi-structured interviews with heads, staff, pupils and parents in each of the three schools would enable me to collect data that would indicate their perceptions of their school.

The next decision to be made concerned the selection of schools to be approached with a view to their taking part in the project. My own contacts, most specifically those made through the Boarding Schools Association, encompassed the whole boarding sector, so I envisaged little difficulty in gaining access to schools within either the maintained or independent sectors. Nevertheless, because possibly the most striking feature of boarding schools is their diversity, I realised that the selection was not going to be easy. When making my selection, I was tempted to include one of the specialist schools which cater for those with special gifts or needs. I visited one specialising in music to assess its usefulness in terms of the project but decided that its objectives were too specialised, its scope too narrow, for any conclusions which might be drawn to be of general usefulness. More validity would be given to the study by the selection of schools offering the National Curriculum and courses leading to O, A and AS level examinations. I then drew up some criteria to guide my eventual choice. The chosen schools should:

1. provide a mainstream, not specialist curriculum
2. cater for pupils within the age range 11 – 18
3. be of similar size
4. be single sex

5. be within daily travelling distance of my home
6. be drawn from both state and independent sectors

In my search for schools that met the criteria, I used the two main sources of information on boarding education: the ISIS (Independent Schools Information Service) Official Guide, *Choosing Your Independent School*, and the STABIS (State Boarding Information Service) *Directory of Maintained Boarding Schools*. From the resulting short list I selected one girls' independent school, one boys' independent school and one boys' state boarding school. These will be referred to respectively as Treetops, Abbeyfields and Foleybridge.

Initial school visits

I made my first approach to schools through a letter to the head (see Appendix). All three responded with heartening enthusiasm, inviting me to meet them at their schools to explain the project in more detail and to discuss the demands it would make on the school. With equal eagerness, I set out to visit each in turn. I outlined the purposes of the study and explained the practical implications of my conducting the interviews and studying school documents (see below).

I asked to interview:

1. the head and/or the deputy head;
2. up to six members of staff representing different facets of school life;
3. four pupils aged 13

4. four first year sixth formers.
5. the parents of the eight pupils chosen for interview

The choice of participants was left to the school but I asked that the following considerations be taken into account:

- the pupil group should include some first generation boarders
- the parents I interviewed should be parents of the pupils I interviewed
- the parent group should as far as possible be representative of different consumer groups (i.e. traditional users of boarding as well as first-time users)
- members of staff should be selected to cover both those with academic and pastoral responsibilities

My initial thought was that I might see the 13-year-old boarders in pairs; as a result of the pilot interviews, I later amended this, asking for individual interviews with all. I intended to interview mothers and fathers separately. I thought that linking the interviewees in this way might open the possibility of triangulation to enhance the validity of my findings.

I explained that I intended to record the interviews on tape and I assured each head of the confidentiality of the findings, though curiously, none seemed to be greatly concerned about this issue. I am interested to note that as I put the finishing touches to this thesis, Walford has produced an article in which he argues that it is 'usually

impossible to ensure anonymity and that it is often undesirable to try to do so' (Walford, 2005, p.83). During my initial discussions with the heads of each school, the timings of my further visits were discussed and a pattern of interview schedules began to emerge. I explained that I intended to record all the interviews on tape I left each school having acquired the beginnings of a valuable collection of documents about each school. In the independent schools, each head nominated a 'link' person to liaise with me on practical detail: in both independent schools this was the deputy head. In the maintained school, I liaised with the school secretary.

Subsequently, I had to deal with one setback. The head of the boys' independent school wrote to tell me that his staff had raised objections to the boys being interviewed, on the grounds that it would take up too much of the boys' and their parents' time. However, he readily agreed to allow me to interview him and any members of his staff if I so wished, an offer that I decided would prove a valuable source for pilot interviews. Meanwhile, I approached another boys' independent school and the headmaster had no reservations in agreeing to all my requests.

Documentary evidence

The collection and analysis of the documents created by each school for marketing and for internal consumption were to be an essential part of the process. The information contained in the documents ultimately provided the basis for a description of the school, in its own terms, for the case studies. By studying the documents, I expected also to be able to begin piecing together each school's stated

aims so that, as required by the project, I could evaluate each school's effectiveness by its own yardstick rather than by some 'universal' one. This issue is taken up in the next chapter, which reviews and critiques the literature on school effectiveness. I anticipated that an analysis of the documents might serve as the basis for generating themes, patterns, commonalities and differences; moreover, changes within each school which had occurred over a period of time would be apparent. I felt reasonably confident that the collected data would enable me to fulfil my first two objectives, which together would produce an up-to-date profile of boarding education in these three schools.

Additionally, I read widely on the history of boarding education relating to both boys' and girls' schools. Of particular interest was the contemporary rationale for setting up schools in the nineteenth century when there was a veritable explosion of new schools for girls and for boys, as described in Chapter 2.

As well as attempting to keep abreast of developments in the boarding school sector, mainly through articles produced under the auspices of the Boarding Schools Association, I also followed national developments designed to improve school effectiveness, to that end, accumulating a considerable number of press cuttings. At this point, I was somewhat less confident that the gathered data would enable me to achieve my third objective; namely to present conclusions which, by contributing to the debate on school effectiveness, might prove to be of value to the whole secondary sector of education. I realised that it was essential for me to gain

some understanding of existing research on school effectiveness and school improvement and with this end in view, studied the work both of researchers in the two fields and their critics. This element of the project is set out in the literature review (chapters 3 and 4).

The interviews

My next task was to prepare the questions for each group and I found, somewhat to my surprise, that this proved far less onerous than I had imagined. I found that the real starting point was provided by the research questions: I needed to be in a position to gauge the effectiveness or otherwise of each school and all questions must therefore increase my insight into the perceptions of the school held by all the interviewees.

The common aims pursued by boarding schools, modelled on the public schools and developed alongside the development of the philosophy of education in the nineteenth century, are chronicled in Chapter Two. A study of the school literature proved most helpful in providing some insight into the declared purposes of each school; in all three schools, the literature confirmed that the intention was not confined to the nurturing of each pupil's intellectual growth. In every case, the school prospectus indicated that the school was concerned to develop all aspects of a pupil's growth in the six areas put forward by Passow (see Chapter Three) i.e. intellectual, social, emotional, moral, aesthetic and physical areas. It appeared therefore that questions directed to providers and users of the school would not

only throw light on their perceptions of the school's aims, but might, additionally, help me to assess their perceptions of each school's effectiveness. I was also mindful of the claim made by Dancy (see Chapter Two) that the distinctive characteristics of boarding school placed them in a more advantageous position than day schools having the same aims. In Chapter Two, the particular characteristics that emerged were the provision of a broad curriculum, encompassing classroom and extra-curricular activities; opportunities afforded by a residential community for furthering the schools aims; and the necessary commitment of all members of the community. It was with these thoughts in mind that I framed the questions for the pilot interviews; each set of questions was related appropriately to the experience of the groups to be interviewed.

The pilot interviews

I proceeded to arrange seven pilot interviews. My own professional experience having been gained almost exclusively in independent girls' schools and my experience of boarding exclusively so, I was particularly anxious to 'tune into' the boys' education and boarding. In addition to the Headmaster and a member of staff of the first boys' school I had approached, but who had later withdrawn permission to study the school, I was also able also to see a parent of one of his sixth form students. I then turned to a girls' school that was not to be included in the main study and arranged to see four thirteen year olds, in pairs, and two sixth formers individually. I had imagined that the younger girls might find it easier to talk if they had one another's support. However, I had overlooked the confidence of the young; the response of the thirteen-year-olds showed that they were clearly quite unfazed

by the prospect of talking to a stranger, and their individual responses to the questions caused me to revise my opinion. On the strength of this experience, I decided to interview all pupil participants individually.

Copies of the questions asked in interviews can be seen (see appendix)

Yin (2003, p.59) produced a basic list of commonly required skills of the research case study investigator:

- A good case study investigator should be able to *ask good questions* and interpret the answers.
- An investigator should *be a good 'listener'* and not be trapped by his or her own ideologies or preconceptions.
- An investigator should be *adaptive and flexible*, so that newly encountered situations can be seen as opportunities, not threats.
- An investigator must *have a firm grasp of the issues being studied*, whether this is a theoretical or policy orientation, even if in an exploratory mode. Such a grasp reduces the relevant events and information to be sought to manageable proportions.
- A person should be *unbiased by preconceived notions*, including those derived from theory. Thus, a person should be sensitive and responsive to contradictory evidence.

This proved to be an excellent checklist as I embarked on the pilot interviews.

I prefaced each meeting with the interviewees with an explanation of my purpose and a reminder that the interview was to be recorded and assuring them of my intention to maintain their anonymity.

My first question to a headmaster dealt with the philosophy that provided the driving force for the school. I found his assertion that he did not understand the meaning of the word 'philosophy' in this context somewhat disconcerting; but at least it served as a swift reminder of the need to couch my enquiries in the simplest possible terms! In the event, I moved swiftly on to ask about the aims of the school and the remainder of the interview proved very lucrative in terms of useful information. It also revealed something of the personality of the interviewee, an aspect of the interview which was to re-occur in later sessions. I was glad to be alerted to the need not to allow my judgement to be unduly influenced by views expressive of personality rather than fact. What astonished me was the complete openness shown by all concerned. This was a trait that was to be displayed by all with whom I came in contact when I subsequently visited the three schools in the main study.

I found that all the pilot interviews were valuable, not least because they gave me an opportunity to sharpen my interviewing skills that were undoubtedly somewhat rusty, but also because they indicated changes to be made for the main study. After transcribing and digesting the contents of the tapes of the pilot interviews, I spent

some time considering possible amendments to the questions; but I was satisfied that in the main, they had created a rich dialogue, the assembled evidence enabling me to check ideas in the light of that information, and to deal with the inevitable discrepancies between what was expected and what was found. A study of each school's literature led to some diversity in the wording of questions; but essentially, as can be seen in the Appendix, the questions were focussed on the issues raised by the research questions.

The main study interviews

Each interview occupied about 45 minutes. The schools were amazingly co-operative. Travelling daily to each, I spent the equivalent of two to three weeks in each school, managing in two schools to complete all the planned interviews. The schedule may appear to have been demanding, but I have to admit that I found each encounter totally absorbing and invigorating. Following the advice of my supervisors, I tried not to exceed four 'formal' interviews a day; but additionally, I had opportunity to savour the ambience of each school by meeting informally with staff over lunch, and chatting informally with others. I travelled to some of the boys' homes in order to see some parents, but the majority of interviews took place on school premises. I delighted in the opportunity to experience the vibrant environment I discovered in all three schools. Sadly, I was unable to see either the Headmistress or the parents of the girls I had interviewed in the third school. This was due originally to the school's internal commitments that necessitated the postponement of these interviews and then to my own enforced withdrawal from the project for 12 months because of health problems. After this enforced break, I

found it oddly difficult to pick up the threads of the study. I was on familiar ground and in one sense I welcomed familiarising myself with my former milieu. It took some time before I acquired a renewed sense of direction and I have the skill and expertise of my supervisors to thank for 'getting me back' into working mode. Then the whole exercise again became intensely exciting.

The transcripts

The major task was dealing with the transcripts of the interview. I had in total conducted some 70 'formal' interviews, so the task of transcribing was fairly formidable. I coped with two thirds of the scripts, but gratefully accepted the offer from one of my former secretaries to complete the task. Health problems again brought my studies to a further temporary halt (in all for a period of some 20 months). On each occasion when I returned to the task, I experienced some difficulties in 'picking up where I had left off '. However, with the firm guidance and support of my supervisors, I was able to recapture my interest and the conviction that I had something that I really wanted to say. Yin's description of the exemplary case study (2003, p.162) strengthened my resolve; he declared that an exemplary case study is likely to be one in which:

- the individual case or cases are unusual and of general public interest.

- the underlying issues are nationally important, either in theoretical terms or in policy or practical terms; or
- both of the preceding conditions have been met.

The study appeared to fulfil these criteria.

Analysing the evidence

Re-reading the transcripts proved to be a truly rewarding and enjoyable process. As I studied their content, I was immensely struck by the openness of the interviewees, their sincerity and willingness ‘to tell it as it is’, something that I had not fully appreciated at the time of the actual interviews.

As I read, I kept in the forefront of my mind the three research questions. It was exciting to recapture the impression of each school’s purposes and ethos as perceived by the providers and the recipients. They revealed both the differences between the schools and the underlying commonality of purpose that all three schools shared. I decided to present first the evidence that revealed this commonality of purpose. Though only one school went so far as to declare that the school’s mission was to provide the pupils with a holistic education, evidence showed that all were intent on promoting the development of more than each pupil’s academic potential. All three were equally concerned to fulfil their perceived task of developing each pupil’s intellectual, social, spiritual, moral, emotional, aesthetic and physical well being.

Yin (2003) acknowledges that analysing case study evidence is especially difficult because the strategies and techniques have not been well defined. Almost from the beginning of the study, and certainly when I prepared the questions to be used in interviews, I was intent on preparing the analytical approaches I wished to employ.

When formulating the questions for the interviews, I had focussed on the six elements involved in the delivery of 'whole' education as expressed by Passow. Choosing a different colour for each element, and dealing with each transcript in turn, I proceeded to highlight passages in the transcripts dealing with matters intellectual, social, emotional, moral, aesthetic or physical. I recognised that background study on boarding and on effective schools had been a continuous preoccupation throughout, and this, together with the rest of the acquired data, now informed the shape of the final submission. Resisting the temptation to manipulate data to fit a preconceived conclusion was not always easy. Allowing the accumulated data to dictate the development of thought, I found as I worked through the evidence, that the data, distributed between Passow's six elements, could readily be linked with the structures or characteristics of boarding previously acknowledged (see Chapter Two) as making an important contribution to the implementation of boarding school aims. Thus, I determined to link the data to the three characteristics of boarding that contributed in some measure to each school's ability to realise its aims.

Reporting the case studies

The case study material is presented in four chapters. The first introduces the three schools, in each case describing the circumstances of the foundation and subsequent development. There follows a description of each establishment's physical make-up and finally, the characteristics contributing to a basic understanding of each school's ethos and workings that emerged as the study proceeded are highlighted.

The content of chapters to be included, though not their sequence, began to take shape comparatively early in the study. In the first chapter, I felt a need to present my reasons and credentials for attempting the study. Thus I embarked on a chapter giving biographical details of my own educational background and experience. I found the writing of this chapter both nostalgic and self-indulgent; but more importantly, it forced me to identify the precepts and principles that had informed past judgements and decisions and provided me with information about where I might need to take especial care to reach conclusions on the basis of research evidence, not solely on professional knowledge. This material was presented in Chapter One.

Chapter Two describes the development of boarding schools from their inception in the fourteenth to the twentieth century, focussing attention on changes made to the sector's aims, structures and characteristics.

The following two chapters deal with school effectiveness.

Chapter Three. In this chapter, research undertaken in day schools is reviewed. Though many of the practical outcomes have relevance for the boarding sector, it soon became apparent that I needed to examine both the work of the researchers and the work of their critics in order to arrive at a real understanding of the work accomplished.

Chapter Four therefore extends the discussion of effectiveness to education in the boarding sector.

Chapter Five is on methodology. It records the different elements of the chosen research strategy and the manner in which I proposed to tackle the research questions.

Chapter Six introduces the three schools selected for study, giving a straightforward description of each; their characteristics and structures.

In the next three chapters, data derived from each school is presented. Having established a link between three particular characteristics in residential schools, namely, curriculum, community and commitment, and the delivery of total education, the data is arranged under these three headings. In Chapter Seven, a description of the curriculum delivered in each school is followed by data reflecting its contribution to the provision of total education, as perceived by staff and pupils.

In a similar manner, Chapter Eight describes the contribution of the community to the successful delivery of the school aims. In Chapter Nine, the data is related to commitment. The selection of data for chapters eight and nine posed some problems, for much of it had relevance in both contexts. The exercise certainly underlined the very close relationship between community and commitment.

Chapter Ten The final chapter revisits the research questions, suggests possible further research and opens the possibility that additional research might lead to a re-examination of the ways in which effectiveness could be re-conceptualised

CHAPTER SIX

Introducing the Schools

The case study material is presented in four chapters. In the first of these I propose to introduce the three schools chosen to provide data for this research project, illustrating the thinking that influenced their selection. All three schools comply with the original criteria governing their choice; that is, they are of similar size, they are all single sex and the selection fulfils my intention to include two boys' schools, (one independent and one state maintained), and one independent girls' school. All the schools are within commuting distance from my home. As I began to familiarise myself with the schools, it quickly became apparent that the religious life of each school, in every case a fundamental factor in each school's conception and development, holds a firm place in the culture of each school. Though none of the schools has a direct affiliation to a particular faith, it is clear that each school's values derive from the Christian faith. Details of the physical location, the buildings, and the staff of each school are followed by a description of the documentation received from each school. The chapter ends with a description of the stated aims of each school.

Abbeyfields

An abbey that forms a spectacular backdrop to the first school, Abbeyfields, is a constant reminder of the fact that Christian values underpin all that the school attempts to do. The school prospectus proclaims that:

It is a Christian foundation and the beliefs that have sustained it for centuries still form the core of its spiritual life. This is not to say that every boy is a committed Christian; other faiths are welcomed and boys who express doubts can express them freely. (Undated, read in 1999). The whole school comes together regularly for services in the abbey, and there are many other services, mostly voluntary, held in the school chapel, or often for quiet meditation, in individual houses. There is a school chaplain.

Abbeyfields is a single sex boys' school, catering for boys aged 13-18. At the time of data gathering there were 423 boys, of whom 395 were boarders; the remaining 28 were day boys. The school draws its numbers from a reasonably wide catchment area, though a high proportion of the boys come from the London area and from the West Country. As its name suggests, it was originally a monastic settlement and an abbey forms a spectacular backdrop to the school today. The school received a Royal Charter in 1550, an event that marked its re-founding. It is an independent school, having its own governing body and there are 18 governors. Three are *ex-officio*: the representative of Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for the county in which the school stands, the Lord Bishop of the diocese and the local vicar. A further governor is appointed to represent the interests of the teachers, and the remainder are described as 'co-optative' (sic) and are chosen customarily for the wisdom, experience, gifts and skills which they can bring to the task of governing the school. At the time of my visits to Abbeyfields, out of a total membership of 19, the governing body included three female members, one of them being the Lord

Lieutenant of the County serving as an *ex officio* member. The bursar of the school serves as Clerk to the Governors.

The school is set in the heart of a peaceful but thriving country town, and provides a secure environment which, in the words of the school prospectus, is 'sheltered from the more aggressive pressures of modern life yet avoids the introspection of a campus school'. The buildings have spread beyond the confines of the immediate school campus. At the time of writing a development programme will provide new chemistry laboratories, new classrooms for geography and economics and space to relocate and expand the art and technology departments. There are 73 full time members of the teaching staff, with an additional 22 visiting teachers, making the staff/pupil ratio 1: 8 approximately.

Management of the school

Abbeyfields is led by a head in the last year of his headship. By convention, and aware that he is leaving a successful school in good heart, a man in his position is unlikely to make last minute, innovative changes in the status quo. He has made a distinguished contribution and will leave behind for completion a development programme he has masterminded. Additionally, the boarding culture of the school has been affected to some extent by changes affecting all public schools. Public Schools generally have begun to recognise the value of good communications. Therefore new strategies are being employed to help all sections of the community to become better informed about the workings of the school.

Thus, Abbeyfields is adopting policies that encourage parents to forge closer links with the school; that allow boys to have closer contact with society beyond the school gates. But the management framework appeared to be cast in a traditional, rather than in a twenty-first century mode. In addition to the headmaster there is a second master, a senior master and director of studies. It appeared that in addition to full staff meetings, there are various committees: notably, for heads of department, for each department, for tutors, for housemasters and for house staff. A very recent innovation has been the establishment of a school council, an experimental body to 'ease the flow of information between the school and its members' (personal communication, second master). The council is chaired by the second master, includes another member of the teaching staff, the head of school and another school prefect. There are eight other members, one from each house. The group does not make policy and is not an elected body, its members being chosen by housemasters. It meets twice a term to discuss a single item. In the light of my own experience in girls' schools, this appeared to be somewhat a tentative approach.

The documentation

Abbeyfields has a prospectus with a fresh approach, written as a response to questions to which all parents should have answers when choosing a school. The accompanying documents, attractively presented, give clear instructions on how to reach the school, a list of governors and staff, a statement of obligations and fees and other contractual terms, a list of scholarships and details of sixth form awards and entrance, and a clear description of the curriculum. As is the case of all

prospectuses, it is a public relations presentation whose purpose is to ‘sell the school’. The fact that one detects the hand of a professional in this instance in no way detracts from its appeal. It supports the school’s intention to give an honest and full account of itself. Documents handed to me by a housemaster included a letter addressed to all new boys and additional information on matters academic and pastoral, health and emergencies and a reminder to keep the house informed of contact numbers when not at their home address. All the material indicated the school’s intention to keep parents closely in touch with all matters affecting their son’s welfare during his time at school.

Foleybridge

The founder of the second school, Foleybridge, had made a considerable fortune in the manufacture of iron goods. In his words of intent written on his portrait which hangs in the school library, he requires that the boys be brought up ‘in the fear of God’. Up to the beginning of the twentieth century, most candidates to the school had to be chosen by the churchwardens of the local parish church. From the earliest days of the school, the boys attended the local parish church twice on Sundays and during the week; morning and evening prayers were read in school. On leaving school, boys could only be apprenticed to trade masters who belonged to the established church. As the century progressed, the school began to accept pupils whose parents belonged to other denominations of the Christian church, or other faiths and now the school welcomes boys of any faith or belief. The school normally has a chaplain; when ‘between’ chaplains, the Area Educational Chaplain helps in the school. Boarders are expected to attend the school service on Sundays. The local

parish church has always been regarded as the school chapel and the boys regularly attend parish communion there and the school choir sings at this service. Arrangements are made for boys of other denominations and faiths to attend their own places of worship if this is the wish of their parents.

Foleybridge caters for 500 boys aged 11-18. The school is unusual, for it falls into a category that has not found its way into the public perception of boarding establishments. It is a state boarding school catering for some 500 boys, all of whom have boarding status, though a minority are weekly boarders who return home on Saturdays when all their commitments have been fulfilled, normally after morning lessons, and return on Sunday evening or Monday morning. The Local Education Authority nominates the bulk of the school governors. Each year, the school takes 26 boys aged 11 from its own Local Authority, and though not housed by the school, they must live very close to it: they are designated 'out boarders'. The remainder of the boys are drawn from a wide catchment area. The Local Education Authority for the district in which their parents live pays the cost of their education in the classroom, as opposed to the boarding costs, which are variously funded. The school was founded in 1667 as a place of education for 60 boys of 'poor but honest' parents who were to be educated free, and apprenticed at 14 when they were provided with the apprentice's uniform. The founder's will endowed the school with considerable lands and money and laid down that his three sons and their descendants should always have places amongst the trustees who administered his generous endowments. The trustees number 15; three of them are direct descendants of the founder and the other twelve are elected by their fellow Trustees. The income from

the endowments is now primarily used to give financial assistance to parents who cannot afford all the fees: additionally, there are funds for academic scholarships and exhibitions. The trustees also pay for additional facilities of a recreational nature. By the Articles of the school, the trustees have to form a majority of the governors who are responsible for the management and day-to-day running of the school. Twelve of the trustees are therefore governors. There are two teacher governors; the headmaster is a governor '*ex officio*'. The Trustees appoint two parent governors and there are five parent governors elected by the parent body. The Clerk to the Governors is a former local Chief Education Officer.

From charity to voluntary aided status

Foleybridge's decision to forfeit charitable status deserves attention if the school's present status is to be fully understood. Up to the end of the second world war, every boy who attended the school was educated entirely free of charge as a boarder; but by the middle years of the twentieth century, as costs of maintaining boys rose and rent income failed to match the increased costs, the school began to look for additional sources of income. Numbers had fallen and in 1945, there were only 70 boys in the school. However, in September 1946, 10 boys entered the school, paid for, because of their home circumstances and boarding 'need', by a Midlands city or county council. They were followed by a group from the London County Council. Other local authorities especially in the Midlands, but also from further afield, e.g. Kent, began to send boys to the school. Thus the school acquired a significant new basis of finance, mainly from a state source. By September 1947, there were only 42 boys in the school paid for by the trustees, but 34 supported by local authorities. A

year later, numbers had risen to 98, only 27 of whom had to be paid for by the trustees and, most significantly, for the first time, two parents were sending their sons to the school and paying the boarding costs themselves. Once finance had been accepted from a state source, it was inevitable that increased involvement with the state system of education should follow and ultimately, in 1949, there followed a bid for, and the granting of voluntary aided status. This meant that the school received sufficient finance from its local authority, for all the educational costs. The boys' boarding costs were met either by the trustees, or local Authorities where boarding need was proven, or lastly, by parents themselves who could afford to pay. In fact, more and more boys were falling into this latter category, for an increasing number of parents were prepared to pay part or the whole of the boarding cost. These fees were, of course, far cheaper than those of a comparable independent school where parents had to meet not only the boarding, but also the educational costs. In all these changes, there is no doubt that the trustees were intent on remaining true to the spirit of the founder by preserving the social mix in the school which had been its hallmark throughout the centuries. The change in county boundaries, which took place in the mid-1970s, took the school into a metropolitan borough, where secondary education was being reorganised on comprehensive lines. The school took its first comprehensive intake in 1976, though academically it has continued to build on its former, grammar school tradition. Both GCSE and A level results are far ahead of the national pass rates; indeed, sixth formers have achieved pass rates well over 90% at A level each summer since 1990. In 1979, the trustees and governors of the school, with the support of the metropolitan borough and Her Majesty's Inspectors, decided on a bold policy of expansion of boarding provision, with a

commitment to raise numbers from 300 to 500. This was achieved by dramatically and proportionally increasing the number of boys whose parents paid full boarding costs. Many of these boys came from state primary schools at 11, and at this stage the school began to provide increasingly healthy and successful competition with local day independent schools and boarding schools all over the country. In order to attract academically able boys, the trustees provided money for scholarships, initially for boys at 13, but more recently for 11 year olds and sixth formers.

From voluntary aided to grant maintained status and back

In 1989, the school governors and trustees seized the opportunity to become one of the first grant maintained schools. They felt that they had guided their own destiny with considerable success and the decision to go it alone was supported by 96% of the parents who voted in a ballot. The move proved to be successful. Applications for places increased and success both in and out of the classroom escalated. Since the abolition of grant maintained status, the school has reverted to the voluntary aided status previously granted in 1949.

Foleybridge is built on a campus within a residential setting on the edge of a thriving town and not far from a large village. Attractive countryside is within reasonable distance; so too are vast urban, industrial conurbations, though these do not impact on the school's immediate environment. The school buildings, interspersed by the playing field areas, are of different architectural periods, but manage to blend into a harmonious whole. The excellent facilities provided by the houses are matched by those provided to support all curriculum subjects and extra-curricular activities.

Since the seventeenth century, the school has been aware of the importance of training boys for the industries of the day. The school has a fine range of workshops equipped to enable boys to work with all modern materials. A new art centre was added to the craft design and technology department in 1982, with a separate pottery workshop. A music school provides an extensive range of teaching and practice rooms. The extensive playing fields and the local golf course, whose land the school owns, together support a programme which includes virtually every sport. The list of teaching staff at Foleybridge records some 80 names; these include the headmaster, his deputy and the second master, all of whom have a teaching role; also included are 13 instrumental teachers, 2 visiting teachers from Eastern Europe, and a composer-in-residence. The staff/pupil ratio approaches 1: 7.

Management of the school

The headmaster of Foleybridge, had not reached the final year of his headship and was therefore not bound by the same constraints of his colleague at Abbeyfields. The management structure of the school is clearly defined. There is a senior management team made up of the headmaster, the deputy head, the second master and director of studies, the head of sixth form, the director of boarding, and the head of outdoor pursuits/activities. The director of studies, in his role as second master, is the senior member of the common room. Together with the headmaster and the deputy head, he is involved in weekend 'cover', one of the three always on duty on Saturdays and Sundays. The senior management team holds a breakfast meeting lasting for about an hour and a quarter, once a fortnight. Its brief is very wide, ranging from problem boys, the arrangements for upcoming events, and smaller issues such as the problem

of litter. In alternate weeks the same group meets for an administration meeting, when the facilities manager joins them to discuss matters concerning the fabric of the buildings and the general provision.

