THE RESEARCH PROCESS : THEORIES AND METHODS

IN AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF INFANT SCHOOLS

FOUR VOLUMES : VOLUME 3

by

MARGARET WENDY BOWEN

THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

APRIL 1990

VOLUME THREE

CONTENTS

CHAPTER TWO : 'SETTING THE SCENE'

INTRODUCTION

This chapter attempts to 'set the scene' of the research. "Setting the scene" is a term used by Delamont, who attributed it to Strauss et al (1964). Delamont defined this as meaning:

> "All aspects of the temporal and institutional context
> in which any particular classroom is to be found."
>
> (Delamont, 1976, p. 26)

Elaborating on this definition Delamont stated that the term included:

> "Temporal aspects of classroom interaction, the formal
> organisation, the social and educational context and
> the physical surroundings in which they take place."
>
> (Delamont, 1976, p. 27)

The point of 'setting the scene' is to contextualise the school which was the main research site. This seems essential as otherwise what could be important features of the school, and of classroom life within it, might be misunderstood or missed completely by the researcher. Delamont similarly argued in reference to classroom life that "Classroom processes can only be understood if their context is understood". (Delamont, 1976, p. 40). Such a context for a classroom would include the school, and for the school its environment.

This chapter, as part of such contextualisation, thus sets out to describe certain physical, institutional and temporal features of the main school. It does not describe classroom practices, as these are dealt with in a further chapter.

As a further part of contextualisation, it seeks to show how the main school stands in comparison with other schools seen. It therefore gives some similar descriptions where possible of four schools out of five which were visited in a small pilot study prior to the main research, with visits ranging from two or three days to a week, and also of one school which was visited for some six weeks after the main research was

completed. Because of the shorter timespan description of these schools is limited, especially in relation to 'temporal' aspects. However, as observations from these schools are used in the relevant empirical chapters of this thesis, their 'setting' is given in their own right as well as in comparison to the main school.

The physical aspects of context, according to Delamont, refer to:

"The location of the school, the spatial arrangements between the classroom and the rest of the school, and the layout and decor of the classroom itself."
(Delamont, 1976, p. 29)

Thus, the description of the 'physical context' in this chapter includes the immediate environment of the school, its internal layout, and the layout content of classrooms. The 'institutional' aspect of scene setting refers in this chapter to the number and deployment of staff, and to the number of pupils and their distribution between classes, although it notes rather than gives details of the organisation of pupils for teaching purposes. This is developed in the Heads' chapter.

'Temporal' features are defined by Delamont in terms of the classroom, when she stated that:

"Classrooms can only be understood when it is accepted that they are situated in time. They are never static."
(Delamont, 1976, p. 27)

She was referring to the 'history' of interactions within the classroom and the effect of past incidents, such as the "strawberries" incident she describes, on present relationships.

'Temporal' is used differently in this chapter. First, it refers to the school rather than the classroom, but this does not mean the relationships between personnel, as these are discussed elsewhere in this thesis. However, brief references are made to the effect of heads, for example, where this seems relevant. It is principally used to refer to two features, the school 'environment' as a social entity, and school design.

The main concern is with the school in the context of its catchment area, its external environment. This 'physical location' of the school has a social aspect, the people who live there, parents and pupils. Heads referred to the social composition of their catchment areas, ascribing social class to those based on the type of housing and the occupational background of the people living there. So reference is made to these comments. This is done because the social aspect of the area seemed to be part of their view of the school, part of its 'biography'. In the case of Moorland, the main research school, more references were made to the social nature of the area and references were also made to the history of the catchment area. Therefore, an account is given of the history of this area, though not of the others. This latter lack was more a consequence of lack of time rather than interest, although in these schools the question of the area was not so directly brought to the attention of the researcher as it was at Moorland. This does not mean however, that such 'temporal' factors would, though apparently influencing staff in the school at the time of the research, always do so, a point made in the preceding chapter.

The question of the relationship, if any, between school design features and the activities within a school was also raised when teachers commented, for example, on the size of rooms, and the Head of one school to 'closed doors'. The age of the school had some bearing on design, hence this feature is noted in the description of the general appearance and internal layout of schools. However, it is not suggested that design necessarily determines practice, but rather that, while it may act as a constraining factor, other variables are involved.

The chapter is arranged chronologically. Thus the first section considers the pilot study schools, the second the main school, and the third section the last school visited. Within each section the 'physical setting' is described first. That is, the environment of the school,

its general appearance and internal layout and then the individual class-
rooms. The contents of classrooms are referred to again in the chapter
dealing with classroom activities and teacher control. Within this
'physical setting' the 'temporal' aspects mentioned above are noted,
apart from the history of the environment, which is confined to one school
in any case. The 'institutional' setting follows. The section dealing
with the main school gives also, as noted, an outline of the 'temporal'
or historical aspects of the environment after the rest of the descriptive
'setting'. In the final part of this section this is brought up to date,
in terms of the start of the research, by noting the paternal occupational
status of Moorland pupils, and commenting on this. At the end of the
section dealing with the last school a small sample of pupils there is
compared with Moorland in this respect.

SECTION ONE   THE PILOT STUDY SCHOOLS
Five schools altogether were visited, but one, "Ashley", was visited for
one day only, with no time to do much more than see the Head, so it is not
described.

The four schools described in this section were chosen using a map
and telephone directory, in order to try and cover a range of areas.
They thus comprise different localities, from 'urban' to 'rural'. The
social nature of these catchment areas also differed, from being pre-
dominantly 'working class' to 'mainly middle class', as described by the
head teachers. This range was partly accidental, as from the map alone
such 'social distributions' were not clearly apparent.

The schools also varied in physical size and numbers of staff and
pupils.

The basic aim of the pilot study was to explore the meaning of 'infant
school' across a range of settings, to discover any similarities or
differences before undertaking the main research, as noted in "Methodology".

The schools are named "Stone Street", "Rushside", "Briarfield" and "Fairfield". They are described in this chapter according to age, with the oldest first, although the order in which they were actually visited was Briarfield, Rushside, Fairfield, Stone Street and Ashley for one day, as noted.

1. "Stone Street"

Stone Street was a city centre school, its catchment area was quite small. Much of the housing near the school consisted of small terraced houses, at least some of which appeared to be privately owned because they were not painted uniformly, while the others seemed more similar. There was also some council housing in the area, including flats. It did not appear a particularly drab setting to the researcher.

In social terms the head described the area as "working class" and in fact it was officially designated as an EPA school. The other teachers in the school did not mention the children's background, but they were not specifically asked. In a short visit it was difficult to establish much real communication.

The general appearance of Stone Street reflected its origins. It was the oldest school seen, and was a Victorian 'two decker' school built in 1898. There were high windows and, internally, high ceilings. There were separate entrances for boys and girls, so designated above the doors, with steps leading up to them. These separate entrances were no longer enforced, however. All went in by the same door.

Unlike the other schools, Stone Street was not a separate infant school, but comprised a junior department and an infant department under the one head. These two departments were housed on the ground floor of the building, with a separate secondary school on the upper floor.

Around the school was an asphalt playground, with a high wall surrounding this on two sides, meeting at the corners of the building.

Internally, the main entrance led into a small lobby off which were stairs leading to the head's office, which was situated on the second floor. From the lobby a door led into the infants department.

There was a small central area which contained a piano and a small library corner. Off this led three small classrooms, one on the right and two on the left. There was little space to move about in these rooms.

The infant department was separated from the junior department by a partition, but there was no door, so the two departments were not closed off completely. Beyond this separating partition was a large hall. Off this led the junior classrooms, one on the right and three on the left. At the far end of the hall was a storage area. There was no staffroom as such, instead one area of the hall on the right was partitioned off for this purpose, and this was not very large and not even a proper room.

The classrooms of this school were separate, however. That is, teaching went on behind closed doors, particularly in the junior department. This was the case with the infant department in the mornings. In the afternoon the 'infants' were grouped together since numbers were small and there was one teacher less.

The head commented on the 'closed' aspect of teaching, saying: "If I had my way all the doors of the classrooms would be taken off". (Head, Stone Street, Observation Notes). He said that he was trying to persuade the staff of the junior department to try new ways of teaching, but so far without success. He added that it was: "Hard to get the staff to experiment with new ideas". The teachers seemed to prefer their closed doors.

This head had only been at the school for one year, while some of the teachers, he said, had been in the school for thirty years and had experienced a stricter regime.

The question of the relationship of a head to other staff, and the possibility of staff acting as a restraining influence on a head's desire to initiate change, is returned to in the chapter on head teachers. At Stone Street the actual layout of the school perhaps influenced teachers' views. With the classrooms opening onto a central area, closed doors were their way of gaining privacy. This may be important to teachers in some situations, though not necessarily in all. Wallace, for example, pointed to the concepts of "personal space" and "territoriality" in relation both to "human perceptions" and "the functions which teachers are expected to achieve". He claimed that:

> "Class based teaching, therefore, may be seen as attractive
> to teachers, not only for the privacy and control over
> environment which it provides them with, but also because it
> can be organised to reduce interaction between pupils by
> focusing attention on the teacher. It serves therefore to
> assist the teacher with the maintenance of social order."
>
> (Wallace, G. W., 1980, p. 54)

Given that to be seen to be 'in control', in discipline terms, of the social order of the classroom, and so of children, is considered by some, especially including heads, *to be the mark of a 'good' teacher, it would not be surprising* if teachers preferred situations where such 'control' might be less difficult, or rather any lack less obvious.

The infant department comprised three separate classrooms. These were the home respectively of a reception class for pupils of $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5, a 'middle infant' class of 5-6 year olds, and a 'top infants' class of 6 to 7 year olds.

One difference between the junior and infant departments was that in the latter the children did come together in the afternoon in the reception class, which was slightly larger than the other two.

The reason for this was less an interest in integration (the 'Integrated Day' is considered in the Heads' chapter) than a practical response to staffing problems. Falling rolls meant that one teacher was part-time in the school, working mornings only. Also pupil numbers were small, so that combining groups made better use of facilities.

The description of the internal layout of the classrooms is thus restricted to that of the reception and top infants rooms, so visits were made in the afternoon.

In the reception classroom there were small tables and chairs for the pupils, with a larger 'teacher's desk'. Near this last was a fixed blackboard, and also two easels. Round the room there were other tables set up as a 'class shop' and, a 'nature corner'. There were areas in two corners which were designated res- pectively a 'book corner' and a 'dressing up corner'. A small cupboard held plastic trays in which the children's personal possessions were kept. There was also a sink in the room for 'cleaning up'.

Around the walls was displayed a 'collage'. At the time of the visit this was of daffodils. Also prominently displayed were letters of the alphabet.

Amongst the practical materials provided for the children were large plastic bricks, 'Lego' building apparatus, and various puzzles related to learning activities.

The 'top infants' room contained five smallish tables of different colours, and a teacher's table. There was one fixed blackboard and easel. There was a larger table on which were some sets of commercially produced work cards for 'number' activities and for reading and writing. There did not seem to be a large number of these cards, however. The teacher in this classroom was the deputy head, and she mentioned financial constraints on material provision. She said that the capitation allowances had been cut owing to falling rolls. This affected what teachers could make in the way of work cards and other learning aids, as the school was short of paper and card.

As in the reception room there were tables for practical work and special 'interests', and a similar cupboard for children's trays, which each had its owner's name.

On the walls were collages and also small charts. One showed the days of

the week, one the composition of numbers up to 20, and one for numbers up to 100.

The general impression of the appearance of the school and the classrooms waa that it did not seem unduly gloomy and depressing, in spite of the design features, even though it was not brightly coloured inside. What did impress, however, was the apparant shortage of reading and mathematical apparatus. What there was seemed of poor quality. "It looks worn and obviously there seems to have been little renewal". (Observation Notes).

The deputy head again said, in relation to equipment, that no money was available for replacements. Partly this was blamed on falling rolls, but the deputy was also critical of the head in this area of materials. She complained that he had spent money on some expensive piece of equipment when "We were desperately short of materials for the classroom". (Observation Notes). She said that the head: "knows nothing about infant practice" as he was "junior trained"; yet tried to "tell us what to do". (Observation Notes).

The implication was that if the head had known more about 'infant' work more money might have been set aside for materials.

The idea that 'junior training' affected a teacher's views of infant school practice was raised by King, who spoke of the one such teacher in his study as "deviant". (King, 1978). This view was strongly rejected by the head of "Larkway", the last school visited, as is noted in the Heads' chapter following.

As noted, there were four classrooms in the junior department and three in the infants, and three 'infant' staff. The overall head of both had general responsibility but there was a deputy head who taught the 'top infants' and so was in charge of the infants department. Because of its small size there were no special posts.

At the time of the visit there were fifty-one pupils on roll, As noted, the children were arranged in separate age classes for main teaching and learning activities, with integration in the afternoon for things like art and craft.

In the school numbers had fallen rapidly during the seventies. By Easter 1980 this had reached such a level that the new intake numbered just ten pupils.

The deputy head considered that one consequence of this would be that separate age classes would no longer be viable. 'Family' grouping, or mixed age, was thus a distinct possibility, or closure of the school. Such 'mixed' grouping might be difficult with small rooms, since this form needed more space, with different sizes of children in the same area.

Because of the falling rolls, there seemed a general air of uncertainty about Stone Street.

The next school described is "Rushside", which was the second oldest of the group, although age here meant some thirty years instead of ninety.

2. "Rushside"

This was the largest of the schools visited, both in the pilot study itself and subsequently. Its catchment area was also more extensive than that of "Stone Street". "Rushside" was set in the suburbs of a city, which merged into a rural area on its boundary. The housing surrounding the school was mixed. There was some terraced housing, as at Stone Street, but of smarter appearance and more obviously owner occupied. There was some council housing, but not a large block.

There was also some older semi-detached private housing, all with separate gardens. Some new private housing was going up.

The types of housing were interspersed rather than a series of separate developments. In general the area appeared relatively prosperous, as far as a walk round could elicit, although there were pockets which seemed less so.

The headmistress referred to the area and the "social background" of the children, as being both "middle" and "working" class. One of the teachers, in contrast, thought that the children mostly came from poor homes. Some children did seem less well dressed than others, but this was not a striking feature.

579

"Rushside" was a single-storey building of brick construction. It was quite large as there were nine classrooms altogether plus a nursery. Eight of the classrooms were inside the block, while at the right of the building was a separate nursery with its own facilities. At the right rear of the school a new classroom had been added, again with its own cloakroom.

The school was bordered in front by a low brick wall, with a short drive leading from the entrance gates. On either side was an asphalt area, and some lawn. An asphalt playground lay to the rear of the building. Beyond this was a separate junior school which shared the same site but had its own amenities.

From the outside the school had quite a pleasant appearance.

The main entrance at the left of the school led into a quite large hall area. A kitchen preparation room and the staff cloakroom were at the far end, and a store cupboard on the left. On the right a narrow corridor led off to classrooms. On the right hand side of the entrance the first rooms of this corridor were three small rooms which were respectively the secretary's office, the 'staff room' and the head's room. The staff room was extremely small for the number of staff. Beyond these three on either side of the corridor were the eight classrooms of the main block plus a store cupboard.

Along this corridor were placed pegs for the children's clothes and also their shoe lockers. This feature narrowed the corridor even more, and made it a very crowded place at break-times. The head remarked that:

> "The corridors and cloakrooms of most schools resemble the M1
> at peak periods and can be almost as hazardous, and this is
> certainly true here."

There was no separate dining room, the hall doubled as this. As at 'Stone Street' the classrooms seemed to be "all distinct entities". The first impression the school gave to the researcher was that:

> "Such distinctiveness seems very important to the teachers.
> They guard their privacy. In fact, some of the teachers

appear very uneasy at the presence of a stranger in 'their' classrooms".

This was a matter raised with the head, as this was a school which, as noted in "Methodology" was at one stage a possible choice for the research. However, the request for research access here was denied. The head explained this by saying that it was not agreeable to the staff, as also stated in "Methodology". She gave as the main reason for teachers' attitudes to 'strangers' the after effect of the previous head: "who always looked in the classrooms and they resented this very much. They felt they should have more freedom". (Head, Rushside, Interview).

As stated in the Heads' chapter, the shadow of this former head still hung over the school. This 'temporal' aspect was thus quite important.

Because of the lack of time and the wishes of the teachers, only six of the nine classrooms were visited, apart from a brief initial look inside the others. Nor was the nursery visited, although in the light of interests which developed later in the research, this last omission was much regretted. Also, because of the institutional arrangements noted below, the classrooms were more alike than Stone Street. Therefore 'model' descriptions are given.

Class One had small tables and chairs for the pupils and a teacher's desk with a fixed blackboard near. Given the size of the school, the classrooms were quite small, with little space between the tables and so little scope for children to move around easily. The teachers commented on the lack of space.

In this classroom was a cupboard containing 'number' apparatus, and number games, and another with reading and writing materials. There was a 'book corner'. It was noticeable that: "There were very few work cards to be seen". (Observation Notes).

Classroom Three (the numbers refer to rooms, not any grouping of pupils) contained three larger tables for pupils. Again, there was little room between

them. There was also a teacher's desk and blackboard. Down one length of the room ran a worktop, underneath which were cupboards containing 'number' activities, art and craft materials and reading/writing apparatus. These last contained 'comprehension' and 'story' cards. These were cards on which there were pictures from which the children could develop 'stories' for writing.

There was a 'book corner', and in another corner were a set of 'measuring' work cards. In another corner, on the wall, word lists were set out. There was also a sink in the other corner.

Displayed around the walls were examples of children's work in art and crafts. The classroom thus presented quite a cheerful appearance and this was general.

Classroom Three a was very similar in general layout, but was even smaller as this was a new separate terrapin block. What was noticeable in this classroom and other classrooms of this age group (see below) was the presence of more work cards. These were graded, using coloured shapes to denote different stages. The 'number' or maths cards were based on a commercial series, Stern. This comprised both a set of practical apparatus, the Stern blocks, with a graded work book. As noted, there were also comprehension cards.

Classroom Nine contained a number of toys and games suitable for younger children in addition to other materials, but was otherwise similar to the other rooms.

As noted, the school contained nine classrooms, and all were in use. Besides the head and the nursery teacher, there were ten staff, two of whom were part-time and shared classroom Three A. One of these two was nursery-trained. There was a deputy head, but the head gave no further information on the distribution of responsibilities. There was no opportunity to follow up this question.

At the time of the visit there were 203 pupils on roll, with class

sizes varying from seventeen to twenty-six. Unlike "Stone Street",

numbers were expected to rise, especially in the lower age range of

4½-5 year old, although these might be for 'top infants'.