The housemasters have two major meetings each term, which give them the opportunity to air problems, to discuss the ways in which the houses are functioning and to consider issues such as whether the day boys are integrating successfully. The headmaster chairs these meetings. Regular staff meetings and heads of department meetings take place and these cover academic and administrative issues generally. There is also a boarding development meeting, at present held once a term, chaired by the director of boarding and which the headmaster does not attend. This is a relatively informal meeting. Over a bottle of wine and a meal, housemasters can share their concerns and ‘tap in’ to each other’s expertise. A voluntary meeting takes place once a term for all the boarding staff. All are given an opportunity to discuss, with the headmaster present, issues such as the way tutoring is going, house punishments, and the philosophy behind house policies. The line management structure is very clearly defined, so that anyone with ideas, anyone with concerns, be they boys or members of staff, can feed and funnel things through the system with ease and confidence.

An additional opportunity for the senior management team to focus on particular issues was provided recently by a weekend spent in mid-Wales. Members of the team produced papers on specific issues, e.g. boarding policy and its development; marketing the school. The school not only creates its own opportunities for

members of time to think through such issues; it makes full use of the conferences and training courses organised by the Boarding School Association (BSA). All staff are encouraged to take up opportunities for further training.

The BSA offers conferences and courses for heads, deputy heads, housemasters and housemistresses, boarding school governors, house staff, matrons and medical staff. The emphasis in many of the courses is on pastoral care, that is, caring for others; but of equal importance are occasions when the emphasis is looking after oneself. A further benefit that can be gained from conferences and courses is the opportunity to share experiences, to discuss problems and to be given fresh ideas about how they might be resolved.

The documentation

Foleybridge's prospectus is an attractive presentation of the school, giving a wealth of information to prospective parents. The parents of all new boys are fully informed on matters such as attendance, uniform, the shape of the school week, the calendar for the term and extra-curricular activities. Additionally, all parents receive a parent handbook, 61 pages packed with information.

Similar booklets, all designed to inform, are produced for the staff: Housemasters' Guidelines, Matrons' Handbook, and Boarding Policy. All are focused on the importance of the quality of the house staff and the relationships that are engendered in the community:

Central to good boarding is the way in which the school and the house provide for individual children's care and welfare, and the arrangements made for their personal, social and emotional development.

Treetops

The chapel stands at the centre of life at Treetops. From its inception, the teachings of the Church of England have formed the foundation of the school's spiritual life. Morning prayers and Matins or Evensong on Sundays provide a regular focal point for the school community. The chapel is run by a council of Chapel Seniors and Juniors under the leadership of a member of staff who is the sacristan.

Treetops, is an independent girls' school established as a girls' boarding school in 1907. The school caters for girls aged 11 to 18. In the recent past, numbers rose from over 400 to 600, an expansion that was accompanied by an extensive building programme. Even so, the rapid growth in numbers outstripped the available facilities and an attempt to reduce numbers is now being made. At present, there are 540 girls of whom 35 are day pupils living close enough to the school to take full advantage of a busy boarding school life. The school's governing body has 12 members, 6 men and 6 women, chosen for their particular skills, expertise, experience and wisdom. It supports two committees. The Education Committee provides the headmistress with a sounding board when matters affecting the school's educational programme are under discussion. The Finance and General Purposes Committee, working closely with the headmistress

and the bursar, has oversight of all financial matters. In common with all schools in the independent sector, the school has to perform as a successful business concern. It is significant that a bishop is the school Visitor.

Physical location and staffing of the schools

Treetops moved to its present 110-acre site in 1921 (14 years after its establishment) and occupies an attractive wooded ridge some five miles from the nearest country town. A recent building programme has added new laboratories, computer studies rooms and technology workrooms. Over one hundred names, including all save one of the housemistresses, appear on the list of academic staff, most of whom are non-residential. In addition, there are 29 visiting music staff. Although allowances must be made for staff who have a dual role in the school and for a minority of part-timers, the staff/pupil ratio approaches 1: 6.

Management of the school

The headmistress of Treetops took up her appointment, her first headship, in 1997. Her approach to administration is rooted firmly in the twenty-first century. The senior management team has seven members: the headmistress; the deputy headmistress; the bursar; the senior mistress; the assistant head; the director of studies; and the director of public relations. With the exception of the headmistress, all have a particular link with a department. As link mentors, they provide advice and support to heads of department in the execution of their duties. There are two heads of department committees; heads of department (academic) and heads of department (pastoral). There are eight other staff committees. The headmistress

chairs those relating to curriculum, public relations, staff development, administration and the chapel. The bursar chairs the health and safety and the information technology users' working party; the assistant headmistress chairs the assessment committee.

The documentation

I found the level of information published 'in-house' at **Treetops** almost overwhelming. The prospectus gives a clear picture of the school: its aims, curriculum, its organisation and general provision of facilities. A booklet, '*Information for New Girls*', sent to all parents, welcomes them to the school as a family and seeks to begin to build up a relationship with them. The text of the booklet appears to deal with all eventualities, beginning with a section on how to prepare for boarding and ending with a section on how to cope with homesickness. In between, practical advice is given to help parent and pupil to make a smooth transition into a new life.

The staff handbook issued to all new members of staff is an impressive collection of information, compiled by many staff working together, which deals with basic policies and routines. Its twelve sections claim to give 'as comprehensive a view of the modus operandi of the school as possible'. Additionally, every member of staff receives a departmental handbook and development plan, and a copy of the school development plan. As in Foleybridge, the staff are encouraged to take up courses offered by the Boarding Schools Association.

The aims of the schools

The aims of **Abbeyfields** are firmly embedded in its religious foundation and long history and the school prospectus indicates that high priority is by the school to its attempt

‘to give to its boys a lifelong anchor in a world of fluctuating values’. It sees helping pupils to develop sound moral principles as a primary duty; above all, it encourages tolerance and kindness (Prospectus, undated).

The school claims that boys leave the school with firm ideas of what is right and wrong, which it believes is increasingly valuable in a society where so many moral standards are being challenged and eroded. According to the school prospectus (undated, read in 1999) its aims are as follows:

1. The school’s primary aim is to help pupils develop lively, enquiring minds, self-discipline and a love of learning. Success in public examinations is not the main focus of the school’s academic programme. Examinations are not allowed to become oppressive or stifle intellectual curiosity – they are regarded merely as useful goals to work towards.

2. The school believes that every boy has a right to feel safe, happy and valued as an individual and for this reason gives the highest priority to pastoral care.
3. The school sets out to provide a rich and varied life for its pupils seven days a week. A huge range of activities is on offer to fill evenings and weekends constructively and enjoyably.
4. The school recognises the importance of creative activities. These enjoy high status and everyone is encouraged to take part. There are numerous music groups, many of which tour abroad; around a dozen drama productions are staged each year; and the dynamic art department has a formidable record of entries to the most competitive art colleges.
5. The school aims to provide each boy with opportunities to take part in sporting activities. Excellent facilities and coaching enable boys of all abilities to enjoy sport at an appropriate level.
6. The school aims at providing the advantages of single-sex education with the best aspects of co-education. Working with a local independent girls' school, a new programme was launched in 1999 which set out to complement the greatly increased timetable of social activities that had been organised in the previous few years.

The programme of joint events was aimed at providing cultural and intellectual meetings between the two schools. Since its inception, it has included philosophy, psychology, a theatre club, academic links, travelling planetarium, poetry workshops, archaeology, Russian culture, creative writing, production of a guide book in French for visitors to the town, debates and poetry workshops.

The aims of **Foleybridge** are encapsulated in four points set out in the school prospectus (undated, read in 1999)

1. To provide each boy with the greatest possible individual attention in a disciplined and caring community.
2. To enable him to obtain the appropriate academic qualifications together with the practical skills which will act as a foundation for his subsequent career.
3. To develop a sense of community with the ability to work both independently and in a team; to accept responsibility and exercise leadership.
4. To help each boy to find something at which he can excel by providing a wide range of out-of-school activities.

The aims of **Treetops** are stated unequivocally in the foreword of the school prospectus (undated, read in 1999):

Treetops' mission is to provide girls with a holistic education that encourages them to strive for the highest academic results of which they are capable, while at the same time enjoying the opportunities and support which enable them to develop the personal, social, spiritual and emotional awareness that is the balance to academic excellence. By giving opportunities for the development of independent thought and leadership qualities, for co-operation in a team-building group and for living in a community, the School prepares girls to cope with the pressures of careers and families and to contribute to the wider society as good citizens with sound moral values.

Summary

Though expressed in different words, similar themes can be discerned in the aims of all three schools. Given that all three schools state that they are committed to placing Christian teachings and values at the heart of their community life, it is unsurprising that this commitment should help to shape their declared aims. Attention is focussed on the individual pupil; all three schools are intent on providing for each pupil a stable and secure environment in which opportunities for the development of individual talents will abound. All acknowledge the need to develop each pupil's intellectual strengths; but in each school there is tacit agreement that equal attention must be given to the development of each pupil's personal, social, spiritual and emotional and aesthetic growth.

Lambert classifies the goals into three sociological categories.

- Instrumental goals concern the transmission of useful skills or the acquisition of qualifications.
- Expressive goals concern not the means but ultimates: norms or means are transmitted, aspects of personality are developed.
- Organisational goals concern not ends but the machinery by which the society operates.

Lambert (1973) confirms that residence enlarges the scope of the goals which a school can pursue. Having conducted research into the stated goals of schools, he reaches the conclusion that:

the patterns of goal emphasis and the subsequent styles of boarding that develop to implement them are remarkably consistent (Lambert, 1973, p.79).

He goes on to point out that the stated goals are not necessarily reflected in the day-to day practices of schools and thus attention must be paid to the implemented goals. In the next three chapters, evidence gathered in interviews with staff and pupils that throws light on the implemented goals in the three schools is presented. In previous chapters, three concepts, developed in boarding schools and closely related to the achievement of

instrumental and expressive aims, have been put forward: curriculum, community and commitment. Though fully aware that there is an element of artificial separation of what is essentially an integrated activity within each school, the following three chapters are presented under these headings. The first of these involves matters concerning primarily the instrumental goals, the academic curriculum and the provision of a programme of extra curricular activities. The next illustrates experiences of community life that contribute to the achievement of expressive goals. Chapter Nine looks at the degree of commitment to house and school acknowledged by both staff and pupils that have some impact on the achievement of implemented aims.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The curriculum

In this chapter, I propose to examine the academic curriculum and the extra-curricula provision, or what might be termed the ‘extended’ curriculum, in each school. Data gathered in interviews with parents, staff and pupils, gives an indication the contribution made by the academic and extended curriculum to the achievement of the school’s aims, as seen from their respective perspectives.

The academic curriculum

All three schools are committed to delivering the national curriculum; indeed, as a maintained school, **Foleybridge** has a legal obligation to do so. **Abbeyfields** and **Treetops** choose to do so. But in each case, the schools aim to provide greater choice for their pupils than is strictly necessary to meet the national requirement.

Boys joining **Abbeyfields**, aged 13, join the third year of the secondary school course. All take the core subjects: English, mathematics, and science, the latter subject including chemistry, physics and biology. In addition, all boys take French, a further modern language, Latin, history, geography, theology and physical education. Every boy is involved in a course of creative activities, following a modular programme which includes art, music, drama, technology, information technology, electronics and games skills. During the next two years, the focus is on preparation for public examinations. At the time of my visit, boys prepared for GCSE in all the core subjects, plus four other subjects including a modern

language, to be chosen from four blocks. All boys take P.E. throughout the two years; in the fourth year, all boys pursued modular courses in technology/IT/ health education for half the year; theology/personal development courses in the other half. In the fifth year, all pupils continue to attend a personal development course and a regular house tutorial. The curriculum thus ensures that every boy studies a wide range of subjects to GCSE level. The average number of subjects taken is 10.3; the average pass rate is 97% at Grade A* - C.

In the sixth form, boys choose to study three subjects, each to be taken from one of three blocks. These offer a wide range of options, allowing boys to mix disciplines if they so wish; some indeed choose to take more than three subjects. The average pass rate is 97%. Each year about 94% go on to higher education. These are clearly commendable results, yet no-one I encountered during my visits gave the impression of being in an intellectual hothouse; nor did they seem oppressed by the volume of work that faced them. Attitudes appeared to endorse the primary aim of the school to help pupils develop 'lively and enquiring minds ... and a love of learning' (prospectus). The climate seemed not to have changed since the report of the inspectors in 1995:

Learning is exceptionally good, with pupils making clear progress in all lessons. At all age levels pupils pose frequent questions, make spontaneous comments and show tremendous capability of producing logical and extended answers (Report of Inspectors, 1995).

Against the backdrop of the choice of subjects and a generally high level of achievement, when asked to reflect on the academic curriculum, the boys at Abbeyfields managed to convey a strong impression of finding enjoyment in their studies. They want to do well. As a sixth former put it:

Coming to a school like this will set me up for the rest of my life. It is a brilliant opportunity. In this school they (the staff) really push you and make you really bring the best out of yourself. ... It is just everything that is different (from my last school): the style of teaching – it is just everything.

A younger boy, having said that he was working really hard, agreed that the staff give the boys a lot of work to do:

That is all right because I can see where the A's are coming from at the end of it: the A's in GCSE and A level. I am quite happy to be pushed.

He refuted the idea that parents imposed pressure on him:

My parents don't push me because they know I will do the work. The staff push you; but they don't push, push you, and say 'Come on!' They give you the work and if you don't do it you get a Red, which is a 'Do it again', which is a punishment. They have this thing called the Blue Book which has masters' telephone numbers and a few masters

have said to me 'If you don't understand it, just ring me up and we can get to talk about what you don't understand'. And they help.

Another boy, a scholar, also felt that his parents put no pressure on him:

I don't think they want me to do well (meaning superbly well!) I think they wouldn't like it too much if I did very badly. They would like me to do well but they don't put any pressure on me.

His reason for working hard was quite simple:

Well, it is the fear of having my scholarship taken away.

All seemed appreciative of the teaching they are receiving:

There are a lot better teachers than at my last school. Everybody is really good. I like it. The teachers are always willing to help and you can go and speak to them and sort it out.

A thirteen year old admitted that he was doing well except in languages, insisting that the fault lay with him and not his 'brilliant teacher'. Another told me that he was enjoying his lessons:

At my last school I didn't enjoy them as much. All the teachers here are actually quite fun and not really strict but they keep you under control.

Only one area of the curriculum produced some misgivings from the boys. The complementary studies sixth form course, shared with a local girls' school, is deemed not to work too well. One boy attempted to analyse the situation:

I am not sure why it is. (Is it) because girls and boys want to show off to each other? But it doesn't work as well. The teachers find it harder to cope with.

In compensation for the failings was the thought that the boys were able to meet many girls, so enhancing their social network.

At **Foleybridge**, all boys joining the school, aged 11, take English, mathematics, science, religious education, French, Latin, technology, art, information technology, history, geography, music, PE and games. In the following year German or Spanish can replace Latin. In the third year, all take separate sciences: physics, chemistry and biology.

When embarking on GCSE courses, all continue to study English, mathematics, modern foreign language (French and/or German/ Spanish) physics, chemistry, biology (co-ordinated course but each subject taught by a specialist), technology, religious education, careers and personal and social education, information

technology, PE and games. To these can be added guided options: German, geography, history, Latin, art, music, Spanish, and French.

In the sixth form boys choose 3 A level subjects from English language, English literature, French, German, Latin, history, religious studies, psychology physical education and sports studies, geography, computing, geology, business studies, art, design and technology, electronics, Spanish, mathematics, further mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, music, psychology. If there be sufficient demand, other subjects are available: e.g. Ancient Greek, classical civilisation. All boys also follow a course in core skills. A number of boys, particularly those with Oxbridge ambitions take 5 A levels; many take four.

Results obtained in both GCSE and A Level examinations are well above the national average. The proportion of pupils obtaining five or more grades (A*-C) in GCSE was 97% in 1996 and 99% in 1997. Sixth form results are particularly good in the science subjects. Results at A level overall are generally above national expectations.

As with the first school, pupils considered hard work to be the norm. A 13 year old at Foleybridge told me very firmly:

When you come to Foleybridge, you have to be able to work hard, you know. You have to be able to get down to it when you need to and I

think that's what makes the school. It's the fact that all the boys have enough character to do that.

There were some strategies which reinforced each boy's motivation. The younger boys told me of the Red and Blue cards. The former are awarded to boys for unsatisfactory work and lead to a deduction of house points; the latter earn points which are added to the house total. Both affect the House in its bid to secure the founder's cup competed for annually.

As one talks to the boys one senses a powerful motivating force behind all their activities. There are some strategies, such as the card strategy already noted which reinforces each boy's motivation. Additionally, there appears to be a strong degree of self-criticism which affects all areas of life, including study. An older boy found it hard to express what motivated him to do better but, nevertheless, he managed to convey his ideas to the listener:

I think a lot; I don't know, I just think a lot. I think a lot about what I need to do, what I do wrong, what I can do better. It's just something I've evolved. The thing is, in an environment like this, it's not (as though) when you leave school at the end of the day, you can drop it all and go home, because it's here 24 hours of the day, so you've got to be, whether it's academic or social, you've got to be self-critical, the things you do right and the things you do wrong.

The director of boarding told me that the whole school is geared unashamedly to the intense rivalry that exists between houses as the boys compete for the annual trophy. It is surely arguable that this determination to be the best can be interpreted as loyalty to one's community. As far as personal target-setting is concerned, the boys are encouraged to review their group work three times a year after each grade reporting period:

They will note it down and make a comparison with how they were performing at that time and how they had performed in the past. Frequently, they will target their performance in the future, in some cases actually pencilling in their expected grades. Then they are expected to make a self-assessment of how they have performed both in the classroom and out of the classroom as well. They are very conscious of the fact that they need to do well; their parents are paying money for them to do well and to succeed. The expectation is that all will go on to the sixth form, off to university afterwards or some form of further education, and most do. So, therefore, in the vast majority of cases, they are keen to do well (Staff member).

It is recognised that the system can put some boys under too much pressure, and the need for careful monitoring of each boy's progress is acknowledged:

Yes, some can't hack it as well as others, in which case it usually comes to light and then of course, one lowers the expectation for certain

individuals, because it would be wrong not to do that. Some do struggle, but I personally think that school children are far more resilient than a lot of people give credit for and they can withstand pressures that you and I, I'm afraid, would crack under.

At **Treetops**, the curriculum is very broad. Girls entering the school at the age of 11 study twenty subjects: English language, English literature, religious studies, history, geography, French, Latin, mathematics, chemistry, physics, biology, computer studies, music theory, singing, drama, pottery, art, cookery, needlework, physical education. In the second year, the year the girls spend a term in France. Girls showing promise in French may add Spanish, German, Russian or Italian; those doing well in Latin may add Greek. In the third year, girls study English language, English literature, mathematics, French, religious studies, and two of the three science subjects. All other subjects offered as part of the curriculum are GCSE options with the exception of singing, cookery and physical education, though all continue to include the latter course. Most girls take between eight and twelve GCSE subjects, nor necessarily at one sitting. In the sixth form, most girls take three subjects at Advanced Level, selected from a wide range of options. Arts and science subjects may be mixed and, if time allows, girls are encouraged to take music or art as a fourth A Level. Alternatively, girls may add the General Studies A Level course, or subjects taken to A/S Level to add breadth to their programme. Potential Oxbridge candidates are given additional teaching and may, if they wish, take S as well as A Level papers.

This is a demanding curriculum. The results are, nevertheless, very good. At GCSE level the overall pass rate (A-C grades) is 98.8%. At A level, the pass rate is 97.2% with General Studies, 97.5% without it. The pass rate for AS levels is 100%. The programme however is not without its critics. School Inspectors, a few months before my visit, had suggested that the curriculum at Key Stage 3 was probably too broad. The director of studies recognised that there is a problem:

In this school the problem is restricting the number of options. I always say that 8 O levels (sic) are quite sufficient but that does not prevent girls doing 12, 11, and 10 in the norm. Nine may be below average, and we would have the odd girl, and it would be the odd girl, doing 8. So I think it is a very broad curriculum and the nature of our timetable is such, and the fact that we have a very large staff, that we are able to accommodate a large number of options. There are very few things a girl can't do and that is also true of the sixth form. So they are not restricted in what they can do at all.

While the director of studies felt very strongly that there was little virtue in taking 11 or 12 subjects at GCSE, parental pressure meant that most girls took more than 8 subjects:

It is simply that parental pressure is such that we have to and I think this comes in a large part from boys' schools. They tell us that sons who are at Eton and Winchester are doing 3 subjects when they are 14.

They seem to accumulate them; so I think to some extent they look at their son's school and think, 'Why should not our daughter do the same?' (Director of studies)

He explained that some relief was given by allowing girls to take a subject early. It is true that the girls already take religious studies a year early, and there is a proposal that English, French and mathematics should be added to the list to help the girls to meet the demands more easily. Yet the pressure under which the girls are placed is a cause of very real concern:

They do survive. It worries me how they survive. I think many of them work late in the day and still try to indulge in the variety of extra-curricular activities. They work at weekends and one does know that parents are aware of how this pressure demon is being met; which is why, next Wednesday, I am chairing a committee to really look very critically first, at Key Stage 3 curricula, to see how we can, without I think depriving them of opportunities, how it can be made more manageable. (Director of studies)

The school day is a very long one providing about 65 lessons a week. Prep periods are fitted into the day, but by the third year there are insufficient prep periods during the day to accommodate the amount of prep to be done. So girls are working in the evening

I suspect that given the fact that they have facilities within the house to work and given that there is nothing which is compulsory in the evening in terms of extra-curricular activities, that they could work up until they go to bed; but I would not think it is inconceivable that they work after they have gone to bed, after Lights Out.

Given that the girls are under considerable pressure, the director of studies attempted to analyse the source of the girls' commitment:

Essentially we have here, generally speaking, girls who are coming from backgrounds which are such that maybe there is no economic pressure on them to be ambitious. Maybe they don't necessarily need to have careers but, by and large, I think they are very competitive, particularly in the sixth form. They are ambitious and they are very career minded. But throughout the school there is this desire to work. It strikes me that either it is because they want to, or because they fear the consequences of not doing so. Girls who do not hand in their prep will run the risk of bad conduct marks, detention; and, of course, it will be indicated on their reports. Maybe they are fearful of how their parents will react.

He also felt that there were times when the staff, in their anxiety to enable each pupil to achieve the best possible results, placed undue pressure on their pupils. Examination requirements provoked in many staff a compulsion to disseminate

factual knowledge and this in turn led to too much teaching by rote and less time to challenge pupils to read widely and think for themselves:

You know they get very good grades, but I don't know the extent to which we have educated them

Most girls admitted that there was a compulsion to work very hard. As one girl explained:

I think (this comes) partly from the staff who have to have extra patience with you, but that is understandable; (partly) from parents with some people, yes! Personally, not too bad; and also because you can see other girls in your class have done the work and that adds to the stress because you feel you should have done it. There are some people who take on too much. I think it is all about how much you take on. There are some people who have been working late at night like five days a week or something.

In spite of this, there is a sense of enjoyment to be found in work:

There is a sense of accomplishment so you feel you have done something, especially with essays and stuff. Done it! Phew!

Another sixth former admitted to feeling under pressure:

There is quite a lot to do to get good grades all the time. I don't know, I sometimes feel that other people, outside school, don't quite understand how much there is to do all the time. Sometimes teachers give you quite a lot and you can't really say to them that you can't cope because you think you are just being weak and you know it is good for you in the long run. You just can't get it done in the time.

She felt that the responsibility to handle matters lay in her hands:

I always think if you are going to do something you might as well do it properly as well, so I do everything to the best of my ability and it takes a lot longer and so I don't get it done (in the prescribed time).

These sentiments were echoed by another sixth former:

I am quite good; I want to get my work done. I think most people do get their work done. You can ask for an extension if you're really stuck. In the sixth form if you don't get your work done, you are not allowed out at weekends.

The apparently strong desire voiced by some to get away from the school at weekends, or at the very least to resist any sort of school-organised activity belies the fact that there is a very full programme of pursuits to which the majority readily commit themselves.

The extended curriculum: extra-curricular activities

If the development of the whole child is to be accomplished, it is surely not enough to concentrate efforts solely on the academic programme. I have found that while exploring and developing a wide variety of strengths or gifts, each pupil can make a voyage of self-discovery. Finding an area of activity in which they can achieve a measure of success, even excel, boosts morale and raises self-esteem; this in turn, enables them to approach other areas, including the academic, with increased confidence and, invariably, improved results.

Extra-curricular activities play a large part in every boy's life at **Abbeyfields**. Boredom appears not to be a word included in the school vocabulary. Looking back at his early years in the school, a boy remarked:

I think the only time I got bored is when I wanted to sleep and couldn't get to sleep. I didn't like that.

The school presents a wealth of opportunities to its members. There is abundant enthusiasm for sport, particularly rugby; but the choice of sporting activity is massive. It includes hockey, basketball, cricket, tennis, athletics, sailing, fencing, swimming, and sailing, shooting. Boys can join in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. The music department, often working closely with the girls' school department, caters for very varied musical gifts. There is a combined symphony orchestra and a sinfonia, a concert band, a brass ensemble, chamber orchestra, a swing band, and a jazz band. There are many rock bands within the school. A chapel

choir supports the abbey services and there is a chamber choir. A highly acclaimed opera company enables pupils of Abbeyfields and two local girls' boarding schools to take part in an annual full-scale production of an opera, starting from scratch. The drama department, again working with a girls' school, stages several productions each year. There is a wide variety of clubs in the school which support the extra curricular programme. Many activities give opportunities for travel, both at home and overseas, which are clearly fostered by the school. A community service programme gives the boys the chance to widen their perspectives by going into the local community 'to lend a hand'. One boy helped by teaching 4 to 5 year olds in the local primary school to read and type. He felt that he had gained much experience in understanding and handling young children, which would broaden his horizons for later life. Another taught pupils at a different primary school to play rugby. He wrote afterwards:

I learnt how to gain and sustain young children's attention over a long period of time and how to gain their respect without appearing intimidating. Helping at the primary school was thoroughly enjoyable and I learnt to control young children which showed me that they are not the screaming stereotype that I thought they once were.

A third boy worked in a local Red Cross charity shop. At the end of his time there he was able to say:

I have gained a lot of knowledge of how to sell, but mainly of how and why people work in charity shops, to benefit others who are not as well off as myself or others working in the shop. I have learnt that there are more people in the world who care about helping out with the welfare of others than I thought, which I think is great.

Foleybridge encourages all boys, whatever their status, to make full use of the extra-curricular opportunities of the school. The way in which time is spent beyond the classroom is seen as fundamental to a boy's individual development. In the words of the Foleybridge prospectus, 'virtually every sport is played at the school'. This is not an extravagant claim made to promote the school. The main sport in the winter is rugby football and cricket in the summer. The remaining list seems endless and includes all branches of athletics, judo, squash, fencing and archery. Golf is played at the local golf club.

The activities of both the music and drama departments spill over into the extra-curricular programme. Visits to opera, concerts, theatre and places of interest are arranged and in addition to the usual school productions, there is a house drama festival. Boys are encouraged to take part in public-speaking competitions and there are both junior and senior debating societies. Music making takes many forms, from operas and musicals to brass bands, orchestras and ensembles. At least a third of the boys learn to play a musical instrument. The school choir sings regularly in the parish church.

The number of societies that flourish in the school is extensive and includes some unusual ones, e.g. amateur radio station, audio/video studio society and radio-controlled cars. There is a cadet force which is compulsory from age 13 and in which many pupils remain throughout their school life. This gives pupils many opportunities to join in activities such as 'march and shoot' competitions and weekend expeditions to the Black Mountains. All boys learn to shoot on the school's .22 rifle range and the shooting teams take part in national competitions. The Force has both Army and RAF sections and some boys are given the opportunity to join a Police section. Those in the RAF section can go to Shropshire for flying experience. Some have won flying scholarships and sixth form RAF scholarships. Weekend expeditions are often arranged, e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Award, scout groups and cadet force weekend camps. During the last week of the summer term arrangements are made for as many boys as possible to undertake an adventurous activity away from the school. Examples of activities are: walking in the Yorkshire Dales, pony trekking, climbing and canoeing in North Wales, sailing across the Channel and narrow boat expeditions. Many of the boys, supported by generous grants from the trustees, go on Outward Bound courses.

All boys are expected to try some of the activities on offer. Considerable impetus is given to all the boys' activities, both in and out of the classroom, by the inter-house competition held annually. The scope of the competition is very wide, all the following elements contributing to the final result: academic work, all sports, sailing regatta, music (house and individual), public speaking and reading, drama, quiz, chess, pool or snooker, individual achievements. Points are awarded for successful

outcomes in all these areas, and the founder's trophy is awarded to the house with the highest score at the end of each year. All members of the boarding houses compete annually in this competition. Not only does the contest impinge on the academic life of the school, it also gives considerable impetus to many extra-curricular pursuits.

Participation in activities outside the classroom forms an essential part of each girl's programme at **Treetops**. In a document compiled specifically to inform girls joining the school the following statement appears:

It is our aim that girls should be kept busy and should be returned home in a healthy but satisfied state of exhaustion at the end of each term.

In endeavouring to fulfil this aim, an imaginative programme of activities is organised for each year. Girls are encouraged to take part in a range of hobbies in order to maintain a balance between school and house-based activities and excursions out. There follows a long list of available activities, many of which employ the services of outside specialists. There are innumerable clubs and societies and girls are helped to pursue a wide range of hobbies. Increasing opportunities for leisure and working contacts with boys' schools include scope for girls to join the combined cadet force: army, navy, or Royal Air Force sections. A member of staff, also a member of the physics department serves as the extra-curricular co-ordinator. There are, additionally, activities generated by school departments and houses. There are four choirs, two choral societies, two orchestras and several instrumental and

chamber music groups. There is an annual House drama competition, an annual major school drama production, and an annual weekend music festival at which an opera is performed.

Some pupils saw the pressures of academic work as a reason why not all girls responded readily to the extra-curricular activities, though they acknowledged the difficulty of providing a programme to satisfy everybody:

It is quite a difficult situation. There are things which have been offered, like cinema trips and they seem quite popular. But everybody feels they are working so hard during the week that at the weekends they want to laze around; and they are so lazy at weekends that they can't be bothered with that sort of activity at weekends.

In spite of the pressures of work, there is ample evidence to show that girls are appreciative of the ample opportunities to extend their range of activities. One girl gave as her participating interest: music, field sports, lacrosse, hockey and golf. She hoped soon to add football to her list. The same girl believed that taking part in these activities had improved her life in several ways:

I think it (the school) has been quite good at offering lots of different activities. I have quite a wide range of hobbies. It gives me a chance to get different qualifications like life saving, music, and other more academic ones and that is really nice; and I think it gives you quite a

good perspective on girls as a whole and how they behave. I think it teaches you how to stand each other really.

Both the academic curriculum and the extended curriculum play a vital role in enabling each school to fulfil its purposes. The academic training received by each pupil develops their cognitive skills and expands both their knowledge and their developing powers of reasoning. The extra curricular activities bring balance and variety into participants' lives; moreover they give pupils opportunities to develop latent talents, to discover areas in which they can succeed, enhancing their self-esteem and giving them the confidence that is itself so essential to academic achievement. The combination of the academic and the extended curriculum enables each school to promote all the domains of learning outlined by Bloom (see chapters 3 and 4). The combined programme assists the schools in their aim to nurture the development of each pupil's intellectual, social, emotional, aesthetic, moral and physical development, so fulfilling their responsibility to nurture 'the whole child'.

Summary

This catalogue of opportunities, provided by both the academic curriculum and the extra-curricular activities available in each school, suggests that pupils are indeed receiving an impressively broad education. Of interest however in attempting to assess the degree of success achieved are the reactions to the school programme expressed in the pupils' comments. Boys in both schools appeared not only to relish the opportunities to acquire new

skills, but also recognised the impact of many of the new experiences on their developing understanding of people and situations. Interestingly, this was not quite so apparent in the girls' schools. Opportunities abounded, but there seems to be reluctance on the part of some girls to take advantage of them. This appeared to be linked with the academic pressures imposed on them. These pressures appeared to come from the girls themselves and their interpretation of parental expectations; but also from the staff. The questioning by the Director of Studies of the merits of equating top grades with good education (p. 88) and his misgivings about the work load imposed on the girls revealed his concern. Together with the written claim that girls should be returned home 'in a healthy but satisfied state of exhaustion at the end of each term' suggest that the achievement of the holistic aims of the school are being impeded by the strength of the academic pressures.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Community

The previous chapter described the combination of both academic and extended curriculum, which together make an important contribution to the successful realisation of each school's aims. In this chapter, a further characteristic which make a significant contribution to the achievement of boarding school's purposes examined: the concepts of community and commitment

Each of the three schools uses similar strategies and structures to foster a sense of community and each has a concept of community that embraces pupils, staff and parents. All three schools place the pupils at the heart of the community; all consider the staff and, to a greater or lesser degree the parents, to be integral parts of the community; moreover, all appear increasingly to seek opportunities to embrace the wider community beyond the school's physical boundaries.

In each school, the sense of community is built round, and radiates from, the house system. On entering a school, each pupil immediately becomes a member of the whole school community; but it is, almost certainly, the awareness of 'belonging' to the house community which first impinges on each pupil.

Abbeyfields

This school cannot be described as a neighbourhood school, since only a small proportion of the parents live in close proximity to it. Parents are encouraged to

visit their sons at the weekend and to take an interest in their activities. Parents are urged to support all house and school events and in addition to the half term break, boys are allowed two exeats a term when they may leave school at 12.30 on Saturday, returning by 9.00pm on Sunday. Pupils are normally expected to spend these exeat weekends at home or with relatives or with a guardian. The dates of the exeats are fixed by the school and are compulsory for all boys only in the Michaelmas (autumn) term, when they run from Friday evening until Sunday evening. In the other two terms it is possible for boys to remain at school, which undoubtedly helps parents who live abroad. It also helps to ensure that weekend activities are well supported. In spite of a noticeable increased measure of involvement of parents in the school, it is clear that the school will share responsibility for each boy's development and progress.

My visits to Abbeyfields revealed that there is a strong sense among both staff and boys of belonging to a close-knit community. Membership of a house is of crucial importance to each boy, providing him with a stable base for the whole of his school career. As the prospectus declares, 'here he can put down roots, forge enduring friendships and develop independence and self-confidence in a supportive environment'. In addition to the housemaster, often with his own family, each house has a resident tutor and a matron. All strive to create a second home for the boys in their care; housemasters, their wives and children being at the heart of each house. As the boys move through the school, they are given increasing freedom and privacy, which is reflected in the accommodation arrangements. Boys spend their first year in communal rooms and then move on to shared studies. On

reaching the sixth form, they move into study-bedrooms, still within their original house. It is often the case that many of the lifelong friendships forged at school are between members of the same house. At the same time, there are many opportunities for the boys to mix freely with boys from other houses, both in and out of the classroom. For example, strong friendships clearly emerge as a result of sharing common interests and all pupils eat together in a central dining hall.

Even before the arrival of each new boy, the house reaches out to him. The housemaster of each boy's chosen house writes to him as soon as his place at the school has been confirmed. The letter is designed to lessen each boy's fears about moving in to a new and strange environment. A third form member of the house is appointed to make contact with the boy before his arrival; he is responsible for helping the new boy to find his way around when he joins the school and for familiarising him with the routines and traditions of the house.

The chaplain of the school also establishes early contact with each boy. His own tied house occupies a central position in the school and he makes a determined effort to meet all new boys within the first 24 hours of their arrival. He confirmed the importance of the house community to each boy; the loyalty to house felt by each boy and their sense of its being special. He takes a number of services in the houses, as well as in the school:

I always have this very strong sense of boarding house atmosphere and community and commitment to each other in those services when we

are all tightly packed into the biggest room in the house. When we are praying for our homes and families we also pray for our home in term time which obviously is the boarding house and for a number of boys it has been a much more stable place than their home house. A lot of our boys move (home) very often.

He felt that the sense of 'belonging' to the house gave to many boys an additional sense of stability. He described how he viewed his own role in the school:

It is much more than a school because we do share our whole life together for a very considerable number of weeks per year and I know that once term starts my commitment is to the school community. My appointment is such that I am seen as chaplain to the whole school community so I am as much chaplain for the works department as I am to the upper sixth; and I am as much chaplain, I think, to the staff's families as I am to the new boys in the third form.

The chaplain and all the housemasters are committed to an 'open door' policy so that boys and staff alike are equally accessible. One housemaster explained:

It is the house ethos, the spirit, which comes first. My wife and I have tried to develop that by the fact that we run the house as a family and my two children are involved in everything I do in the house. They

come round and wake the boys up in the morning with me and they come to assembly in the evening. We try to create as normal a home environment as possible. The doors in the house are 'open'; the boys' studies are never locked and the doors into the private side (i.e. housemaster's accommodation) are always open.

The housemaster found that the 'open door' policy went some way to creating a certain tone in the house, a feeling of 'togetherness'. 'The boys joke at my expense because I am always talking about the team spirit. I am a great believer in the team ethos'. When asked about the possible conflict between house and school loyalties, he replied that the natural conclusion for a housemaster when running a house might be that the house:

... comes above all else. It is their home. We run a decentralised school here, so it is important that we get it right. The house is very important, but the school is important as well.

A letter sent by a housemaster to the parents of a new boy at Abbeyfields about to join his house, throws light on the school's view of the parent/school relationship. It clearly expresses the need for parents to identify with the school community:

I firmly believe that a boarding school is a combined operation in which parents and schoolmasters are both involved and I am anxious to keep in close touch with parents. I hope you will feel free to contact me

on any matter and that you will be frank about any aspect of your son's life here which causes you some concern. I hope too that you will allow me to be equally frank with you. If we do not know what is in each other's mind, and unless we try to act along agreed and similar lines, your son will inevitably be the sufferer. If he gets the impression that different standards and values apply at home and at school, life will be more difficult for him – and for you and me.

The 'combined operation' referred to seems not to mean quite the same as a 'close partnership' operating in some schools. It is possible that parents at Abbeyfields are less closely involved with their sons' school for two reasons: firstly, it is regarded as a traditional school; secondly, for the majority of Abbeyfields' parents, boarding is a norm and most will have experienced it themselves, in the days when it was not unusual for pupils to be away from home for the duration of each term. Today, even the most traditional schools are moving away from this pattern; Abbeyfields itself has recently enabled boys to spend time away from school on two or three occasions during the term. As this practice has spread, schools find that the tendency to become neighbourhood schools has increased. Aware of increasing opportunities to have children home during term time, distance from home has become for some parents a defining factor when choosing a school. Thus, though the parents appear not to impinge very greatly on the school, their input appears to be increasing. The chaplain felt that it was more than an impression; that this was, in fact, the case:

It (parents' input) has grown enormously. They don't just want to be there; they want to contribute and this can be very helpful if it is controlled, I think.

He believes that boarding has an intrinsic value. While acknowledging that the majority of boys come from stable family backgrounds, he felt that being part of the community brought particular benefits to the minority who are not so fortunate:

I think it has specific value for a large and possibly growing number of individuals as well. You know, I have lost count of the number of times I've thought about the boy who was at a boarding school I was teaching at, particularly when I was a house master, thinking to myself, 'I am so glad that boy is with us rather than at home with mum and dad'. It's obviously an orthodox wisdom that says mum and dad must be best, but there are times when you look at mum and dad and you think, 'No; they are not temperamentally suited to this; they're not in any condition to do it because of the way their professional lives work. This child is obviously much happier here than he would be at home. I spend quite a lot of time teaching young men how they might approach things differently and enabling them to develop and move on.

There can be few, if any, people working in boarding environments who have not had to deal with the boy or girl who dreads going home for holidays.

When talking about their boarding status, all the boys at Abbeyfields to whom I spoke clearly adopted a very 'matter of fact' stance. It is for them a way of life, accepted as a normal progression in their lives, a circumstance to which they readily commit themselves. As one said of the time when he first boarded:

It just seemed natural to me; I didn't have any problems with it at all.

Another stated very positively:

I think that starting off boarding quite young is quite a good decision because it means that you learn to stay away from home and so you are not homesick at all.

When challenged, he admitted that he was homesick for about a week to start off with. Another boy, asked whether he suffered from homesickness, said:

Never! The thing is that everybody has had a lot of practice at fitting people in, like the housemaster; he knows how to fit people in and I fit in very well. I really like it. He has had a lot of practice. He would be able to cheer you up in some way or move you from one group to another. He just, how can I say it? He cures your problems very well because he is a really nice guy.

The advent of the mobile phone has enabled boys to keep closely in touch with home. Most appear to use this facility and feel that it helps to maintain a close relationship with their parents. It also helps to strengthen links within the community.

A member of the first year sixth form, whose home was only some twenty miles from Abbeyfields, had very recently joined the school, having previously attended a day school. He had opted to board because he thought he would miss out on 'quite a lot' were he to be 'just a day boy'. He acknowledged that he thought it more difficult to join the school at sixth form level than earlier when 'it is new for everybody'. Though he found the first week difficult because there were no actual lessons, once lessons started he found he was able to interact more readily with other students. He volunteered the comment

Now I am really stuck into it, I am quite enjoying it and time flies.

He has made friends and, perhaps predictably, these are from within his house. It is perhaps inevitable that being members of the same house forms a basis for friendship; but there are ample opportunities, both within and outside the classroom, to meet with members of other houses.

Foleybridge

At Foleybridge, the development of a strong sense of community ranks high on the list of priorities. At the heart of the community are the boys. Most are full or

weekly boarders though there is a further category of day or 'out boarders', who form a significant group within the school. These are boys who, although living at home, have chosen to enjoy an extended school day. Hence, they stay at school to do their prep (homework) and take a full part in the extra-curricular life of the school. The headmaster is firmly of the opinion that the most practical and revolutionary thing that he has ever done in the school was to heal the division of the boys into boarders and day boys by abolishing the day boy houses. Now, weekly and out boarders are accepted as members of the boarding houses to which they are assigned and use the facilities of the boarding houses, as do the full boarders. The school encourages all boys, whatever their status, to make full use of the extra-curricular opportunities of the school.

Both academic and ancillary staff occupy a vital place in the school community. Sixty-one teachers staff the academic departments, though some have a dual role. The headmaster, his deputy, the second master and all the housemasters all teach. There are additional specialist sports and music staff. A composer-in-residence and two visiting teachers from Europe add to the list. Technicians support the laboratories, workshop, electronics and computers. Additional boarding staff includes tutors, assistant tutors and house matrons. Three nursing sisters staff the sanatorium.

A boy entering Foleybridge aged 11 spends his first year in the junior boarding house. This house is somewhat smaller than the rest and boys are helped by the housemaster and his family to settle in to life within a boarding community. He will

then move on to one of the six senior houses, each taking up to 60 full boarding boys and a number of day boys. There is a resident house tutor in each house and other members of staff assist the housemasters as tutors. Together, housemasters and tutors share the pastoral care of the boys and are concerned with every aspect of the boy's progress. A recent innovation has seen the appointment of house matrons in each house and their input is proving most valuable in providing further pastoral support for the boys. The boys see their tutors on a regular basis and are given every encouragement to make full use of opportunities in and out of the classroom. The boarding accommodation is modern and very comfortable. The sixth formers have individual study bedrooms and are expected to help with the smooth running of the house. Younger boys sleep in dormitories where there are normally about 12 boys of the same age group. Within the houses, every boy has his own study carrel or work- space. Each house has several common rooms, a library and varied recreational facilities. A well-equipped sanatorium with professionally qualified staff and a school doctor, the latter appointed by the governors, take care of the boys' health.

There is little doubt that the depth of commitment recognisable in headmaster, staff and parents heightens the awareness of the sense of community. A parent commented:

I'm sure if anybody was walking around the place looking as though they were lost, you wouldn't go very far before somebody grabbed you and helped, whether it was administrative staff, academic staff, or boys.

There's a community and there's a sense of belonging and a sense of

social responsibility which you see lacking in those schools that don't have that leadership and don't have those values.

Another spoke of the time factor:

The one thing that comes across, from the boys really, is that time, the time that the staff are prepared to give to the boys, whatever their problem, be it intellectual it doesn't matter, they're there for them.

A mother expressed deep appreciation for the time a housemaster was prepared to give to her:

I mean whenever I've rung up, especially in the early days, I was never fobbed off, never made to feel, you know, I always said I was sorry and all that, never made to feel awkward. There was always time for a word, which I find very helpful.

The school recognises that not every parent is able to maintain close physical contact with the school. It is acknowledged that good communication is of extreme importance in keeping the whole community aware of what is happening in the school and, in particular, circumstances and events that directly impact on their son's progress. Parents are regarded as an integral part of the school community:

We have plenty of parents' consultations; a parent can come and see us at any time. Parents want to be involved; boys tell their parents much more than they ever used to and therefore they want to be involved.

As a result, the school engenders huge support and commitment from them. It is unsurprising to find that parents are drawn to make a commitment in terms of time to the school. The experience of one mother was not unusual:

Well, we spend a lot of time at the school. I mean, last week, I think I was at school every day for something or other. In the evenings there was a music concert. I chair a committee to raise funds for the Costa Rica thing (school summer holiday expedition) so we had a race on Saturday morning. So yes, I do become a piece of furniture sometimes.

But as one talks to parents, one senses that there is something more; a palpable attachment to the school that engenders a desire to support it. As one remarked:

Everyone seems to be 'this school orientated'. You know we're all for this school, like any public school where they will lean over backwards to look after their school.

Another parent regretted that he was unable to spend more time at the school, but was gratified that whenever he visited the school, his presence was acknowledged by all:

There's a community and there's a sense of belonging and a sense of social responsibility which you see lacking in schools that don't have that leadership and don't have those values.

The headmaster believes firmly in the importance of the school community, linking this so strongly with the importance of commitment that the two become almost synonymous:

It is a very subtle process, but if you have a certain percentage of your staff always around, then the relationships you build or are liable to build, or be able to build with your parents, with your pupils, with each other, because we are here all the time are liable to be at greater depth.

The majority of the staff too, believe that the boarding environment is of enormous benefit when it comes to building good relations with their pupils. As one said:

As far as I am concerned, I feel very strongly that I get an overview of the whole boy by working with him in the classroom on the one hand and working with him in a more relaxed form in the boarding house or wandering around the school out of school hours. That then gives me a far better relationship with the boys. They see me as somebody other than just a teacher and they see me as a human being and I find I can actually, and do, spend a lot of, well, I can spend half the night if I get

involved in a chat with a sixth former at 11pm at night and suddenly you realise it's half past eleven and they should be in bed! I don't call myself a teacher, I call myself a schoolmaster, because I think there's a world of difference between the two and I think as a schoolmaster, I can offer a lot more that way than I would if I were merely just a teacher in a classroom.

Commitment to the school creates a motivating force for all sections of the school community. As one talks to the boys, one senses a powerful motivating force behind all their activities. There are some strategies, such as the card strategy already noted, which reinforce each boy's motivation. Additionally, there appears to be a strong degree of self-criticism, which affects all areas of life, including study. An older boy found it hard to express what motivated him to do better but, nevertheless, he managed to convey his ideas to the listener:

I think a lot; I don't know, I just think a lot. I think a lot about what I need to do, what I do wrong, what I can do better. It's just something I've evolved. The thing is, in an environment like this, it's not (as though) when you leave school at the end of the day, you can drop it all and go home, because it's here 24 hours of the day, so you've got to be, whether it's academic or social, you've got to be self-critical, the things you do right and the things you do wrong.

The director of boarding told me that the whole school unashamedly is geared to the intense rivalry that exists between houses and the boys compete for the annual trophy. It is surely arguable that this determination to be the best can be interpreted as responding to a desire to contribute to one's community.

Treetops

The structure of the House system at Treetops is more complex. Girls entering Treetops at the age of 11 spend their first year in the junior school. They live in a small, comfortable boarding house and the majority of their lessons take place in their own form room block. They make use of the excellent senior school facilities for science, music, art and physical education. The year is intended to give an introduction to becoming part of community life in a boarding school. An informal, family atmosphere is created in each house where the girls enjoy the company of their own contemporaries. In the second year, when their numbers increase with the entrance of new girls, they join one of two houses catering for their year group. Working on a rotation system, a third of the year group spends a term in the school's house in France. This is in the charge of a school appointed housemistress and her assistant. Several other members of staff, mostly French, are employed as teachers, matrons and household maintenance staff. The aim of the term's experience is to immerse pupils in a French environment, primarily to improve their linguistic skills, but also to broaden their awareness of a foreign culture and community. While in France, appropriate subjects are taught, mainly through the medium of the French language, with an emphasis on the national context, and utilising resources available in the vicinity.

The next three years are spent in one of five mixed-age houses, each with a housemistress and assistant housemistress and having about 50 members. Most girls continue into the sixth form, all joining, initially, one of the two first year sixth form houses and, for their final year, one of three second year sixth form houses. Though living in separate accommodation, they retain their links with their mixed-age house; those entering the school at sixth form level and moving into a sixth form house, are also assigned to a mixed age house to enable them to have regular contact with younger members of the school. Accommodation throughout the boarding houses is comfortable and tailored to meet the needs of the age of its members. As girls move through the school they have the opportunity to respond to increasing independence and responsibility so that when they reach the sixth form, they are prepared to cope with a life that begins to resemble that of a university student.

A sixth form housemistress at Treetops felt that a number of factors make it impossible for all those working at the school to resist the development of a sense of community. She believes that the school's geographical position, on top of a hill with little nearby development; the fact that the school is predominantly residential; the need for all to interact with one another; all contribute to the sense of community. In the houses, there is a great sense of all 'being involved'; and, among the staff, because all understand one another's jobs, of sharing the load of responsibility that each one carries:

The chefs, the caterers, the kitchen staff, the cleaning ladies are all part of the house community. It is very important, I think, that they feel valued and the girls are encouraged, by our example, to treat them with courtesy and consideration. I think the community has three or four 'belts' (strata) because the parents are also part of it.

This housemistress is in a somewhat unique position in the school. The constraints imposed by the design of her house have resulted in her having both first and second year sixth formers in her charge. She had no hesitation in describing her house as a microcosm of the whole community. Not all subscribe to this idea; for at present, the school has an unusual approach. During the first two years and in their final two years in the sixth form, girls share community life in their houses with girls of their year group. In the three central years of their school careers, their house community encompasses girls drawn from three age groups. It is in essence a three-tier strategy for boarding. A senior member of staff concluded that though he senses an awareness of community within the school, he feels it more accurate to speak of 'communities'. He feels that each girl's sense of being part of a community tends to be associated with her year group, rather than with the whole school community. There are others, both members of staff and older girls, who were experiencing some misgivings about the consequences of the three-tier arrangement. Their concern is that it is too divisive, and that it can lead to strong rifts between the year groups, which can have unwelcome consequences, particularly in the mixed-age houses.

A member of staff voiced concern about its effect on pupil relationships:

I think pupil to pupil we have a little way to go inasmuch as a year ahead or two years ahead, they haven't a clue who they are ('they' referring to girls in the year ahead or those in the year below). It doesn't happen in all the years, but there is definitely a feeling you know, that either 'they' are beneath us or above us.

Remarks made by a member of the first year sixth conjured up a scenario that was reminiscent of stories emanating from staff common rooms of the fifties, describing the furore when new members of staff unwittingly reclined in staff room chairs considered by a senior member of staff to be 'their preserves and theirs alone'.

There are some people I expect who enjoy, not exactly the perks, but almost perks, of being a year above somebody else; like, 'That chair's mine'.

Not all members of the sixth form had enjoyed their first year in the school. One who joined the school in the second year, (Year 8), confided:

My mum always said to me, 'Treat other people as you would like to be treated yourself'. I had quite a rotten time in (my first year) and I wouldn't want anyone else to be put down or made sort of miserable because of me, and I wouldn't let them do that to me now. I just want

our whole year to keep the friendly bounce that I have. As soon as people get really, really thoughtless, because we do live in a very tiny community, the whole thing just falls apart. When we first came here it was really 'bitchy' and the year above us was not particularly nice to us and we got all these lectures; 'You mustn't speak to anybody'. And we decided this was really silly so we and our friends in the year below they are really good friends- (set out to change things) and we had a string of new housemistresses who have taken up on the idea and it all seems to be coming together now.

Among members of the sixth form there are those who are making a determined effort to create a sense of community encompassing the whole school community. There is no doubt that considerable efforts are being made by the staff to improve relationships between the members of different year groups, by enabling them to mix more freely. The Junior House for 36 new girls joining the school aged 11, is situated in a nearby village and the girls come and go to school by coach. The housemistress believes that there is a tendency for her girls to be overlooked and is working hard to enable them to establish links with other houses. Thus she was insistent that although they were not competing as a house, her girls should take part in a recent house drama competition by assuming roles in the productions of older girls:

Even though they were only chickens, clouds and people at a party, they were 'something' in it. Now I am trying to get staff in the mixed-

age houses to invite them to things and one has actually thrilled me to bits. She is having a little house 'jolly outing' thing and she has said the Removes can go. They have got to be part of the big picture.

The sixth formers fulfil various duties that contribute to the smooth running of their former mixed-age house; they have scope to propose new initiatives, they attend house meetings and continue to play in the mixed-house teams. It is clear that participation in activities such as sport, drama and music provide an important opportunity for girls to mix with girls from other houses. A school assembly held once a week does much to promote an awareness of belonging to the wider school community. When asked if girls had any sense of being a member of the school community, not merely of her year group, a sixth former replied:

Yes, especially when you get to the lower sixth because a lot of people have younger sisters and also, because I do a lot of rowing, the Boat Club goes throughout the school, so I have raced with the girls in the year below who are really good friends of mine.

Though acknowledging its value, the concept of community is not put forward as central to the school's strategic programme. Nevertheless, from the moment they join the school, there is no doubt that parents, staff and pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of belonging, of being an integral part of the community. From the moment a girl joins the community, efforts are made to build a partnership between the school and her parents. In sending their daughters away from home, the parents

are in no way abrogating their responsibility for her continued development. In both school documents and in interviews, it was apparent that the school views its environment not as replacing, but as complementing home life. Before a girl's arrival, parental assistance is sought to enable their daughter to establish an independent routine so that she can confidently look after herself and seek help should she have any concerns. Once their daughter is at school, parents are encouraged to keep in touch by faxed letter, telephone, voice-mail, or e-mail. The school undertakes to keep closely in touch with parents concerning their daughter's development, reporting progress formally twice a year, and enabling them to participate in all significant decisions relating to their daughter's education within the framework of school policy and to express any concerns they might have.

The inclusion of parents as part of the school community goes some way to help preserve parent/daughter relationships. The general consensus of members of the sixth form is that boarding leads to improvement in family relationships. Their comments showed considerable maturity:

It is funny adjusting between home and school I think. I was talking to my friends and we all found we were a bit 'stropky' when we first go home, the first two hours sort of, because Mummy is still being Mummy and telling you what to do. But you haven't had it for about four weeks and you want to say, 'Don't tell me what to do'.

Another sixth former described her reaction when going home:

I feel more independent from them but as soon as I get home, they are sort of reluctant to let me do things on my own. I don't know whether it's just growing up!

She commented on the times when all the family was at home:

I think it more of a hassle really (for parents), because there is so much extra mess; but I think they do enjoy having us there. They don't have so much to do when we're not at home.

She believed that her relationship with her sisters who were not at the school had improved since she joined the school and felt that this was:

probably because I don't see them that often. I don't know whether it is just because we have all grown up, because of age or just because we don't see each other for so long.

Another sixth former who had made the decision to board after reading an article in a newspaper explained her reasoning: I was quite independent so I thought it would be nice to live away from home and prove that I could brush my teeth without being told and stuff like that. My school (at the time), although it is very good academically, is in the centre of a town so they only have a few acres on which to build all the things we need and they'd just bulldozed one of our tennis courts. I was

very into sport and we had virtually one tennis court and I sort of wanted to come to a school that had space and time; because at boarding school you have time to just be on site and do all the extra curricular things.