Four classes contained 'top infants' and five contained 4½ to 6

year olds, that is, 'reception' and 'middle' infants. The school was

thus partially 'family grouped' - a term discussed in the Heads'

chapter, along with the Heads' reasons for the present pattern of

allocation. Because of the expected increase in 'reception' children

there might have to be some re-organisation of the pattern.

One feature of 'Rushside' was that the 'reception' children were

withdrawn from their classes in the afternoon, and all came together in

Classroom 9. The nursery-trained teacher who took these children in the

afternoon said that in her opinion: "In mixed-age classes the reception

children tend to get left out of things". (Observation Notes).

As a working school Rushside seemed pleasant enough, but as with

'Stone Street', it did not 'feel' to the researcher wholly settled.

The Head had only recently been appointed, and, as noted in the chapter

on Head teachers, this can be an uncertain time for the people involved

in the situation.

The next school to be described is "Briarfield".

3.   "Briarfield"

The school was situated on the edge of a town. It overlooked fields,

and would be classified as semi-rural. On two sides of the school there

was an estate of private housing mostly semi-detached, but the estate was

of the moderately prosperous rather than extremely wealthy type. That

is, there were no extensive grounds to each, it was just an 'ordinary'

suburban estate. Most of the children came from this estate, although

some were said by the headmistress to come from a wider area. The
Head said that most of the children came from:" ... ordinary ... just
ordinary homes ... not well off but not very poor". (Head, Briarfield,
Interview). The Head claimed that there were few problem children
or those from broken homes.

The majority of the children were said not to attend a nursery
school prior to the infants. Those who did were more likely, it was
said, to be those from the "poorer homes". A comment by the
'reception' teacher on the value of such attendance claimed that the
nursery: " ... did not teach the children anything", and made the
children more noisy because: "Teachers there shouted at them".
(Observation Notes).

There appeared to be the view that because the catchment area
provided children who presented few problems, nursery attendance was
not necessary. This comment was one alerting factor when at Moorland,
the main research school, which, like Rushside, had a nursery
attached.

Briarfield, like Rushside, was a single-storey building of brick.
It was at the time of the visit some twelve years old. To the rear
was an asphalt playground, and to the front and right lawned area.
There was a short drive leading to the main entrance, at the front,
and a low wall with gates. It looked quite bright and pleasant.

The main entrance gave onto a large hall. To the right of the
entrance was first a room used as the school library, and next to this
were the Head's room, then the staff room (both of which were quite
small) and then the staff cloakroom. A short corridor in front of these

rooms separated them from the kitchen, a separate room also leading off the hall. Beyond the kitchen was the dining area.

On the left of the main entrance was first a children's cloakroom. Next to this, along the left side of the school were ranged teaching rooms. Class 1, followed by a music room with a store cupboard outside. Access to two more classrooms was via a short corridor opening off the top left hand corner of the hall. Off this on the right, and jutting out from the main block, was a "spare" classroom.

The hall was used for assemblies, but was also equipped for games and apparatus work.

It was noticeable in contrast to Stone Street and Rushside that the classrooms seemed large, and also airy. Also, although there were separate classrooms: "The classroom doors always remain open. The teachers are not shut away from one another". (Head, Briarfield, Interview).

There were general similarities within the three classrooms. Common to all were three small tables and chairs, and a teacher's desk and a blackboard. Also there were cupboards and shelving and a table containing a variety of learning apparatus for reading, writing and number activities. There was much more, and of a greater range, than at Stone Street or Rushside. In contrast to the latter, also it was noticeable that much more of the apparatus was made by the teacher rather than being commercially produced. However, there was such commercial apparatus available, including counting materials such as 'Unifix' and 'Stern'. Also evident were wooden beads, plastic and paper money, weighing scales, balances and weights, rulers and phonic games and 'flash cards'. It was noted that:

> "At Briarfield all this apparatus was displayed in
> colourful plastic trays, obtained from an educational
> catalogue."
>
> (Briarfield, Observation Notes)

There was a table for Art and Craft activities with paints and modelling material. This was available throughout the day for topic activities.

The classroom had a worktop stretching along one wall, and two sinks. There was in each also a sand tray and a water tray. There were two cabinets into which were slid the children's personal trays.

There was a large mat in each room and a book corner. In the room used by the 'reception' children there was a 'Wendy House'. In the other rooms this area was 'dressing up' corner. There was also a large box of wooden blocks. A table contained plants, and just outside the 'sliding doors' of this room there was a bird table set on the grass.

All the classrooms had the walls covered with displays of children's work and also teacher-produced displays (as they said). In the reception classroom these displays included a "'Weather Collage', an item on "Dangerous Places to Play" and a "Dinner Chart" which comprised a display of 'greens'. Another item was on 'Colour'.

In one of the other rooms there was a "Pond Collage" and one on the Loch Ness Monster.

Overall the three classrooms seemed in the researcher's view to be bright and cheerful. The children seemed to be getting on cheerfully with what they were doing and there seemed plenty of activity. There seemed much more space available for moving around than at Stone Street or Rushside, however.

Besides the headmistress, there were three teachers, one of whom was the deputy and one who was part-time. There was no other formal differentiation with such a small staff. There were sixty-four children on roll at the time, with three younger ones attending half-time only. The age range was from $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 years old.

There was one class of 'reception' children of $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 years old. At

first these children attend for half a day, and gradually this period is increased. The other two classes contained a mixture of 5 - 7 year olds. They were thus said by the head to be "vertically grouped". The head herself taught one of these classes, because its other teacher was part-time.

According to the headmistress, each teacher had responsibility for her own class. There was no formal 'open plan' but the existence of 'open doors' as a policy has been noted. Children, and by implication, staff, were free to move between classrooms, though not to wander aimlessly. Also, the head said that there was a period on Wednesday afternoons when all the children were put together. Different teachers had different groups of children for what the head called "group story time".

Compared to Stone Street and Rushside this seemed a more settled school.

The last school described in this section is Fairfield.

4. "Fairfield"

Fairfield was situated in a village. The housing in the village ranged from a small private estate to various other types of private housing, many of which had large gardens and were detached. Thus it seemed a prosperous area. One member of staff said, for example, that the children came from "... mostly professional backgrounds, for example one's father is a surgeon ... there are teachers and lecturers." She added that there weren't "any really poor children". (Observation Notes). The presence of a group of "farmworkers' children" was remarked on however.

The catchment area included not only Fairfield but also surrounding villages, which were not seen.

The school was the most recently built of the schools in the pilot study. There had been a school on the site previously, and the new school

was built in front of the original school.

Like the other schools, apart from Stone Street, it was a single-storey building of brick, with a lawn area at the front, and other lawned areas and an asphalt playground. However, it was not a uniform, square building. The main entrance was slightly on the left of the front. It seemed a pleasing building from the outside.

The internal design was the most unusual of any of the schools seen, not being all on one level for one thing, nor arranged in a 'regimental' way.

The main entrance gave onto an entrance hall or small lobby. Off this on the right was the head's room, round the corner in a short corridor, along which was also the staff room.

Past this corridor, the top right of the entrance lobby led into the main hall. This contained P.E. apparatus, including ropes, wall bars as well as movable apparatus such as a 'horse'. On the right of the hall was the dining area, and also beyond this the 'nursery' classroom for 'pre-fives'. The dining area had its own kitchen where school meals were prepared.

On the left of the main hall some shallow steps led up to one class-room. There was also a door to a small courtyard or patio on the left, beyond the first classroom.

The other three classrooms were grouped around this patio, one on the right and two on the left. The classrooms were all physically separate from each other.

The school looked well kept, and bright and cheerful. The unusual arrangement seemed to add to this impression.

The four classrooms were very similar in size, design and content.

They were quite large, and there was plenty of light, especially in those looking onto the patio, as these had sliding doors as well as windows.

The classrooms contained hexagonal tables for the children and a teacher's desk and a fixed blackboard and movable easel. The arrangement of the tables and the position of the teacher's table varied, however.

The hexagonal tables, which were smaller in Classroom One, were arranged to seat varying numbers of children from four to eight. Besides these tables, there were larger tables, usually two, used for laying out apparatus. There was also a sink. As at Briarfield, the apparatus included 'Stern' and 'Unifix' material, weighing tools, and counting material such as wooden beads and wooden counters. In Class One, the apparatus included Lego construction games and various other games and toys, and small plastic bricks. There was also an 'Interest' table in this room.

In one corner of the room was a book corner, with a fitted carpet, and a wooden seat along one side, and two easy chairs. There was also a 'home corner', which could be a 'Wendy House', class shop or 'dressing up corner', according to need. A worktop ran along one wall, as at Briarfield.

There were also movable storage units with trays for children's possessions, again as at Briarfield. On top of these were boxes of work cards, and boxes with children's writing and story books.

A very noticeable feature of all the classrooms at Fairfield was these boxes of work cards, each of which was labelled. In each box was a series of labelled envelopes which were numbered.

There was a set of 'maths cards' and a set of 'language cards' and in another box was a set of cards which a teacher said contained:

> "... sentences for copying, pictures to write about ...
> and comprehension cards where children have to fill in
> missing words."

(Observation Notes)

589

This box also contained "phonic cards" with different sounds written on them.

All the classrooms had displays of children's work, especially paintings, various collages, depending on present interests of teachers and pupils. Some of these pictures were labelled. One teacher said that she wrote the sentences or labels.

As at Briarfield, the main impression of the classrooms from the point of view of an infant teacher, was of a bright, cheerful atmosphere, and the children seemed happy and busy.

At Fairfield there were four teachers in the infant school proper and one in the 'nursery', apart from the headmistress. One of these was the deputy head.

There were said to be "about 120" pupils on roll at the time of the visit. The 'nursery' class was composed of 'pre-five' pupils as noted. Once children have 'graduated' from this class they are distributed to one of the other four, where they remain for the rest of their time at infant school. These other classes contain 5 to 7 year olds, and were thus "family-grouped".

A feature of Fairfield was the small class size. There were usually no more than twenty children in them.

With the description of Fairfield the 'setting' of the pilot study schools is concluded.

Certain points have been noted in this section.

The schools were of different age and design, serving different catchment areas. Staff seemed aware of the social nature of this area. There appeared to be few 'problem children' in the more 'middle-class' or prosperous areas, in the teachers' view.

In relation to school design, Robson, very much earlier, noted the

importance of school architecture and design for purpose. He stated that
school buildings should be "... of good form and good proportion ... above
all, good architectural character and good colour". (Robson, 1877, pp. 247-8)
He also noted the need for light and air. (Robson, 1877, pp. 9; 224-6).
However, at the time he wrote, as evident from his recommendations, the
paramount concern was the control of children by the teacher. Hence he
stated that separate classrooms were necessary, a policy which continued to[1]
operate for a long time.

Thus, as noted, all the classrooms in the four schools were separate
entities, which relates more to LEA building policies at the time the schools
were built. 'Stone Street' is the most obvious example, and ideas had not
changes greatly in this respect when 'Rushside' was built in the 50's. How-
ever, although in the 60's and 70's some 'open plan' schools were built in
some areas, there was no such policy in the area in which 'Briarfield' and
'Fairfield' were.

However, the existence of separate classrooms does not necessarily mean
that teachers see this as the best way to organise matters, let alone that it
determines how they operate within the classroom, even though features of
design such as classroom size may constrain activities, if in conjunction
with higher pupil numbers. 'Briarfield', for example, had an 'open doors'
policy, while 'Stone Street' did not. 'Rushside' also kept to separate
rooms. Each of these schools had different circumstances. At 'Stone Street',
as noted, there was some expression of disagreement between the head and
teachers. At 'Rushside' the effect of the attitude of the previous head
appeared to make teachers guard "privacy". How teachers actually operate in
respect of separate classrooms and 'closed doors' therefore seems related
more to the individual circumstances of schools than a general view.

As a footnote to the view that design features in themselves do not
determine policy, 'open plan' schools may, actually, not mean 'open doors'.
For example, while on teaching practice at college the researcher learnt of

a brand new school built on open plan lines, with a new head and staff. None of these liked the design of the school, though whether this particular design, or 'open plan' in general was not clear. In any event the head, with the total agreement of the staff, set about separating off the open areas, effectively turning the school into one with separate classrooms. One teacher said that they wanted privacy, but also, the noise of activities in the open areas was objected to. A related objection was the lack of 'quiet areas' for the children to work in.

Thus, the attitudes of a head and staff appear more important than design itself.

This section has discussed the pilot study schools. The next looks at Moorland, the main research school, in the same way, but with the addition of a 'history' of the environment or catchment area.

SECTION TWO   "MOORLAND"

Moorland School was situated at the edge of a council estate, which was itself on the boundary of a city. The school and part of the estate backed onto open ground and fields. The environment could thus in some respects have been termed both suburban and semi-rural, for Moorland was not, like Stone Street, a city centre school, even though in certain respects it seemed more like one. Unlike the other schools it did not serve a mixed housing area, but simply the council estate. It could be classified as a 'working class' area. This term, though, was seldom used directly by the staff, and when it was, no distinction was made between types of working class. Instead the staff, including the head, referred to 'poor home background' and a 'problem area'. (These references are discuased in the chapter on Head Teachers, in relation to views of parents, and the use of 'home background' instead of 'social class' in the chapter on teachers' definitions of pupils). The school had Social Priority status.

The housing of the estate, although it included some terraced houses,

which were in blocks of four, mainly consisted of semi-detached houses of
brick. These seemed quite large, with good-sized gardens. In relation to
size, one of the managers, a councillor, noting the area as "socially
difficult", said that the:

> "large numbers of big council houses ... attract the big
> families from which may come the children lacking the
> home support ... which we know plays a major part in
> helping children to read and to communicate."

Apart from raising a question about the role of infant education, his
comment shows how the area was regarded.

An impression gained from walking round the estate, on more than
one occasion, was that: "It is extremely bleak and unprepossessing in
parts" and that:

> "Some areas of the estate appear more 'run down' than others.
> In some parts ... gates are falling off their hinges.
> Rubbish is strewn across the front gardens of some of the
> houses. I would not care to walk along some of these
> streets on my own in the dark."
>
> (Observation Notes, 1980)

However, it was also recorded that there were other areas of housing on
the estate which, in contrast, appeared to be:

> "... in better condition ... gardens with well kept lawns
> ... and borders in which flowers and shrubs are planted."
>
> (Observation Notes, 1980)

This contrast was mentioned to the head of Moorland, who agreed that there
were differences within the area. She accounted for the difference by
saying that the area where the houses were better kept was "mainly inhabi-
ted by older people", implying that this feature explained the tidiness.
It may have had something to do with it. Discussions with older people
in a local history project give the impression that the women then spent
more time on house-care both internally and externally, with attention to
details such as scrubbing front steps. However, this did not seem a
sufficient explanation as children were seen coming out of houses in these
areas.

In any event, the general impression of bleakness was derived less

from the lack of tidiness than from the number of houses placed together, and an apparent uniformity of design. They were built of a rather dark brick, with windows close together. There were few trees in the primary roads to soften the effect.

Although the estate was older, Moorland itself was opened in the fifties, like Rushside, but was older than that school, and its appearance and design perhaps reflected architectural views then. A nursery unit was added in the mid-seventies.

The main school was a single-storey building of the same dark brick of the estate, but the nursery, a separate building, was of prefabricated construction.

The school appeared somewhat isolated from the main estate, a view which was also held by the head teacher. Like the estate, the school appeared rather bleak. The initial impression was of a drab building which could as easily have been taken for a small business or manufacturing site as a school. The staff had made obvious efforts to try and brighten it up. Nevertheless during the visit peeling plaster was observed, and when it rained water dripped through a glass section of the roof.

A short drive, bordered with grass, led to the main entrance.

The main block of the school was composed of a hall which was rather higher than the rest of the building, with a classroom block alongside to the right. The nursery unit was situated on the left of the main block, and a separate wooden classroom to the right.

Behind the school was a small asphalt playground and more grass.

The main entrance led into a small entrance hall which is an extension of a corridor on the right. Opposite the entrance were the head's room, a small staffroom and staff toilets.

The head teacher's room was small and cramped in any case because it was shared with the school secretary. According to the latter, the staff-room and head's room/office had originally been one room so the head would have even less privacy for such things as seeing parents or children or staff individually.

The staff room was very small, even if a separate room. It contained a small cooker and sink besides some easy chairs, and there were also a few lockers. It also served as an area where some teaching materials were stored, and, during the week, as a "cooking area" for small groups of top infants who did cooking under the instruction of a parent. Thus the staffroom could not serve as a quiet restful area for staff nor as a good working space for preparation. Therefore Moorland teachers tended to do their preparation in their classroom at breaks or lunch periods.

On the left of the entrance hall a door led into the hall. This served several purposes. It was used for assembly, P.E., Keep Fit classes for parents, as a place where parents could chat with the head, and also where they helped to make articles for festivals, such as at Christmas. It was also used for music as a learning activity, and for play during wet play-times. It was also the dining area of the school. A kitchen preparation room was situated at the rear of the hall facing the back area of the school.

On the right of the entrance hall the corridor turned a corner. Opposite the turn was a store cupboard. On the left of the corridor, facing the rear of the school, were the children's toilets, and on the right the entrances to three classrooms. These jutted out from the front of the school, but were each set back slightly from each other. The corridor ended after the third classroom, and another store cupboard was placed there.

The corridor was narrower by the classrooms, and this was made worse, as at Rushside, by a row of pegs for children's clothes. Nevertheless a small library area had been created alongside the toilet wall. This was also used as a teaching space.

Beside the toilets a door opened into the playground, and on the right of this area was the fourth classroom, which was a separate hut.

The separately built nursery unit was on the left of the hall, with its own entrance hall and cloakroom. It was, however, an integral part of the school. The majority of Moorland's infant school pupils had previously spent a period in the nursery unit. The initial impression of the exterior of the building was that it seemed, in spite of the rather grey concrete, quite neat and compact. Internally, the first impression was of "bright colours everywhere". The second was that: "There is hardly any space to move about. A climbing frame takes up a large amount of space". (Observation Notes, 1980).

This impression was confirmed, as it was also a view held by the nursery teacher herself and also by the head of Moorland.

Both of these stated that when the building had been planned, one much larger had been envisaged. They claimed that the builders had not followed the intended specifications to which the head had agreed. The head had therefore complained to the local authority, but the problem had not been rectified. It seemed odd that builders had such freedom to alter a planned building, but the head assured the researcher that this was what had happened.

In so far as size constrains teaching activities, this event indicates the matters outside a teacher's jurisdiction limit the power to define 'reality'. Constraints on teachers' actions are, however, examined both in the head teachers' chapter and in the other empirical chapters.