Her mother, who lived apart from her husband, while expecting her son to board eventually, took a little time to adjust to the idea of her daughter leaving home to attend a boarding school:

Well, she looked a bit shocked and she was a bit upset for a couple of days. But then we talked about it and she actually thought it would be a really good idea because she was working full time and it was getting really awkward taking us (the daughter and a younger brother) to school and so she thought, 'Wow! What a good idea!' There are so many good things. Growing up with your peers around you, I find you develop personality and character and tolerance. I mean things like that I think are quite important. At boarding school you do develop things like that, and my mother thinks that way as well, although we don't have a history of boarding in our family at all. But now my brother is away at school and with me being away, Mum suddenly realised it was so much easier.

The girl feels being in a boarding community has improved her relationship with her mother:

I think it has improved it because we don't have all that everyday stress of 'Get up, get in the car', which was actually quite hard for her to deal with, looking after us on her own, on top of her job, and living about 40 miles away from school.

The nice thing is that I do think that lessons are enjoyed. I think that is the case. We do try very hard. We have a lot of resources: videos, visual aids, artefacts etc.

Summary

The evidence collected in all three schools indicates that, though responding in different ways, the experience of living together in boarding houses provides, in each school, opportunities for the transmission of expressive goals, i.e. those concerned with values, the development of personality and the oversight of the gradual increase of personal responsibility.

CHAPTER NINE

Commitment

The concept of community is closely related to that of commitment. Inextricably bound into the culture of each boarding community, there is recognition of the need for all its individual members, whatever their role, to identify with the declared purposes of the school, committing themselves wholeheartedly to contribute to their achievement. In each school, the sense of community is built round, and radiates from, the house system. On entering a school, each pupil immediately becomes a member of the whole school community; but it is, almost certainly, the awareness of 'belonging' to the house community which first impinges on each pupil.

Abbeyfields

The chaplain at **Abbeyfields** commented on his own commitment, freely admitting that attempting to juggle the demands of school and family life presented problems:

I think I feel that during term time I see it as a total commitment really and any free time I have outside the school is a real bonus, but there isn't a lot of it. I feel I work a seven day week all the way through the term. This term has been wonderful because we have had two exeat weekends when the school has been shut completely which we have never had before. This has been a great help. I work solidly for a three-week block and then have a long weekend.

The role of a housemaster's wife is a demanding one and the one who spoke to me at length had put a great deal of thought into defining her role. Of one fact she was certain

I never try to be a substitute mum, because I don't think that would work. I see myself as having a female comforting role, but I don't think I would ever aspire to be mum no. 2. Initially I am there to support my husband. We have a resident matron and we have a team of dailies and so basically we decided that I would do the housekeeping which means looking after the domestic side of the house. There are obviously things that I won't do. Lunchtime, for example, is a busy time in the study because they are running in and out for pocket money and chits and that is fine; if he is not here I can do that. But if they come in with things to do with their work, like Blues and Reds and Commendations, things that are purely academic, then I don't do those.

She felt that rarely was she asked to help the boys through any emotional problems they might experience; indeed, she tended to think that she did not do a lot of pastoral work. However, as she spoke, she qualified this by saying that she did not do it self-consciously, but in fact it was going on all the time. The housemaster's wife in another house readily acknowledged her pastoral role. She was expecting her third child, at which point she had decided to relinquish her housekeeping role. She had assumed the role of housekeeper when her husband had become

housemaster some eighteen months previously. She was anxious to get to know the fabric of the house as quickly as possible and also, most importantly, she was eager to get to know the boys as quickly as possible. She now feels that she knows the boys inside out and she no longer wants to be a figure of authority. She wants to be the housemaster's wife and 'mother of the house' and is already, on many occasions acting as counsellor to the boys. She had little doubt that on a daily basis, the chaplain 'picked up a lot of the boys' problems'; but she was firmly of the opinion that the boys did an awful lot of talking to one another and sorted most problems out among themselves. Her husband regarded his house prefects, with whom he had a very close relationship, as his eyes and ears. He met with them every week to chat about any sort of problem in the house. This was clearly invaluable in enabling him to keep his finger very securely on the pulse of the house.

All the housemasters' wives at Abbeyfields receive a yearly allowance, a so-called 'disturbance' allowance. The amount paid is nominal, but it is appreciated because it is known that many schools give no recognition at all to the wives of housemasters. Yet much is expected of them. The wife/housekeeper received the payment normally received by a housekeeper working a 20-hour week. Yet the strong sense of commitment shone through her approach to her role:

I don't think they (the parents) understand sometimes how enjoyable it can be, living with the boys; but we have always looked on it, not as a job where you have an on time and an off time. That would be irksome.

To us it is actually a way of life and if we are here then they come and find us and if we are not here, then they come back again as you would in a family. But it is a way of life.

The long holidays are clearly cherished and felt to be entirely necessary:

Because we do get long holidays, you can afford to be busy in the term.

You can recharge in the holidays.

The level of commitment demonstrated by the housemasters, their wives and, indeed, the chaplain is perhaps predictable; but the same level of dedication was discernable in all the members of staff with whom I had contact. These included one who could, on the surface, be seen as something of a misfit in the school community. It was both refreshing and valuable to interview a master who appeared at odds with himself at finding himself working in a fee-paying school, a fact that does not fit easily with his political views. Before taking up his present post, he had taught in day schools. It is not uncommon to find that many, who find themselves teaching in schools in which a considerable proportion of the pupils come from more privileged backgrounds, have to deal with feelings of ambivalence about their own integrity. The reason for moving into the independent boarding sector given by one such teacher was the lure of receiving more money; though he claimed that in accepting the extra financial reward he had no option but to make a huge commitment to the school. I sensed that he was not honestly averse to doing so:

I think teachers (here) are overpaid but on the other hand to some extent you have to accept that you sell your soul here, and the Headmaster has the power and does occasionally use it to demand duties and responsibilities of his staff that are way and above their job description.

In common with most married members of staff, he wrestled with the dilemma of giving adequate time to both his family and his school commitments. He felt it unrealistic of the school to require tutors to 'take the boys in their care to their hearts' on the grounds that it was not always possible to find the time to do so. Yet, all that I learned about this teacher supported the conclusion that he makes an invaluable contribution to the school community, both as teacher and as mentor, and I could not doubt his commitment

.He was not alone in having to come to terms to teaching in what can be viewed as a privileged society. Another member of staff expressed an occasional feeling of guilt at finding himself in a fee-paying school. He addressed this through the very high degree of commitment he makes to the boys in his charge:

I spend quite a lot of time teaching young men how they might approach things differently, and enabling them to move on.

Foleybridge

The headmaster's own commitment is indisputable. Members of staff readily acknowledge it. As one member of staff observed unprompted:

Undeniably, we have a headmaster of phenomenal drive and enthusiasm I think that does filter through, the fact that the headmaster probably gives more time than anybody to what is going on in the school and that he's someone who's leading from the front. There's no doubt about that.

A parent commented:

It is true that whatever function you come to, he (the headmaster) is always around. He may not be running it, but he wanders in and wanders out, has a few words. Well, I can't remember any school I've ever been to, even the Prep schools they (my children) have all gone to which were very good, where this happened.

One boy's father made a comparison with the business world in which he himself operated:

You find that successful companies are run by people who know exactly what they want, and that's one thing that comes over loud and clear to me here. The one thing here is the headmaster.... He's here all hours of the day and night and he's single-minded and he wants to

improve year in and year out. You can see that every year he's trying to improve it, and so I think that the single biggest fact here is the headmaster and that's, if you like, the invisible thread.

The headmaster himself is very conscious of the need for staff to have a life of their own, in addition to their work in school. Thus, the timetables for residential staff are arranged to permit them time for themselves. The headmaster's commitment is clear for all to see. His day starts at 8 in the morning and normally ends just before 6 in the evening. Generally, most evenings are busy with school functions, though there may be one or two entirely free. Recognising the need 'to refuel his own batteries', he tries to take off one afternoon each week and uses this to pursue his own interests. He is a genealogist and welcomes the fact that this is something totally separate from the school. He feels fortunate in having an ability 'to switch on and off' very easily, for this enables him to avoid taking his troubles home. Like the majority of his staff, he draws a distinction between being a school 'teacher' and a school 'master', the latter being prepared to do things at a time when the former might neither be prepared to, nor wish to do them..

His commitment is certainly matched by that of the housemasters. As one reflected:

As far as quality time for myself is concerned, during term time, the answer is very little. It does affect one's family; there's no doubt about it at all. But with a supportive family around, then it isn't a problem. But I can see it could be a problem and has been a problem. Some

people just couldn't hack it. On the other hand, you do get slightly longer holidays and half terms, and the occasional times which you do have to yourself become very precious and you must get away from the place, recharge your batteries and then, come back actually vaguely looking forward to it.

The boys acknowledge the commitment demonstrated by the whole staff. One felt that his own motivation to get on with his work and to complete it came from his teachers:

Well, I mean I think it's because of the amount of effort the teachers put into teaching us. They're here round the clock basically; if you need help, they're there. You can go and see them. But I mean, I suppose the other thing really is what I want to do with my education. They just help me to push out the boundaries and just go for it really. They've helped me and I've got to help myself if I want to get anywhere, so I feel obliged to actually get it done and just to say, 'thank you very much for helping me'.

Some of the older boys needing help with their work tended to turn first to other boys known to be particularly good at a particular subject; but they acknowledged that the staff are readily accessible. As a sixth former said:

Well, if people need help with music, they'll come to me. If I need help with chemistry or biology, there are some people in the same year or the year above, who'll help me. If I can't find anybody, then most teachers live on the campus and they're quite happy for me to go and speak to them.

Another sixth former studying maths as one of his A level subjects deemed himself lucky to have in his house both the head of mathematics and his maths teacher:

One of them is the housemaster, so he's always in the house, so if I come unstuck, I go straight to him. Different teachers are on duty in the houses at night, so you can just go round and see them

When asked whether the boys were well received on such occasions, I enjoyed the irony implicit in his further comment:

Yes, because I presume they get bored sat around the house, making sure everyone's doing something so...

A parent revealed that it continued to be a matter almost of astonishment that the staff are 'on call' for the boys.

Whatever the problem, the boys can go to whomever they want to talk to and it doesn't matter; they can get at them.

Another spoke of the time factor:

The one thing that comes across, from the boys really, is that time, the time that the staff are prepared to give to the boys, whatever their problem, be it intellectual... it doesn't matter, they're there for them.

One of the school matrons described the degree of concern for the boys shown by members of staff:

The teachers that I've met and respected seem to care about the boys, way after 4 o'clock. In the house I see boys queuing; they come in and find them for homework. Nobody ever minds about the 'after hours'. They can go to their house, or make an appointment with them.

The approach of the older boys to younger boys experiencing work problems was much the same:

If someone's particularly struggling, you will help them, 'cos it's just like team building, you know. If one person drags back, they can hold the whole thing up, so you just help them along smoothly until they've got their grip, which everyone does eventually. Most of the staff are approachable at any time really; in your own time obviously. I know my geography teacher is especially (approachable). He's helped me through a lot personally, and in the school work..

The motivation behind the staff commitment certainly owes much to the example set by the headmaster, but in the view of the deputy headmaster, there are other factors:

I think there are a lot of people here, who are here because they see teaching as a vocation...because one has to say that people aren't doing it for the money, although there is an allowance for boarding duties and so on. On top of that, accommodation is provided for some of the staff, but not all. I think there is a sort of 'whole' commitment.

The effort the school makes to involve parents engenders huge support and commitment from them. It is unsurprising to find that parents are drawn to make a commitment in terms of time to the school. One is reminded of the experience of the experience of one mother referred to earlier who happily and cheerfully claimed that she had become a piece of the school furniture, for she gave so much of her time to the school.

Treetops

As seen in Chapter Eight (p.88), the girls' commitment to work cannot be disputed.

A sixth former reported felt that most people handed in their work on time:

You can get an extension if you're really stuck. In the Sixth Form if you don't get your work done, you are not allowed out at weekends.

This was clearly viewed as a serious curtailment of their privileges: perhaps particularly so, because London appeared to be something of a 'Mecca':

I have been home four weekends this term and I have been to London twice.

The apparently strong desire voiced by some to get away from the school at weekends, or, at the very least, to resist any sort of activity on offer in school belies the fact that there is a very full programme of pursuits to which the majority in school readily commit themselves.

The demands made on the residential staff in terms of time and energy are considerable. A Housemaster of first year sixth formers explained that although she had taught some of the girls joining her house at the beginning of each school year, she regarded the need to get to know and to establish a rapport with each individual girl as crucial.

I get 64 or 65 new girls at the beginning of September so the first two or three weeks are exhausting, because I have to be absolutely everywhere to try and get a flavour of what each of the girls is like: so you know how much you can trust them and how much rope to give them. Not only that; I see each of the girls at half-hourly intervals within the first week, to go through their A levels, why they have

chosen those A levels, what they got in their G.C.S.E's; and whether or not it is keeping up with their work, or getting up in the morning, or whatever it is, I usually get a picture of the sort of girl and what sort of things she might want to concentrate on.

The same Housemistress expressed her thoughts on her work, emphasising that classroom teaching was only a part of her task:

I think one shouldn't 'teach' children. I think one should 'educate' children. I think I see that my role with those little girls coming in is to educate them; in the rather barbaric world we live in, increasingly so, spiritually and morally, and I think that is the greatest gift we can give them and I think that is what this sort of school should and does provide.

Another staff member who combines the roles of Assistant Head and Housemistress of a group of first year sixth formers told me that she had initially struggled to maintain a teaching timetable of 22 periods per week. She was reluctant to relinquish her teaching role, believing it to be a vital part of her work, giving her a better understanding of her pupils. However, for the past few years her teaching timetable has been reduced to 7 periods per week:

I think it vital that I teach the first year (sixth) and that is all I do; and then I do a bit of Oxbridge (teaching) on the Romantics, which I like.

Her commitment is indisputable. She has a husband who lives in the family home, a 40-minute drive from the school and a son, now at University. She has a day and a half off duty each week, which she spends at her home. When asked what made it all worthwhile, she produced two reasons:

(a) I love teaching, but I could do that nearer home, it must be said

(b) just watching those girls go up through the school and seeing them turn from those timid little creatures into confident girls going off to take on the world.

The commitment of non-residential teaching staff, though compressed into shorter hours appears nonetheless to be equally demanding. Because the school is a boarding community, the school day stretches from 8.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. except on Wednesdays when lessons end at 4.40 p.m. On Saturdays the day starts at 8.35 and finishes at 1.30p.m. Although non-residential teaching staff are not required to remain in school when not required for teaching or other regular duties, it is clear that the commitment of the majority of them, though compressed into shorter hours, appears to be equally strong.

As a member of staff said:

You may be here longer, but when I look back at my previous (day) school, I was always taking masses of work home. Even though you finished, say, at 3.30 p.m. you have never really finished and I was taking lots of work home. So it was about the same in the end; and I used to feel tired there as well!

She too found her work very rewarding:

I think there are two aspects of it. In the teaching aspect of it, what I really get is seeing a girl understand, getting it through to them, seeing that they have struggled. Like recently with the Lower Fifth starting their Chemistry They just couldn't do it; then when they did the 'end of topic' test, they all did very well; and you could feel that they have got there. Then on the pastoral side, it is sorting out a problem for a girl, and seeing them happy with what we have done; then perhaps seeing her around and how things are going fine for her. I think that's what makes it all worthwhile.

Summary

In all three schools, three characteristics are found: a broad curriculum with a vibrant extra-curricular programme; a community which embraces and cares for all its members; and which succeeds in engendering in all a sense of commitment to the school and its ethics. Yet each school retains its distinctive character, due in part to the different styles of leadership of the two headmasters and the headmistress.

CHAPTER TEN

Summary and conclusions

In this chapter I intend to draw together the threads of the argument put forward in this study, linking them to the historical material, the research on boarding schools and the work on school effectiveness.

The argument

The three research questions provided a good starting point from which the argument might be developed. The first question focussed on the purposes of boarding. As in the second Chapter, the development of boarding education was traced from its inception in the fourteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century, so the developing purposes emerged. The earliest schools were Christian foundations. Set up initially to educate the sons of the ruling class, their catchment area spread over a very wide area. It was thus inevitable that the schools became national rather than local and that, for mainly pragmatic reasons, the schools should assume responsibility for the provision of accommodation. Without doubt, this change heralded a shift in the disposition of responsibilities for each boy's development, now to be shared by school and parents; for boys were if anything spending a greater proportion of their time at school, rather than at home. Thus, though the school's declared purpose was to train pupils to become scholars, administrators and clerics, training in skills that could largely be achieved in the classroom; they were also on intent on preparing their charges to be gentlemen, a

task more readily achieved using the opportunities provided by the experience of day-to-day life, rubbing shoulders with staff and fellow pupils within the school community. In this setting, they absorbed, as indicated by Lambert, (1975) the norms, values, culture and style of life appropriate to those who would later be at the apex of English society and who would wield power over others. From their earliest days, the schools assumed responsibility for more than mere academic progress.

It was not until the nineteenth century that schools began to express their aims in more detail. The number of schools for boys rapidly increased and, modelled on similar lines, residential schools for girls appeared. In the same period, the emergence of a number of inspired reforming heads coincided with the development of the philosophy of education. The 'new' thinking exemplified by researchers such as Passow, and Bloom, did not conflict with the long established aims of boarding schools; rather, it served to confirm the authenticity of the boarding school approach to education as embodying the responsibility to nurture the different aspects of student growth – intellectual, social emotional, aesthetic, moral and physical; in other words, to promote the development of every child's cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills. Moreover, practical steps taken by the reforming heads confirmed the ability of boarding schools to implement their aims. The existing structures of boarding continued to be used. The adherence to religious and moral principles remained. Organizational changes in house formats were made, which led to more responsibility being vested in those in charge of

houses and some responsibility being passed to senior pupils; the academic curriculum was broadened and the extended curriculum expanded.

Thus, in the twentieth century, heads were able to assert that not only were boarding schools able to offer a total education programme; they were also able to provide significant, specific opportunities for implementing it. These were the broad academic and extended curriculum; community life; and the overall commitment that school life evoked in all its members.

The research questions revisited

The first research question in this project, directed to each school in turn asked:

What are the purposes of boarding education in the view of schools, parents and pupils?

A study of the official literature generated in each school involved in the project clearly shows their endorsement of these aims. All three schools make it clear in their literature that their central purpose is to enable each pupil to develop to the full their qualities and skills, by using the support of a caring community, and by providing a broad curriculum and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. All three schools include the pursuit of academic excellence as part of their mission, but this is not interpreted solely in terms of high examination grades; the development of intellectual curiosity, self-discipline and a love of learning have importance. All concur in believing that successes in the extra-curricular

programme are of real value, promoting self-esteem, self-confidence and self-discipline which they consider to be essential to academic achievement. In addition to an analysis of school documents, the transcripts of interviews with parents, heads, staff and pupils indicated that their perceptions of the schools' purposes matched the declared aims of each school.

The collected evidence from parents and pupils of each school indicated some discrepancy in their perceptions of their chosen school's aims. Parents at the two boys' schools, **Abbeyfields** and **Foleybridge** clearly wanted their sons to achieve the best academic results of which they were capable; but there was little, if any, indication that they felt a need to impose pressure on them. They appeared to accept that the school promoted a love of learning that would produce enjoyment and appropriate rewards in examinations. The boys themselves appeared to enjoy their academic studies, though those in **Abbeyfields** expressed some disenchantment with the joint studies shared with a local girls' school. Certainly, in both schools, there appeared to exist total confidence in their teachers to help them to achieve their ambitions. Boys in both schools relished the variety of opportunities to pursue their interests outside the classroom; indeed, they appeared to have a very balanced approach to life. On the other hand, the girls seemed to accept rather than to relish their time at school. Their work appeared to occupy a central place in their lives and they conveyed a real sense of being under pressure to succeed academically. Though they acknowledged the variety of opportunities to extend their skills and interests, there appeared to be some resistance to taking up the opportunities, preferring to put what energy they possessed into their studies

and to spend time away from school whenever possible. The explanation to this discrepancy between the boys' schools and the girls' became clearer as answers to the third research question came to light.

How do different boarding schools go about achieving their purposes?

In seeking answers to this question, I also relied on analysing school documents and interviews, as above. The ways in which all three schools approached the task of achieving their aims included: the provision of a broad academic curriculum and extra-curricular activities; a conscious attempt to create and sustain a school community; and a reliance on extensive commitment to the aims of the school particularly on the part of staff and pupils, but also, on parents.

Differences between the schools began to emerge when I progressed to the second research question. At first sight the three schools in the study appeared to adopt the same strategies. All three schools offer a broad and well-balanced academic and extended curriculum, but the response of pupils to the opportunities on offer is markedly different. The evidence from both boys' schools indicates that the pupils expect to work hard, and do so; but additionally, they appeared to be willing to enjoy what they do, both in and out of the classroom. In the classroom, boys at **Abbeyfields** relish good teaching and are well motivated. The same is true of boys at **Foleybridge**, and they have an added incentive, in the shape of a house competition, to inspire them to maintain their efforts. In both schools, careful monitoring of each boy's progress prevents him from being placed under undue

pressure. At **Treetops**, the academic curriculum is very broad but also very demanding. The girls succeed in gaining high grades in an unusually high number of subjects. What I encountered however, particularly when talking to the first year sixth formers was a feeling they conveyed of being under intense pressure. This was confirmed by the director of studies who talked of the girls' 'survival' and was hoping to find ways of reducing their work-load. There appeared to be a real problem in that the broad academic curriculum, in itself desirable, enables the girls to set their sights on collecting high grades in as many subjects as possible. The director of studies is concerned that the teaching delivered in the classroom may well be geared to 'passing exams' rather than to expanding minds and instilling a love of learning. It appears that the policy has grown out of pressure imposed by parents, on their daughters and on the school. This is in apparent contrast to the relative lack of pressure in the boys' schools. The collected evidence showed that demands of academic work prevent some girls from taking up opportunities to relieve the pressure by expanding their interests, and introducing more balance into their lives. As indicated in chapter 6, all of the schools seemed to be successful in terms of pupils' examination results and, indeed, in the girls' school, **Treetops**, the average level of achievement (in terms of numbers and grades of examinations passed) was higher than in either of the boys' schools. However, interviews with pupils suggested that the girls found the academic programme over-demanding and appeared to find little pleasure in learning. Unlike the evidence gleaned in the boys' schools, there was little sign in their interviews of enthusiasm for their work.

All three schools provide extensive opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities which heads and staff consider to be an element in achieving their stated aims. The boys at **Abbeyfields** and **Foleybridge** engage with enthusiasm and relish in the many pursuits available, including some that take them out into the wider community beyond the school gates. At **Treetops** the response to extra-curricular activities, particularly from older girls, was more muted. The value of the additional opportunities was appreciated by some but, no doubt as a reaction to the hours spent on their studies, others, particularly the older girls, claimed to be too tired to do anything but relax and be lazy; an outcome that is at odds with the schools' declared intention to provide a holistic education.

The third research question asked:

How effective are they, (the schools) in achieving their purposes?

It would appear from the evidence that I have been able to produce that the boys' schools are somewhat more successful in achieving their aims than the girls' school. Analysis of the data supplied by all three schools (i.e. documentary evidence) showed that in each case, they consider the achievement of aims to be related to the idea of community. The collected evidence endorses the view that membership of the community, a sense of belonging to a group of people encompassing staff, pupils and parents, has real significance for the participants. They talk about it providing a sense of stability, opportunities for self-esteem to be boosted and for successes to be applauded and failures to be handled supportively and constructively.

The data (mainly from the interviews) accumulated from all three schools, revealed that to realise and support the community, a well-defined managerial and pastoral structure is required. This enables the interrelated parts to function as a whole and provides an infrastructure which binds the parts together. The basic physical and organisational structures needed for the operation of any society or enterprise community are readily identifiable in all three schools. Pupils in all three schools are divided horizontally into year and class groups. Thus they work with others in the same age group. However, in the two boys' schools, the houses, to which all pupils belong be they day or full boarders, are vertically divided. By having two different bases for division and identification, the boys' schools are able to give every pupil the opportunity to extend the number and age-range of friends and acquaintances and, by so doing, gain increasing awareness of belonging to the school community. However, in **Treetops**, the vertical house division is applied only for three of the seven years of a girl's school career; in the remaining four years, she lives and works with members of her year group. Inevitably, though she has the opportunity to establish firm friendships with her exact contemporaries, her awareness of being part of the whole school is limited. The girls were very aware of this and, though they felt things were improving as a few more opportunities for them to mix with other age-groups were appearing, they expressed dislike for the present system, finding it very restrictive. They firmly believed that there was a need for the school to cultivate a greater awareness of 'belonging' to the school community. While members of staff could see that greater mixing across age groups was desirable, very few were as clear as the girls as to the organizational implications of finding a solution to the problem.

Increasingly at **Abbeyfields**, parents are viewed as part of the school community; but this is a comparatively new development. On the other hand, at **Foleybridge**, parents are reported as being considerably involved in the school and I was able to observe for myself some parental involvement in the library, for example. Sadly, my enforced withdrawal from the project at a crucial moment made it impossible for me to interview parents ago girls at **Treetops**.

The third strategy which forms part of the policy to ensure successful levels of achievement is commitment. At **Abbeyfields**, even a member of staff who, when first appointed, found it hard to offer his whole allegiance to an independent school, now gives his full support. The level of commitment of the staff is indeed high in terms of open-door policies and long hours of work during term-time, so that for the majority their appointments represent a way of life, rather than a job. The school is managed on hierarchical lines, but it is beginning to adopt more democratic procedures. At the time of my visits, **Foleybridge** was led by a head whose full commitment to the school inspired staff, pupils and parents alike to give their unstinting support; this was evidenced in the interviews. As an outsider it appeared to me to be a school run on considerably more democratic lines than **Abbeyfields**. Interviews with staff and boys indicate that they felt that they were fully apprised of decisions and there were structures, such as the school council, which provided opportunities for their voices to be heard. **Treetops** seemed to me highly organised and well run, an impression borne out by the copious amounts of documentation about virtually every element of school life. A very strong

managerial structure was in place. My initial impression underwent some change as I gained more experience of the school. The sheer amount of documentation overwhelmed me, a visitor with professional interest in the running of girls' schools. Additionally, the somewhat unusual structure of the house system and the very demanding academic programme produced an imbalance in the school community which made it difficult to cultivate a feeling of unity.

Limitations of the study

While the underlying strategy for carrying out this research proved robust and qualitative methods of the sort adopted still seem appropriate, there are issues where the research might have been more rigorous. For example, in asking for the head to select pupils and staff, I am unable to know to what extent they were chosen with impartiality or to present the school in a good light. Consequently it is not possible to comment on how representative the informants were. I was pleased that they acceded to my request to include first-time boarders among those interviewed. In that sense I am happy that my sample does include a range of experiences of boarding. Even though I spent whole days at the schools which enabled me to attend lunch and gain a cursory view of each school, with hindsight it would probably have been fruitful to have negotiated greater access to them. In so doing, I could have set my perceptions of the academic and social activities and the ways in which community operated, alongside the perceptions of the various participants, and the portrayal of the school in the prospectuses.

As I anticipated when I embarked on the project, my own experience of the boarding sector, while helpful in some ways, has at times been a handicap. It was helpful when meeting the interviewees, who were entirely relaxed and open,

Areas for further research

My interest in effective schools led to my studying the prolific and complex body of research dealing with the subject that appeared in the 1960's and continues to the present day. I was dismayed to find that the main thrust of the research was to discover ways of improving performance in the cognitive area, particularly as this approach appears to have found favour with, and acceptance by, those who frame national policy. I am conscious of the fact that most of the effective school research has been conducted in day schools, though none, it would appear, in day schools that share the philosophy of holistic education to which schools adhering to the public school traditions subscribe. My dismay has been tempered by the work of a significant, albeit largely disregarded number of researchers who have criticized the lack of interest shown in the development of affective and psychomotor areas.

Totally unexpectedly, the evidence gathered for this project reflects 'the great divide' that has occurred in this country as attempts have been made to raise levels of achievement in all schools. The study of three boarding schools, all working towards the same holistic goals and using apparently the same basic structures common to residential schools, nevertheless, produced very different outcomes. In their different ways each of the schools in this study claimed to address the education of the whole child, but the interpretation of the house structure in the

girls' school differed from that applied in the other two. This led to a palpable difference in the interpretation of the school and house community. The girls themselves recognized that living and working with girls either a year older or younger made it more difficult for them to develop an awareness of the school 'as a whole'. Additionally, the girls' preoccupation with securing high grades in examinations sapped their energies and prevented them from making full use of the wide range of opportunities offered in extended curriculum.