In general the school internally seemed as bleak as externally, an impression added to by the cramped nature of the spatial arrangements, although the teachers made a real effort to improve matters by decorative displays, especially in the hall.

Each of the classrooms at Moorland contained basically the same
fixtures and fittings. Amongst these were:

> "... blackboards, shelves for apparatus, games, trays for
> pupils' belongings, and a sink. In one corner was a
> 'Wendy House', sometimes called a 'Home Corner', and a
> 'book corner'. The furnishings included small hexagonal
> tables for the children, and a teacher's desk, and also
> a carpet. Round the walls were display boards covered
> with children's work, or teaching material. Some of this
> last was commercially produced, others appeared teacher
> made."

(Observation Notes)

The nursery held space for two tables, on one of which were 'games' and
on the other 'craft' activities. There was a climbing frame and slide,
and a rocking horse. Beside these were the usual sink and two fixed
easels. There were also sand and water trays.

There was a carpeted area which was used for a number of purposes.
It served as a play space where children played with "floor toys", as the
nursery teacher described such items as Lego, plastic trucks and building
bricks. It was also the area where "communal activities" such as "story
time" or "lunch (snack) time" took place.

Outside the nursery building was a small enclosed "play area", half
grass and half asphalt, which was used whenever the weather was fine for
the various 'play activities' and some others. This area was described as
"a Godsend" by the nursery teacher, as it eased the congestion in the
nursery itself, though this was not the sole reason why it was used. It
was better for using the larger apparatus. Also it was thought important
in any case for children to play outside.

In terms of classroom content, apart from the fittings, Moorland was
equipped with similar materials to the other schools observed. There was
a TV. The materials included sand and water, coloured card and drawing
paper. There were various types of reading and number equipment such as
'flash cards' and reading games, Unifix counting units, plastic money and
weighing scales. Work cards were available, but at the teacher's discretion.

They were more available in Class Four and there were work books there also.

It was a feature of Moorland that work cards were not freely accessible to the children. This was not a haphazard matter, but one in line with the teachers' views on the necessity and importance of these cards. This point is discussed further in the Heads' chapter.

Generally, in terms of quantity and quality Moorland seemed, like Stone Street, to be poorly endowed compared to other schools seen. Not only did there appear to be inadequate apparatus, particularly with regard to 'number activities', but much of it was rather worn. For example:

> "Two children are playing with a set of wooden figures of different colours. The paint has almost completely worn off."
>
> (Preliminary Observation Notes)

However, new materials and equipment did appear during the period of observation. A new construction toy, for example, was seen in one class-room. Another teacher commented that she thought that this 'toy' was "very expensive". It cost in fact nearly twenty pounds. Cost can clearly be an inhibiting factor in the provision of materials, and thus be an important constraint on teachers' activities.

The materials in the classroom were a mixture of commercial apparatus and that made by the teachers. These included some of the work cards. In comparison with Briarfield, for example, the equipment was not only less in terms of quantity and quality as noted, but also of variety. For example in the number apparatus such as Unifix and Stern blocks there did not seem to be available any trays for counting "twenties" or "tens and units". However, one classroom did have, besides this type of apparatus, a number of small counting toys, for example animal shapes of different colours, which the children used for "sorting". This last was a number activity which involved putting different shapes into different groups, according to the categories being used. These could be colour, such as yellow, red, blue and green cars, or all cars, all lorries, and so on.

However, in general the children appeared to be working with the same materials.

There were four teachers beside the head and the nursery teacher and her assistant. One of these four was the deputy head although, in contrast to all the other schools seen, it was not known for some time which teacher actually held this position, as noted in the Heads' chapter later. In the other schools the head had introduced the researcher to the deputy as a matter of course. One head had even directed that a visit had to be made to the deputy head's class first, out of politeness. Nothing like that happened at Moorland.

There were no teachers under thirty at Moorland. Ages ranged from the early thirties to the mid-fifties. There were two older teachers, who were approaching retirement and one younger. One of the older teachers had a post of responsibility for the library, and the other a similar post for music.

The head had taught in the school for a short time before becoming the head, and immediately prior to this had been herself the deputy. Length of service in the school ranged from just over two years to twenty-four years.

In the summer of the visit there were some 116 pupils on roll, in four classes. These were organised into two parallel groups of two. One pair contained "bottom infants" of $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5+ years olds, and the other pair held "middle to top infants" of $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 7 year olds. Thus, all classes were partially family grouped.

This brings to an end the first part of the 'setting' of Moorland. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, an account is also given of the history of Moorland's catchment area, because this was referred to not just by present staff but also in comments in the school record books.

It seemed to have an important influence on the head and most of the other teachers' views of pupils and parents. Thus, the final part of this section is concerned with this 'temporal' feature.

As stated, Moorland school was situated on a council housing estate, though not in a central position.

Information about the history of the area came from local newspapers and a local survey which considered the historical development and also school record books. These last were not vital here because they are referred to later in the thesis, for example in the chapter on Head Teachers. The local survey is not cited by name, to preserve anonymity.

The estate was built during the thirties, at a time when there was:

> "... a major slum clearance programme which involved the displacement of 3,100 persons from slums all over the city."
>
> (Moorfield Estate Survey Report)

The report commented also that the estate had a bad name. It stated that:

> "... many council housing estates in Britain often acquire a good or bad reputation, both in the minds of the people living there and in the files of ... departments responsible for providing services to the area ... Rightly or wrongly the Moorfield estate ... has acquired over the years this kind of reputation."
>
> (Local Survey)

The idea of Moorland being a 'slum' area was also found in a letter in the local paper. This came from a farmer, part of whose land was purchased for housing development in the Moorland area. He claimed that:

> "... the class of property which had been erected by the corporation on the site had adversely affected the remaining estate."

He therefore claimed damages. The solicitor who acted for him stated that:

> "One does not care to use the designation slum dwellers but there is no doubt that this estate ... being built is accommodating those people who have been removed or who are to be removed from certain areas of slum property in the city which are about to be abolished."
>
> (Letter, Local Paper)

Such a comment appears to imply that dwellers in slum property have them-
selves certain characteristics, but may refer to the housing itself and
not necessarily their inhabitants.

A survey of housing in that city as a whole in the thirties
said of council housing in general that:

> "Some of the streets are pleasing in appearance, but
> everywhere one is conscious of a lack of real genius.
> The same plans are used over and over again"

and that, with regard to:

> "... design ... a few are quite frankly, ugly."
>
> (Housing Survey, 1935-9)

Commenting on the rehousing programme and the housing being provided, a
local newspaper report stated that the "dreadful conditions" of the old
housing being replaced:

> "... should not be allowed to blind people to the conditions
> that many of the new houses will be in during the next
> few years.
>
> Very little has been said about jerry building ... time
> will reveal the weak patches and then we shall be
> exactly where we are today - the new houses will have
> become the new slums."
>
> (Local Paper Report, 1930)

A local councillor expressed similar views of the new housing. He
claimed that these houses were: "Like the 1914 motor cars ... useless
and ... no use whatever for [the area's] labour." (Local Paper, 1930).

The view that the new housing might become the new slums was possibly
an accurate one. A local survey of 1977, which included the views of
tenants, something the earlier complaints did not, found that of a sample
of 10%, few had favourable comments to make about the Moorland estate,
apart from references to spacious houses and gardens.

60% of those surveyed considered that "rewiring" was necessary and
also that "more power points" were needed. 29% stated that because of the
conditions their houses required complete modernisation.

Amongst the problems cited were "mould, dampness, mice and rats".

However, as the tenants being moved into these houses at the time they

were built were not asked what they thought of their new homes in relation

to the old "slums", it is difficult to make a real comparison. To those

who were moved, the new estate houses, including Moorland, may well have

been seen as an improvement.

Also, if the complaints about the 'new' housing which referred to

"slum dwellers" did mean the people themselves, they may have been based

on misconceptions.

For example, from the 1935-30 survey of housing, it would appear that

many of those moving to the new estates were not the poorest 'slum

dwellers'. The survey stated that:

> "There are, however, 425 families in Class D, and 1,015
> in Class E who are occupying council houses". These
> were "comparatively well to do".
>
> (Housing Survey, 1935-39)

The survey, however, did note that there were differences among those

moving to council houses. It distinguished:

> "... between a council house occupied by a careful
> tenant and one occupied by people who have no idea
> of cleanliness."

Consequently the author of the report questioned:

> '... whether the Council has been wise in transferring all
> families direct from the slums into new housing without
> any preliminary training and education."

He added:

> "It is too much to expect people who all their lives have
> been surrounded by dirt and squalor, and are suddenly
> moved into a clean wholesome house, to change the habits
> of a lifetime all at once ... usually much time and
> patience are needed to induce people to change old habits."
>
> (Housing Survey, 1935-39)

The survey suggested that such 'training' in good social habits was

part of the work of the "Welfare Officer". Thus, living in 'squalid'

surroundings was equated with people themselves being sqalid. No consi-
deration seems to have been given to the idea that people may have not
only wished to be 'cleaner', but may also have made efforts to be, des-
pite the difficulties. Explicit in the survey's views is the notion that
many of the 'new' council tenants were deficient and in need of socialisa-
tion. This seems to have similarities with the "missionary ideology" of
the 19th century noted by Grace. (Grace, 1978).

This view of 'deficiency' is a persistent one, and was one held in
relation to the parents of pupils at Moorland school by most, though not
all, of the teachers there, and also by the local advisers, the health
visitors, and the educational psychologist. These views are noted, for
example, in the Head teachers' chapter.

According to an informant, the school's catchment area included "the
two most poverty-stricken areas of the estate". It was further stated that:

>"... teachers who have taken ill children home can tell
>you tales of abject poverty, broken windows, stairs
>without treads, stained walls with plaster exposed
>and no lighting."

(Key Informant, Observation Notes, 1981)

A local report confirmed the initial impression of differences between
sections of Moorland estate in terms of the appearance of the houses.
It stated that:

>"Perhaps the most striking thing is the fact that there
>are very great differences between the areas ... that
>area is both economically as well as in terms of
>housing standards the poorest area of the estate."

(Local Survey, Moorland)

This survey also stated that:

>"... this particular area had an extremely high percentage
>of population ... who were classed as belonging to socio-
>economic group 11, i.e. unskilled manual workers ...
>this area did rank as one of the highest [in the country]
>for this group as well as for overcrowding and for the
>% of its population in the 0-14 age range."

(Moorland Estate Survey)

Unemployment on Moorland estate was said to be higher than in the city in which it was situated as a whole. The 1971 Census indicated that the latter had, at 5.6%, a lower rate than the national average. On the Moorland estate the figure was 11%. At the time when the research began unemployment for the city as a whole was said to be increasing, although population was decreasing. In February 1980 the actual figures were given as 3,350 and in October of the same year 4,660. (Local Paper).

Moorland estate was, therefore, classified as a 'problem area' in several respects, such as the standard of housing, the socio-economic grouping of tenants, and the rate of unemployment. These features of the estate were known to the staff of Moorland school both from 'official' sources such as the local survey and from school records and also from "experience" such as "taking children home" which, as noted, was related by an informant. Some of the knowledge available is discussed in the final part of this section, which notes the paternal occupational status of Moorland pupils, at a particular stage of the research.

Although the estate undoubtedly had 'problems' and although Moorland school had some children who in the classroom showed behaviour which was difficult for the teacher, as is shown in the chapters dealing with the classroom, the problems and difficulties could not be ascribed either to unemployment alone, or to other factors. The evidence for this comes from a simple analysis of the occupational status of fathers, as classified by the head and the researcher from school records, of the 116 children on roll when the research began. The head originally gave the list for the top infants only, and this was completed by the researcher from school records. On first studying the complete list, the first impression was that there was a higher proportion than expected of skilled work listed, and even some which could be termed professional.

There was a difficulty in classifying some employment, however, since

some parents had listed the employer rather than their actual occupation. Also, a number of parents had not given the information the school had requested. Also, the school recorded pupils having one parent only but without giving the occupation if any, of that parent.

The figures are presented below, grouped together in terms of occupation where possible and logical, and the occupations are listed alphabetically.

Table One   Table of Fathers' Occupation, Moorland School 1980

Type	No.
Accountant (Management)	1
Agriculture (Farmer 1, Sugar Beet Worker 1)	2
British Rail	3
BSC	1
Building Trades (Builder 3, Stonemason 1, Roofer 1, Scaffolder 1, Painter 1, Prefabricated Building 4)	11
Chef	1
Confectionery Work	17
Driver (3 plus Removals 1)	4
Engineering (various employers 5, plus Machinist 1, Mechanic 1, Welder 2)	9
Factory Worker (including Mill Worker 1, Factory Cleaner 1)	4
Glass Worker	1
Inspector	1
Labourer	6
Local Authority (2) and Official Boards (including Gas Board, Waterworks and Rodent Operative)	5
Milkman	1
Newspaper Worker (local)	1
Nurse	1
Photographer	1

Postman	1
Sales Assistant (including Car Spares 1) ·	2
Security Officer	1
Student	1
Telegraphist	1
EMPLOYED TOTAL	76

Thus, of 116 children, 68% had fathers who were recorded as employed, and at least half of the occupations could be classified as skilled or even higher, and several as semi-skilled.

For the remaining 40 children, the classification was as follows:

Not Given	14
No Father	3
Single Parent	10
Separated	3
Prison	1
Unemployed	9
TOTAL	40

Thus, some 7% of the children at Moorland school had an unemployed father. This did not seem a very high proportion given the reputation of the area. However, some of the 'Not Givens' could have been in this category, and also unemployment could have also been associated with the 'Single Parent' status. The figures for this factor, if the 'No Father' and 'Separated' are added together show that 14% of Moorland children had some form of 'broken home' or family problem, although the categories were rather confusing.

If the unemployed and those with a family problem are added together this still leaves the majority of Moorland children with no readily apparent financial or emotional problems. Yet the school records, the

teachers (for the most part), and other relevant officials still refer to "poor home backgrounds". This feature was referred to when discussing children's behaviour. While several of the children at Moorland did present teachers with behavioural problems, as is shown in the chapters dealing with teachers, there seemed no direct correlation between children's behaviour and parental occupation and marital status.

For example, of the 48 boys and 38 girls of the above 116 who remained in the school for the next stage of the research, there were 23 boys and 5 girls who were observed to be difficult and were also said to be by the teachers, an obvious sex difference.

Of the boys, 4 had one of the features notes above. Two had unemployed fathers, and two more had a single parent. (Three were 'Not Given' in terms of occupation).

Of the five girls, on the other hand, one had an unemployed father and another's father was in prison. None had a single parent, and one was in the 'Not Given' category.

This difference between boys and girls is perhaps related to the greater number of boys. However, it is possible that girls might be more affected by difficult home circumstances than the boys because, as is noted in the chapter on teachers' definitions of pupils, they are more used to being in the home while boys "play outside" more.

This brief analysis of the occupational status of Moorland pupils' fathers in 1980, and related factors, concludes the section on 'Setting the Scene' in this, the main research school. The next section considers "Larkway", which, as stated in the introduction, was visited for some six weeks after the conclusion of the main research, partly for comparative purposes, and partly because it was pointed out by an adviser as an example of a "good infant school" and partly for personal reasons, as noted in the previous Methodology chapter.

SECTION THREE "LARKWAY"

Larkway Infant School was, on the surface, situated in a completely different type of area from Moorland.

It was set in a suburb which, like Moorland, was not far from rural areas, although the housing was quite extensive. It was observed that:

> "Many of the houses were semi-detached and also several
> are detached. All had good gardens, and those of the
> detached houses were large."
>
> (Observation Notes, 1981)

The houses were quite different in aspect to those of the Moorland estate, even though the latter also have been noted as being semi-detached with quite spacious gardens. The area around Larkway appeared to be more cared for, and 'prosperous'. The housing was said to be all privately owned. However, "Larkway" seemed not quite so 'well to do' as the area of Fairfield.

The head teacher stated initially that the catchment area consisted of: "mainly middle-class parents". Later, however, in conversation with the researcher, she said that she actually defined the area more specifically as: "lower middle-class materially". (Interview, 1982).

However, one of the class teachers at Larkway considered that there was: "quite a large proportion of working class children in the area". Another teacher defined the catchment area as: "mainly upper working class". These different descriptions indicate that Larkway teachers had no agreed clear definition of social class, even though they apparently made quite precise distinctions. This is referred to again in the chapter on Teachers' Definitions.

Larkway was more modern than Moorland, being about the same age, some twelve years old at the time of the visit, like Briarfield.

Like the other schools, it was a single storey building of brick. In comparison with Moorland not only did it appear more spacious but also more

pleasant. As recorded, it notes: "What immediately struck me is how bright and cheerful it looks". (Observation Notes, 1981).

In front of the school and to the side were grass areas, and on either side of the short drive from the main gate were asphalted areas used for car parking, and a side play area. Another asphalt playground was situated at the rear of the school. Beyond the school ground at the rear was some , open waste ground, and to one side a sports area. So the school was not surrounded by houses on all sides.

The main door, situated rather to the right of the front, led into a spacious entrance hall which was covered with bright displays. To the left of the entrance hall were the head's office and opposite steps led down into the hall. These steps continued around one side of the hall. A short corridor led from the entrance hall, past the hall, from which it was divided by a wall but no door, to the staffroom around a corner.

Also leading off from the entrance hall, straight ahead, was a short corridor running alongside the main hall and around a corner at right angles. Off this corridor led three 'reception' classrooms, one on the right and the other two at the far end, facing the back of the school. The left hand one of these two had a door leading into a 'top infants' class-room. This had its own separate entrance from the hall, as well.

Also from the hall near the entrance to the last named classroom, a door gave onto the side playground. Situated here, to the left of the main school were two 'temporary' classrooms. That nearest the front of the hall was for 'middle infants', and the other another 'top infants' classroom.

The main hall, which was quite large, had a separate dining area, and a small kitchen to the left, near the playground entrance, where school meals were cooked. As at Moorlands and elsewhere, the hall was used for a range of activities apart from dining, such as assemblies, P.E. and music.

The classrooms themselves were quite small, giving initially the impression that there was not much space to move about. Each classroom was an enclosed unit though one, as noted, was connected to another.

Noticeable around the school, especially in the entrance hall and the corridor to the left, were bright displays.

Commenting on the visible attention to colour and brightness to the head, the researcher was told by the head that:

> "This is intentional. I think that an infant school should be a bright and cheerful place."
>
> (Interview, Head, Larkway, and
> Observation Notes, 1980)

There were six classrooms in all, as noted. Each classroom had similar equipment to most of the schools seen, such as small tables and chairs, a teacher's desk and blackboards, a sink and other tables for setting out equipment, plus trays for personal property. In all there was also a 'library corner'. There were some differences however.