- As I have worked on this study, I have encountered a number of areas in which further research might prove to be fruitful. A study of the concept of the school community as applied in both state and independent day schools could be very productive.
- A second area that might be explored is linked with the development of community. This study has drawn attention to the value of providing pupils with opportunities not only to mix with their own age groups, but also to get to know younger and older pupils. Research on the use of vertical and horizontally formed divisions in schools could be beneficial.
- As, increasingly, parental commitments take up time that was once devoted to the family, an exploration of the length of the school day might lead to a new approach to the academic and more particularly to the extended curriculum.

- If young people were to spend longer hours on school premises, research relating to teacher training might explore how best the teaching profession can be prepared to meet the new challenges that schools will face.
- Finally, in engaging in this project, I was reminded of the innumerable qualities required of members of the teaching profession. The use of the word 'schoolmaster', as opposed to 'teacher' by one interviewee reminded me of the complexities of the work involved. A study of the exact nature of the work undertaken by teachers in schools could prove effective in maintaining and where necessary, restoring morale and confidence.

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Appendices

1. Bloom's Taxonomy as interpreted by Butler 2002
2. Letter to heads of boarding schools
3. Questions for interviews
 - Headteachers
 - Staff
 - Pupils
 - Parents
4. Sample interview schedule (one week at one school)
5. Sample interview transcripts
 - Abbeyfields: 13 year old pupil
 - Abbeyfields: member of teaching staff
 - Foleybridge: headteacher
 - Foleybridge: parent
 - Treetops: 17 year old pupil
 - Treetops: member of ancillary staff

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

Interpreted by Barbara Butler (2002)

Learning Domains or Bloom's Taxonomy

Adapted for Public Garden Informal Education Programs

Barbara H. Butler

In 1956, Benjamin Bloom (a professor of education from 1943-1970 at the University of Chicago) chaired a group of educational psychologists who developed a classification of levels of intellectual behavior important in learning. The results of this work was published in 1965 and now is known as Bloom's Taxonomy. It is the most widely applied such taxonomy in use today. It includes three overlapping domains: the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Although it is used mainly by formal educators, this taxonomy is quite useful in the conceptualization of informal learning activities. Although emphasis is generally placed on the cognitive domain, informal learning activities can be especially effective in reaching the affective and psychomotor domains as well. The cognitive domain focuses on mental skills (knowledge), the affective domain details feelings or emotional areas (attitudes, feelings), while psychomotor domain addresses manual or physical skills (skills). Collectively these are also known as KASs, SKAs, or KSAs (Knowledge, Attitude, and Skills). Serrell, in Butler and Serrell (2001), refers to these three as "Do, Think, Feel."

The Bloom committee produced classification schemes for the cognitive and affective domains, but none for the psychomotor domain. Their explanation for this was that they had little experience in teaching manual skills at a college level. Others, however, have developed subdivisions for this domain: E.J. Simpson (1972), A.J. Harrow (1972), and R.H. Dave (1970). The Dave version is presented here, as this seems most compatible with informal learning in a public garden setting.

Cognitive Domain

This category involves knowledge and the development of intellectual skills. This includes the recall or recognition of specific facts, procedural patterns, and concepts that serve in the development of intellectual abilities and skills. There are six major categories, which are listed in order below, starting from the simplest behavior to the most complex. The categories can be thought of as degrees of difficulties. That is, the first one must be mastered before the next one can take place. The following presents the current categories from the revision of the taxonomy as presented in Anderson and Krathwhol (2001).

Learner's Behavior	Examples of a Learner's Activity	Key Words
Remember: Retrieve relevant knowledge from long-term memory. This involved the processes of recognizing and recalling.	Recites names of plants or a list of attributes about a plant. List the plants that grow in a certain area. Know the parts of a plant.	Defines, describes, identifies, labels, lists, matches, names, outlines, recalls, recognizes, reproduces, selects, states.
Understand: Construct meaning from instructional messages, including oral, written, and graphic communication.	Explain the relationship between a humming bird and a flower. Distinguish between a deciduous and evergreen leaf. Cite two different way that plants propagate.	Classifies, cites, compares, distinguishes, estimates, explains, extends, generalizes, infers, interprets, paraphrases, predicts, rewrites in own words, summarizes.
Apply: Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation.	Use a dichotomous key to identify a tree. Determine the pH of the soil.	Applies, computes, constructs, demonstrates, manipulates, modifies, operates, predicts, prepares, produces, shows, solves, uses.
Analyze: Separates material or concepts into component parts and determine how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose.	Determine the point of view, bias, values or intent underlying a newspaper editorial about biodiversity. Analyze the arguments for and against draining marsh lands.	Analyzes, compares, contrasts, diagrams, deconstructs, differentiates, discriminates, distinguishes, identifies, illustrates, infers.
Evaluate: Make judgments about the value of ideas or materials based on criteria and standards. (Some equate this level to critical thinking.)	Determine which of the several ways possible is the best way to solve a given environmental problem. Determine if the scientist's conclusions follow from the observed data.	Appraises, compares, concludes, contrasts, critiques, discriminates, evaluates, explains, interprets, justifies.
Create: Put elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganize elements into a new pattern or structure. (Some equate this level to creative thinking.)	Design a xeriscape garden including plant selection and hardscape. Generate a hypotheses to account for increased acidity in the soil.	Combines, compiles, composes, constructs, creates, devises, designs, generates, modifies, plans, rearranges, reconstructs, reorganizes, revises, rewrites, writes.

Affective Domain

This category, published a few years after the cognitive domain taxonomy (Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia, 1964), includes the manner in which we deal with attitudinal and emotional aspects of learning including feelings, appreciation, enthusiasm, motivations, attitudes, and values. If the purpose of the learning activity is the change attitudes and behavior, then the activities should be structured according to this hierarchy. The five major categories listed in ascending order of complexity are:

Learner's Behavior	Examples of a Learner's Activity	Keywords
Receiving is awareness, willingness to hear, selected attention. Passive attention	Listen to others (guide, family member, friend etc.) respectfully. Listen for and remember the name of newly introduced plants.	Asks, acknowledges, follows, , locates, selects, retains, responds, processes.
Responding involves active participation on the part of the learner; attends and reacts to a particular phenomenon. Learner is willing to respond, or shows satisfaction in responding (motivation).	Participates in a group discussion or a conversation. Questions new ideals, concepts, models, etc. in order to fully understand them. Offers to assist others in seeing the characteristics of plants.	Answers, assists, aids, complies, conforms, discusses, greets, helps, labels, performs, practices, presents, reads, recites, reports, selects, tells, writes.
Valuing is the worth or value a person attaches to a particular object, phenomenon, or behavior. The range is from simple acceptance to commitment. Based on the internalization of a set of specified values and clues to these values are expressed in the learner's overt behavior.	Demonstrates belief in a healthy ecosystem and biodiversity. Values individual and cultural differences (diversity). Proposes a plan to increase the diversity of plants in a neighborhood and follows through with commitment. Informs public leaders on environmental matters that one feels strongly about.	Argues, completes, commits to, convinces others, differentiates, explains, follows, initiates, invites, joins, justifies, proposes, protests, reads, reports, selects, shares, studies.
Organizing values involves contrasting different values, resolving conflicts between them, and	State personal position reflecting a reasonable balance between the needs of the society and the need to	Alters, arranges, combines, compares, completes, defends, explains, formulates

Psychomotor Domain

The psychomotor category emphasizes physical skills, coordination, and use of the motor-skills. Development of these skills requires practice and is measured in terms of speed, precision, distance, procedures, or techniques in execution. There are five major categories in the R.H. Dave (1970) scheme.

Learner's Behavior	Examples of a Learner's Activity	Keywords
Imitation: Observes and patterns behavior after someone else. Performance may be of low quality.	Copy a drawing of a plant, move like an opening flower, build a bird's nest. Feel the differences in four leaf types.	Trace, copy, follow, imitate, reproduce, locate, obtain, hear, smell, taste, feel.
Manipulation: Performs skill according to instruction rather than observation.	Cut a bean and kernel of corn in half and prepare them for examination under a dissecting microscope. Build a cold frame. Prune a tree.	Assemble, adjust, build, calibrate, connect, focus, play (as in music), thread.
Develop Precision: Reproduces a skill with accuracy, proportion and exactness; usually performed independently of original source.	Using a CAD, design the layout for a play area that is a learning center for the children about plants. Draw a map of a swamp to scale and label all the features.	Assemble, set-up, manipulate, calibrate, calculate, mix.
Articulation: Combines more than one skill in a sequence, achieving harmony and internal consistency.	Produce a video showing a slow motion development of an annual from seed to flower. Build a model of an historic landscape.	Manipulate, coordinate, combine, regulate, integrate, standardize, shape, recreate.
Naturalization: Has a high level of performance. Performance becomes automatic. Completes one or more skills with ease. Creativity is based on highly developed skills.	Construct a station to collect environmental monitoring data.	Create, formulate, design invent, construct, develop.

Letter to Heads of Boarding Schools

Home address

Date

Dear (Head's Name)

Thank you so much for agreeing to see me. Whatever the outcome of our meeting, I know that the opportunity to discuss my research programme with you will be enormously helpful. I feel it may be useful to provide a summary of the implications of the project for the school.

The research questions I am seeking to answer are as follows:

1. What are the purposes of boarding education in the view of schools, parents and pupils?
2. How do different boarding schools go about achieving their purposes?
3. How effective are they in achieving their purposes?

This will involve interviews with key informants:

- (a) The Head
- (a) Up to six members of staff, representing the different facets of school life.
- (b) Eight pupils, four aged 13, four first year sixth-formers. The 13 year olds will be seen in pairs, the sixth-formers, individually. They will include some first generation boarders.
- (c) Their parents, mothers and fathers separately, chosen as representative of different consumer groups.

I envisage that each interview will occupy up to one hour and that possibly two interviews will be needed. The conversation with each person will be recorded and anonymity and complete confidentiality will be guaranteed.

It will be very helpful to receive a copy of the prospectus and other publicity materials. I will be grateful to have access to any other literature that will contribute to the construction of an accurate profile of the school.

In conjunction with you, I will prepare letters for the parents and members of staff invited to participate, explaining the purpose of the interview and outlining the kind of questions I wish to discuss with them. I shall also tell them that the interviews will be taped and explain how the tapes will be used. It will be necessary at this point to give guarantees of anonymity and an assurance that each interviewee will have opportunity to read and check the accuracy of the transcript.

It is my hope that as a result of the research programme, I will be able to produce accurate accounts of boarding. Additionally in that some boarding practices could inform schools generally, the findings may be of more general interest.

I am most grateful to you for allowing me to trespass on your time. Both my supervisors will be glad to answer any further questions you may have.

They are: Professor Mary Fuller, B.Sc., Ph.D., (01242) 532212 and Ms. Pauline Dooley, B. Ed., M. Phil., (01242) 532975. They can be reached at:

Faculty of Education and Social Studies,
Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, PO Box 220,
The Park, Cheltenham, GL 50 2 QF.

Yours sincerely,

QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS

Questions for interview

(b) with Head

1. What philosophy (ies?) provide(s) the driving force for the school? How much do these owe to the past? Will the dawn of the new millennium provide the impetus for radical changes?
2. Has the word 'community' any particular significance in terms of the school? How do you perceive the school community?

Some researchers have concluded that schools consist of inter-related units which can be 'fixed' by applying the right mix of policy and resource inputs which will result in greater effectiveness. Effectiveness generally relates to higher academic standards. Having studied the Parent Handbook, it appears to me that the policy and resource inputs are in place. But are there other factors to consider?

3. It would appear crucial to adopt the appropriate management style. Can you tell me something about your own style?

You say in the Handbook that education at Old Swinford has an immense breadth to it, such as can, you believe, only be offered in a boarding school. Can you elaborate on this, perhaps by giving specific examples?

But is there more to it than this? For instance:

4. How far is it possible to ascribe the effectiveness of the school in the academic field to the boarding factor? Can you tell me what you mean by "academic effectiveness"? What is this school doing which leads to better academic performance that couldn't be done in a wholly day environment? What is it that you can't achieve with day boarders that you can with full boarders? Are there certain structures that have to be avoided to avoid disadvantaging either dayboys or boarders?
What of effectiveness in other fields: social, emotional, moral, aesthetic and physical?
5. How would you describe relationships between staff and pupils?
5. How would you describe the relationship between parents of boarders/day boarders/boarders and the school?
7. Are there any ways in which boarding can affect a boy's progress in a detrimental way?

Questions for interviews

© with staff

1. Can you tell me a little about your own educational background and teaching experience to date and, in particular, why you have chosen to work (i) in a boarding environment; (ii) in this particular school?
2. Are you entirely in sympathy with the general aims of the school? If you have any reservations, what amendments would you support?
3. Does the management structure of the school help you to address the wider educational aims to which most schools pay lip-service; i.e. nurture the growth of each pupil's academic, social, emotional, moral, aesthetic and physical development? How much scope do you have to engage in encouraging the all-round growth of your pupils?
4. What particular stratagems do you employ? Does the presence of full boarders, day boarders and dayboys helpful or otherwise?
5. Do you feel that there are any ways in which a boarding environment inhibits progress or provokes problems?
6. How would you describe relationships between staff and pupils; staff and parents?
7. Does your job offer sufficient challenge, or are there times when frustration creeps in?
8. What criteria would you use to measure the effectiveness of the school as a whole? Your own effectiveness?
9. How do you rate both on a scale of 1 – 10?

Questions for interview

(d) with pupils

1. Tell me first a little about yourself; your age, your family, your previous school(s).
 2. Which form are you in? Do you stay in the same teaching group for all classes? Which House? Can you change houses if friendships change or do you remain there for the whole of your school career?
 3. Who made the decision that you should attend a boarding school; you? your parents? How many schools were considered before this school was chosen? Do you know why the decision was made?
 4. Do you feel any sense of privilege about being a member of this school? What does this school set out to do which makes it a good place for you to be?
 5. Which part of school life do you enjoy most?
 - (a) **Work** Do you find it easy to study? Are there particular incentives to encourage you to try hard? To do well? What happens if you slack? To whom do you turn if you have a problem? Have you any particular goals in life? Did you come here with them, or have they evolved as a result of being here? Do you think that everything is here to help you realise your goals?
 - (b) **Social** Does the school system help you to make friends with your exact contemporaries? With younger pupils? With older pupils? Has being a boarder changed your relationship with your parents? Your brother(s)/ sisters? Adults generally? Do you feel cut off from the world in general as a result of being in a boarding school? What about girls? Do you get opportunities to meet them? school? In extra-curricula activities? At home?
 - © **Emotional** Can you explain it? What happens if you have a really upsetting personal problem? To whom do you turn for help? Are there others to whom you can talk?
 - (d) **Moral** Have you got a set of values on which you base your life? Do your standards reflect those upheld by the school? Have your values been modified in any way since you joined the school?
 - (e) **Aesthetic** You are living in very beautiful surroundings. Does this fact make a difference to your life, or is it something you take for granted? Do you think that since you joined the school, your appreciation of art, music, literature, science, has increased/diminished?
 - (f) **Physical** what contribution does the provision of sporting activities, good food, general levels of comfort etc., make to your life?
- What do you enjoy most? What do you dislike about being here?
6. Do you think that as a result of being here you are going to achieve your particular ambitions?
 7. Do you think that the school gives you an adequate preparation for adult life?
 8. What would you change if you could?
 9. Will your own children attend boarding schools?

Questions for interviews

(a) with parents.

A. Background information.

1. Will you give me a brief outline of your own educational history?
2. Can you give me a brief, thumbnail sketch of your son/daughter?

B. What are the purposes of boarding education as perceived by parents?

1. Why did you choose to send your son/daughter to boarding, rather than a day school?
2. How did you come to send him/her to this school?
3. Did either of you, or any other member of your family, experience any initial difficulties when your son/daughter joined the school?
4. Do you now perceive any particular disadvantages in the boarding system: for your son/daughter; for you as his/her mother/father; for the school?
5. What do you expect the school to do for your son/daughter in terms of his/her intellectual, social, emotional, aesthetic, moral and physical growth
 - (a) **Intellectual** Are you happy with the scope of courses offered? Has motivation been sustained? Has there been a recognisable growth in understanding? a broadening of interests? Careers advice? Contact with role models e.g. former members of school?
 - (b) **Social** Has he/ she encountered any specific problems in any of these areas? What part was played by the school, by you, in resolving his/her difficulty? What effect has boarding had on your son/daughter's relationships with members of his/her immediate family: i.e. father, mother, brothers, sisters etc.?
 - (c) **Emotional** Do you feel that being in a single sex, boarding environment has helped or hindered your son/daughter's emotional development so far? Do you foresee problems ahead?
 - (d) **Moral** Are you aware of any change in stance assumed by your son/daughter since he/she joined the school? Has he/she shown any signs of rebellion?
 - (e) **Aesthetic** Has your son/daughter's appreciation of beauty, whether in art, music, literature, the environment noticeably altered since he/she joined the school?
 - (f) **Physical** Do you feel that the school's provision of sporting activities, general levels of comfort have encouraged healthy physical development or otherwise? (It is said that the introduction of central heating into public schools hastened the demise of the British Empire!)
6. How would you describe your relationship with the school?
7. Do you wish for greater involvement or do you feel able to make a worthwhile contribution?
8. Looking back, with hindsight, would you have made different decisions concerning your son/daughter's education? For what reasons?
9. By sending him away to school, do you feel you have "missed out" on being able to play a full parent's role in guiding him through his adolescent years?
 10. Are there any things that the school has accomplished for your son that you have especially Valued?

SAMPLE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

MONDAY, 17TH MAY

TIME	NAME	TITLE
10.00 am - 11.00 am		Headmaster
11.15 am - 12.15 pm		Lower Sixth
12.30 pm - 1.30 pm	Lunch	CFRP
1.30 pm - 2.30 pm		HOD, Careers Dept
2.45 pm - 3.45 pm		Matron, Foster House

TUESDAY, 18TH MAY

TIME	NAME	TITLE
10.00 am - 11.00 am		Grandfather of D
11.15 am - 12.15 pm		
12.30 pm - 1.30 pm	Lunch with	Director of Extra-Curr. Activities
1.30 pm - 2.30 pm		Year 9
2.45 pm - 3.45 pm		Lower Sixth

THURSDAY, 20TH MAY

TIME	NAME	TITLE
10.00 am - 11.00 am		Parent
11.15 am - 12.15 pm		Director of Boarding
12.30 pm - 1.30 pm	Lunch with	Head of Sixth Form
1.30 pm - 2.30 pm		Year 9
2.45 pm - 3.45 pm		Year 9

FRIDAY, 21ST MAY

TIME	NAME	TITLE
10.00 am - 11.00 am		
11.15 am - 12.15 pm		Lower Sixth
12.30 pm - 1.30 pm	Lunch with	Deputy Headmaster
2.00 pm - 2.45 pm		Parent
2.50 pm - 3.50 pm		Year 9

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW
WITH
THIRTEEN YEAR OLD FROM ABBEYFIELDS

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~~Can you tell me a little bit about your own background? You family, where you live and how you came to be here. ?~~

~~Well my mother and my father and Jean and.... I live six miles from here in a village called I have a brother at school as well. He is a year above me and he is called Will and is in the same house as me. I went to..... and got a scholarship here in May.~~
Many congratulations. Are you a full boarder or a day pupil?

I am a full boarder.

Were you in your previous school?

Yes, I was.

You have always boarded and your brother likewise.

Yes.

This presumably was your parents' decision.

Yes, it was. It was partly mine as well.

Were you involved as far as this school is concerned, when they thought right where shall we send him next, why - did you look at several?

Yes we looked at several such as Radley, Camford, but we decided on partly because we knew the town very well and it seemed like quite a good school as it has a good mix of sport and academic.

And when you say we you really were involved in the decision and nothing appealed to you more obviously. And then you sat Common Entrance.

No I sat the scholarship.

And you came here in September. You haven't been here very long but your brother was already here in the same house. You have always boarded since the age of what?

7 or 8.

Do you feel you have missed out on anything because of that?

Not really. I think that starting off boarding young is quite a good decision because it means that you learn to stay away from home and so you are not homesick at all.

Were you ever homesick?

I was for about a week to start off with.

That is pretty good isn't it?

What about your parents. How do they survive without you?

My father is retired. He retired earlier this year. So he is at home quite a lot of the time. He was in the Navy. My mother works for Sherman Pratt just across the road, part time.

So she is quite busy. Do you see her?

I see her sometime around the town.

That is rather nice. Do you think it - perhaps that is the wrong thing it won't have changed your relationship with your parents, but have you got a good relationship with them in spite of boarding?

Yes because I talk to them quite a lot on the phone and at weekends quite often I go home because it is not far.

And they both there I expect.

At the weekends they are.

So you don't feel that you are missing out on having them as your parents. Do you find you can talk on any subject to them?

Yes.

What about this brother of yours. Are you on good terms with him?

Most of the time yes.

Do you see anything of him?

Oh I see him quite often around the house but not much apart from that.

Do you chat or do you rather ignore one another?

At school I don't suppose you chat as much because we have got friends of our own age.

So you don't bother with one another?

But at home we do quite a lot of things together.

Does the school system help you to make friends? Have you made friends since you

arrived here?

Yes I suppose I have because, well partly being in the house and boarding with other people, you get to know each other very well.

How many in your dormitory?

Three other boarders in the house in my year but there are also three other day pupils.

All in your room?

And 2 in the year above us.

So it is a small dormitory in fact. And do you like that?

Yes I do quite like it.

You don't get fed up with having them around?

Most of the time no. Sometimes it can be hard.

Can you get to sleep and all that sort of thing?

Yes.

I expect you are pretty tired after a day here. It is pretty energetic. Do you make friends here, do you have a chance to make friends with older boys or not?

I wouldn't say that you do as much.

They are nearly all your age group. You haven't any experience yet of those younger I suppose but the same will apply.

I think you only make friends with the year above in your own house.

When you think of being a member of this school do you instantly think of your house rather than the whole school?

No I wouldn't say that.

You feel you are a member of the whole community do you?

Yes, but I feel quite small in it.

That is inevitable when you have just come. It is quite a good feeling to feel you are part of the big unit isn't it? What about your own year group, do you encounter many of them?

We encounter most of them because in lessons we meet quite a lot of them because of the different settings. But the ones we don't meet in class we normally in sport.

What academic expectations do you have of this school? What do you hope it will do for you?

I hope that it will help me to get good grades.

Any idea what you want to do yet?

No I haven't.

Do you enjoy your work?

Some of it, certain subjects. I like Languages but I don't like Maths.

You have got to get them but you can't neglect them. You are OK are you?

Yes.

But Languages are possibly

Yes I prefer Languages.

What are you learning?

French, Spanish, Greek and Latin.

Where did you start your Greek?

I started - well I did about half a term at my prep school but we have done half a term here. We sort of alternat between Greek and Latin.

Do you like Greek?

I prefer Latin to Greek but I don't mind Greek.

What do you do - what other activities do you do? What do you enjoy?

I like doing sport, cycling.

Cycling. Can you do it here?

You are allowed bikes here but I prefer off road and there is quite a lot of road.

Where do you it off road?

I usually do it around my house.

Do you have any fun here?

Yes we do actually. Mostly in the evenings. We have Hall in the evenings and then we have half an hour off when you can just relax.

And what form does the fun take? Is it energetic fun?

Quite often we do sort of shout in the dormitory which is fun. But we usually play football or something in the sports hall.

Do you find there is plenty to do or do you get bored?

There is plenty to do if you can be bothered to do it. There is a lot on offer.

Very wise statement that. Nobody pushes you into it, you have got to do it.

Yes.

And you do some of them. What about girls? Have you met any here?

Yes because we have social evenings with the girls' school when we go to their houses or they come here.

Does that work?

Yes it does. Most of us go and we had a disco last weekend.

And you enjoy that?

Yes.

Were you in a co-ed school?

No

So this is a new thing?

We had discos with other schools.

But you are quite happy with it and get on with it. Do you meet in the town or do you not go into the town yet?

They are not allowed into the town during the week but they are on Saturdays.

So you might meet them then?

Yes.

Is that enough?

I don't know because we can phone them and talk to them.

But as you get a bit older?

As we get older - in the Sixth Form they are allowed more.

Not yet. You have to wait for that. What about prefects and so on? What are your relations with the older boys who have authority? How do you get on with them?

Well the prefects in my house at the moment are really nice.

So all is well.

Yes.

Do they have a job to do? Do you respond as a house?

Yes I think we respect them if they are nice to us.

And that is the case at the moment?

Yes.

Have you had a problem with your work since you have been here?

There was one lesson which I got thrown out of because the teacher thought that I was undermining his authority or something.

Tell me more.

He said that I was looking for cheap laughs and so he told me.

Was this because of the way you responded to his questioning?

Yes.

Oh I see,

And he told me to go away and not come back but I walked in as normal at the next lesson. He sort of talked to me after that and I talked to my Housemaster and he talked to him but I wasn't allowed to speak in the next few lessons.

What lesson was it?

French. We have got two teachers for French. We have one main one who is really nice but one lesson a week we have another French teacher who is quite strict.

Have you come to terms with it now? You are handling it are you?

Yes. I don't think the teacher likes me anyway. He referees our rugby matches so he usually gets me then.

Don't you believe it. Anyway you are handling that. I was going to say who do you go and talk to but you talked to the housemaster and to the man himself.

Not as much,

But he came and talked to you and told you what was wrong and presumably you are trying to put it right.

Yes.

You have fairly high expectations of yourself I suppose having got a scholarship which is a great start. Do your parents expect you to do well?

I don't think they expect me to do well. I think they wouldn't like it too much if I did very badly. They would like me to do well but they don't put any pressure on me.

Why do you work, because I expect you work quite hard?

Yes I do. Well it is the fear of having my scholarship taken away. If you just stop working then you get a..... so I would like to get good grades.

So you are putting pressure on yourself for whatever reason? Do the staff put you under much pressure?

I don't think in the first term they do.

Would you like more from them?

No not really.

Do you feel competent to make yourself work?

Yes. They give us quite a lot of work and we just have to get on with that in any free time we have.

Where do you do it if you are doing it in free time?

We do it in the hall of the Third Form and in the house in the day room where we work.

So you can go there any time.

Yes or we can work in the library.

So you just have different places to work? And are they quiet in the day room?

Most of the time.

Do you have another room for noise?

There is a common room.

Supposing you have a different sort of problem. You know, perhaps you quarrel with your friend, be it a girl or a boy friend, and harsh words are said and it gets you down, who would you go to?

I don't think I would go to anyone. I would probably try to just sort it out myself.

You wouldn't tell your brother or one of your friends.

Well I might just mention it but I wouldn't ask them to do something about it.

No

I would see it as my quarrel so I would have to sort it out.

Do you feel that though you have only been here a short time you are more capable of sorting things out for yourself?

I don't know. I haven't actually had anything to sort out myself this term. I don't know. I haven't had that many problems.

But you would find someone to talk to if you needed it? Who would you feel able to talk to?

I would talk to my Housemaster.

Which house are you in?

I am in

is the one with the big dormitory. What else do you do besides work. You play rugby. Do you do any other club activities or sing or...?

I don't do any music at all. But every Monday afternoon we have an activity with the girls school and there is a whole list of things from debates to creative things and every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, we have creative activities when we do such things as Drama, Art, Technology,

What have you been doing this term?

This term I have been doing - you can't choose you are put in a group. The first block will do Technology, Art and Computers.

Is that what you did this term?

I did Technology, personal development.

Drama.

No I have been doing Drama recently because the block changed.

A good variety. Art do you like.

I am not very good at it but I enjoy it.

Would you, this is awfully early days to be asking this, but sitting now at the end of the first term have you come across anything you would change had you the power

to change it?

I would change my exams results.

Weren't they good enough for you?

Some weren't.

You have got to expect that. When you think about how much you have to absorb in just being here let alone doing any work. Well you can change that next term.

With hard work.

It starts next term. You will have to start getting ready for the next lot.

But nothing major that you feel isn't here but should be.

I don't know. Something which I don't like too much is that we have sport - there is a lot less organised sport, which I suppose is all right if you don't like sport but it means you have to find the time to go and do it and find someone to do it with.

That actually is quite a good thing when you stand back.

Yes I think it is, but it is quite hard.

It means you have got to take the initiative and get on with it. Will you send your own children to boarding school? Do you think boarding is a good thing or not.

I think it is actually.

You don't think you miss out on your home life?

No. I think if you are a day boy you miss out in school life.

The other side of the coin isn't it. Well thank you very much. You have been enormously helpful.

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW
WITH
MEMBER OF THE TEACHING STAFF AT ABBEYFIELDS

Interview with

Your own involvement with boarding; when it started? Your own personal involvement.

How old were you when it started?

I was 11 when I started to board.

Did you go right through as a boarder?

I did.

Was this usual for you family?

Very unusual! I say that. Neither of me parents; no! that's quite wrong. My mother had boarding, but my mother is by way of being Irish and was sent away because there simply wasn't a school anywhere nearby. My father had been at the High School in Newport, as indeed had his father and that was where I would have gone as well except that Mrs Williams had different ideas and Newport Borough Council embraced the Comprehensive ideal with enormous enthusiasm at a very early stage. So the High School disappeared in the year in which I was due to join it.

I started at 11 and went on through till I left at 17. Curiously enough I was miserably homesick to start with and I still have memories of tearful nights. But by the time I had got to the sixth form, my parents by that stage had moved abroad and then moved back again and found themselves a house very close to the school and were quite anxious I should become a day pupil at that stage. I'm afraid that wretched child that I was, I dug my heels in and said I don't want to do it. You've fought your way to the top of the system, this was 1967 to 73, and it just felt very differently then.

Which school were you at?

I was at Monmouth.

Did it affect you relationship with your parents at any stage?

I'm not convinced that it did, but that may be partly because my mother was a G.P. and whether she was there or not was a pretty hit and miss business anyway; never sure when she was going to be around. My father was working very hard as well. Soon after I started at school in fact, he left and went to work in Africa for a longish spell. Now I don't quite know what would have happened. I think boarding was probably literally the only option available to us at that stage. I don't see how else we could have done it.

I'm going to jump to a question I don't normally ask members of staff, but the thing that bothers me about the educational system as a whole in this country at the moment, the way it is being handled by the government, is that the educational; pundits are saying that if we get the right mix of policy and the right resources then you will get better and better outcomes. But they're measuring

those outcomes by the League Tables. In other words, if you get the right mix, then you get better academic success. Surely there's more to what we're doing, to what you're doing here as your other members of staff have pointed out to me; you're not just teachers, you're schoolmasters which has a different meaning altogether. I question whether those academic results would be as good if you hadn't got surrounding pastoral care and the emphasis on things cultural and helpful and so on and the care for every part of a boy's personality.

I go along with that absolutely. I don't think there's any doubt about it. One's seen it again and again and again with boys. The busiest ones tend to be the most successful. People I think rather happily assume that if you spend a lot of time rehearsing the choir or playing cricket this will somehow detract from your performance in the classroom. Of course the reverse is true. The busier boys tend to be the most successful across a range of activities. It's confidence isn't it, it's self-esteem.

If only people knew how much time they give to the performance of music. There's no time at all for musicians usually and yet they produce it.

Any thing that boosts their self-esteem has a happy knock on effect into other areas.

I'm worried that so much of this part of school mastering is being missed out by those who are in day schools.

I can imagine they have little opportunity to do it.

Of course some do; I've met so many dedicated day school teachers I'm sure the intentions are there, the will is there but there just isn't the time.

It's a very difficult business this, isn't it? I mean one can see all kinds of things that are militating in the one direction. I can think of obviously the publication of league tables and the way in which they are subsequently interpreted by the media and by parents. One can see that there is pressure coming in from appraisal systems, which is still very new in schools like this. This time last year when the governments Green Paper was explicitly linking preferential pay awards to appraisal, you start thinking, well any young teacher under pressure of time and so on: parental expectations, League Tables appraisal and all these things; if I were a young teacher and I thought I was being appraised largely on my performance in the class room, that might encourage me to think twice about whether or not I was going to take the boys rock climbing in the Cairngorms next Easter.

I think the thing that stands out is the fact that the job done in schools like this is a way of life; it's not a mere job. You can't say it's a job because people are prepared to devote the whole of their time in term time to the boys; that's what it boils down to. I keep asking why they do it?

I don't know! It's an interesting one. I have mentored senior staff here and spent time encouraging them to break and get away.

I think that's vital. I'm not saying that you give every minute. That was wrong to say that. I think you've got to go and get refreshment outside or you'll be useless when you're in the building. No, I'm with you there; but nevertheless, when you are here in the building, if a boy needs you, you're there. That comes over from everybody.

I can't imagine it being otherwise. I can't imagine a housemaster saying to a boy, except in extreme circumstances, I'm terribly sorry, can you come back another time.

You haven't really got time to have a full personal life in term time. You can do perhaps one thing: obviously you spend time with you family but they too very often, get drawn into the net. You can't keep them separate; they're part of it.

Only last night I discovered that my daughter is saying a prayer in the Christingle Service in the Abbey on Sunday and I'm already committed to being at a school concert here and I think, what do I do? The boys in the school orchestra won't notice whether I'm here or not. My duty is very clear, but uncongenial given the circumstances. My daughter astonishingly said to me last night, Don't worry Daddy, it's all right. I'll read you the prayer some other time. We can go into the Abbey and I'll read it to just you. And you think, have I got this right? But she of course was brought up in a boarding house knowing full well that daddy wasn't going to be around when she wanted daddy and she's come to terms with the slightly warped vision of the way parents operate. It is inconceivable that people can simply say 'go away'. I don't know why they do it.

People have suggested money.

I have an alternative suggestion which you may think quite outlandish. I think people look for the sort of perfection in their relationship with other human beings, particularly their wives or husbands. Many will track that down to a subconscious quest for perfection which represents something which is divine, unknowable. Is this too ridiculous for words?

No, what you're tying up with is my own explanation; that teaching is or should be a vocation, which is a word that has gone out of the window. How often have you heard anyone thinking of the teaching profession talk about vocation?

People don't go into it for the money though do they? Pretty emphatically one could look at it and say no! The sort of salary structure.....

No. they can't even go into it because it's safe anymore because it's not!

Do they go into it because its easy? Some do and of course they get disabused of that notion very early. You've seen it and I have; people who come into the profession, do a year, do two, and then say, not for me. Very wisely!

They think they're going to have long holidays and shorter hours and they're disabused of that to a certain extent wherever they go. It's a mystery though to me.

It's always disappointing when you hear boys, as I sometimes do, say something to the effect that hang on a minute Sir, you're a graduate. You seem like a reasonably bright bloke. How come you ended up as a teacher then? One has this conversation saying that you really shouldn't underestimate your own importance young man! You know , one goes down that route. It's very interesting. That of course is an attitude that they have got from their parents I'm quite sure. I don't think it's from them. I don't think it's their own view. Curious isn't it, that we should go into something that is so underpaid and under regarded?

Do the boys themselves have a sense of privilege because they're here?

Some, but not in the main I think. At my last school we used to take the boys off for inner city weekends and show them a little bit of a Salvation Army hostel and what it looked like to see a battered wives refuge and all that sort of thing and that used to change a few lives, I can genuinely say. If you take a hundred boys away, maybe 5 or 6 of them come back utterly changed. We have that sort of programme here but it's a small voluntary thing. We used to make them go!

Do you feel guilty?

Yes, just occasionally.

How do you square it?

My brother teaches in a maintained school and my children have remained in maintained schools. I think I take the view that these children here in school are the owners of personalities and souls and consciences: that they have been sent here by their parents is something over which they have no control. My interest is really much more in the children than it might be in the dreadful reservation I have about sending them here. I suspect also I've got to the stage now where I'm beyond the pale. I don't suppose I'm employable in a maintained school. I just find that this is something that suits me terribly well. I'm conscious that this isn't a terribly good reason for doing it. I don't spend a lot of time on crowd control. I spend quite a lot of time teaching young men how they might approach things differently and enabling them to develop and move on. I think that is something better suited to my temperament and whatever talent I might have. But it does trouble me actually, only I should think because in my dream, as in your dream and everybody else's dream, the educational system would be financed and resourced properly. It would be staffed by able, motivated and intelligent people who were doing it for the right reasons and we would be making more of our children than we do.

Would we be using boarding? Supposing you had charge of the educational system of the country. Would you include boarding facilities for some?

Yes, I think I would.

Because you think it has value, intrinsic value?

I think it has intrinsic value, absolutely no doubt at all about that. I think it has specific value for a large and possibly growing number of individuals as well. You know, I have lost count of the number of times I've thought about the boy who was at a boarding school I was teaching at, particularly when I was a housemaster, thinking to myself, 'I am so glad that boy is with us rather than at home with mum and dad'. It's obviously an orthodox wisdom that says mum and dad must be best, but there are times when you look at mum and dad and you think, 'No'. They are not temperamentally suited to this; they're not in any condition to do it because of the way their professional lives work. This child is obviously happier here than he would be at home. Where you have homes that are operating in unorthodox ways, there are splits, there are sometimes people who haven't split – I remember saying to my wife, 'Why haven't those people just divorced? It would be a great deal simpler for everybody. I remember a boy who got worse and worse as the holiday grew nearer. I eventually worked out that this was the problem. He dreaded going home. Now the parents on some level had understood that and monitored it and done something about it.

I'm going to stop you, because we haven't worked out the timetable and that's important,

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW
WITH
HEAD OF FOLEYBRIDGE

Interview with the Headmaster.

The current of thought at the moment seems to say if you get the right mix of policy and resource inputs, then your school becomes effective, and they are thinking in terms of better examination results almost exclusively. How selective is the school? I haven't discovered that.

That's a most interesting question. The ability range is skewed to above the national average. This is a very complicated matter. Actually, I can produce you some figures of I.Q.'s of different year groups coming in over the last five or six years which actually could be quite interesting for you. First of all, the last two years, and this will be the third year, we've had 16 boys coming in as our "day boys" who are by the old 11+ type selective exam. That is because the last government said you could choose 15% like that. So we seized that because that gives us the really bright ones. Now I think I discovered over the years the really difficult thing for me to crack was actually to get that very, very bright lot i.e. the old 140+ I.Q. or 130+ I.Q.'s because there are so many schools round here, the offering all kinds of inducements as schools. to get those that I felt I was missing out on that little group who would be my Oxbridge lot. So having a selective exam for those was something we seized. So we go 16 which was 15% of our overall entry, which is not a huge proportion and we've had, let's say, each year well over a hundred boys trying for that and to some extent they're self-selecting, but they are the bright ones from their schools. But they are also looking at three, four, five other schools as well. They take exams all over the place and then when you've actually chosen your 16, you actually then keep your fingers crossed to see whether they're going to accept.

We've all lived through that.

Now, this year, we've had our disappointments, but we've also in the end had our surprises and great delight; in particular, one boy who at the moment is in a Prep school in He got a place at main and then they found, with an academic scholarship, so tops performance, to turn that down to come here. So with another one we make, so we know we've got two at least and we always have had made being turned down and that's become a bit of a trend in the last five, six, seven years. The way the parents see it is that is actually offering something more and that is where you really come on to your boarding, you see, because in a residential school you can offer even your ones that aren't strictly boarders something extra. Now, about six or seven years ago, a little bit of background for you, I had a school where and I know you may have experienced this; other heads have certainly done, that was, when I first came certainly, divided into two parts. There were the kingpins, who were the boarders, and there would be, what they saw themselves as second class citizens, the day boys. Now this strikes fundamentally at the whole boarding thing because so few schools are left which are entirely boarding or nearly entirely boarding that many schools, boarding schools, have actually got this situation. I always thought this was a difficult matter and that one of these days one would have to face up to try and do something about it. The day boys had no physical house; they had very little here, being a state school in terms of places to go. They didn't even have a locker when I came, there was no such thing, but there was a tiny little tuck shop, but it was only a servery really. Basically, you were outside, I suppose. Now about six, seven, eight years ago, I said to the governors, "The numbers of day boys are declining as our boarding population grows". When I came it was slightly more day boys than boarders, 160 day boys and 140 boarders, making 300 in the school. I said the day boys now, because of the numbers coming in at the bottom or into the Sixth form are comparatively small because our boarders have grown and I think the time has come to do something pretty radical, and that is to destroy two day boy houses. I'm going on about this, but it is actually very fundamental. It is the most practical move and revolutionary thing I ever did here. There were two day boy houses, and, so I said I think we should actually get rid of those.

No physical base.

No physical, no! And I think we should take a bold step of where, as it were, as far as possible integrating the day boys into the boarding houses and I think that the day boys, as far as possible should have an extended day like I know some of the independent schools do, and that they should do their Prep here and be able to take part, or be encouraged to take part in the extra-curricula life of the school, because it was noticeable that the sports teams were much more boarding than they should have been. The governors agreed and they said, "Well what about the finances"? I said, "This is really difficult, because you can't actually, perhaps, technically charge fees for day boarding, as we'd actually call it". So we drafted a very carefully worded

statement to say that of course they paid for their meals which they always did, but that then was a donation expected for the use of the boarding facilities. Also, if they couldn't afford donation, they should have a chance to come and see me and we could talk about it, 'cos I didn't want to put off the financially disadvantaged day boarders. Well the next problem was actually to get the day boy housemasters on my side; one was actually a lady, who's now a deputy head of a school in B , and she's also head of the Sixth form, and we agreed that we should strike now rather than let the day boy houses wither. Let's just destroy them and let's assign even though they weren't day boarders, all the day boys to houses for the sake of inter-house competition, even though they weren't day boarders, for they had the option. So we started off and of course it built up really from the bottom, but quite a number of boys, particularly below the Sixth form, the parents took the opportunity of them having a fuller life and again when you're on a future visit, I can actually do a graph showing the growth of this; and if I tell you that it's still optional at this precise moment, whether you're a day boarder or not, in the first three years of the school, there is not a single day boy. They're all day boarders, and below the Sixth form in September, I think there will be 9 only. And that indicates the success of the scheme. It's also, of course, from my point of view been a rather carefully done thing, because I realise that the money in education, purely for the teaching side of the school was probably, whichever government's in power, was going to go down and down and down and down, as it is, and we're going to be £25,000 down for this monetary year. I said to the governors, "Well this is a way of actually increasing our income and propping up actually the education side. There was a moment a couple of years ago when the governors said, Yes, we will actually physically move day boarder income, or donations income, into the education side deliberately, and we show it there, (day boarder contributions it's called). Now this year, that sum is £120,000, perhaps £130,000, and it's only with that money that we're able actually to have the small classes we do. Now the governors, some of them will understand this fully, others are a bit lost on it, and certainly the staff wouldn't quite appreciate, I think, probably all this, but it has been there for vital extra income for the school. We then had the problem a couple of years ago thinking the labour government are going to destroy, like you said, no interviews, no selective exam, and I thought, 'Help! We must get ourselves into a position (a) we will fight the interviews for boarders, for that's the way we choose our boarders incidentally, because you're not going to look after somebody seven days a week, twenty four hours a day, without actually meeting them and their parents. So I thought the selective exam would go and therefore I thought well how on earth are we going to choose our non-boarding? Before we had this selective exam three years ago, it was open to anybody in , and, of course, we got again heaps of people. We did interview; we weren't allowed to know anything about them or reports from the school, and we chose the ones who seemed to be bright at interview. Then of course parents came along, thumping the table at appeals and saying, 'I want an objective reason why you've turned my son down, because we all know that he's much brighter than another boy you've taken from that school', and so on and so forth. The Appeals Committee had a terrible time, so the selective thing solved all the arguments because everybody sees that as fair. It also meant fewer boys from . more from . 'cos they can come in under the Greenwich ruling which you must know about, which allows people to be able to have a selective place beyond their normal boundaries, council boundaries, which is exactly what the Labour M.P.'s like Mrs. : has done; she's gone outside Islington to wher ever it is, to a grammar school. He's got a place so he can go. So the selective thing helped. But then I thought, Well that's probably going to go and we don't want go back to this awful situation so I said to the governors, 'Well, the trick may be now actually to say that we're going all boarding, and unfortunately we can't actually. We haven't got enough room to have everybody boarding, so therefore the boys, who come in, the 16, will have to be out boarders. It's a term I've already used and this may appear, you may have picked this up, the headmaster seems to wind more boys in sometimes by calling them out boarders. We don't quite understand it, but they're here. So I said, 'Right! Out boarders, and what you need to say as governors is that any of these 16 boys who comes in as an out boarder MUST be an out boarder until they get to the Sixth form where with the entrance into the Sixth form from local schools, we have got some more day places and so on. Then you can actually change. The governors said, 'Fine!' and they said from this September every boy will be an out boarder and they will remain like that until the Sixth form. And they said one other thing which is remarkable in a state school, and I only tell you this because I know you won't use these things, I said, 'Well! We should take the opportunity because the scheme has been so successful of saying that the out boarder fee, and I was bullish using the word 'fee' will be from henceforth 50% of the boarding fee, because it was well under that and thereby you will increase your income even more with these 16. You've got them 'till Sixth form and any further education cuts, which I'm sure are on the way, will then be guarded against by an added income. Before a parent applies for one of these 16 places, they will know they've got to pay 50%, which is only of course at the moment £850 a term, all meals included and alright, if they stay the night, they've got to pay an extra 'tenner', but that's cheaper than a baby-sitter, and if they're disadvantaged financially, then again they can fill in a form and then they will have a reduction. We have actually a form enquiring into income and I can reduce it, so there's a let-out for the poorer families which is very important. So we still have over a 100

boys sitting the tests knowing this and we've got our 16 and one or two of them have got reductions on the fee, and as I say, we've got, as I said when we started, we've got some very bright ones. That's a long answer to the first thing. That's only the 16, but it's actually a fascinating thing about the school.

Do you have 'a tail'?

The tail used to be the day boys, because they used to come on proximity in the old days, so used to be dreadful ones with reading ages of eight, and then it was siblings as well, so you could get two or even three in a family who were awful and carry on through the years. We've got a sibling in the school now taking GCSE's this year, whose elder brother was very bright, came in on the sibling rule so it just shows it still obtains, and he came in with all kinds of difficulties and he might just scrape his five, with a bit of luck, so it seems, but it's been hard work. So the tail was there.

In the main, all who come will get reasonable GCSE's?

Yes! Because the boarders then, coming on to the boarders, we've always chosen by interview. I say that, before we went Grant Maintained I actually ran tests on them, quite probably illegally, but I did. But the boarders can be a mixed lot; again, we get some very bright ones, but also of course, I can take boarders that I want to take even though they appear not to be bright or not particularly bright, or have been to lots of schools, hoping that they might be developed. So we go through an informal interview which we're going to go on doing and with more boarding tasters where the parents or the boy are not sure and we generally agree. We've got the same people interviewing for ages really, and it's all very important that we see their books. We get a report from the school, and we, I suppose select out the ones who we think will be difficult and don't really want to board, who we feel don't have anything to offer the school except their work, and coming for the wrong reasons, and so on and so forth. Now, you then might say, 'How selective are you? How many boarders do you get to see?' Well, I suppose probably the peak was about five or six years ago when very genuinely, we were probably interviewing three if not four people for every boarding place. We had one or two marvellous years and we built up to that. Then I think it's been harder work, 'cos I think probably there has been so much anti-boarding in the press, in spite of the government propaganda on State boarding schools, and again, even with us, rising fees which make even £1800, £1700, quite a lot for some homes. I think we've had to work harder and we keep our statistics, which you're welcome to see, because the statistics are based on registrations; and you would know that registrations don't always turn into candidates and then your firm candidates again who you interview round here, well, what are they looking at? Where is our competition? Well, our competition very definitely is the day Independent sector and increasingly over the years it has been, Well, we were going to send him to or or one of the or where-ever, but we think we can get the same thing at and we've got more than one child and really £14000 isn't really what we can now cope with, and that's a growing trend in our favour. I do believe, and there you are, you ran a famous school, that for many British parents the fees have really got for many of them beyond paying out? Interestingly, talking to who's gone to and now you were at , she actually says, 'Well, the sort of parent we get, actually the money seems to be absolutely there'. But I don't think it's perhaps the which is the of Catholic families, but I think it's the people who really can't afford £14000 who are having a real struggle are the ones that are going to the lesser boarding schools, perhaps not the . Maybe would have a harder time; maybe has got in that very nice area of , maybe it's got a pretty good clientele there.

is using its location; it's getting a terrific number from London, because they don't want their children to grow up in London.

That's a growing market for us too, but it's mainly the ethnic minorities from London we're getting, but yeah, I know what you mean. So the boarders are actually an interesting lot and I say we're working harder and there are plenty of people who are unsure about boarding, but we're getting quite a good intake. I can give you the IQ levels of them, coming in.

What intrigues me is that in that Handbook that I've had, which is probably a bit out of date as you say, there are two sets of aims; you state the aims of the school, and then there's a formal set of aims which is general and then there's a set of aims for boarding. I find it incredibly difficult to sort these out. Does the day boy or day boarder get as much out of the school as the full boarder and is it a matter of degree or is the whole thing so geared to a better environment that they all gain as much, or can potentially gain as much.

Well let me just say something about the aims first of all. The last OFSTED inspection said we ought to look at our aims again which we haven't yet done, The aims which I think you're first of all talking about are the

sort of aims which were done really as a sort of normal educational State school and I have to say I'm not terribly happy with that. My view is that the boarding aims that you're talking about which are presumably there somewhere, the real aims of the school, I would actually say, if you read my paragraphs which I wrote in 1980 in the first bit of the Prospectus, are actually those which I actually think really encompass what I feel. I think the aims of the school as in the Parents' thing are a sort of sop to the OFSTED inspectors and I personally am unhappy about them.

What I seize on in your piece is 'to develop the sense of community', because that it seems possibly is key to the whole boarding experience and you go on later to define it, that it's close co-operation between boy, parents and the staff. Can you just say a bit about how you see your school community, made up of...

Different elements. Well, I genuinely do believe that, I'm not just saying, that we need to co-operate with everybody and it's interesting, having had my children at boarding schools, I would have thought that only one really did well on that and that was the one furthest away. No, sorry, Prep school! I think the Prep school, the *at*, I think that really does do very well. I always felt that and so I have models. Luke then went on to *,* and I felt, not that we kept a distance from *,* but Luke was very house-based and I don't think that really we knew anybody more than we knew by the first day by the end of it. We knew the housemaster but other parents we didn't really know except in the Prep school with Luke. A jolly good school, but I don't think---we went to the formal parents meetings and one or two things---but it was, I felt, very much taking Luke, doing its thing and it was very unfeeling about exerts and so on and so forth and I think certainly a number of parents who have got their boys here, including on lot of parents who live opposite *school gates have actually said that* *is too, or it was, too hide-bound by its sort of image of itself, in that sense, that it's restrictive. Charmian went to* *, which I think did try harder. It got off to a very good start and I think we could actually know that better, certainly some of the teachers better. But of course, there again, and it's interesting with your own experience, we never felt we got to know people who looked after Charmian as a person beyond the day, because they weren't, and this is the difference between a boys' school and a girls' school perhaps, they were not teaching staff on the whole. They were more sort of matron types and they were sort of ethereal figures and I think that there's a great argument or debate as to whether your boarding staff should actually be teaching during the day. Of course, I obviously tend to believe that although it's quite hard, perhaps those who teach are perhaps the best to look after them beyond the day. That's another controversial matter.*

I found an enormous plus was in non-residential, for the non-academic housemistress when they come to *.....*. The girls would suffer stress because they placed themselves under such stress, and to get away from the College atmosphere, the academic part, and to go to their house and to leave behind all stresses which they'd experienced in the day and just to relax with their housemistress, was a great bonus. For the teacher to have followed them 'home' would have been very hard for many of them, but, having said that, for the Sixth form, I've no hesitation at all, it's got to be an academic or they honestly can't do the job.

Anyway, *where Marcus went, the furthest away, we got to know that school much better. We felt much more involved, we knew more parents, it was 150 miles away, but* *had got the home/school thing much more sorted in my view, and I think coming back to the idea here, community, I try and say whenever I meet parents first of all that you are welcome. Certainly, the total contrast between when I started teaching at* *and it was, as it were, the gates clanging shut for the whole term and I remember one parent, the mother of a new boy who I was going to tutor; She said, 'Well, here's Christopher. He's yours now. Do whatever you like with him. Just get on with it'. And off she went with her dogs in the back of the car and soon, and I thought, well even then I thought,* *'Well, he was a nice easy chap, but I never saw the father at all. I might have done once in the whole of the boy's career and I was his tutor. Now here, When I came here I thought parents should be involved. There was a sort of ethereal parental organisation which did a Christmas Fair, and it wasn't that huge,*

I love your unusual use of the word 'ethereal'; I get it straight away.

Boys were not allowed at weekends or on a Sunday after Service and I changed that, but here we've got two Mums in here this morning helping in the Library. There are social events, they're raising money; there are a lot of social events for the parents here and parents are in and out of this place the whole time and they know they're welcome. The support on the touchline is great. Now we don't and I try and say it in the parents' Handbook, I think, ring them up and tell them whenever minor things go wrong; we do really try communicating if the work is going wrong or something. Some parents would say we do well; a few parents would say, 'Yes! You don't do well enough. We like to know more. Some parents would say, ' You write in

the report', and this does worry me increasingly, 'he hasn't been handling his practice, or he's difficult in class. What the hell have you been doing about it? Why don't we know?' So I think there are still gaps and we've still got to be careful with these ever more demanding parents, but I think we do try. We have plenty of parents' consultations; a parent can come and see us any time. Parents want to be more involved, boys tell parents much more than they ever used to, probably girls too, and therefore they want to be involved and I think that we try.

In doing this work, because I'm hopelessly out of date, the mobile 'phone has reared its head as being a way in which parents communicate with, in this case, son, and how important its become. Interestingly, the Headmaster, or the _____, where I did a visit with a colleague from _____ who's now there, He spends the first few moments of every day writing birthday cards for all the boys who have a birthday, and knows them all pretty well, but he freely admits that he doesn't really know the parents and I also did an interview with a mother with a son there and there's no doubt at all that _____ is a fine school, the staff are doing a superb job. They know what they're doing and they're on target, but occasionally the parents have got into touch with the school because of a concern and its all taken rather low key, but the school does then handle it, just gets on with it, doesn't make a hullabaloo, just does it quietly and efficiently. But there is something, a link, that's not quite there, I felt, having heard both sides, you know.

Well I think we know our parents very well here. There are obviously some that we see less of. I try and know virtually all of them. I make an effort at parents meetings to go round and talk to as many as possible and I get to know who they are. I'm just thinking about the boys you're going to see. Well it will be interesting what their views are as to how well they know their housemaster or the tutor or me or anybody else and whether they feel they can ring us up or whatever. That will be quite interesting, but I think there is a lot of parental contact and that's important.

Can I very quickly 'cos we are running out of time, do you have a Bursar?

Ah! That's a long story.

Clearly you've got your fingers on the pulse of the finances.

Well I'll talk to you informally perhaps. We've had a Bursar; we split what normally would be a Bursar's job into a number of things. You could say the head master therefore divides and rules because being the Bursar triangle with the Chairman of Governors is potentially the most difficult thing in many schools and is the source of huge friction between the three parties and particularly potentially between the head and the Bursar. I came to the conclusion over the years that the Bursar, who very often is Clerk to the Governors in many schools, is the person who does the finances and the person who does the sort of maintenance or whatever. What we've done here, three years ago: we have a totally separate Clerk to the Governors, who is a retired ex-Chief Education Officer of _____, a great friend of the school, from _____. He comes in once, maybe twice a week, on a Tuesday and he handles that. I have a lady Principal Finance Officer, who was a lady Clerk/Accounts and so on, who very definitely, the relationship is, she is, as it were, my subordinate. She'll say what she thinks, but she 's got two ladies, three men, well two really, and that's very, very tightly controlled with an internal finance committee which I chair, and then the Governors Finance Committee, chaired by a governor, and then there's a person called a Responsible Officer, who's actually the Chairman of the Trustees who checks independently; when all the procedures are going, he comes in, he comes to our Internal Finance session. Though he tightly controls the finance side, knows exactly where I am unlike most Bursars I have to say. I now have a Facilities Manager who does all the lettings, all the maintenance and I've got all the sub-contracts, all the grounds. You'll meet him, he'll take you into lunch one day, super bloke, married to my Head of Computers, has an interesting background in travel companies and so on and again, the relationship with me is right in the sense that I am very much his boss. But we get on well together.