In the reception class, for example, there were sand and water trays, building blocks and a range of 'toys' such as Lego and smaller wooden and plastic blocks, and a number of toys that would be pushed about the classroom. Unlike Moorland and some of the other schools, Larkway had no nursery, so more 'toys' of this type were provided. The reception class-rooms had a 'home corner' as well as a 'book corner', for 'dressing up' and various other 'games'. These toys and materials were not in much evidence in the top infants' rooms.

There was a clear difference here between Larkway and Moorland. In the latter materials such as sand and water trays, a variety of toys and a 'home corner' were found in every classroom from the nursery to the top infants. On the whole Moorland appeared to have a greater number of toys available.

In all the classrooms at Larkway, as at Fairfield, there were sets of work cards on prominent display for reading, writing and number activities. These were accessible to the children, although in the reception classes teachers 'directed' their use. Children in these classes were instructed on how to use cards, so that when they went into the other classes they would be able to work at their own pace and would know the system. This availability was not haphazard either. As at Moorland, it reflected teachers' views on how to organise learning with respect to 'their' children.

There were six teachers at Larkway in addition to the head. of the six classroom staff one was the deputy head, one was responsible for the co-ordination of the reception classes and also for 'reading'. Another teacher was primarily responsible for 'number' within the reception group of teachers. A third teacher held a post of responsibility for music in the school.

As at Moorland there were no teachers under thirty in age. The age range was from the thirties to near retirement. Both the head and the deputy had been with the school since it opened. Both had been 'junior trained'. Larkway had been initially intended as a junior school and it was to this that the head had been appointed, and the deputy. Because of the number of infants in the area, the LEA had decided in fact to open it as an infants school. As noted in the chapter on head teachers, the head had therefore gone on a DES six week course on infant education, something arranged by an HMI who had suggested it.

There were approximately 150 children on roll by the time of the second and longer visit. The first had been a preliminary day the previous summer term, shortly after leaving Moorland. Numbers, as in most infant schools, varied during the year. The pupils were grouped into six classes, as noted.

Of the six, three were 'reception', one was 'middle' and two were 'top' infants. Larkway thus operated single age grouping, although with a degree of overlap in the reception classes. The children thus moved chronologically into the 'middle' and 'top' classes.

Having described the 'institutional setting' of Larkway this section is complete as compared to the pilot study schools. However, to compare it more fully with Moorland, a small sample of fathers' occupations was obtained from a reception class of twenty-eight pupils. It was not possible to get information on the whole school. From the list of Moorland pupils a similar sample was taken alphabetically of children from reception classes.

From the Table which follows, and from a comparison of this with Table One, the spread of occupations would seem to be broadly similar, though with only one class from Larkway compared to the whole school at Moorland, this can only be an impression.

There seems to be a marginal tendency for more Moorland fathers to fall into the semi or unskilled occupations than at Larkway, if confectionery work and labouring are considered in these terms. For example, one labourer might have been expected to show up in the Larkway sample if there were others in the school, as they do in the Moorland list, when there are six in this category in the school. Again, there is no representative of the building trades in the Larkway sample, whereas at Moorland this is quite a large occupational group amongst the fathers and one shows up in the small sample.

Another difference is that no category like squadron leader, shop owner, teacher, or butcher, existed for Moorland in the whole list of occupations, although there were 'professional' occupations such as accountant.

Table Two Comparative Sample of 28 'Reception' Children from Larkway and Moorland listed by Fathers' occupation and number in each

Occupation	Number in Each	
	Larkway	Moorland
Agriculture	-	2
British Rail	4	2
Building Trade	-	1
Butcher	1	-
Civil Service	1	-
Coal Worker	1	-
Confectionery Worker	2	6
Driver (Taxi, Lorry)	2	-
Engineering (including Mechanic)	-	1
Gas Board	1	-
Hospital Worker	1	-
Labourer	-	2
Nurse	1	1
Policeman	1	-
Scrap Metal Dealer	1	-
Security Officer	-	1
Shop Owner	1	-
Squadron Leader	1	-
Student	1	-
Teacher (Secondary)	1	-
TOTAL EMPLOYED	20	16
UNEMPLOYED	2	2
Not Given	6	3
No Father	-	1
Single Parent	5) Included	4
Separated	) in sample 8) of 28	1
TOTAL IN GROUP	28	28

The unemployed group was the same for both reception samples, and, as noted, only nine unemployed out of 116 were recorded at Moorland.

This suggests that the two areas may not have been very different in this respect, although again this is only tentative given the small Larkway sample. The number of Single Parent and Separated families in the Larkway class is further evidence for some similarity, although these are not separate categories as at Moorland.

However, as will be noted in the chapter on teachers' definitions, Moorland teachers regarded the Larkway area, as well as that of Fairfield, as being "better off". As noted, one Larkway teacher thought there was not so much difference.

This brief comparison of a sample in terms of occupations concludes the section on "Larkway", and the 'Setting' chapter.

CONCLUSION

This chapter which is in a sense a reference chapter, has attempted to 'set the scene' of Moorland and other schools. This has been done not only to place Moorland in its own context, but also to relate it to the other schools. These have, though, been described in their own right since references are made to them in other chapters. 'Setting the Scene' has brought out a number of points.

First, the schools differed in age and design. However, the physical layout of a school did not of itself determine classroom practice and school policy. This had more to do with internal factors such as the relationship between a head and staff, and teachers' own views. Heads could meet resistance from staff, a point developed in the Head teachers' chapter. Nevertheless, some physical aspects of design, such as space, can place some constraint on what is possible. It can, for example, restrict movement of pupils, especially in relation to the number of these.

Staffroom space, or its lack in the case of most schools seen, can also not only make preparation difficult, but give teachers nowhere to restore energy and gain privacy.

Second, the schools had no uniform system of organising pupils into classes. Some used single age chronological grouping, others different versions of 'family grouping', either partially or completely.

Single age grouping could possibly affect a pupil's future achievement, as with this system some children would spend less time in the reception class than others, have less experience of the infant school. Jackson, for example, noted the effect of date of birth on length of this experience. (Jackson, B., 1964).

Third, though all the schools had very similar materials for the children, there were differences between them in the amount, variety and quality available. Stone Street and Moorland seemed less well provided for in some respects than other schools. There were also some differences within schools, especially Larkway, in the type of material provided in the reception and top infants' classrooms.

There were also different policies in relation to work cards both as to their provision and their accessibility to children, particularly as between Larkway and Moorland. This difference was related to the 'philosophy' of the school, as is shown in the chapter on Head teachers, and to teachers' views of children's capacity, as indicated in the chapter on teachers' perceptions of pupils.

Fourth, the schools served different catchment areas, and the social class composition of these varied. Teachers appeared to have a perception of the social class of their area, even if there was some disagreement over exact classification, as at Larkway. Teachers at Moorland generally used "poor home background" rather than 'working class'. Reid noted that

teachers were aware of social class in relation to their school area and pupils, and referred to it directly or indirectly. (Reid, 1980, cited in Reid, 1986).

Fifth, Moorland estate had a 'bad reputation' historically, and this view of the estate seemed extended to the present. The views of the Head are noted in the Head teachers' chapter, and those of the staff in Teachers' Perceptions of Pupils. Nevertheless, this catchment area appeared in some respects not as bad as teachers' comments suggested, in certain respects, such as the occupational status of parents. Nor did it seem in these respects so different from the area of Larkway as Moorland teachers appeared to believe.

This chapter, in 'setting the scene', is in a sense a reference chapter, for in the empirical chapters the above points are picked up and discussed in context.

The next chapter is also a *reference chapter*. *It discusses three* concepts found in the research literature on infant and primary schools, and *notes a problem of definition which was partly observed in the* literature but on which attention was focused during the empirical work and the analysis of data.

CHAPTER THREE : A REFERENCE POINT : SOME TERMS DISCUSSED

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a reference point for the empirical chapters which follow, which deal with the head teachers' and then with the teachers' views of their role, their relationship with each other, and of parents and children, and their aims and 'approaches'. This is done for two reasons.

First, such terms as 'ideology', 'perspective' and 'shared ethos' are found in much of the literature on infant/primary schools. The ideas they emcompass are related, but have differences. It was thought useful to discuss these, in order to explain, for one thing, why reference is made in this research to 'Perspectives' rather than another form. Also terms like 'ideology', 'perspective' and 'shared ethos' have different definitions, and further, they are accepted by some writers and rejected by others. It seemed necessary to show these differences at some point, rather than using terms without discussion, as a content for the presentation of the empirical work.

Secondly, the terms are discussed separately from the empirical work in order to avoid repetition of explanation, for they are noted at various points in this. In earlier drafts this repetition did occur, and was thought to obscure the details, as well as making the chapters rather unwieldy. As noted in the methodology chapter such revision is part of the reflexive process.

The chapter does not discuss the concepts of 'progressive' and 'child centred' although these are linked in the literature with the three terms above, for these have been noted in Chapter One, and are discussed further in the historical chapters on the infant tradition.

The first section discusses 'ideology' as used by other writers, first in terms of various definitions in general, and then of those used

especially in relation to infant, primary education. It offers some reasons why this seems a difficult concept to apply as a general description of the views of teachers in infant schools.

The second section considers 'perspective' and its relationship to 'ideology' and explains why, with reservations, this term is preferred in reporting this research.

The third section looks at the notion of 'shared ethos' in connection with 'ideology' and 'perspective', and notes views on this term when used to describe the relationship of teachers in schools, especially infant schools, in terms of 'consensus' and 'conflict', as found in accounts of schools by other researchers.

It is important to state again here the point made in the Methodology chapter, that these ideas were not held prior to the research, but come from reflection while doing it, and subsequently while writing about it.

SECTION ONE   IDEOLOGY

In this first section, various general definitions of ideology are noted first. Then it is considered in terms of its use by writers in infant schools, and some problems pointed out.

Writers in general, when discussing ideology, have pointed out that it is extremely difficult to define. Marriott, for example, described it as being a complex, ambiguous concept. (Marriott, 1985). Apple also stated that what the term actually means was "problematic" and said that it: "Cannot be treated as a simple phenomenon". (Apple, 1979, p. 20). Meighan also stated that the concept was ambiguous. This was so not just because of "competing definitions" but also because:

> "It is used to describe sets of ideas operating at various levels in society and in various contexts."
>
> (Meighan, 1980, p. 139)

These levels can be broadly summarised as structural or group levels, and the individual.

1. Group

Watson, for example, stated that ideology referred to:

> "Sets of ideas which are located in particular social
> groups and which fulfil a function for that group."

It serves:

> "To defend, justify or further the interests of that
> group."

and so can have "an external function". It can also serve to unite the

group and so have "an internal function". (Watson, 1979, p. 26).

Meighan, amongst several usages, referred at the group level to

ideology as "false consciousness", the Marxist view of it as a system

of ideas acting to legitimise the dominance of the bourgeoisie. He noted

the link between this and what he called "revolutionary thinking". There

ideology was defined as an "undesirable set of ideas". (Meighan, 1980, p. 136).

Manheim noted similarly that ideology is a term used when sceptical of

the ideas advanced by opponents. (Manheim, 1960).

Meighan also noted a further definition of ideology at the group

level as:

> "A broad interlocked set of ideas and beliefs about the
> world held by a group of people that they dominate in
> both behaviour and conversation to various audiences."
> (Meighan, 1980, p. 135)

Meighan also noted the view that there could be competing ideologies, with

one perhaps achieving dominance over the other, or incorporation of it,

and that to do this required legislation.

Apple also noted this last feature, in stating that 'ideology' had

three distinctive features; "legitimisation", power conflict and special

style or argument, and the last: "Is seen to be highly explicit and

relatively systematic". (Apple, 1979, p. 21).

Thus, at the group level 'ideology' could involve conflicting beliefs

within or between groups, and seeking to justify such beliefs.

2) Individuals

Some definitions of 'ideology' relate to the individual level. Cosin, for example, stated that it could be seen:

> "As a system of meanings with which individuals are involved, as a stock of meanings in which they draw to interpret their experience of their world."
>
> (Cosin, 1972, p. 131)

This relates to the view of society as composed of actors making sense of their world, and building up structure through understandings.

Meighan noted a 'psychological view of ideology' which is said to begin with: "Attitudes and opinions of individuals". (p. 136). These were seen as: "Structured in a hierarchical manner". (Meighan, 1980, p. 136). From this view, "specific opinions of individuals" may give rise to "habitual ones noted on several occasions". A large number of such habitual opinions of about one central issue is referred to as an "attitude", and when "groups of attitudes" are related this is referred to as an ideology. (Meighan, 1980, p. 136).

3. Either Group or Individual

Some other definitions of 'ideology' could be taken as referring either to the group or the individual level, or both together.

Apple, for example, noted on meaning, cited as ("following Geertz") as:

> "Systems of interacting symbols that provide the primary ways of making 'otherwise incomprehensible sound systems' meaningful, that is, as inevitable creations that are essential, and function as shared conventions of meaning for making a complex reality understandable."
>
> (Apple, 1979, p. 20)

This again refers to individuals making sense of 'society' and in a sense sustaining it in so doing.

The Oxford Dictionary defines ideology in a factual manner as:

> "A systematic scheme of ideas, usually relating to politics or society, or to the conduct of a class or group, especially one that is held implicitly

or adopted as a whole and maintained regardless of the course of events."

(O.E.D.)

If ideology is so maintained, then perhaps it is because, in Watson's terms, it 'fulfils a function' for the group or individual.

Thus far ideology has been shown to have many meanings. In various ways, it refers, as noted by these various sources, to 'sets of ideas', perhaps 'systematic', with possible conflict between different sets. They also point to its ambiguity as a concept.

4. 'Ideology' with reference to Infant School Teachers

This section next looks at 'ideology' as used in relation to infant/ primary school teachers, noting some problems.

Sharp and Green referred to 'ideology' as "a connected set of systematically related beliefs" which in this case were those held by teachers: "about essential features". They used the term to refer to 'beliefs' of a higher order, those which exist at a higher level of generality than those they see as incorporated in the term 'perspective'.

In consequence, they wrote of a "teaching ideology". They argued that this:

> "Involves a broad definition of the task and a set of
> prescriptions for performing it, all held at a rela-
> tively high level of abstraction."
> (Sharp and Green, 1975, p. 68)

Gibson, in a review of 'All Things Bright and Beautiful' noted that the use of the term 'ideology' in that work could be construed as "an example of language inflation". He asked in what way "ideology" differed from a simpler, more everyday word like "belief" (it may be more "everyday" but it is _not_ necessarily "simpler"). (Gibson, 1979, p. 82).

Gibson further pointed out that in the Sociology of Education at the time – the article was written in 1979 – the term was "fashionable",

adding that: "The many different meanings of the term are simply

overlooked". (p. 82). He noted further that King in his study (probably

in the interest of not over-complicating his story): "avoids any sophis-

ticated attempt at defining 'ideology' ...." (Gibson, 1979, p. 82).

King did not, as Gibson noted, explicity define ideology (very

wisely), He stated that:

> "The infant teachers' actions were related to the ideas
> they held about the nature of young children and the
> nature of the learning process."

King added that:

> "These ideas, or ideologies, were seldom explicitly
> expressed by the teachers because to them they had the
> status not of ideas but of the truth."
>
> (King, 1978, p. 10)

This relates to the O.E.D. definition regarding "implicitly held"

beliefs. It is not clear whether the teachers he described could not be

explicit, or did not bother to be. The distinction is important, given

Apple's view that one of the features of 'ideology' is a "style of

argument" that is "highly explicit and relatively systematic". The head

and the teachers of Larkway did not find it difficult to state their

views clearly.

Also, Gibson noted that King's teachers, faced with:

> "Major discrepancies between their ideologies and what
> actually went on [then] kept their ideologies intact
> [by reference to another theory] ... disadvantage at
> home."
>
> (Gibson, 1979, p. 82)
> (See also King, 1978, p. 119)

This can relate to the O.E.D. description of a belief "maintained regard-

less of events". Therefore King could be seen as implicitly defining

'ideology' in the sense of ideas which are related and held in common.

But these teachers also might not have had an 'ideology' in the sense of .

"systematically related beliefs" or they might have held conflicting ones

without realising it, a theory of disadvantage could either be an 'ideology'

in itself or part of 'progressive'. Certainly a 'theory' of 'disadvantage' was part of the vocabulary of Moorland.

The "teaching ideology" or "ideas" King noted have ascribed to them a particular content, and this is, in a sense, a definition.

As stated in the Review Chapter, King stated that the:

> "Special ideologies of infant teachers are those labelled as 'progressive' and endorsed by the Plowden Report. The official ideology of the Report is child-centredness."
>
> (King, R. A., 1977, p. 73)

The main features of this 'ideology' are said to be that the child passes through a naturally ordered sequence of development; that each child possesses a unique individuality; that the young child is naturally curious, exploring the world around him or her, that the child learns best through play, and when *free to choose, through choosing what is of interest to them* and finally, that education is concerned with the development of potential. (King, 1978). Sharp and Green pointed to similar concerns within the ideology. They state that its main features are; a concern for the whole child, the notions of 'readiness' and 'free choice', 'needs', and a belief in play as a means to 'discovery' in learning. (Sharp and Green, 1975, Chapter Three).

Richards, who wrote of "belief systems" in education, of which one was the "child-centred" 'belief systems', seemed to mean by this something very similar to 'ideology' because, in relation to this 'child-centred belief system' he noted some of the same features as did King, and Sharp and Green in their 'ideology'. However, he also added the role of the teacher as a 'facilitator or catalyist' (p. 42) in the 'learning situation' and also that of more equal partnership between pupils and teachers in the pursuit of learning. Other features noted by Richards included the view that learning is integrated rather than differentiated and the idea that the boundaries of space/time curriculum were "not as marked" as in

traditional "schools" and in what he termed the "pragmatic belief system".
(Richards, 1979, p. 48).

Thus, there seems some agreement between these writers that there
is some form of 'ideology' about infant teaching, and what the content of
a "teaching ideology" in infant education might be, whether or not only
held ideally. However the term itself is not presented as wholly
unproblematic., As noted, it has several different meanings. Sharp and
Green themselves refer to a lack of "complete conceptual clarity". They
did this, though, in the context of a reference to Strauss (1964), and
the finding that, in the case of psychiatry, there were "schools of
psychiatry" where it was: "Comparatively simple to discern the dimensions
and boundaries of the major ideological orientations. "Sharp and Green,
1975, p. 69). But that, even there, the concept was difficult. They con-
trasted this view of fairly distinct schools of thought (or 'ideologies')
in this one field with the care of teachers. They seem to see teachers as
a group as relatively homogeneous, for they argued that in this case:

> "The situation is further exacerbated by the fact that
> there are no professional groupings which differ
> clearly in terms of this outlook and approach to
> teaching methodology thus compounding our problems of
> conceptualisation."

(Sharp and Green, 1975, p. 69)

Although in the chapter where this occurs they are talking about the
teachers in the study, it is not clear in this precise reference whether
they mean teachers in general, or 'Mapledene' teachers. It appears in
its context to be a general statement. If so, it is rather an odd one;
since several writers have pointed out the fragmented nature of the
'teaching profession' as a whole, and of differences within it of various
kinds, such as that between 'radicals' and 'conservatives'. (Grace, 1978).

There is also the division between graduate and certified teachers.
Although all teachers now have to be graduated, there remain in service
many non-graduates.

There are also the different spheres within which teachers operate.
Delamont noted both these differences and stated that although:

> "The non-graduate nursery school teacher is a member
> of the same occupational group as a graduate maths
> master"

they could not be expected to share the same "attributes and attitudes"
even though she stated that in some respects they might be alike; in that
their "classroom life is similar" for they are both involved in teaching.
(Delamont, 1983, p. 49).

King, however, argued that the world of the infant classroom was
different to that of classrooms in other schools. (King, 1978, p. 10).
So teaching can have very different meanings and this would seem to depend
on context.

There are also divisions in teaching within spheres of action, such
as those within 'subject' teaching at secondary school level pointed out
by Ball, and those between 'examination' and 'non-examination' groups
such as the 'Newsom' pupils studied by Burgess. The latter also noted
dividions between 'academic' and 'pastoral' staff. (Ball, 1982; Burgess,
1983).

The examination distinctions may be changing with the introduction
of G.C.S.E., but other differences seem likely to remain.

A further difference exists between innter-city schools, suburbs and
rural areas.

Several of these divisions could give rise to separate 'ideologies'
if these are taken as meaning beliefs which have a function for particular
groups, such as to defend or preserve their position relative to others.

King claimed that the infant school has special features which set
it apart from other schools. If so this might be expected to give rise
to an 'ideology' in terms of ideas held in common.

However, if there are differences between teachers in secondary schools and nursery schools, and also divisions <u>within</u> secondary schools, it is at least possible that different interpretations of the 'situation' of "experience of the world", might also exist between infant teachers in a school, and/or between different infant schools. Thus, different ideologies might exist, with possible competition between them for dominance and this legitimisation, although within one school it is difficult to envisage all the groupings that can develop within a secondary school. This point will be returned to later.

The possibility of such differences was one reason for looking at the historical dimensions of infant teaching, as discussed in the historical chapters. These indicate that ideology, if defined as a: "Set of systematically related beliefs", may not be the most appropriate term in view of the development of infant education. There, several themes, not necessarily related, were found.

In view of the problems with 'ideology', particularly with definition, and especially when this is coupled with the equally "complex and ambiguous" concept of "progressive", it was decided at the start of this research to hold this term in abeyance. This was done partly not to go into schools with fixed ideas, "in true ethnographic style", like Walford. (Walford, 1987, p. 50) expecting to find a systematic scheme of ideas, and partly thus to see how teachers themselves specified any 'beliefs' and 'ideas' they might hold, so that it could be seen whether any of these held features, which might allow them to be categorised as 'ideologies'.

It was notable in all the schools visited that no teacher used the term 'ideology', although of course this does not mean that their views because of this alone could not be defined. It was also the case that the teachers seen were unwilling to place themselves in particular categories such as "progressive". They used instead, quite frequently, terms such as "formal" and "informal". These cannot be interpreted as 'progressive' or 'traditional' dichotomies.

Two head teachers spoke of their views as "philosophy". Miss North, head of Larkway, for example, used this term, specifically to refer to curriculum aims and the manner in which the aims were translated into practice, calling these: "My philosophy of education". (Head, Larkway).

This calls to mind Williams' comment, quoted by Meighan on ideology as "illusion". "Sensible people rely on experience, or have a philosophy, silly people rely on ideology". (Williams, 1977, in Meighan, 1980, p. 155).

Teachers also sometimes used the word "approach" when talking of their aims and methods, as in: "I have adopted a mixed approach" or "My general approach is ...". This term was also used with reference to a personal style, apart from aims and methods, as in: "My own approach is the way I am, the way I talk and react to children". (Deputy, Larkway).

Thus, teachers used various terms to desribe their views, as will be seen in following chapters.

Having discussed 'ideology', the next section considers 'perspective'.

SECTION TWO   PERSPECTIVE

In writing about the perceptions of heads and other teachers, the term 'perspective' is used in these chapters. As noted above, 'ideology' was put on one side at the start of the research. Similarly 'perspective' was not used during the research. However, partly because teachers do use a number of terms, one overriding category was thought to be necessary when discussing these views. 'Perspective' has been preferred to 'ideology' because the research indicates a relative lack of "systematically related beliefs" amongst the teachers in the research schools, both within and between these schools, even though in certain respects there may be elements of 'ideology' in one sense or another, in reported observations.

1.   Perspective Defined
The term perspective has been defined as:

> "An ordered set of beliefs and orientations within which,
> or by reference to which, situations are defined and
> constructed by teachers."
>
> (Delamont, 1976, p. 60)

This might not seem so different to ideology in one sense.

Sharp and Green though, used 'perspective' specifically to distinguish a "lower order of beliefs" than those of "ideology" which, as noted, were seen as those of a higher order of generality. 'Perspectives' are also 'situational' for they are:

> "A set of beliefs and practices which emerge when social
> actors in an organisation confront specific problems in
> their situation."
>
> (Sharp and Green, 1975, p. 69)

However, Woods cited Lacey (1977) as arguing that "perspective" refers more to a "framework of ideas ..." (Woods, 1983). Woods himself agreed that: "Perspectives ... are linked to action through strategies" which are: "Ways of achieving goals". (Woods, 1983, p. 9). In this sense, 'perspective' could be both general and situational.

In this research 'perspective' is used to refer to the "framework" of ideas which the teachers themselves claimed to hold about the nature of children, their development, their home backgrounds and about learning, their own teaching "approaches" and classroom organisation, as related both in and out of the classroom; that is when they were talking 'generally' or in 'classroom situations'.

2.   Problem : A Dichotomy between General and Situational Beliefs?

There is a problem with both 'ideology' and 'perspective', if one is used to refer to beliefs at a more abstract level and the other to those held in a particular context. This is the query whether general beliefs can be separated from those used in the confrontation of "specific problems" in a given classroom or school, since beliefs both may arise in situations and may also be a consequence of reflection upon these, perhaps building up to comparisons with different situations, and thus to a

'general' belief. Some form of general belief is then called on in particular contexts. Thus 'general' and 'situational' may be linked. This idea would correspond, to some extent, to the 'psychological' view of 'ideology' noted by Meighan, quoted earlier. It has been noted in 'Methodology' that in 'Interactionist' work "the situation actors face are assigned a considerable role in shaping their perspectives and thus actions". (Hammersley, 1980, p. 199).

This idea is to argue, in a sense, against the distinction which Sharp and Green make, and also against the finding of Keddie that there was a dichotomy between "educationist" and "teacher" contexts. (Keddie, 1971). There may be, but this is not necessarily so in all cases. This point is raised again when discussing the views of possible 'conflict' in infant schools. This research also argues against the view of Woods that Keddie's findings found support in Sharp and Green's study of an infant school. Woods claimed that these authors:

> "Found a strong contrast between the progressive doctrine of child-centredness of some of the teachers and the realities of the classroom."
>
> (Woods, 1983, p. 43)

One of the starting points of this research was the view that Sharp and Green, unlike King, did not show enough of the detail of the classroom to allow this kind of judgement, nor did they discuss enough with teachers as opposed to heads. Also they seemed to take 'progressive' as relatively unproblematic.

Thus, 'perspective' as a term has problems. So while this term, rather than 'ideology' was used to put together teachers' descriptions of their views, it was not wholly liked either. It was chosen simply because one term seemed necessary to avoid using several, and this one seemed the better of the two, less vague and more inclusive than 'aims', more general than approaches, while less 'ideological' than 'beliefs'.

SECTION THREE   SHARED ETHOS

In relation to descriptions of schools as collections of people, the term 'shared ethos' is frequently linked in the literature with the concepts of 'ideology' and 'perspective'. The third section of this chapter discusses this term.

Like ideology, 'shared ethos' is also variously defined in other research. For example, Shipman stated that a description of a school's:

> " 'spirit', 'ethos', or 'climate' was an attempt to sum up an impression not of particular aspects but of the total pattern of life culture."
>
> (Shipman, 1968, p. 25)

Sharp and Green used the term 'ethos' to mean an awareness of a school as having an: "Identifiable ideology about its role and practice in relation to its clients". (Sharp and Green, 1975, p. 47). However, they pointed out that, as with 'ideology', the meaning of the term ethos is 'problematic'.

Pollard stated that, in his view, terms such as 'school ethos' and 'climate' have been used to: "encapsulate the rather intangible feel of schools as organisations". He himself preferred the term "institutional bias" which he defined as:

> "those understandings which grow up between teachers, pupils, parents and others about 'what a school is like' and what is done here!"

and as being:

> "a type of generally shared knowledge, a diffuse, often taut, set of social understandings about a school and ... practices within it. These conventions develop over time and frequently reflect the perspectives of those with most power and influence in the school."
>
> (Pollard, 1986, p. 16)

This definition is interesting both for noting that parents may have an influence or share in developing any understandings, and for its comment on the effect of 'power', a concept discussed later in both the chapter on Heads' perspectives and in that of those of teachers, as is the effect of time.

It has been argued that in 'primary' schools in particular there is

a distinct 'ethos'. Shipman stated that: "Observations of several primary

schools would reveal an overall similarity of pattern" but also added

that: "Each school would seem to have its own distinct climate or 'ethos'."

(Shipman, 1968, p. 23).

This seems to indicate that the individual context of a school is

important. If this is seen as 'the total pattern of life culture', and

if this is related to context, then the 'ethos' of a school, if it exists,

might mean different patterns.

Alexander considered that primary school teachers have certain things

in common, such as:

> "Overlapping areas of experience and consciousness, that
> of being a class teacher working in a particular kind of
> institution : a primary school."
>
> (Alexander, 1984, p. 9)

He seemed to argue that teachers in a particular situation will all interpret

that in the same way, a point discussed earlier in relation to ideology.

1. Idea of Consensus

Alexander claimed in fact that a "professional consensus" (p. 19) exists

among primary teachers, through working in a particular sphere;

> "... over the kinds of practices connotated by the word
> primary ... a commitment to certain assumptions."
>
> (Alexander, 1984, p. 19)

Hartley, on the other hand, although he stated that people: "Who

share a common situation may, over a period of time, construct a shared

ideology" also pointed out that: "There is a possibility that ideological

factions may emerge within a school" and thus that: "Consensus should not

be assumed". (Hartley, 1985, p. 62).

On the other hand, there could be conflict within an overall consensus,

(See also Methodology) depending on circumstances, an idea noted in

teachers' Educational Perspectives.

King, as noted when discussing ideology, argued that in infant schools also there is a 'consensus' in that there is a "shared set of understandings" or a "shared ethos", although in his study he also noted differences. (This again might disturb an 'overall consensus'). He stated that he used the head teachers 'notes for teachers' to discover the nature of these "shared understandings". The difficulty created by relying too much on such notes is pointed out in the next chapter on 'Head Teachers Perspectives'.

Thus the term 'shared ethos' involves the idea of shared beliefs or 'understandings' among teachers, and/or pupils, and others, or a 'professional consensus' amongst teachers and a commitment to such beliefs. It thus has similarities to 'ideology', and is used almost as interchangeable with that term in some cases, which makes discussion difficult, but in general seems to mean something less 'systematic' and more intangible.

2. Nature of Alleged Consensus Reviewed

In Chapter One and in the section on 'ideology' the nature of this alleged 'consensus' in relation to beliefs about children held by infant teachers was outlined. It is here reviewed briefly.

It is said to encompass; first, a view of the child as innately curious, involved in the active exploration of the environment, second, the view that children pass through similar stages of development at their own pace, third the importance of 'play' which is not distinguished from 'work' as a means of learning; fourth, the importance of concrete experience, fifth, the integration of knowledge, with no specific knowledge to be acquired by everyone at the same time. (Alexander, 1984).

King indicated other elements. These included the view that children have individual needs and interests, and thus there was an emphasis on the individual by teachers, the notion of 'readiness' and the importance of free choice.

Moreover, King argued that in infant schools: "Progressive education is fairly institutionalised".(King, 1977, p. 74).

3. Notion of Conflict

If shared ethos is taken to involve "consensus" and if this includes "ideology", and this in relation to infant schools is held by some to be classifiable as "progressive", then this is a view which is challenged. There is a growing body of research which presents an opposing view.

This suggests that first the 'progressive revolution' never actually happened and secondly, that the 'primary' school may be an area of conflicting views, and not necessarily one of 'consensus' in regard to beliefs and practices. It also suggests that the 'infant' as distinguished from the 'primary' school, so long upheld in some quarters as the principal site for 'progressive' and child-centred practice, and regarded as an areas where a 'consensus' existed, is likewise an area where there may be conflict and diverse views. Historically this is nothing new, as the account of the development of infant education shows.

Research which suggested that primary schools are not necessarily 'progressive' included that of Bennett (1976) and Galton and Simon et al (1980) with Simon (1981) and Richards (1979), as noted in the review of the literature.

Marsh also cited these, and others. He stated first, that:

> "The Plowden Committee, and many othe educationalists,
> were certain that the English primary school had advanced
> a long way along the progressive road."
>
> (Marsh, C. A., 1985, p. 151)

This seems a little unfair to Plowden which actually said, while advocating these practices, that at the time they were found in only a minority of schools.

However, Marsh continued:

> "However, the evidence now available indicates that the
> much acclaimed primary school revolution never took

place. It was, in fact, a much publicised myth."

<div align="right">(Marsh, C. A., 1985, p. 151)</div>

He quoted Richards' (1980) comment:

> "The primary school revolution has not been tried and
> wanting, it has never been tried except in a small
> number of schools."

<div align="right">(Richards, 1980 in Marsh, 1985, p. 151)</div>
<div align="right">(See also Sedgewick, 1980)</div>

Richards elsewhere stated that primary education was "political"

in that it involved:

> "A struggle for power among various interest groups, each
> with its own view of primary education which it seeks to
> make the accepted view ...."

<div align="right">(Richards, 1979, p. 40)</div>

He considered that each group had their own "belief system" so that:

> "What emerges as primary education is the result of the
> interplay and conflict among these diverse sets of
> beliefs and the practices they inform."

<div align="right">(p. 41)</div>

Richards identified "four major belief systems" in primary education.

These were "child-centred", "pragmatic", "community centred" and

"traditional". However, he noted problems with this categorisation,

because:

> "Belief systems have inevitably to be described in terms
> of ideal types, whereas in reality teachers have their
> own particular interpretations."

<div align="right">(p. 41)</div>

Also, he noted that:

> "The relationship between belief systems and practice
> ... is both complex and untidy."

Some teachers could articulate their beliefs clearly, some could when

ideas were questioned, others could not explain at all. Nevertheless,

Richards claimed that his categorisation was able to:

> "capture more of the complexity and diversity of primary
> theory and practice than the oft-quoted "traditional
> progressive dichotomy"."

<div align="right">(Richards, 1979, p. 41)</div>

Although Richards considered that there was little evidence to suggest that "child-centred education" was "widespread", he claimed that this did: "not follow that the majority of primary schools are traditional in ethos, organisation and beliefs". (p. 46). Neither did it mean that there had been no changes in primary education. The existence of other "belief systems" as well as the "child-centred" contributed to: "A diversity of primary practice". (p. 46).

As regards infant schools, Lee, in a study of an inner-city school found that:

> "The school was characterised by relatively explicit
> conflict over pedagogy and practice."
>
> (Lee, 1984, p. 242)

As stated in the 'Review', this conflict existed between mostly "younger members of staff ... committed to a progressive ideology" and older ones "... opposed to this" and who "could be regarded as traditional in outlook". (Lee, 1984, p. 242). This study appeared thus to find the 'oft-quoted' dichotomy that Richards rejected.

This point about a possible difference between younger and older members of staff is examined in the last section of the chapter on 'Teachers Educational Perspectives', and noted in the 'Heads' chapter.

Differences were acknowledged by King in his study of three infant schools. While he stated that infant teachers were "secure in their acceptance of the child-centred ideology" he also stated that this did not mean that: "they all used exactly the same classroom practices". He stated that in fact he found: "as much variation in classroom practice within the three schools as between them". However, he concluded in spite of this finding that: "The similarities between all teachers were more substantial than the differences". (King, 1978, p. 142).

As stated in the Review Chapter, more recently Hartley's observations in an inner city infant school also indicated a diversity of

teachers' views within it. He stated that:

> "At the school level of analysis especially there is a
> wide offering of ideological views".

<div align="right">(Hartley, 1985, p. 62)</div>

Thus, he seemed to be arguing that the differences may be stronger than

any similarities.

Hartley thus seemed to be in agreement with Richards, that there

are more than two sets of beliefs.

However, Hartley also argued that:

> "The reportedly shared ideologies within the infant
> school permit us to regard infant school teachers
> as a separate status group."

<div align="right">(Hartley, 1985, p. 10)</div>

He considered, however, that these 'ideologies': "may be stable or in

flux". (p. 46). If he found different "ideological views", it is not

clear why he then spoke of 'reportedly shared ideologies'. If they were

not shared, how could this alone enable infant teachers to be regarded as

"a status group"? This idea seemed to require some exploration as an aside.

King stated that while infant teachers formed "a social group" with

"class characteristics" in view of their occupation of a particular economic

position, they also formed a "status group", with "shared perspectives

and social identities", as well as a "particular social position". (King,

1978, p. 151). Since he mentioned "88,000 infant teachers", it is

difficult to see how he could be sure of a "shared perspective".

'Status Group' is usually used to refer to social position in terms

of 'social esteem' as judged by others, and partly this includes material

position. In the English educational system infant school teachers would

appear to have a lower social esteem than university teachers, for

example, or those dealing with examination work in secondary schools. In

this sense infant teachers could be called a 'status group' of relatively

low esteem. In this position, if there was a "shared ideology", it might

have a function, as the definition of 'ideology' by Watson (1979) indicated, of 'defending', 'justifying' and 'furthering the interests of' infant school teachers as against other groups of teachers, or parents, to give them 'professional' standing.