There are two areas; if I can just tell you, well, staff selection is crucial and I'd love you to talk about that for a bit. The other thing is, 'Do you have a life of your own or is this your life?' I mean, I know you have a family. how do you fit it in?

Well it's interesting. Last night I was on the 'phone to a friend. We were talking about the head of the Sixth Form College here and he said, 'Well, he's working very often till half past nine at night at school, at his College'. I said, 'Well that is a recipe for disaster. You mustn't do that.' Do I have a life of my own? I think right from when I started teaching, I actually got into the job and I was then a bachelor, and I looked at some of the older bachelors and said I don't want to be like that. I looked at some of them who were then in their early 40's and thinking that they are totally involved in the school. And so I had this golden rule that I would

always go out of the school once a week, go up to London to see my friends. Yes, when I ran a house, it was theoretically seven days a week. I think not only do I have to have a life a bit of my own, but also the children, my staff do too. So in the boarding houses, there are teams of five, so it isn't the house master every night although he is subject to the 'phone and again that may appear as you're talking to Philip. They are very much kingpins of their houses, but I hope there's time for them. I tend to finish here, I come in, I'm normally here by about quarter to eight in the morning and my Secretary is often in by just after eight, and I'm seeing boys from about eight o'clock onwards with their distinctions and whatever. There are usually boys to see every morning, or we have a breakfast meeting, my Senior management team at half past seven. I would normally reckon to get home by about ten to six in the evening and then there are things on in the evening. I would reckon to go to any concert, any Parent 'do', tonight there's an Old Boy Association meeting and so on and so forth. I reckon probably I would have three nights to do with school out, one to do with something else. But on Saturday this week there's a Parents' Association Promises Auction, we're raising money for the Sport's Centre, which is a nice way. Last Saturday we had a Residents' Dinner for anyone who wants to come; there were 44 of us with spouses. So a lot of evenings are busy, so I might have one or two at home which isn't actually terribly many. I try and have an afternoon off which is normally Tuesday and so I have my own particular interests. I'm a member of the Celebrity Lecture Committee which organise celebrity lectures, that always meets been here. My big thing is being a genealogist and that's taken me totally away from the school and that's a totally separate thing, but I'm one of those people who finds that I can switch on and off very easily and I don't on the whole take all the troubles home and I can say, 'right that's the end of that and we can start again at that point' I reckon I can do that so I probably am more relaxed than some heads. Probably my colleagues will say he goes around looking really worried a lot of the time, but I'm not necessarily so and I think I can switch off and I think that's what you sort of mean can you actually get away from it?

Yes it is, but I'm also searching for what makes this place special? What do those of us in boarding schools do which makes them effective that either could or couldn't be achieved in a day school?

Quite! Well I think probably that those of us who work here will actually or should, particularly the seniors or those with the greatest commitment should actually be able to do things at times when a school teacher as opposed to a school master or a school mistress, if you see what I mean, wouldn't be either prepared to or want to. Now yesterday, for instance,

You see to suggest there's a greater sense of dedication would send them into a flat spin, and actually I've met many day school teachers who are enormously dedicated.

And an increasing number of boarding staff who are much less than they ever used to be
And yet, in so many ways, boarding school is more easily made effective.

Yes!

We're doing something right and I can't quite put my finger on it.

And how do you judge that? By looking at the product or happiness of the parents or the ethos in the schools?

You've got to look at it all. You can't pick any one thing out.

Right!

I mean on the whole it's meeting the present criteria which is to produce good results, taking into account the calibre of the material you're dealing with. You do extraordinarily well, I think.

Well, I think, coming back to what we were talking about earlier, this idea of community that it's a very subtle process but if you have a certain percentage of your staff always around, then the relationships you build or are liable to build or able to build with your parents, with your pupils, with each other, because we are here all the time are liable to be at greater depth. I'm not so confident with one's pupils in the formal sense; I always feel I probably know my full boarders better than any of the rest because you need to have a passing word with a full boarder for instance on a Sunday morning after the service if you just happen to have a few words about having to congratulate him about something. I actually take breakfast on Sunday in the Dining Hall. Now I can therefore go and ask what happened to the matches on Saturday if I didn't know

or maybe just have a word with somebody out of the blue. There was a boy yesterday at breakfast who was waiting for breakfast when I got over there and he actually did need to see me on Friday but hadn't made it, and we had a few words together. Well that's because both he and I were actually around on the Sunday. Now is it something to do with the structure that accounts? Now the other thing is it because we're also here and in many boarding school and some boarding schools, a small campus? Does that have something to do with it because I think some of the parents here...?

Not entirely because we had huge numbers and I think you have to deal with it differently.

You've got a house community there.

Yes and you're always dealing with the girls in small groups. It's only when you're in Prayers that you're conscious of the size and it can be comforting. I think it's the Christian ethic probably at the very least that has much to do with it. I think you need more or less a common standard.

But you can get that in day school. You get the same proportion perhaps who have a Christian ethic.

It isn't quite so self-conscious. I mean prayers have gone out of the window in many. There's no Chapel.

It's interesting for at the moment we don't have a Chaplain. We're surviving a year without a Chaplain who I think actually here did a lot of good. But by no means are all my staff practising Christians.

INTERVIEW ENDED.

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW
WITH
PARENT AT FOLEYBRIDGE

... mother ...

I've already met your son; he was the first boy I talked to, and I couldn't have had a better introduction. Since then, it's all gone on and I'm slightly worried that I'm looking at it all through rose-coloured spectacles. Time will tell! Do you think you could tell me first whether you have any personal experience of boarding?

No, I don't.

Did your husband?

No!

So is Andrew the first one in the family?

I have a nephew, my brother's boy went to boarding school.

So you know a little bit?

Yes and he was always with Andrew, so we got a little bit of background from him.

What made you opt for boarding rather than day?

I think, to be truthful, it was our circumstances at the time. Andrew went to a prep school and around the time he took Common Entrance, my husband was made redundant and he eventually found a new job in the West Midlands. We were living in Hertfordshire at this time, in Stevenage, and we had problems selling the house and Andrew was due to change schools and we more or less decided, 'Well, that's it! If you go to the Perse or St Albans, because of the situation at home, we then looked at boarding. The headmaster actually of his prep school suggested state boarding. My husband was educated in Birmingham, so he knew about ... and we looked at another on the list of state boarding schools.

Which one?

Adams, in Shropshire, and Andrew had interviews at both the schools; we let him choose which school he felt he was most comfortable about and he was very adamant that this was the one for him.

Were you happy about the choice?

Yes! In fact it all happened quite quickly, and yes, I was. In fact I was happier once I saw the school. I'd only seen Adams; I hadn't seen ... But then the choice was made and Andrew came for his interviews and I came and looked over.

Did your husband go along? Were you all unanimous about it?

Yes! But it certainly meant then that Andrew didn't have to start at one school and then change. His education was better I hope.

What do you think, what do you know happened to your relationship with Andrew as a result of him coming away? Is he a full boarder?

He's a full boarder, because at first he was still living in Hertfordshire.

So he's gone on as a full boarder. Was that his choice?

Yes, I gave him the choice and he chose to stay a full boarder.

What difference has it made, do you think?

I think, I mean you can't tell because he's an only child, but I think probably our personal relationship is probably better because he hasn't been with me continuously through the adolescent stage. I'm a supply teacher and I see how fractious children are at this age and I mean it might have been perfectly all right, but I do think that we have a better relationship than we would have had, had he been at home all the time. I tend to worry a little bit about him; he's quite a laid-back character, and that applies to his work as well; and it might have worried me more if I had seen him not working at home. Whereas here, I think he does actually work, certainly during prep time, but whether he does enough is the matter, but I think even there, I would have nagged him more.

My experience of this place is that you can't get away with it. What were and indeed still are your expectations of the school? What did you want it to do for Andrew?

I mean, first of all, I was looking, I wouldn't pay for education just for the sake of it, 'cos it's quite a struggle for us to afford to send Andrew here, so I'm really looking at a more rounded education, because I think Andrew is quite clever and I think that needs bringing out. That's what I was looking for here; a school that would encourage him to do the best he could with the talents he's been given. But as I said before, I wouldn't just pay for the sake of it. I want him to have the best education that I can afford to give him and state schools in my area certainly wouldn't have; because having been a supply teacher since moving, I would have been quite upset particularly for example from the music point of view. He has had a very good musical education here; he plays the cello, and I'm quite sure that if he'd been at any of the schools that I've been in recently, I think his peer group would have persuaded him to give it up.

Isn't that a sad comment?

It is! But that's the kind of thing that persuades me that this was right.

And it didn't particularly matter to you which subject, you know, which career he followed ultimately as long as his gifts are being developed?

No, not at all! I mean I've always known that he was not going to be a mathematician, from being quite a small boy. I know that that's not where his talents lie. So I'm not surprised that he didn't choose science; although he was good at sciences, I'm not surprised that his A level choices didn't go in that direction.

What else do you think it gives him besides getting him down to work and making sure he does enough? Have you noticed a big change in him, in other words, since he arrived here?

He's quite a confident boy. He's polite; they re-enforce my standards, which again is something I'm looking for. That was another reason why we started him at private school as a small boy. It was because, I mean I expect youngsters to be polite to me so therefore my son must be polite to others, including his parents, and that's something that impresses me here. When I go into his house, I mean boys I don't know, they greet me and say, 'Hello', and his friends, 'Hello, nice to see you', and you don't get that in the schools that I work for.

They're very easy to talk to I find.

But I do think they definitely have more confidence in themselves as people.

Socially do you feel he's able to cope with mixed groups, even though he's in a single sex school? You're not bothered about that?

I don't find that a problem at all. In fact my friends comment, you know. They do. They say, 'What a nice boy Andrew is and how easy to talk to'. I get quite a lot of pleasure from people saying that.

I'm sure you do, yes! Does it ever bother you that you haven't been there perhaps when he's going through his adolescence? Do you feel guilty, or not? Or do you feel you've done the right thing?

No. I don't feel guilty. To be perfectly honest, I don't think he's had any major problems, as far as I can tell.

How often do you communicate with him as it were? By phone, at weekends?

I can't phone Andrew; he's got to phone me. He has a phone card, so he can ring me at any time if he wants to; but generally speaking he rings me at weekends and that's about it; unless there's something that he wants to tell me about; so generally, once a week.

How often does he get home as a full boarder?

There's an 'out-weekend' between each half term and he perhaps comes home one other weekend. It varies slightly. If there's something at home that he wants to do, then I only have to ask the house master and he can come home.

Is that good time, quality time as they say now?

Yes, it is. As a family, we all play golf and so he usually plays golf with us; but generally speaking, he just wants to unwind when he comes home; because having moved to a small village and not having been to school in Staffordshire, he hasn't got a lot of friends locally.

Is that a minus for the whole exercise, do you think?

I think it is a slight minus. I think we made, although we're very happy living where we do, I think it was perhaps a wrong decision to live where we are. I think if we'd lived west of Birmingham, which was our first choice really, but as things turned out, we had to find somewhere very quickly, for we suddenly sold the house and we had to rent or buy a house, and this was the only house that we liked.

Do you still like it?

Oh, yes! And it's a pretty village.

What about his standards? Does the school re-enforce the standards you instilled in him? Morally, does he still subscribe to the right sort of standards?

I think he does. I mean I was pleased that he chose to be confirmed after he came here. We didn't put any pressure on him to do that. At the time the school had a Chaplain and he happened to be a tutor in Andrew's house. Now whether that had any bearing on it. I doubt it actually, but we were very pleased that he chose to do that. I'm sure there wasn't any pressure at this end.

What about your relationship with the school itself? Do you feel part of it, or are you too far away for that?

I'm not as part of it as I would like to be. When Andrew was at prep school, I suppose I was on the Parents' Association for about 4 years, and I suppose if I lived nearer I would definitely get involved in that. I regret that a little bit because I haven't really got to know the other parents. I haven't got to know them as friends,

so I would perhaps see that as a minus, because I found at prep school that our social life really revolved round the school quite a bit with the other parents.

So many schools now have become more neighbourhood; this one's going in the other direction, becoming more international, which has its own plusses of course.

Yes, because the other boys at Andrew's prep school tended to go to definite public schools.

In spite of the distance, do you feel you are kept in touch with Andrew's progress, not merely his academic, but also the rest of it; his activities, and the good things he's achieving.

I certainly do with the music. Perhaps that's because he's pretty involved with the music. He plays in the Chamber Orchestra and in the School Orchestra and because they produce quite a number of concerts throughout the year, and I come to those, so from that point of view I certainly think they keep well.... I mean, I had a little communication this morning from the music department about the little concert they're putting on in June, the middle of June. Yes. I mean they always tell me, and we get a programme of events.

Can you get in touch with the house master at any point if you're concerned?

Yes! There's a school number and an extension and I can get straight through. You go to the tutor room or to the house master.

So you are in a sense in partnership with the school? You don't feel cut off.

Oh, I don't feel cut off! Even sports-wise, I'm a little bit disappointed because I'm interested in sport, and Andrew was very good at hockey and cricket.

His hockey is particularly good!

Yes, but I don't feel he's kept that as much as he would have; now that's something I think that if he'd been at home, he would have joined the local hockey club and he would have played every weekend, whereas here, he plays in the school matches and certainly one master tried to get him involved in a local club here on Saturday afternoons, and to a certain extent, he has played. But not as actively, I don't think.

Does he want to be a pro? Andrew freely admitted that the standard here is not what he was used to.

That's right. I mean he played Under 13 County hockey in Hertfordshire and it just so happened that the year he was in at school the Prep school was fantastic at all the sports, and one of his friends is now an England player. For a school that only had 30 boys in its year, they were Hertfordshire champions and they represented Hertfordshire, they must have been fantastic. No I mean, the rugby is like that at this school, but hockey is very much the second sport.

You never know, he might come into his own at university.

Oh yes, I mean he's got all the skills there, and if he chooses to take it up at a later stage.....

Have your expectations been fulfilled? Are you pleased with what the school has contributed to his development?

I think I'm more than pleased. I think it's perhaps better than I expected it would be. I think the boys generally feel very happy and there doesn't seem to be; I mean I have heard of very little bullying or even serious horse-play. Boys will be boys and there are little bits possibly, but generally speaking in the house, younger boys respect the older boys, and I think the older boys look after the younger boys, perhaps better than I would have expected judging by the youths that I meet. There definitely seems to be a looking after the younger boys.

They really seem to care, which is absolutely marvellous! I suppose the outside world looking at the place might perceive that it's out of step in that it holds very traditional values'

Which is what I want for my child. I don't know whether it's being Scottish, but we have very traditional upbringing and traditional schooling.

Can you see any problems that come because of this? Will he be ready to take what faces him outside which is a far less disciplined approach to life?

It worries me a little bit that as far as say studying is concerned, they are quite methodical about how they approach that; now when he goes to university, will he suddenly have a relapse after the regimentation of this? On the other hand, it might work in his favour in that he's so used to it that he'll carry on.

What is emerging to me is that they are self-motivated, that it's not really because of the pressure of having a rigid time-table to adhere to. They're quite appreciative of it, but they want to do it, really want to get there, really finding out where they've gone wrong and being determined to do better next time, as it were. That comes over generally and it's quite remarkable. I would imagine that the habit will be instilled in him.

I think I mean, I'm fairly confident that he's a fit and able boy.

Would you do it again?

Definitely! And I think it suits less academic children as well, not just the very academic. I think that's one of the plusses about it. It was a nice cross-section of children; although they may not be particularly academic,

the school seems to bring out other facets of their life that they're good at, like nice sports. I mean, there are sufficient and I think, from what I can gather that the sports are going to improve here. They're about to build and so. I think the PE Department are very enthusiastic.

The extra-curricular programme is extremely wide.

I'm amazed and surprised in a way that Andrew hasn't taken more advantage of the extra-curricular, particularly being a full boarder. He's always until, I suppose till year 11 had one outing every term at a weekend, but last year and this year he hasn't. Again, that's his choice. Whether they outgrow some of the activities.....?

I think so and also with such an interest in music and being such an active musician must take time which is very precious. He probably goes to concerts, does he?

Not very much; if the school organise them he will go and he will go to Stratford or Birmingham Rep if the school are organising something and occasionally, we take him. But in general, yes, I suppose he was playing for a time; but the choice is there if you want to do it.

Just to re-enforce really what we've already said, you would do it again. Is that because it's a boarding school do you think that makes a difference? Yes, it's the head master, but it's the head master of a boarding school. I've been very happy with this school, and the boarding aspect. If the same situation arose in our private lives, then I definitely would. If I lived down the road to a very good day school, then I think I'd probably send him to the day school.

What I am interested in is whether he'd have got the same facilities handed on a plate to him in a day school. Many of them, you know, city schools, they don't shut down at 4pm but soon after and the catchment area is so wide, it means in fact that the parents have to be prepared to provide a lot of that themselves, which is not always easy, especially if you're working yourself at times.

Yes, I do appreciate...

I'm trying to analyse obviously the value of the boarding ethic, if you like, and what it gives that couldn't be given in a day school; or is it something that could be transferred into the day framework?

At this school, they have the day boarders don't they? Now it will be interesting to see...

I'm looking very carefully at that. They literally only go home to sleep; therefore in a sense there's very little difference. The real difference is really the weekly; well there are minor differences between the full boarder and the weekly, but the whole ethos of the place is really dictated by the fact that they set out to be a boarding school.

I think that's one of the attractions, because at Adams, I'm not sure of the percentage boarding, if I were going to choose boarding, here where 85% or whatever it is are boarding, that's much better. I think it's much better to have one or the other, because I'm sure the boys who board in a small boarding house in a day school must feel it and there's less done for them as well in the way of extra-curricular activities. Whereas here the choice is endless. The other thing is, I think it's better for Andrew because he's an only child.

I think he feels this quite keenly, that he's gained enormously because of having all his friends round him.

He certainly wouldn't have at home. He would have if we still lived in Stevenage, but he wouldn't around here. I think it's great for him, when they've finished their school work in the evening, he's got somebody to kick a ball about with. A lot of parents would argue again; an only child shouldn't go away.

I think you've made the right choice for him.

Definitely for Andrew! It's worked for him! Not once has he said, 'I don't want to go back', after being home for the weekend.

Can he occupy himself when he is at home even though he's no friends there? Can he get on with things?

He doesn't get on with school work, but he potters. He enjoys things. He doesn't do a great deal. When he's at home and I think he just likes to wind down. He's always been a child that could occupy his time. He's not needed other children around. If other children come, well fair enough, but he's quite happy to entertain himself. And yet he's quite gregarious as well.

Thank you! That was so helpful!

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW
WITH
SEVENTEEN YEAR OLD FROM TREETOPS

LOWER SIXTH

I have heard a little bit about you but I wonder if you would fill me in a little bit about yourself, other schools you have been to and when you starting boarding.

My last school was a school called Brackenhall School which actually used to be a boarding school for boys but the boarding sort of dropped and they introduced girls as well. and then I came to when I was 11. I followed my sister who was two years above me and she has just left and gone to Cambridge to do Medicine. I have a twin sister as well who is here with me and my big brother is 20 and he is at University. He also went to boarding school; he went to Winchester College. He is now at St. Andrews

Who made the decision to send you all to boarding school.? Was your first school a boarding school.?

Well it wasn't really when I was there.

So this was your introduction to boarding. Who made the decision that all you children should board.?

It was my parents really. There were quite a few schools near us, Oakham, Rugby, Uppingham and Oundle, but none of them took Day Girls and my cousin went here and my Godfather's daughter went here and my parents really made the decision.

Did they discuss it when you all came to look at it to sound you out.?

Actually with us they sounded out my sister and then with us they just saw that we followed her and we were quite happy.

Were you quite pleased.?

Yes it was fine, I thought I might go to Tudor Hall but I had never looked round before.

Was that because friends went there.?

I think one of my sister's friends was at Tudor Hall and it sounded quite nice and I quite wanted to go to Bradbury as well because my old school friend has gone there.

Did it help having a sister already here.?

It did a lot and also with my twin sister as well.

Did you go into the same house, the two of you.?

Yes we went into St. Hills together and then we both went to Tedworth with my big sister as well

Do you share a room now.?

No we don't We have only shared a room once which was quite a large room

Is this a good thing from your point of view.?

I think it is. In certain ways we are quite..... but we are actually in different Houses at the moment but in the same sort of building. And yes if we were in the same dorms or anything like that it would just be like home all the year round

Did coming here alter any of your relationships with those who are not here? What about your relationship with your parents? Did that change in any way?

I think it did. My father was quite busy with work so with him actually then he got me into a couple of years ago. Now when we come home it is .. it makes you appreciate home more when you actually come home it is nice.

And is the same true of your mother that you .. do you think you have got closer in any way?

Yes I think it is difficult for her because she was with us from babies and when we left it was like oh they have all gone. But so it was very hard but yes it has changed because I think she recognises that we have grown up

So you are great friends. What about your brother? Did you get more remote from him or closer would you say?

I think if we had both been at home we would probably have been closer if we had both been going to the same school but in the holidays we are quite close anyway and he was very good. It is nice because it is the same with my Mother because if we were at home the whole year round we would fight all the time but in the holidays we are just friends which is nice.

Do you do things with the family in the holiday period?

Yes we do on holiday together

Looking back what do you think, or can you think of any particular thing that the School has done for you so far, has it improved your life in any way?

I think it has been quite good at offering lots of different activities. I have quite a wide range of hobbies. It gives me a chance to get different qualifications like Life Saving, Music, academic ones and that is really nice and I think it gives you quite a good perspective on girls as a whole and how they behave. I think it teaches you how to stand each other really.

And how to respond?

Yes I think so.

What do you hope it will do for you at the time you emerge from? Have you got any ambition which it will help you to fulfil do you reckon?

I think one of the things I might do at University, I am not sure, I might read Psychology and being with such a lot of people altogether that is quite good.

It is interesting in what you have just said about observing girls. What are your A Levels?

English, History, Biology and French.

What are your interests?

Music and field sports, Lacrosse and Hockey and Golf and I hope to do Football. And that's about it.

Is there anything you harbour a feeling about which you would love to do? Any activity or any subject you wish golly I wish we could do that? Anything that is missing?

I think, I don't know if that comes in here, but at the weekends there is not very much to do. I think the problem is where it is situated. In this part of the school there is not an awful lot to do and obviously in a village there is a Post Office down the road but that is really it. So that is a shame because there is not very much to do at weekends.

So what do you do if you are here at weekends?

Well if you are sporty you play matches and this year, in the Upper Sixth and the Sixth Form you can go up to London a lot with your friends and meet people up there which is really nice.

Do you go for the day?

You can go for the day but mostly we stay over night.

With one another I mean?

Yes mainly.

What do you wish you could do?

Actually more things to do at weekends,,

Things like Drama and Music. Do they happen at weekends?

Yes. There is a Drama Competition thing when we come up to it and four musicals a year and we have to stay at the weekends but on the whole there is not much.

What about theatres? Do you get out to those?

Not really in term. Next year we are going to see a Midsummer Nights Dream which will be nice but other than that

So the mini buses which are around the place are for teams largely?

Yes teams and also there is a teacher, Miss..... organising weekends. She takes people to the cinema and other little trips. They have weekend activity things.

You still feel you want more?

Yes. I don't know because it is quite a difficult situation. There are things which have been offered like I can't really think what - like cinema trips, and they seem quite popular but everybody feels they are working so hard during the week that the weekends they want to laze around and they are so lazy at the weekends that they can't be bothered with that sort of activity.

It is difficult. Which part of School life do you enjoy most? Do you enjoy your work?

Yes, some of it. I enjoy History and English and I enjoy Sports is good especially in the Sixth Form, that is really nice. And I enjoy having all the other girls around and that and you make lots of friends. And all the other activities there are.

Do you take pride in being a pupil? - an old fashioned word but I am using it

quite deliberately.

It depends who I am with really.

That is interesting. Tell me more.

If I was with someone else who had been to boarding school then fine but it is with my old school friends who went to the local high school then it is more embarrassing.

Why is it embarrassing?

Because of the emphasizing the difference between the people, the change of pattern.

Do you feel any guilt about being here? You are saying in other words you feel privileged and you are here because your family is supporting you. Do you feel faintly guilty?

Yes perhaps a little.

So you keep quiet about it?

Yes if I am talking to my friends.

It is not unusual don't be bothered by this, it is very natural reaction. Supposing you do talk about it, do they react?

No normally they are quite understanding if they did they would be being nasty. They are nice about it.

Do they pity you because you are boarding?

I think the fact that I don't have boys there I think that is something which people find it hard to understand.

Does it worry you?

It does slightly. I am not worried about myself because I have a brother and know quite a few boys but there are some girls who do sort of have a whole different perspective and see them as objects rather than as friends and I think that is a bit worrying.

It's too soon to ask how you think they will react when they emerge from and mix with boys. Do you think they will be mature enough to cope?

Yes I think at university everybody goes through such a change anyway that it will be fine. My sister found it difficult. Everything is so scheduled here and you are sort of deadlined all the time and I think she found it a bit difficult to adjust because she does not have to do the work.

How much responsibility do you have for organising your private study time?

If you are in your own room you have much more responsibility because it is up to you. But in the lower forms when you are going down to the prep room that is much different but it should be up to you to do the prep and you should have enough time

Are there things you are very upset about? There probably won't be because you stick with your boyfriends or whatever, but perhaps somebody has been rather

unpleasant to you? Not meaning to be necessarily but it really has got to you or they have said something disparaging about your family or something that has hurt, who do you turn to when you are away from home or do you rush for a 'phone.

I don't think I would 'phone my mother because I think she would worry about me too much. She does sort of worry. One day one thing is very important and the next day you have forgotten it and she hasn't. I would probably go to other people, other friends, or if it was really bad go to the Housemistress but if I went to the girls and it wasn't right I would go to the Housemistress and she would probably act.

And you feel you can talk to her.

I feel I can talk to my Housemistress but some people can't, it depends on the Housemistress.

Have they got an alternative then if something happens to them and they don't have the same rapport with their Housemistress?

Yes they can always turn to the Head. or Mrs. W. I know her quite well because I used to be in her house.

But there is always somebody?

There are always some people who don't want to talk to people but there are other girls as well and that is the main thing.

Supposing someone you saw feeling really low and miserable or not eating properly or heading for trouble what would you do about it?

There was one girl in my year who we knew had a problem and we went up to Scotty about her because she had been her Housemistress and we knew Scotty very well. If it is eating problems we go up to the San and tell them about it.

So there is always a route you can take?

Yes there is but some people think they shouldn't tell the San that it is not being loyal but.

Are there enough of you about to cope?

There is usually someone who will go up.

Do you feel that you have a set of values that you honour in your daily life?

Well sort of being nice to people.

Well yes, that is part of it and knowing right from wrong, not being swayed by your peer group which you know deep inside you is wrong. The values first instilled by your parents and probably reinforced by the Schools you have attended.

Yes, there are some people who are fairly easily led by peer pressure and it is down to whether they are insecure. They expect us to know right from wrong and to be responsible.

Do you find, obviously in any society there are bound to be restrictions, and particularly in a group as large as this one, do you find that you are very frustrated at times because you can't do something that you want to do?

Yes there are sort of times when you see the gate but we have a big area and it is not claustrophobic because I have lived in a village but I think some people who have lived in towns it is completely different for them because they can't just hop on a tube or a bus or something like that.

I expect you have quite a lot from London?

Yes we have quite a few from London and .

Clearly you enjoy sport and so you really do take part in quite a lot. Again is there any sport which you wish you could do? I can't imagine it; you've got Football on the curriculum.

In the younger years they do sort of emphasise the Lacrosse. They do push that. I think for people who don't like Lacrosse it is.

But you won't get a first rate Lacrosse team?

No you won't but in the Sixth Form it is pretty varied. You can have Rugby in the Upper Sixth, but you can't do it in the Lower Sixth. But some people want to do kick boxing. We are not allowed to do that. I think it is something to do with the insurance.

Why do they want to do it? As a self defence?

Yes really. I do JuJitsu which is pretty similar but it is not quite as violent but it is a sort of defence and also to let the stress out sometimes just to have a kick.