Also, an 'apparent' if not actually shared, ideology, could be so used.

King, as noted, assumed that there was a "shared ideology". Hartley's own research seemed to contradict this. Hence, it is difficult to see why he added that teachers could be considered a status group on this basis.

However, in the sense noted above they could be. But within the group of 'infant teachers', if this concept of 'status group' is accepted, it could be considered that there is another 'status group' within this category of teachers, if head teachers within that group have higher social esteem. As will be seen in the chapter on head teachers, they do have 'legal authority' and are conscious of their 'power'. These features are recognised by others, such as local education authorities, school governors, teachers and parents as well as children, who recognise the 'status' if not the term.

Referring to Hartley, he also distinguished between the 'public' and 'private' presentations of teachers' ideologies. He claimed that in the privacy of their own classrooms teachers work in: "quite divergent ways". (Hartley, 1985, p. 53).

Sharp and Green also noted, as previously indicated by Woods, that there was no direct relationship between what they saw as the 'child-centred' views of teachers in 'Mapledene' and their practice. However, it has previously been suggested that these teachers may not have been as child-centred as these authors stated if more detail had been given of their views.

However, Pollard also stated that what occurred in the classroom was:

> "... related to what was talked about outside the school, in an educationist context, but it was not the same."
>
> (Pollard, 1985, p. 3)

This might seem to support Keddie - an issue which has been raised before but could also be seen in the light of 'ideology' as justification and defence, as in Watson (1979). However, the idea of a discrepancy between 'official' views and practice, that the former do not necessarily translate into practice, or be related to it, has been noted in Chapter One.

Pollard argued that the difference he observed: "Can be accounted for by the most practical and pragmatic realism" of teachers. He argued that Government reports: "Ignore class sizes, limited resources and 'teacher pupil ratio'." (Pollard, 1985, pp. 36-37). Hammersley, considering this point, distinguished between factors *operating at a particular* point in time, that is "situational" and those which have shaped teachers' perspectives in the past, that is "cultural" factors. (*Hammersley*, 1977).

4. Work Situation

The issue of the work situation in relation to teachers' 'perspectives' has been touched on previously, when suggesting that possibly general beliefs can arise from a situation. The influence of this 'work situation' is also an issue raised in the last section of the chapter on teachers' 'educational perspectives', and reflected on in the chapter dealing with their classroom practice. This 'work situation' includes the role of the head in relation to teachers' perspectives.

In this research it is argued that while some "situational" aspects may constrain what teachers feel to be possible - thus perhaps creating the apparent dichotomy noted above, they may also influence and create

their beliefs as noted earlier. That is, there is not necessarily a sharp dichotomy between "situation" and "culture" in the perspectives of teachers. This does not mean though, that all teachers in a particular situation will interpret that in the same way. King, as noted, found as much within school as between school differences, and Hartley within the school he studied. His point about not assuming consensus and that "ideological factions" may emerge has also been noted when discussing the idea of 'consensus' in infant schools. However, it also has been noted that the idea of 'factions' within an infant school may not be partic- larly appropriate, given the fact that an infant school is usually small in terms of staff. But in discussing 'situation', it seems important to point out that teachers within a school may not be in all respects in the same 'situation', for classrooms can differ, because they are about people. Teachers may, as in the case of Moorland, be dealing with the same 'type' of children, but these children can (and did) react differently to different teachers. Thus, individual teachers and pupils have their own 'situation'. It may not be surprising, therefore, that different views may be expressed by teachers within a school. By the same token, it is not surprising if there are differences between schools, where these face quite different 'situations'. Moreover, if Richards' views of different 'belief systems' is correct, then this would also account for both within and between school differences.

This point brings to an end the discussion of concepts and related ideas which was thought to be useful.

Conclusion

In this chapter three concepts, ideology, perspective and shared ethos, which are found in much of the literature on infant and primary schools, have been analysed. It has been pointed out that there are different and sometimes competing definitions of these concepts, as well as some disagreement over their relevance to schools.

The chapter has indicated, from other research, that teachers in a 'situation' may or may not share the same views, that 'consensus' or 'conflict' may be present, and that in any case these views may, perhaps, not be a connected, systematic set of beliefs. It was noted that Richards pointed out that not all teachers were able to explain 'beliefs'. (Richards, 1979).

It is important to point out that some of the ideas expressed in this chapter arose out of the empirical work. In talking to teachers, it was noticeable that they seldom used words like 'ideology' or even 'perspective' in discussing their views. Instead they were more likely to use terms like 'aims' or 'approach', though a head might use 'philosophy'. This led to reflection upon the reading, where a problem of definition had already been observed. It had not originally been the intention to devote a chapter to this form of analysis, but in the light of the empirical data it seemed necessary, in order to not only sort out the confusion, but also understand the views of the teachers, and place them in some sort of context. Thus the attempt to sort out conceptual confusion was directly related to analysis of the empirical data.

Thus, theory both arose from the date and influenced the reading, or re-reading, of research literature in a reflexive process. As noted in the review of the literature, this relationship between reading and empirical work existed during the research and in the analysis of the data which followed.

Thus, although as stated in the introduction, the basic aim of this chapter is to act as a reference point, like 'Setting the Scene', for the chapters following, for convenience, it should in no sense be regarded as an 'ideal type' against which observations were tested.

In the following chapter the views expressed by heads and teachers in relation to their beliefs, together with observations of teachers, pupils

and classroom activities are set out. The effect of 'the situation' noted in this chapter is indicated.

CHAPTER FOUR

HEAD TEACHERS : THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ROLE : THEIR VIEWS OF THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAFF, THEIR EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVES, THEIR VIEWS OF CHILDREN, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH PARENTS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with how head teachers view their role in its various aspects, and how they view the different relationships involved in being a head.

The reason for devoting a chapter to head teachers in infant schools was, first, personal experience of being a teacher in such a school, which gave awareness of the importance of a head, in the effect they could have on staff or others. An infant school is usually small in number relative to secondary schools, so heads are in closer proximity to their staff and more aware of pupils and parents can also be similarly closer.

Secondly, preliminary reading prior to observation had pointed to the feature, the importance of the head in other such schools.

Thirdly, during initial observations before the main research a copy of King's research had been taken to a school to show one of the teachers. It had 'sparked off' an interesting discussion amongst the teachers. They had actually organised a 'seminar' of their own to discuss it amongst themselves. One of these teachers, discussing this with the researcher, afterwards said, among other comments:

> "But why didn't he say more about the role of the head?
> They can have a very important effect on what you can
> do."
>
> (Teacher, Rushside)

It was also felt by the researcher that King had perhaps not explored this in great detail in his book, perhaps through reasons of space or time, or for diplomatic reasons. He did note that the head was important but references are scattered rather than in a separate chapter, which perhaps reduces their impact.

Also, though, in conversations and interviews with heads, it was made evident that they did see themselves as having a considerable influence on 'their' schools.

For all these reasons, a chapter on head teachers seemed justified.

The main concern of this chapter, therefore, is to show how some of the head teachers who were seen actually perceived their roles. As Moorland was the principal research school the views of its head are given prominence, because more time was spent with her. Though a shorter time was spent at Larkway, the subsidiary research school, this head's views are given some weight. Comments are included where possible from the heads of the four schools in the pilot study proper, and from a school visited briefly after this was completed. As noted in 'Methodology', it was found rather difficult to interview the head of one school (Briarfield) in the pilot study. Also, only a short time was spent in these four schools, varying from a week to a few days, and only a day in one case (Ashley) as noted previously. So many issues could not be explored. That is why the heads' views are discussed in a rather different order from those of teachers in the following two chapters.

The views presented were gathered from interviews, a questionnaire and from notes to teachers, and in the case of Larkway, a letter to the observer. (The difficulty with the questionnaire in the pilot study schools has been noted in the Methodology chapter).

The first section of the chapter considers some external descriptions of the role of the head, in order to emphasise its legal standing. It discusses the concept of 'power' and authority as defined by Weber. This is done both in order to provide a background for the heads' own views and because these issues were brought up in interviews.

The second section considers the 'status' aspects of head teachers' perspectives, in terms of how they interpret their role as an 'authority

figure'. It notes the importance of 'situational' factors in such inter-
pretations. It notes the connection of 'responsibility' with status. It
also indicates the importance of personal style on 'leadership'.

This section concludes with one head's account of, in her words, "a
typical day". This is included as showing the varied nature of the head's
task.

The third section, in the light of the previous two, shows how head
teachers view their relationship with their staff colleagues. It indi-
cates the importance of time as a factor in the kind of relationship
developed, as noted briefly in Chapter Four.

The fourth section looks at another aspect of the role of the head
teachers, their 'educational' perspectives, what they thought the school
should be about in the teaching process. This perspective includes views
of the pupils and their 'needs'.

Following from this, the next two sections deal respectively with the
heads' views on the organisation of the learning context, and the organi-
sation of pupils, which are aspects of 'leadership'. These again show the
importance of personal style and school 'situation' in their perspectives.

The seventh section presents definitions of pupils. This is placed
after rather than before the previous section, because it leads into the
view of parents. This section depends most heavily on the perceptions of
the head of Moorland. This was one area where views came in other schools
mainly from other teachers. This was because other heads were either seen
less frequently, and consequently spoke more of 'aims' and 'methods', and
had little time to expand views on pupils, or in one case, as noted, there
was difficulty in gathering the information.

The next section follows on from views of pupils to those of parents,
and the heads' perception of their relationship to the school. It indicates

that 'class' factors influence these views, as well as a Head's status

as a 'professional'. The idea of 'defence mechanism' or 'justification'

is noted, as referred to in Chapter Four in definitions of 'ideology'.

The chapter concludes with a summary of the position of a Head

Teacher vis-a-vis 'important others', and thus the consequence of the

views of a head for all relationships both within and without the school.

SECTION ONE : EXTERNAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLE OF THE HEAD

This section notes views about the role of head teachers as expressed

by others, as a comparison with heads' own views.

Sharp and Green argued that the head of 'Mapledene' was: "... a power-

ful reality definer in the situation". (Sharp and Green, 1975, p. 47).

As seen in Chapter One, they see teachers as being in this position

in regard to pupils, and thus seem to see the head as standing in the

same relation to teachers as the latter do to pupils.

Much educational discussion concerning the head teacher's position

stresses that the position is powerful, and that authority is invested

in it. One exception is King. As was noted in Chapter One, he made

relatively little reference to 'power' and authority in general in the

school or in relation to heads. What references there are tend to be

scattered, which reduces their impact, as noted in the introduction.

Burgess, for example, argued that: "considerable power and authority

is vested in the office of head teacher". He noted what this meant for

a school, stating that:

> "Head teachers have been given responsibility for internal
> organisation ... recruitment of teachers ... distribution
> of resources ... control of discipline."
>
> (Burgess, 1983, p. 26)

Whitaker argued that the very title 'head teacher' or 'headmaster'

indicated the head teacher's position as the senior teacher in a school,

and that this was underlined by the fact that under the arrangements of the Burnham Committee the head teacher was paid on a different salary scale. (Whitaker, 1983).

The concepts of power and authority were analysed by Weber, and most discussion of these terms acknowledges his influence.

In Weberian terms authority is legitimised power and rule, that which is accepted by those ruled and obeyed by them because it is 'right' to do so.

Weber distinguished between different types of authority, traditional, legal and charismatic. Traditionalist authority is seen as that: "Based upon piety for what actually, allegedly or presumably has always existed." (Weber, 1964, p. 296). Under traditional authority office holding depended upon 'personal' right, or inheritance of an office, for which the original holder may have been selected for personal qualities, or which may have been appropriated. Thus traditional organisation of administration was partly rational, as it was dependant to a certain extent upon established rules.

Legal authority was defined as authority in which: "The official duty ... is fixed by nationally established norms", so that "legitimacy of the authority becomes the legality of the general rule". (Weber, 1970, p. 299). Charismatic authority was:

> "rule over men, whether predominantly external or internal,
> to which the governed submit because of their belief in
> the extraordinary quality of the ... person."
>
> (Weber, 1964, p. 295)

In the infant schools observed the charismatic element was present in some cases, especially at Larkway, although not more so than the legal aspect. It seems very reasonable to assume that a head's personal qualities have some bearing on whether the authority of the position is accepted cheerfully or grudgingly. However, whatever individual qualities

a head may bring to his or her position, it is still basically defined

by others' perceptions of and acceptance of the actual legal status.

Teachers may or may not _like_ a head, but they know that he or she _is_

one, and that he or she has power to affect them.

Waller considers that the basis of the heads' authority is

"traditional" in that:

> "Through the rules of government the position and status
> of the head teachers is acknowledged. Through a process
> of delegation coming down from central government,
> through educational authorities and the governors, head
> teachers receive their authority. [This] gives them the
> right to carry out their duties."
>
> (Waller, 1932, p. 34)

However, this definition of authority appears to correspond more to the

idea of legal authority rather than traditional, with its ideas of rules

being the source of delegation downwards. Traditional authority would

seem to be more governed by the past patterns. As Waller also stated:

> "A social situation has been set up ... its pattern been
> determined. The pattern is one that calls for a leader.
> The pattern also governs what the leader shall do with
> the led. This is institutional leadership."
>
> (Waller, 1932, p. 89)

There is a sense in which the authority of a head is traditional,

or "institutionalised", because of past history - schools have had heads

and so the idea of a head is established, but the actual rules governing

a head's position are legal ones, and so can be and have been changed

over time.

Sharp and Green argued that the heads' ability to influence others

related to: "their position in the power structure which supports them".

(Sharp and Green, 1975, p. 36). Since that power structure includes the

Government, the position of heads can change if or when new laws are made.

Thus far it has been argued that others outside the school generally

interpret the head as being someone who exercises authority because he or

she is placed in a position where he or she is given legal power to do so. Thus the legal relationship between heads and staff is institutionalised. When a person becomes a head he or she is thus aware of the responsibilities which this position entails, in general terms.

To a certain extent therefore heads do not "construct their own reality". However, whatever the general belief is about the nature of the 'role', each head may interpret his or her position somewhat differently according to personality and context.

In relation to this last issue it was argued in the 'Review' chapter that Sharp and Green, in claiming that phenomenology ignores the issue of power, did not appear to have examined whether the head *saw himself as being in a position of authority.* Since phenomenology is committed to the idea of the individual interpretation of reality, it seemed important to discover whether in fact head teachers see themselves as *being in a position* of power and authority. This study indicates that the head teachers in the infant schools observed were well aware of *the nature of their position* in this respect.

These features of a head teacher's position, together with their perceptions about the nature of learning, of children, and their background, their views on the organisation of learning and of pupils form their total 'perspective'. This term here has therefore two aspects, a 'status', with the head as an authority figure, and an 'educational'.

Because this section has focused on the concepts of power and authority as present in others' definitions of the role of head teachers, the 'status' aspect is first examined, from the heads' own views.

SECTION TWO : THE 'STATUS' ASPECT OF HEAD TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES - HOW THEY DEFINE THEIR ROLE

The term 'role' is associated with structural-functionalism and this might seem out of place in a mainly 'ethnographic' study, though not to this

researcher. However, it was one used specifically by the head teacher of Moorland. There are many aspects to this 'role', and it may vary according to circumstance.

Baron argued this, stating that: "there are many variations in the role of the headmaster [sic] and settings in which it takes shape". (Baron, 1968, pp. 43-44).

Mrs. Warner, the head of Moorland, similarly argued that any interpretation of the role of the head varied according to the situation and circumstances. She stated that it would vary:

> "according to different circumstances and will depend on
> the size of the school and the staff, the age of the
> children and the different personality of its
> incumbents, and the different priorities of work re-
> flecting different attitudes of the incumbents."
>
> (Mrs. Warner - from 'Notes to Managers')

Mrs. Warner appeared clearly to see herself as being in a position where 'authority' had been delegated to her, for she described herself as:

> "the authority's representative" [and added that there
> were] certain responsibilities implicit in the job
> [responsibilities] to the authority, governors and managers
> ... staff and parents."
>
> (Mrs. Warner, interview)

Mrs. Warner herself, as noted, used the word 'responsibilities'.

Whitaker has argued that "responsibility" is a "Key concept in any discussion of the role of the head". The term is defined by him as:

> "an obligation to do something ... a quality inherent
> in the individual, not imposed from without ... a way
> that a person responds to authority delegated by a
> senior ... superior, for the work that delegated
> authority demands."
>
> (Whitaker, 1983, p. 35)

But in a sense 'responsibility' is implied from without. It can have a legal interpretation in respect of the head's position. It is expected by the authority that the head will do certain things, even if the details are not spelt out. As noted previously: "Head teachers have been given responsibility". (Burgess, 1983, p. 26).

This comment seems to indicate that 'responsibility' is inherent in the position rather than the individual. Mrs. Warner, in seeing herself as a 'representative', did seem to be arguing that 'responsibility' came with the position. However, in her comment about the effect of "situation and circumstance" she was implying that these had an effect on the inter-pretation of that responsibility. Where detail is not laid down, personal interpretations may be possible.

Mrs. Warner herself did stress the personal nature of 'responsibility', and the effect of circumstances again. She pointed out that:

> "As each school is different, so the role of the head ...
> must be different ... different emphasis ... priorities
> ... although certain responsibilities remain current to
> the job."

She also added that personal attitudes affected a head's interpretation, so that:

> "the head teachers also bring their own style ...
> attitudes and interpretations to the job."
>
> (Mrs. Warner, Moorland Interview)

Thus the context of the school of 'work' situation can have an important influence on the heads' perceptions of their role, and because of their position as "senior teachers" such individual interpretation can affect their staffs. So if there are differences between schools, as King for example found, and Shipman, which are noted in Chapter Three, these may be accounted for by different interpretations of their role by individual heads. Equally, if there are classroom differences within schools, which were found by Hartley and which are also noted in Chapter Three, these may be a reflection of differing views among staff, who may not wholly or indeed at all accept the heads' view.

'Responsibility', for a head teacher can cover a wide range of activities. Mrs. Warner saw her responsibilities as being partly for administration and maintenance. She considered that she was responsible for "efficient administration of the school ... maintenance of buildings..."

650

although part of the latter would be delegated to the caretaker. It was, she said, "As the authority's representative" that she had overall responsibility for such things.

Mrs. Warner also saw it as part of her 'responsibility' to keep the Governors and Managers of the school - and these are legally constituted bodies - informed, amongst other things, about: "... the education within it". Responsibility thus seems to include the idea of accountability and also of some legal constraint. The head is held responsible for what happens in the school by the local authority and the school managers and parents. Both the Authority and parents are represented in the management body. The legal accountability of Heads was brought out in the Tyndale case, for as a consequence of that trouble it was made clear.

Mrs. Warner considered that, apart from the authority and management she also had responsibility to parents generally, and to her staff. She stated that these responsibilities required her, in the case of parents (and children):

> "to provide a framework for education ... ensure a proper
> curriculum is available for all the children within the
> school, a balanced curriculum ... an environment in
> which learning takes place."
>
> (Mrs. Warner, Moorland, Interview)

She added that she was thus responsible for "the overall curriculum and educational policy of the school".

The head of another of the schools visited stated similarly that:

> "the policies and the curriculum of the school ... are
> the responsibilities of the headteacher."
>
> (Head, Rushside)

In relation to staff and the heads' responsibility to them, the idea of 'leadership' was mentioned. Mrs. Warner saw herself as: "leading a team". Likewise, Miss Lasky, head of Fairfield, also saw herself as a: "Mediator, leader and organiser" in relation to her staff.

Part of the role of leader appears to involve evaluation. Mrs. Warner, for example, said that her "educational role" involved: "An attempt to ameliorate teachers' shortcomings ... monitoring standards". Yet Mrs. Warner saw herself as a consultant with her staff. Part of her role thus involved, in her view: "Consulting and discussing ideas". She stressed that she saw her role as being co-operative in relation to her staff. She referred to herself and her staff as "fellow professionals" working together. This point is taken up again when discussing the heads' relationship with staff in this chapter, and again in the following chapter concerning teachers' educational perspectives and their definitions of pupils.

In contrast to Mrs. Warner's view of her role, which stressed co-operation while at the same time speaking of 'monitoring standards', which implies that those monitored are something less than "fellow professionals", Miss Lasky of Fairfield held a straightforward view of her role. She stated unambiguously that it was her responsibility to run the school and to: "dictate the type of organisation ... the style of operation ... and the methods used". This seems the sort of 'tight control' that King stated one of his heads exercised. (King, 1978, p. 122). Miss Lasky also saw innovation as part of the task of the head. She stated that when Fairfield opened in the early seventies that she had: "initially conceived the ideas" and saw herself as having been the one, because of her position as head, "with the means to put them into operation". She was very aware of herself as a head teacher of being in the position, in her view, of being able to do what she wanted. She said that: "Heads in England can do what they like".

If this were true, they would be extremely powerful reality definers. Miss Lasky's view was one that the researcher would have liked to explore, but time prevented this. However, it seems an over-optimistic view of a head's power, remembering Tyndale again and arguments that the media exposed

about certain secondary schools such as Countesthorpe. But the limits to such power may well depend on the degree of trust that a head can establish both with those who delegate authority and those over whom she has authority. 'Personal style' and attributes seem important in this respect.

It could also depend in part on a head's skill in presenting his or her views. Indeed one aspect of a head's role is the necessity of explaining their view to others in order to get co-operation from all those who play some part in maintaining a school as a 'going concern'. A study of how primary head teachers perceived their role stated that an important feature in their view was: "Having a clearly defined policy". (Cook and Mack, 1971, cited in Whitaker, 1983, p. 8).

King stated that the heads in his study were in a position where they had to justify their 'ideologies' to parents. (King, 1978). It could be argued that, because heads do have relationships with others, not just with parents, children and staff, but also with managers and with other outsiders who may or may not be officials, they have to develop the art of presenting their aims and approaches, and also themselves together with any 'needs' of the school, as clearly and also as favourably as possible. In fact Miss North of Larkway stated that as part of her 'administrative' role:

> "the first priority is to establish good working relation-
> ships with all the various outside agencies involved in
> running a school efficiently."

She added that she liked to do this as much as possible by "personal contact". (Miss North, Letter).

This personal and public skill of presentation may become more developed over time, as experience of management of this kind grows. Certainly Miss North found no difficulty in expounding her views and seemed quite accustomed to this, and of being explicit, as noted in Chapter Three, and she was a long term head. Mrs. Warner had been in post

for a comparitively short time, but she had to prepare some 'Notes for Managers' on her role for a meeting, and so recognised this aspect of her role. An interview with her arose specifically out of these notes, which were given to the observer to read. Because of Mrs. Warner having to give attention to this aspect, she also found no difficulty in explaining how she saw her role.

There was one aspect of a Head's role which was only stressed at Moorland. At Larkway it was never brought up, nor in the pilot study schools, perhaps her for reasons of time. At Larkway this was an area which should have been explored, but it was not mentioned by the head at all, and also less time was spent in this school than Moorland. It was, however, brought up very quickly by Mrs. Warner. This aspect is the 'social nature' of the Head's role, not to all outsiders, or staff, but in relation to "social welfare agencies". Mrs. Warner said in an interview that she saw an important part of the role of the head teacher as being a link between these agencies and parents and children.

This 'social role' was very clear. She said that it might appear to the managers that most of her time in fact was spent on "social work", but she added that in her view, this was inevitable given the particular circumstances, which were: "The problems of pupils and their parents in this area".

It will be shown that Mrs. Warner's view of her role and responsibility in this 'social context' had a considerable influence on the organisation of the school, including to some extent curricular provision. The 'social aspect' was a very important part of Mrs. Warner's 'status perspective', and the idea of the school as a 'social welfare' link was part of this, stemming from her view of the area's 'social problems'. This part of Moorland is discussed further in relation to the teachers' definitions of pupils, as well as later in this chapter in relation to the heads' views of pupils and parents.

654

This brings to an end the discussion of the status aspect of a head teacher's perspective. It shows that heads have a legal position, with delegated authority and responsibility, and that with this they have considerable power. This section has also shown that within this general position of head teachers, there is considerable scope for individual interpretation of the role and that this may have consequences for the school so that schools are not necessarily the same situation.

It also has indicated that a head is a kind of mediator between other groups to whom responsibility extends and who may affect the working of the school, such as managers, staff, parents and to some extent children. Thus a head has to be able to explain her views to these various groups in order to gain consent for her views. Part of the role of a head is 'management' of people, in order to minimise conflict, and this involves the art of persuasion as well as, sometimes imposition, (for she has the final responsibility and therefore must sometimes take decisions if agreement is not forthcoming). The personality and style of the head can be an important influence in gaining acceptance of ideas from others. This may be partly developed by experience over time.

This section ends with an account of a head's day given to the researcher by Mrs. Warner. She claimed that it was a "typical day". It is therefore included as showing some of the varied tasks of a Head, and the fragmentation of her activities, a point noted by Hall, Mackay and Morgan (1986).

A Typical Day in the Life of an Infant Head Teacher

Monday Morning

The children arrive at school from eight thirty onwards. I arrived at eight thirty five. I saw the caretaker about various issues, such as vandalism. Today there were none to report. The caretaker keeps me in touch with what goes on.

At 9.15 there was assembly and then I dealt with other routine matters. Last Monday I had to ring for a supply teacher though. There are two teachers on the supply list who have worked previously on supply in the school. I usually call on them when I need a supply teacher as they know the school and its layout and to some extent the children, so there is minimal disruption and little settling in is necessary.

On days when the clerical assistant is not here (she doesn't work every day) I deal with the routines of the register, dinner, numbers and money.

I then go and see that the shop is operating smoothly. After this I am available in the office for staff or parents or children to see me if they want to. This takes me up to break.

I usually see to the post during this time, but sometimes I can't do this until playtime.

During break (today) the catalogues arrived, also a letter reminding me of business to be dealt with in the next managers' meeting.

After the end of playtime at eleven I hear children read from then until twelve o'clock. My doing this reduces the pressure on the class teachers, and also enables me to listen to each child. It gives them a few minutes of individual attention which is not always possible in the classroom. In a large school this would be impractical.

I try to hear each child in the school read once a month to monitor progress. I can later discuss this with the teacher concerned. This lets me see how the reading scheme is working out in practice.

I sometimes may take a class instead at this time if their teacher is taking music or the library period.

This takes me up to dinner time.

After dinner until after dinner time playtime is over is a time when staff can get together. Much of the chat relates to individual children and activities in the school.

I like to go in the staffroom, this period provides an opportunity for the staff as a whole to exchange information and opinions or problems, so formal staff meetings tend not to be necessary. But if there is a specific topic that needs discussion on a particular day, then extra time is arranged for it. Such a topic could be the reading programme, or changes in the month's programme, or the results of tests.

But I don't always go in the staffroom. I like to give the staff a break sometimes, and sometimes I have to go out.

In the afternoon today I took half a class while the other half watched a film strip with their teacher.

I also took another class for a story.

At various times during the week I go and take a class for a period either to allow the teacher some time for preparation, which is rarely available in a primary school timetable, or to enable some specialist work to go on ... in addition I regularly take small groups from different classes to do some topic work, maths work, or work on sounds and reading. There may be children who need stretching, or extra remedial help.

This takes me up to three-fifteen when the children leave. Then I had to make further 'phone calls.

This is an interesting account. It shows for instance, how a head can keep an eye on what is going on in the school, especially in relation to

children's progress - and so in a sense the teachers'. It indicates the importance of ancillary staff, something also pointed out by Miss North. It shows at least in part some of the 'busyness' of head. But the account is perhaps not wholly typical, it presents a fairly tidy view. It does not show the interruptions nor the problems. For example, Mrs. Warner on occasions had to take a child home. There was also the time when a parent came in during the lunch period and demanded attention and was in fact shouting. The children often popped in and out to show her things. Also, she herself,was frequently round the school and visited the nursery. So her day in fact could be even busier than she herself presents. Also after school she frequently did a number of things - putting up displays, or going round.

Her reference to the staffroom as a place where staff can get together needs to be considered in the light of its description in "Setting the Scene". The same is true for staff 'preparation time' when Mrs. Warner takes a class. There was little space for teachers to do this, so as noted they tended to do this in their classrooms, at break or at lunch time.

The account also shows, however, that a head, particularly at this level of schooling, is still a teacher among teachers, although one with special status. Allied to this 'status' aspect of a head's perception of the role, then, is their view of the relationship with their staffs, which is the subject of more detailed treatment in the next section, though certain aspects have already been touched on.

SECTION THREE : HEAD TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR STAFFS

This section discusses briefly how heads see their role as 'senior teacher' in relation to others, the staff in general and, in two cases the deputy heads, and comments on their views.

It was stated earlier that Mrs. Warner of Moorland saw herself as "leader of a team" in respect of her staff, and as a "consultant" working

with them, and that she saw her staff as "fellow professionals".

She defined the latter as being people who had undergone "specific" training and know "what they were aiming for", who were: "Able to justify what they do in the classroom".

She suggested that younger members of staff were better able to justify what they did because their training was recent. This is another reference to age difference between teachers. Lee, as noted in Chapter Three also spoke of age as a factor in 'conflict' situations - the younger staff in her school were seen as more "progressive".

Mrs. Warner said in an interview that she saw herself and her staff as joint decision makers, working together as a team. As her account of a "typical day" shows, she said that informal meetings of staff were unusual, and formal ones were not often necessary, but were called if a specific topic seemed to require one. In practice Mrs. Warner was the one who called for a formal staff meeting, rather than consulting staff, and who led the discussions in it. One example of such a meeting was observed after 'top infant screening' had taken place in the summer. Before it took place Mrs. Warner was seen discussing the results of the tests with one of the teachers of the older age group. Concern was expressed over 'low visual discrimination scores' in the tests, which were part of the 'screening'. The head then subsequently called a staff meeting specially to discuss the results. This meeting was quite illuminating, as it showed Mrs. Warner's views about parents - something discussed in a later section, and of teachers as possessing 'expertise'.

In the meeting, when the head expressed concern over the results, one teacher suggested trying to involve the parents in helping their children in some of the activities covered by the tests. Mrs. Warner rejected this suggestion on the grounds that the parents did not have sufficient know-ledge to do so. However, earlier in the year she had placed in the staff-

room a copy of a journal which outlined an experiment in which working class parents helped their children learn to read. It was one of the staff in this instance who was sceptical, stating that: "It wouldn't work at Moorland". This is one situation where the head rejected the idea of parental help as being 'unskilled' while on the other hand she seemed to be implying that they might have the knowledge to help.

Implicit in Mrs. Warner's rejection in the staff meeting of help from parents is the view that teachers had greater 'expertise' - their 'specific training' had been the feature which in her view made them 'professionals', as noted. Cope, however, argued that such 'expertise' might be questionable. (Cope, 1973).

Similarly, Bloland stated that while teachers possibly claim subject expertise, sometimes the level of such expertise was no higher than that of the parents. (Bloland, 1969). It would seem to depend on the issue, however, and on individual situations.

In the staff meeting, one of the two top infant teachers asked for advice on what she could do to help children in her class develop better visual discrimination. Clearly this teacher did not in this respect consider that she had enough 'expertise'. Also, it was the educational psychologist who had carried out the tests and drawn the conclusions which were being discussed. The top infant teachers were thus not apparently regarded officially as having 'expertise' in this area. However, some teachers at Moorland did have some 'expertise' in 'visual discrimination'. At this meeting, the two reception/middle infants' teachers had brought in, as requested by the head, their 'visual discrimination' material - games and other activities. This raised the question in the observer's mind as to why, if these two teachers had some knowledge of this skill, the one top infants' teacher had not thought it to be in part of job, since from observation it was known that in the other

top infants' class (which happened to be the deputy head's) material of this kind was in use. This raised the further question as to how far infant teachers could be considered as a similar group in a school, something considered in later chapters. At the same time the observer was more interested in the process of a staff meeting.

As noted, Mrs. Warner saw herself as a "consultant" and her staff as "joint decision makers" with her. From observations at other staff meetings it seemed that the other teachers at Moorland were only involved in the decision-making process at a comparatively low level. They certainly were able to express their views in meetings. However, their suggestions were not necessarily implemented nor accepted by the head, if she did not think that they would work. Also on one occasion, a teacher raised the question of the effect of lead in petrol on children's behaviour, since children in the area were exposed to a good deal of traffic. Her efforts to get this topic discussed were ignored by the head, as well as by other staff. In the end she just gave up.

However, staff meetings are not the only area where joint decision-making can take place. Mrs. Warner did have an 'open door' policy - it was never seen to be shut in fact while the researcher was in the school. As she noted in her 'typical day', there were times when she was available, so that teachers or others could see her if problems came up. Also, she did meet teachers informally in the lunch hour.

Also, in the final analysis, head teachers, having 'legal authority', are responsible for what happens in the school and so for decisions made, however much - or little - 'consultation' has taken place.

As noted, Mrs. Warner spoke of 'team work'. In contrast Miss Lasky of Fairfield saw herself, as noted, as being able to 'dictate' the type of organisation she thought most suitable. She considered that it was her responsibility to run the school. On the question of decision making she

said that she liked to give her staff the impression that they were involved in this, or at least some of it, but that ultimately she chose the ideas that she agreed with.

Miss Lasky's comments suggest another view of the concept of 'shared ethos'. In a subtle (and on occasions not so subtle) way ideas may be imposed, rather than shared. It also casts new light on King's idea that heads try to convert their staff. (King, 1968). It may perhaps be an undermining rather than conversion, or a deliberate effort to change staff in the direction required by removal of those who disagree.

For example, Miss Lasky said that in her early life at the school she had decided to change from single age grouping of children which was favoured by the previous head, to family grouping (a range of ages). She said that her changes had met with opposition from older members of staff (again the view that age was a factor) so that she had been unable to implement this family grouping as quickly as she would have liked.

This suggests that where the staff do not share the head's vision they can act as a constraining influence. Given the legal authority of the head, this may be only up to a point and for a certain time. That is, if the head is determined enough, he or she has the means to get much of their own way in the end, particularly through their process of appointment. (King, 1968, p. 94). At Stone Street, for example, as noted in 'Setting the Scene', the head was relatively new, having been in the school for a year, while some of the staff had been there a long time. He wanted the staff to experiment with new ideas and was meeting with resistance. On one of the visits there, some candidates were being interviewed for a lower junior post at the school. The youngest candidate was chosen. It was not possible to ask the head the reason for this choice, but one of the staff said that in her view the candidate was chosen because: "She would accept his views and not question them" and added "He doesn't want anyone who will do this".

This last comment referred to another candidate who, in this teacher's view, had asked "too many questions" and whom, consequently, the head not not wanted. However, it could equally have been that the appointed candidate had the best experience, so it may or may not have been 'true' in this instance that the head chose someone just because they agreed with his views. The speaker was, though, an experienced teacher who 'knew the head'. In the case of Miss Lasky, though, this definitely was the reason for appointing candidates. After talking about her early problems with staff she went on to say that now she had a staff who agreed with her "educational philosophy". This had come about she said, because as staff had left, she had appointed teachers who held similar views to her own. This might have been what the head of Stone Street was trying to do.

The part that the appointment process plays *in getting for a head the* 'approach' desired was also mentioned by Miss North of Larkway. Her account also shows the importance of *time in the development of any "shared" views.* Miss North did claim that there was a "shared perspective" at Larkway, and that she and her staff worked "as a team". She said that staff "were involved in curriculum development". Scale post holders, for example, were encouraged to "become more au fait" with their specialities by going on courses, reading, and visiting other schools. They would then report back to full staff meetings and a "full and fruitful discussion" then took place. She also said that the making of materials and displays of children's work, together with stock ordering, were joint efforts which "again meant consultation". (Miss North, Letter). Her staff agreed with this, to a large extent, though a few differences were noted, which are referred to when discussing the role of the head in the chapter on teachers' 'Educational Perspectives'.

Miss North said, though, in relation to the current situation, that initially there had been differences between her views about 'aims and

approaches' and those of the staff at the start of her career as head at Larkway. Over time she considered that these had diminished, as she appointed staff who were in basic agreement with her own views. She commented that now her staff: "knew the pattern of the day and the manner of working that I preferred", although she said that each of her staff "adapted to this in the way that suited her best".

It seems that this situation of basic agreement was very likely a consequence of her appointment policy. Miss North's comments clearly also indicate that any 'shared ethos' is the result of a 'process' as an interactionist view would suggest. It also shows that a school is subject to change over time, as new actors arrive on the scene. For example, 'Stone Street' head was relatively new in terms of appointment in the school, although not in experience. Staff there, with thirty years of experience, were shown to resist some of his ideas.