Is there a lot of stress? Imposed by staff or by you yourself because you are determined to make the grade?

I think partly by the staff who have to have extra patience with you but that is understandable. Parents with some people yes. Personally not too bad. And also because you can see other girls in your class have done the work and that adds to the stress because you feel you should have done it.

Does the volume you have to cover cause problems?

There are some people who take on too much. I think it is all about how much you take on. There are people who have been working late at night like five days a week or something.

Do you work in the evenings?

Yes I was actually working late last night but I think in every form you have to work in the evenings pretty much. It depends on the subjects. I do History and English and that's heavy.

Do you enjoy it?

Yes I do actually. There is a sense of a sort of accomplishment so you feel you have done something, especially with essays and stuff. Done it, Phew.

That's great. What would you change if you could?

About this School..

Yes.

Well I would change where it was to a bit closer to town but I would have more socials with boys because I think that is quite a good thing and but it is quite good about that.

Have you got comparable size school very close. and ? Quite a lot of people want to have social meetings with is not bad but are not allowed socials which is quite hard.

Having said that you are not too worried on the whole about girls' ability to cope with boys when they leave. There are probably girls who have no brothers.

It is different where you live. The London people find they have lots of friends living independent of their family or their brothers or sisters but there are others who are only children and who live sort of along. But most people do. Yes I think they are fine.

Will your children attend boarding school?

I don't think I would send them away at seven or eight. I think that is the end. My brother went away at seven which I think is too young but perhaps, I am not sure. I think it depends where I live and where the schools are. If there aren't any alternatives close by then I would but I think I would prefer to send them to a mixed school.

That is interesting. You would probably sacrifice the academic clout but notYou would have to think that one through with your husband whoever he may be.

Now is there anything else I want to ask you May I just look? We have until 12.15 and I am sure I have missed something. I know one thing. You have told me you want to read Psychology and so on. The question of friendships. The House system has changed since you came. Did you feel that you had opportunity when you arrived? I know you had an older sister here, but did you feel that you had opportunity to mix with other year groups, more so than is the case now, or less so?

In the removes I think they do split them off too much especially now that they are in I think because I had a sister who taught me but I have always felt slightly embarrassed about beingbecause of what they taught us.

Why were you embarrassed by it?

Because they were sort of silly; take your food off the tray and butter little bits at a time and stuff like thatOur House never had mixed age dorms but we always said we wanted them. But there are other houses which have mixed age dorms and they are much more friendly.

Do you feel there is a year group thing now still?

There are some people who have friends in the year below or the year above. Especially the Sixth Form who are mixed.

I am not thinking of close friendships but just close relationships as you would get with a younger sister and an older sister. Does that happen at all?

it does happen but there are more people who don't than do but there are still quite a few people who do.

There are some people I expect who enjoy, not exactly the perks but almost perks, of being a year above somebody else. Like that chair's mine?

Yes you should open doors you mean,

Do you get a consciousness of being part of a community which is what.....?

Yes you do especially when you are in Hall and everyone is there and she is talking to everyone and she says what the School has been doing for Charities you do get a sense that we have all done it together.

So it does enter your lives and you are continually conscious Do you regret having been sent here?

No I don't think I do.

You're not sure though. I don't see how you can be totally sure.

No I don't regret it. It has given me a lot of positive things, all sort of extra activities.

What is the obvious thing it will have done for you?

I think it will have taught me to be aware of other people's feelings and to be understanding sort ofvalues.

That is a pretty big thing and if you have learnt that you are away ahead and pretty secure I think. I do wish you every success in what you are planning to do. Where are you applying to?

I don't know. I would love to go to Edinburgh because my family come from Scotland. But I am not sure. They are quite good with careers here.

I have spoken to your Careers Mistress and I was most impressed with the opportunities which are laid out in front of you.

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW
WITH
ANCILLARY STAFF AT TREETOPS

I wonder if you could fill me in with a little bit about yourself. I am interested in your own educational background and I am particularly interested in any contact you have had through the years with boarding; where it started and so on.

I was educated at Clifton High School for Girls, which is partially boarding, but I was a Day Girl. Went on to be Head Girl there. I then went to my training as a nurse and then since being married and moving to this area I have actually worked at Norland College as a night nurse for 20 years in the childrens' hotel where of course we had pupils who were boarding but older as all our girls were residential and did their training there. And I started here part time 20 years ago as well and have been here ever since. My daughter has gone through the School. Started as a Day Girl and going on to Boarder. Both my sons boarded having said none of my children would ever go to boarding school. So that is really my background.

It is most interesting. Why did they board? What made you decide against all your initial convictions?

Originally because we couldn't find a school that we felt was going to suit our eldest son. And when we did it was Grammar School in and they would only take boys from outside the area as boarders and our eldest was very keen to go and we felt he would benefit from it. Our daughter started here as a Day Pupil and was never going to board. I think we survived six weeks before she started pleading with us to allow her to board and we gave way about two years later when we felt financially we could cope with it and our youngest son, because the other two were boarding, was desperate to board. I was very keen to have them at a boarding school. They were at a prep school originally a day prep school and the Headmaster and Headmistress said to us, 'find a school within 70 miles so that you can attend everything', so I was very keen if they were going to board that we were there for every match. We went to Chapel and did everything with them that the School permitted us to.

When you say your daughter was never going to board. Was that her conviction as well as your own? She just switched right around?

I think it was the two things that she found hard to cope with; the day Girl had had a bed to sit on at break and although she was very sporty and used to stay for all the matches some days all her friendships were gone by Monday morning by the time she came back and she found it like 'breaking in' every Monday morning again. So she then wanted to board and I have to say boarding was the answer for her. It turned her from Miss Farr would have called a shrinking violet and she ended up..... and it made a huge difference to her confidence so the School, worked wonders for her and that was the boarding environment.

What is she doing now?

Doctoring and that was mainly again because she was boarding here and she got huge encouragement and she made it.

When....?

Because all her preps were timetabled; everyone was here to do it with her. She could always get help in the evenings from someone if she couldn't do it and that is what gave her the opportunity. So I am convinced, having never been originally about boarding.

Well, I like you, was exactly the same. \Why did you choose to work here? Was it simply because it fitted with your own life or did you ever think deliberately about choosing to work in a community that is mainly boarding?

No, because of the Nurse. I always wanted to do hospital work but in those days being a Nurse and family life didn't go together and I had my children to look after. I didn't want anyone else to do that. So I wanted to find a job that used my nursing skills but also meant I could have a proper home life. So doing nights was the answer and these jobs opened up. I can't ever say when I trained I ever thought I would end up as school nurse but I think school nursing has changed dramatically as well and it is that much more of a profession now so the two went together. But it was not something, I have to say, that I set out to do. Being here twenty years later I have obviously loved it.

And in this particular School, simply because?

They were advertising so I applied for the job.

Where were you living then?

In .

So it is on the doorstep?

Yes, I. ~~but~~ have seen lots of changes and enjoyed every minute of it.

Wonderful! When I talk about schools like , I find myself very often talking about the school community because I think this sense of community is usually reasonably strong and it is something I am interested in. Have you got a sense of belonging to a closely knit community?

Yes. I think the residential staff have a particular bond obviously because they all live on site with husbands and wives. I am not residential. But yes over the years I feel very much that it is a community. I think again teaching staff and support staff have a slightly different role and I think are working very hard at trying to amalgamate them because I think, it is the same at Norlands, that there is a little bit of them and us is bound to happen and I have to accept we don't understand the teaching side. We have a totally different side to it but that is being worked at very hard but I feel very much part of the community. And we are very much included in the community. When there are concerts and things. Last Sunday I was working and there was a concert and my husband came with a friend to it. So we are allowed to be a part of it which is very important.

You say allowed. Do you use that work advisedly? You could have said 'encouraged.'

No were not possibly encouraged. It was put up there and I felt I ought to go and ask whether it was open to other support staff and perhaps that was being over sensitive. But no I just felt I should ask whether it was open to staff's other half and whether my husband could bring a friend. I never want to put either the Department or the Staff in the embarrassment of being somewhere where they should not be. If parents had been invited there wouldn't have been room and, therefore, support staff are obviously the first ones to back off. So I am always conscious of those sorts of things.

I haven't worked this out but what proportion is residential? Have you any idea?

I haven't. A small part

But you mentioned the husbands. Are there Houses where non-residential staff live

or not.

There used to be but I don't think there is now. All the ones who live in now are attached to Houses. But I am not certain.

But there are teaching Housemistresses, aren't there²

Yes, there are. There is only one I have come across.

Indeed Teaching, doing a bit of teaching.

This is a funny follow up now but when you have a community like this it can become claustrophobic and narrowing. Do you feel that it is sufficiently outward looking? Does indeed the prevalence of the staff help to bring in the outside world as it were?

Yes, I think it does because a large proportion of staff come in every day. I think we are trying to look outwards to the community as well. Probably don't do it enough but it is time like everything else and of course, situated here the village is so long and we are between and so that is quite difficult. But yes certainly come in from outside. I don't feel we are totally

I don't quite know whether, I am sure you can with your experience, have a crack at answering this. Down is generally considered in the educational world to be a highly successful school and what sort of criteria would you, in your role as Head of the medical side of things as it were, but also as a former parent, how would you judge? What criteria would you use to judge whether the School was successful or not. I am just interested in your personal views.

Well I like to look at the care of the individual as the most important to me because if the child isn't happy it doesn't matter how good the school is they will never perform to their best. When we were looking for schools and we looked, my husband came to look at this school, as I was out of uniform coming as a parent. We were looking mainly for that and a school that offered opportunities for the children. I wasn't interested in how many theatre trips they had because I felt that was our role in the holidays. It was what opportunities they gave the children in the educational side.... that perhaps we couldn't do in the holidays. A school that would bring them along at peak performance as well as teach them the three R's but also where they were..... for children to feel they were being too pressurised. I think though that education .. has become very pressurised. I think..... My youngest son actually has become a teacher and I think in every way now teaching is becoming more and more pressurised for all sorts of different reasons.

Teaching certainly. I am not sure that the use of the word education is quite the right one quite honestly because you haven't once mentioned league tables. You didn't look first at those obviously. It seems to me that we are getting focused on a very narrow part of education forgetting the development of each individual.

My husband was state educated and though I suppose he wasn't adamant he was interested in the school and didn't worry about whether it was private and all the rest of it where perhaps I.... No I don't know I think we both looked at the same school.

Your role here. Can we focus on that for a bit?⁷ Obviously you have a job description but I am quite sure it doesn't really cover a fraction of what you do or indeed not necessarily the part which you consider to be most important. Can you tell me a little bit about how you view your role rather than your job?

I feel we are here to support the girls. We are looking after well children on the

whole but it is our role to see that they are kept healthy and that we are there to back up the support, we are there as a listening ear, really almost surrogate mums at times. If they want to let off steam they can come and do that with us and not feel it will go any further. We are medical, we have very strict rules of confidentiality and that is the most difficult role in our in our job. Teaching staff don't always understand. I appreciate why they don't but we cannot break our codes so we have quite a difficult role there to play. I would like to think the girls can come to us. I also want my staff to teach the girls that when they leave school and go out into the ~~wild~~ world of the NHS service they can't leave it..... cross country run.... is come back at the right time because they have to learn that no doctor will stand for that either. If there is a problem they have got to come at the right time so without being unkind to them there are times when I will turn them away from the door and tell them to come back at the right time. They must learn that. We are here to support staff too. We are a community and I like to think we can advise staff. We can't offer medical treatment to them because they are not patients of the School Doctor but I like to think that we can give them a friendly word or advice. And that means any member of staff; kitchen staff, gardening staff' anyone that approaches us if they want to come and talk that is fine. We do have a School counsellor so she does a fair bit of counselling but we also do quite a lot of that as well. Apart from the routine like afternoon.... and they have to go on as well.

What does interest me enormously is this thing of confidentiality. I wonder when the interests of the child dictate that you have got to say something to somebody. It must be incredibly difficult.

It is awful. I have to say awful at times. We are very lucky in that we have a School Doctor and a lady Doctor who comes in and does two sessions and that is very supportive. My staff know they can always discuss things with me. We usually say that to the girls. Allright you might tell me in confidence but I may have to discuss this with my Head of Department and if I am concerned I will go to the Doctor. There is a very very fine line at times and I am trying to build up hard with the House Staff to accept that there are times when I will say to them - Jemima Blocks is not a hundred per cent and will not perform one hundred per cent but I can't tell you why. You have got to accept that. And I am trying to work on that one. They are being very good about it. I understand why they want to know but.....

Does this cover their emotional problems when they are not strictly medical? Do you still abide by the same sort of code? You know if something horrendous is going on in the home or something that you hear about does it have to remain with you.

If the girl has said so, yes.

If you ask the girl to give permission for you to talk to somebody.. ?

I would do that. And often girls come and say they want to say something in confidence I always sit them down and say of course you can. Before you start if this has to go further for any reason, if you want to talk about a friend who is at risk or the rest of the community... you realize I shall have to pass it on but I will tell you if I am going to do it now will go away and think about it and come back in five minutes and I have never had one who as not come back and gone on with it. And then there are times when you say to them it will have to be passed on or I have said that is fine it can stay with me. But it is, my young staff, find it almost impossible..... But then equally we will soon be struck off. It is one of the bits of the job I hate

On the whole, in the last resort it's your powers of persuasion, to persuade the child. Yes they themselves must speak to somebody else or they will ask you to do it for them.

Yes if they are at risk or..... or if they won't then..... and that is when I go to the

Doctor..... and say am I right.....

It's a huge issue.

Absolutely. And it is often the things that you don't think, to you don't seem particularly important but to a child is absolutely crucial and we have to accept that it is going to be not to tell the parent because the child feels that strongly however hard I am going to find it if a parent finds out I have got to stick to it. Parents do not like it at all and it can get us in a lot of hot water.

I go back to the time when the pill was being prescribed without the parents' knowledge and the flack one took when they realized that..

I haven't had that but the School Doctor has and the Doctor having prescribed it you can imagine....

It is a funny question this but we have haven't talked about the aims of the School. Are you conscious that as you do your work especially in this sort of counselling aspect of things that you are playing a part in fulfilling aims that the School sets out ?

Yes because it is the holistic approach and we feel that very strongly and try to work towards that all the time. You know I like to think we put as much input into the girls keeping healthy as actually making them better when they are not and when they leave School they know what a healthy lifestyle is about and the importance of exercise..... Although PSE teach it we put it into practice.

A question for you which I have put to staff generally, do you have a life beyond the School?...Clearly you have

..... you would know. Because I have had a new deputy this term and she has just had a fortnight's holiday because she had booked it before hand so yesterday was..... my first day off since the beginning of September but I do have a life beyond school yes.

My admiration has no bounds for the things you do. It is wonderful but clearly you have your family. Have they all left home?

Yes, all left home. All got their own homes.

Coming and going whenever they need you.

Yes and a mother

Does she live with you?

No she doesn't but my father died just a year ago so she needs a fair bit of support but she is wonderful

And you have time to do things together, you and your husband?

I am lucky. My husband is quite a lot older than I am so he has retired so holiday times are very precious. I Mean he does lots of things like Magistrates work so he works around that so when I am off he has a break so we do spend time together then. Not as much as we would like but that is the way.

In a way it balances out and keeps it all alive.

Oh very much so.

I hope you know what I mean.

I do indeed.

This sounds like an intrusive question; what is your view of the relationships that prevail here? I am thinking of the group thing now, say between staff and pupils, pupil and pupil.

I think pupil to pupil we have a little way to go inasmuch as a year ahead or two years ahead they haven't a clue who they are. Don't quite walk on the other side of the corridor but I think we have a fair bit to do on that and the management team are working very hard on that and

This is because of the hierarchy in School. You know if they are a year above they think they are rather superior.

It seems to be. It doesn't happen in all the years but there is definitely that feeling. You know they are beneath us or are above us or whatever.

Not helped by the division into Houses in the way it is done. I know there are pros and cons but this is one of the things against it I think. They don't get as much chance to meet one another.

No. Funnily enough when we were looking at schools it was one of the things which attracted us where the boys were because they were 11 to 18 all in one House and the 18 year olds. You know I remember the Headmaster saying one day there was a little 11 year old who got taken to Matron by an 18 year old; Matron this child has been coughing all night and it is time you did something about it. Very much a family unit and I had one of mine bringing home a Sixth Former to tea one day when he was in the Second Year so they were very much like that but as you say there are advantages ...

I am interested in this because I think it is the reception year I am not quite reconciled to. I can see the virtue of it but it does fragment their whole passage through the School. It will be interesting to see how this...

Now they have taken the Second year out as well. In the second year they go into two houses and then in year three they go into mixed age houses.

So they are very much year orientated aren't they until they get quite high up and then it is very difficult to get that vertical feel I think.

But we do now do everything like Sports Days and everything that's done and they are allocated the Drama things when they arrive now so they are very much included in that House which is helping.

I think has got this idea too that she wants to do something about this. So I was most interested. I think the girls generally are aware of it and it needs attention.

Staff and Parents. Are those relationships cultivated as it were or..?

Yes I think so.

Or do they only meet when they talk about the girls' work?

No obviously they meet at other times. Even the House Staff have Mothers' Lunches and things like that and that is fairly recent. I would have loved that when my daughter was here. It is lovely. And the parents seem to know a lot, not just from the

girls, through being here and everything, they know. So I would say it is good. I think the staff are very approachable certainly.

And the girls and their parents. On the whole are those relationships good and openly sound or are some pretty remote still.⁷ A great mixture I suppose.

I think you get that in any school.

Funnily enough the boys school where I have done this same exercise, the relationships between the boys and their parents have been tremendously improved because they were at boarding school. There was a high proportion of weekly boarders which I had always been against but I was totally won over because of the success and they were talking to their parents very openly and a huge number of them, not just a minority thing at all. And it was because they had been removed from one another.

Well I have to say my own children were far closer I am sure because they were boarding. They were incredibly close and even now they will ring up and say when are you going home next, let us all try to be there together. The two younger ones could never go on holiday together. At the end of a week they would be at each others throats but they are very close because they have all been away and apart at boarding school.

This is something which someone with no experience of boarding school cannot understand at all.

..... that is why holidays are so precious with my children. I spent every minute of the holiday with them and we do everything together. With my friends with children at day school holiday is just a continuation so they went shopping when they were at home and didn't do anything when they went on holidays. So it was a very precious time and I am sure I saw as much of children as my friends with children at day school; probably a lot more.

You certainly had more meals with them.

Oh definitely. All the time.

How far does the management structure here help you in your work?⁷ Do you have the right support behind you and so on and do your staff get the right sort of links with the School generally, and so on?

I think the Management structure from the Department from my point of view is excellent and it makes a huge difference to running the medical centre. I know what is going on in the Houses..... and that makes a huge difference. If a child is coming up two or three times with sheer trivia and I know their parents have split up it makes a huge difference and also if there is a problem in the house and the child arrives at the wrong timeshe is not the one who is going to say to that one you go and come back tonight she is the one whose door is going to be open. I hope my staff get enough support but it is very difficult as they are all part timers.

How many do you have?

Five. I have a deputy who is full time because we have to cover 24 hours so it is difficult. We're trying to make a bit of an effort and come into meals to see if that will help to bond us a bit more with staff but the management structure is very supportive. My staff have come totally foreign environments so it is not just the structure being wrong, my staff have to adapt as well. They are used to being in an NHS service and this is very different so I hope they get the right support.

Does it help their sense of commitment to the place? Do you find it does develop?

Not all the staff. A lot of young staff go out to work for the money these days and the job

And convenient hours to fit with their families.

Absolutely, and I accept that what my staff are but when we set up the department two years ago when I took over. Two members of staff have been with me for two years just recently. It makes such a difference when you get to know the girls and actually look forward to seeing them and seeing them develop. So their interest has developed. It won't happen instantly. It is job. You see a girl one day and you don't see her again for another six weeks and if you are not on duty when she comes back you don't see her for a year perhaps. But they are beginning to feel..... Pardon. You have got to ring the Housemistress. Why. It is a new world, absolutely. I have lost one member of staff - it wasn't for her. That is fine, if it is not fine there is no point in starting with it. But the others are beginning to really get quite committed and determined to get in right for the girls which is super.

How do you measure your own effectiveness? Do you ever try?

I am not very good on all these assessment things that one is meant to do these days. We have got two senior girls who actually asked to be attached to the medical centre so I try to pick their brains a lot because they are my clients and therefore if they feel we are doing things right then that has got to be a step in the right direction. And also by parental comment too. We try to take on board you know if you want to criticise that is fine but I would like you to do it to me and not my staff because that is the only way we can learn how we are doing.....I don't know. I go to lots of conferences with other school nurses and comparing what we are doing with what they are doing. I am very lucky and the Governors have been very good in allowing me to have the number of staff I have got and allowing us to develop along the path we have. There are so many schools where the medical centre is down there and you are not allowed You only see girls when they are sick and don't know anything about them. I couldn't do it like that so I have been very lucky in that way. I'd like to think that we are cost effective.

What about training for your staff. I mean obviously you are doing it all the time but do you use the BSA or courses?

We do. None of mine have done - I think and Tim Holgate knows this, because I have had quite a few conversations and letters with him. I don't think they have got it right for the nursing staff because qualifications don't count and therefore we have got to do the basics. Now my staff, if they are going to do anything, want to do, not Higher Upper 2 , but he knows my feelings on that very vociferously although in fairness I haven't checked this year whether they have changed it or not. I couldn't get to the BSA Conference this summer. Yes, Tim also knows that the BSA are going to keep the nurses in on that Conference and they are going to have to work a little bit harder on that because schools are prepared to pay for to go on everything and the Royal College now school nursing..... coming out of the woodwork and doing very well. Somebody is doing it and so there are very good training sessions there. So I don't want to split away because I think it is a shame but we do have quite a few....

Have they thought of linking up I wonder?

Well I did write to Tim and suggest this and I also wrote to the Chair of the School Nurses board. It hasn't happened yet.

No but it seems sensible doesn't it?

Well the BSA is a three day course and I suggested they had the on one day but they put that in the middle. There are people who are coming for the BSA could still come to that but those of us who are members of both could have..

The three days.

There isn't time to do all these unfortunately.

The other thought that occurred to me just now - how do you communicate with parents? Obviously telephone but writing letters :?

Mainly telephone and I record everything. Every call I make I now record in the girl's file. Obviously things like flu immunisation.... so that is all done by letter but no it is much quicker by telephone.

Supposing there is a problem, a medical problem, that requires parents to come here to see you or the School Doctor or whatnot, obviously you would inform parents and so on but would that be done?

Yes, some parents ask to see the School Doctor and we work around that. The Doctor will always speak to parents. We are lucky with both the School Doctors. They are very understanding of the situation and they will always speak to parents on the 'phone and very happy if parents want to come in. Most of them are quite happy that we will report back to them and obviously that is done with the girl's permission. But every child that has to have a blood test, Xray, see a specialist, physiotherapy, put on an antibiotic, I automatically tell the parents, admitted overnight. if..... I expect the child to write and tell them. Anything I think the parent I would rather.... than my child I try and do so I spend every evening, you know I give 15 parents a ring some evenings and spend a lot of time on the phone to parents and this is one way when you do get a Department working successfully you actually have overcome by.. because we have made a with the girls to come and because parents now have much more contact. There are some days when I feel I have done nothing but talk to parents and see girls. We actually do hardly any of our own work at all so we have to get it right.

You have to get a balance but on the other hand it is all part and parcel of doing your job.

Yes, it is important, terribly important. I also let the House staff know too so they are aware of what is going on. Again not necessarily all the details but I have a problem or am having a problem with parents then I like House staff to know. I do get some fairly angry phone calls from parents and..... particularly can be very unpleasant but I immediately tell the Head so if the parents ring up to complain, which they are likely to do

They can't play off one another.

No because I won't give way on my confidentiality, then she needs to know what is going on and the House staff need to know to try to support us.....

You wonder sometimes when you talk in these terms how on earth you manage to do your job? There are so many ramifications.

There are unfortunately and we have 600. You know when House staff have 50..... well I've got 570. Not all the time..

But you are responsible for each one really.

When parents ring up about Joe Bloggs they expect you to know immediately who Joe Bloggs is.

And that is not easy is it when you are as remote in a sense as you are?

That's right. And with modern communication especially Email. A parent rang me up and asked what are you doing about Samantha's ankle so I wracked my brain and thought who is this child . So I said what do you mean. Well she has fallen in the Netball court and hurt it and she has just E mailed me. The child had E mailed her mother on the way to see me. She had not actually got to me. I had to say there is actually a ring on the doorbell now . it might be your daughter. If you will give me ten minutes and ring back I will let you know what I am doing about it. Parents are very quick. You know you can say to a girl you can play games there is actually nothing wrong with you and I can bet my bottom dollar within ten minutes I will have mother on the phone. She has immediately contacted mother. With 'flu vaccine today I had written consent from all parents and I had one girl who said I have rung Mummy and she said I mustn't have it.

Mixed benefit but E mail is the worst of it and mobile phones. Do you have any dealing with Day Pupils? I don't suppose you do.

Yes if they are unwell they come to us.

They are very much in the minority aren't they? It must be quite hard as your daughter found. Do many transfer to boarding?

Nearly all of them..

This is a silly question I think - Do you ever regret your decision to work in a boarding school?

No. I love my job. I love young people and now mine have grown up I love the challenges of them. All right there are times when but we have such characters here. No I have no regrets at all . I have been here so long the girls say gosh you must be part of the furniture.

Can you pinpoint anything that makes it really worthwhile? Are there particular girls who have gone through and you have had a lot to do with them and you think gosh how rewarding!

There are. Quite a few I still keep in touch with. One who had horrendous problems and still I get 'phone calls but also happy phone calls to. You see some little scraps come at 11 and you see them develop into such wonderful young ladies. Not that I have had anything to do with that and I love going to concerts and seeing the girls. Such a different side. You know the one that wings up with us and there she is playing her violin and I think yes. And every day is different. You know I think it is all being quiet and then by 4 o'clock in the afternoon all hell's let loose. And you never know what it is going to be. Maintenance man fall off the ladder or parents because something is wrong at home. So this is the enchantment of the job for everyone here. You never know . Once..... I was taking to the Head and I said I kept one case from everything.

.....

We have almost covered this. Can you think of anything you would criticise about boarding? I mean the obvious thing that people may think is that they are unprepared for the world beyond.

I disagree with that. My children when they went off to University settled immediately. They all knew exactly what tuck they were taking for the first night to have everyone on the corridor in for drinks. No I disagree with that. All could stand on their own two feet by the time they had left boarding school. They all knew how to organise themselves, although they were disorganised children, but they knew what they had to do so I would say the opposite. If they had been at home with me they would have been far more - I think I would have looked after them far more which is not helpful for the child. So I think boarding school prepares them for the outside world. They know also, though my children didn't know what a split home meant or the ramifications of that and that is very important to know that not everyone is as lucky perhaps as you are with things at home or in a job or whatever and I think it taught them quite a lot about

Did you find they were sufficiently streetwise? Because there is a sort of culture that they go into which is tough.

Yes probably different streetwise to that if they had been at a day school, but certainly, and I suppose here my daughter might be different because a lot of pupils here were far more worldly than we were. She had a lot to cope with from that point of view so she was streetwise in a very different sense. And my boys being in the state school they went to, were streetwise in a totally different way. I mean they used to, obviously there were boys there whose fathers were bus drivers right the way through to Navy as it were. Yes I would say they were streetwise but in a different way.

This is always a difficult one because obviously coming from a home like yours they have a set of values, did you find that the School reinforced those values in our daughter or did they conflict in any way?

No I would say the School enforced. Not all their friends' parents enforced but they went to stay with friends they would often find it quite difficult to know what they were allowed to do knowing that I wouldn't approve. I think the difficulty now is that parents are allowed to have so much say it is often difficult for the school to actually enforce. I mean obviously underneath this place are Christian values. Many parents never go near a Church or have never thought .

I presume your daughter was strong enough when she went into an environment, staying with friends.... to stand firm, and possibly the fact that she knew the School would say the same thing as you would say, helped her. But it must be a terrible dilemma particularly for some who have not quite got the moral strength. Perhaps your child has mercifully but you know who is to say. It's tough I think. It's a hard world to grow up in any way.

Sometimes it is so much easier to say yes to a child than no whereas...