At Moorland also, in contrast to Larkway, the head's appointment was of fairly recent date, as noted in 'Setting the Scene', although the head had previously taught in the school for two years as deputy. Also in comparison with Miss North, she had only been teaching for a relatively short time - about six years at the time of her appointment. The deputy was also fairly new in the school. Mrs. Warner remarked herself that there were differences between herself and her staff in some respects. She told a 'key informant' that *if she could not get the staff she wanted fairly quickly she would leave.* However, in relation to the differences, Mrs. Warner said that she would not attempt to impose her views on teachers in the school.

This last point was also mentioned at Rushside. There again a new head had just been appointed. In this case, she was, like the Stone Street head, an experienced teacher and previously had been head in another school. The former head of Rushside, it was stated, "controlled everything" (rather

like King's Miss Fox). The present head said that she hoped that she was "more flexible" and certainly would not try to direct her staff in this way. (Head, Rushside). Other teachers in the school agreed with her picture of the previous regime, said to 'hang like a cloud over the school even now', and of the change in style.

However, this apparent rejection of control, or rather unwillingness to exercise it directly, could relate to the length of time in the school of these heads. It may require time for the authority of the head to be wholly accepted as legitimate, whatever their legal position in the eyes of the appointing educational authority, by the other teachers - or even children. On this latter point, in reference to Mrs. Warner's 'typical day' and her taking of classes for other teachers, children were not seen to stop talking when she entered the room and sometimes behaviour deteriorated. On one occasion some children even threw sand at each other. It was difficult to envisage such a situation occurring at Larkway with Miss North.

There, with both the head and the deputy having long experience, when either walked into the room or into the hall for assembly, there was silence.

However, such observed differences between heads may equally relate as much to 'personal style' as noted previously, as to experience, or the nature of the children, or to training. Mrs. Warner was a university graduate who had then trained as a teacher (one year P.G.C.E.). Miss North had originally been 'junior' trained, as had her deputy. King noted this as a factor in accounting for a difference he found among teachers. (King, 1978, p. 75). However, Miss North, and Larkway, appeared more 'progressive' (in general terms) than Mrs. Warner and Moorland, not less so as King's 'junior' teacher appeared. Miss North in fact had raised the issue of training in one discussion. She said that there were differences in training but, in her view, experience was more important. She said that "teachers are capable of learning".

In discussing the head's view of her relationship with staff, the fact of there being a deputy has been pointed out. This can be a key role in staff relationships. At Moorland and Larkway there were noticeable differences in this respect of the head's relationship with staff.

At Larkway, Miss North considered that her deputy was "very important" in the life of the school and as a member of a team. Miss North stated that the role of the deputy was to act as: "A liaison between myself and the rest of the staff". It was observed that the deputy often took over functions that the head would usually attend to, such as supervising dinner time, or taking assembly. She also appeared to be responsible for organising several activities, one, incidentally, that of introducing the researcher. In general the head and the deputy appeared to work 'in tandem' with shared responsibility. The deputy's mediating role came out very clearly in a semi-staff meeting over a proposed strike. While personally not in agreement with this, the deputy said that the staff if they felt strongly could go ahead, but should not involve the head. This was in the presence of the head herself.

The head at Moorland also viewed the role of the deputy as being a 'liaison officer', who, she considered, could act as a sort of "go-between" between herself and the staff. She thought that the deputy could discuss ideas with the staff to get their point of view, in order to test out her basic ideas. Observation suggested that the deputy took a rather more distant view of her role. In fact it was around three months before the observer knew she was the deputy. When issues and problems with which the head would normally deal came up and the head happened to be out, the deputy would not take over. From a 'key informant' information came that in the deputy's view it was not her job but the head's to make decisions. In staff meetings she said very little, whereas at Larkway, if the deputy head did not like proposals she would normally say so.

These differences in the Head-Deputy relationship could have been

explored further. That they were not was, in part, a matter of shortage of time, especially at Larkway, and also there were other features, such as classroom activities, which took priority. However, in the case of Moorland, this also seemed a very delicate area. It was sensed that there was a problem here, but raising it might have been the means of bringing the research to too abrupt an end.

Apart from their general or school level view of their relationship with staff, three heads mentioned the classroom level. Here, both Mrs. Warner and Miss Lasky, and Miss North, said that the teachers should be free to teach in the way that they wanted and Miss North said that: "Imposition does not work".

As noted, Mrs. Warner, also said that she would not "impose her views". Yet as noted, she saw part of her role as "monitoring standards" and "ameliorating teachers' shortcomings". On one occasion, in connection with this last point, a 'key informant' told the observer that an adviser had been called in by Mrs. Warner to see a member of staff.

Miss Lasky said that she believed in: "freedom in principle for both the staff and the children". (Miss Lasky, Fairfield) Yet on the other hand she spoke of it being her responsibility, as noted: "to dictate the type of organisation" and the "style of operation and the methods used". Miss North was also recorded as saying that her staff "knew the pattern and manner of working" that she preferred.

Freedom for teachers to teach in the way they like would appear to be fairly closely circumscribed within 'preferred patterns'. A head may or may not directly exercise control over classroom activities, for a variety of reasons, but do appear to have ways of getting the approaches which are approved of into the school and of 'keeping an eye' on what happens. It may though, take time for any form of control to be well established. Thus a school may be stable at one point in time, then go

through a transition period of change, before a new stability is established, perhaps of a different kind.

This section has looked at the relationship of infant heads to their staffs, as they see it, in broad terms. It shows that there head teachers, directly or indirectly, control much of what goes on in the school in their view. Thus, in effect they act as a constraint on teachers' freedom to experiment except within an 'approved' approach. The infant heads have shown, in their own words, a strong preference for having teachers on their staff who are in agreement with their own 'philosophy'. Their powers of appointment appear to have an *important bearing on their success* in achieving this situation. These seems more *influential than an attempt* to 'convert' staff, though this may happen. It has also indicated that any school is a dynamic, not 'static' entity, as heads and/or staffs change over time.

The next section considers these infant head teachers' educational perspectives, that is what the school - or rather its staff - should be doing for the children in its care, in terms of a: "framework for education" or "an environemnt in which learning takes place", in Mrs. Warner's previously stated terms.

SECTION FOUR : HEAD TEACHERS : THEIR EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

As the comments by Miss Lasky, Miss North and Mrs. Warner show, the head teachers seen had clear views on the aims they believed the schools should be pursuing, and wanted staffs who agreed with these. In terms of the 'educational' content of these aims they are, as a study of head teachers noted;

> "in a strong position.to shape the curriculum since they
> have the resources and power to define what it might be,
> albeit in conjunction with other interest groups with which
> they must work."
>
> (Hall, Mackay and Morgan, 1986, p. 72)

From Mrs. Warner's statements on the effects of different circumstances,

however, the 'educational perspectives' of heads may relate to a specific set of circumstances such that these perspectives, or priorities within them, could change completely, or be modified, according to the situation.

The special aspect of Mrs. Warner's perception of her role has been noted. Thus apart from the 'status' position of heads, the fact of being a head, a member of a 'status group', does not necessarily entail, even in infant schools, that they all share the same 'educational perspective'.

King noted, for example, that "many of the actions and policies" of two of his head teachers were related to how they saw parents and children, that is, the circumstances of the area. (King, 1978, p.,122).

King claimed, as noted, when discussing the concept of shared ethos, that in an infant school the head and other teachers share a particular perspective, or specific educational beliefs about the nature of children and learning. (King, 1978). The previous section showed how, over time, heads may being this about, but this says nothing about the actual content of the head's perspective. King claimed that the schools he visited were characterised by a 'child-centred' 'progressive' set of ideas or 'ideology'. These ideas were said to have been made explicit by the head teacher in the form of guidance notes to teachers and notes to parents. (King, 1978, pp. 10-11).

Because of this, it was asked in this research whether the heads visited did produce such notes. This was done to ascertain how far such notes, if present, did express the 'reality' of the heads' views, for comparison.

Mrs. Warner of Moorland did not provide 'guidance notes' for teachers in the curriculum areas of reading and language, but said that she was in the process of working out some for mathematics. Later in the year she did present a scheme in this which was discussed in staff meetings.

Like all schools, as now legally required, she also then produced an 'Aims and Guidance' set of notes.

Miss North of Larkway provided guidance notes for the observer to see. However, she stated that these did not necessarily reflect her views at the present time as they had been written in the period in the mid-sixties when she became head. She said that she had since 'modified' her views and was still in the process of doing so.

Similarly the head of Rushside said that the views presented in the guidance notes issued to the staff were, in fact, mostly those of the previous head.

These comments are another indication that schools, in the sense of ideas held by people, change over time. However, the main point brought out by them is that there is a danger of relying over much on such guidance notes as a 'true' reflection of a head teacher's perspective. They may contain views which have been produced in one set of circumstances which are not perhaps those which a head currently faces. A further but related point is that such notes in any case cannot be taken as necessarily re-presenting the views of all staff in a school, unless the notes were a consequence of consultation with teachers. Thus guidance notes, like other documents, cannot be 'taken for granted', as pointed out in the 'Methodology'.

For these reasons, therefore, evidence in this research for head teachers' educational perspectives was obtained from various sources. These did include guidance notes for teachers, and also those which in one case, Moorland, were produced by the head for a managers' meeting. School record books were also looked at where available. There were discussions with the head teachers themselves, supplemented with information about their educational aims derived from a questionnaire given to staff, including the heads, in Moorland and Larkway.

As noted in 'Methodology', however a criticism made by some of the teachers of this latter was that in the space given it was difficult to adequately discuss "complex ideas".

From these various sources, several themes emerged, with varying degrees of agreement. These themes were first the idea that education is concerned with the whole child, although there was also the view that |
the teaching of certain "skills" was necessary. The emphasis on this differed.

Another theme was that children have particular 'needs' and 'interests' separate from those of the teacher. There was also the idea of 'learning by doing' and finally the themes of freedom and responsibility in relation to children, linked with the idea of teacher versus child control of learning. Some of these themes are those which are thought to form part of the contents of the 'child-centred ideology' previously noted and summarised in Chapter Three.

Information from the various sources is provided in terms of these themes rather than listed separately, in order to point out the similarities and differences.

The need to consider the development of the 'whole' child was noted at Moorland and Larkway.

Mrs. Warner wrote that it was important to provide:

> "a balanced curriculum ... one in which all aspects of
> the child are catered for - physical, emotional, creative
> and imaginative."
>
> (Mrs. Warner, Questionnaire)

Likewise Miss North wrote of the importance of providing an environment:

"which will give ... opportunity for ... all round development". She also wrote that she agreed with Mellor's philosophy, that of being 'concerned with the whole child'. (Mellor, 1950) (Miss North, Guidance Notes).

All the head teachers spoken to emphasised the importance of teaching certain "skills", though which skills in particular were not individually stressed.

Mrs. Warner, for example, emphasised the importance of "verbal communication" because in her view it "plays an important part in our lives". She considered that "the child must be helped to express himself clearly and fluently". She also stated that "listening skills" had to be developed because "One of our greatest problems is getting children to listen". This was a skill' apparently not developed at home, as she stated, that it was "a skill not acquired amongst the cacophony of sound at home", a comment which indicates her view of parental homes of Moorland children. School by contrast, was presented as a place which provided opportunities for children "to talk, listen or be listened to". (All from questionnaire, Moorland).

Miss North of Larkway wrote not of 'verbal' or 'listening' skills but of "language skills" as a "tool" to develop thinking. She wrote that: "Unless he [sic] can marshall his thoughts how can he really think? (Notes for Teachers, Larkway). Such language skills would probably involve 'verbal' and listening skills. Other skills mentioned in several instances were reading, writing, and mathematics skills, referred to either as the '3Rs' or 'basics'.

Mrs. Warner for example, stated that she aimed to "provide a curriculum in which the 3Rs are given prominence" as such skills were crucial for the child to be able to "function in society". (Mrs. Warner, Questionnaire).

At Moorland however, Mrs. Warner stated that education was more than the transmission of "academic skills". Another set of skills was viewed as important. Mrs. Warner laid the emphasis on "social skills" and was quite aware of this. Her views on the social role of the school were noted

previously. Mrs. Warner stressed that Moorland: "is more concerned with social skills than purely academic ones" and that in the school she wanted to see: "the children in my care learning to get on together". (Mrs. Warner, Interview).

There is something of a contradiction here. Mrs. Warner is in the interview situation stressing 'social skills' and in the questionnaire that the three Rs are given prominence. But this contradiction may be related to external factors rather than be the result of two different beliefs. In an interview situation she may have been less aware of the precise words being used, and as noted in 'Methodology', a nervous interviewer may fail to pick up points. Time is an important aspect of content as well. The questionnaire was given at the end of the research and could not be discussed. But the 'social role' of the school had been mentioned by Mrs. Warner very early in the research, and stated again in the 'Notes for Managers'. It was this stress that stood out. This does not mean though, that she did not think that the 3Rs were important. The questionnaire, however, was a more public statement and may have been as stated in 'Methodology', a joint effort, and so less of Mrs. Warner's own views. However, as noted above, she did write of a "balanced curriculum" and a concern for the 'whole child'.

In another 'public' document - public in the sense of being legally required - Mrs. Warner stated that, in general terms, one of the main views of Moorland school was to:

> "Help all children become social beings, morally aware ...
> self disciplined with a sense of responsibility for their
> own actions ... to help children develop respect for and
> tolerance of others."
>
> (from 'Aims and Objectives', Moorland)

Mrs. Warner's views expressed above and on other occasions seemed to be clearly related to her conception of Moorland pupils as being particularly socially inept and unable to control their behaviour in relation to one

another. This point is returned to when discussing the head's views

about children in a later section.

In contrast to Mrs. Warner, Miss North appeared to place her emphasis

on 'social skills', although she wrote of: "helping the child to under-

stand his own feelings and behaviour" and of learning to: "develop a

social conscience". She wrote of the "play situation" as being the best

for learning these things "with its give and take, sharing, being

dominated". This 'play situation' was considered to be one in which

children could:

> "play out incidents that have troubled them ... in these
> they are trying to understand why people behave as they
> do".
>
> (Notes to Teachers, Larkway)

As stated, these notes did not necessarily express her current view.

But it was the view at Larkway of head and staff, that 'socialisation'

of this kind was necessary for any child, part of being at school, rather

than an emphasis in particular children.

Apart from the teaching of various 'skills', Mrs. Warner stated that the

curriculum should cater for children's interests. She said that:

> "Through the curriculum and teaching programmes we would
> seek to develop in all children their interests to the
> full."

However, although these interests were seen as important, she did not

consider that the curriculum should wholly reflect these. Teachers had a

part to play. Although "the curriculum should reflect the interests of

the children" it was the teacher's role to: "define a child's needs, and

so, yes that would constitute the basis of the curriculum". (Mrs. Warner,

Interview). She argued that children learnt best when activities in the

classroom were thus suited to "individual needs". She also spoke of the

children's 'need' for security.

Miss North also mentioned children's needs. She stated that in each

class there were: "a wide range of needs ... basic needs such as the need need for security ... emotional needs".

There are similarities between the two heads' views of 'needs'. However, whereas Mrs. Warner saw the teacher as the one who had to define pupils' needs, Miss North placed the emphasis on the pupil. He should be brought to realise his own needs at least in some areas. It was stated that:

> "through a variety of activities he will realise the need
> to acquire ... skills and techniques which will enable
> him to communicate using written or spoken language."
> (Miss North, Larkway)

The idea of children's 'needs' is returned to when discussing the head teachers' definitions of pupils. In the case of Moorland the needs of the children were very clearly defined.

Perhaps the greatest range of opinions was offered by the head teachers on the issue of children's freedom, in the sense of freedom to choose their classroom activities, whether to 'work' or 'play', and at what times, and to move about the classroom, contrasted with the teacher control of these.

Mrs. Warner pointed out that 'freedom' included the freedom to do what, when and how, and that lack of freedom in one respect did not necessarily mean no 'free choice' at all.

She did not rate very highly the idea of pupils choosing what activities they wanted to do. 'Discovery learning' in the sense of a child exploring through doing what interested him or her, implying free choice of what, as well as when and how, was not seen as relevant to Moorland children and their 'needs'.

Mrs. Warner considered that the children there needed:

> "direct structured teaching ... Now I do more direct
> structured teaching of skills rather than relying on
> the children to discover facts and skills for themselves."
> (Mrs. Warner, Interview)

This statement not only indicates that teacher control of activities was considered necessary, but also that the teaching of skills was still an important part of the curriculum. The "3Rs" were meant here rather than "social skills".

Mrs. Warner said that her views on such "structured teaching" had altered partly as a result of experience. The changes had been "dictated by the needs of the children as perceived by me and experience". (Mrs. Warner, Interview). Thus her perceptions of the nature of the children at Moorland - which are discussed later - had a direct bearing on what she believed should happen educationally.

This is borne out by her comments on work cards. Now these were in use in the majority of the schools observed. Work cards comprised graded schemes in reading, writing and number activities which were usually devised by the teachers. They were used in relation to the children's 'needs' and capacities, because the children worked through them "at their own rate". There was some degree of freedom of choice amongst these in what and when activities were done, except at Moorland. The children at Moorland did use work cards, but it was the teachers who decided which child did which cards and these were not freely available. Mrs. Warner herself did not particularly agree with work cards, considering that these could become "stilted". She preferred herself "a more open system". Also she did not agree with "whole systems" of work cards. But these personal preferences were not the reasons for the control of work cards at Moorland. The reason was that work card systems were regarded as unsuitable for Moorland children because it was considered that they could not cope with them. Mrs. Warner considered that the children would not only be able to work by themselves, but also that they could not be trusted to replace the cards in the right place after use. She also considered that to get the children used to working on their own, learning to use the cards, would take too long to organise. The view appeared to the observer to be that the children were unable to take responsibility.

While Mrs. Warner emphasised 'structured learning' and teacher control, there were some apparent contradictions in her views. For example, in the questionnaire sent there was a statement requiring an 'agree-disagree' range of responses. It said:

> "The purpose of infant education is to encourage independence, and to help children learn for themselves."

Mrs. Warner expressed 'complete agreement' with this. It was a matter that the observer would liked to have raised but in the circumstances it was not possible.

However, the questionnaire statement was a general one. It did not relate agreement or disagreement to specific contexts, so did not ask in what circumstances independence would be encouraged or perhaps discouraged. Mrs. Warner, for example, although she advocated "structured teaching", that is, control of the 'what' and 'how' of freedom, did not believe that the actual pace of learning, the 'when' could be determined by the teacher alone, for she said that:

> "It is sometimes the teacher, sometimes the child ... the teacher cannot force a child's progress beyond that which he can cope."
>
> (Mrs. Warner, Interview)

Whereas Mrs. Warner spoke of structured learning and teacher control of activities, Miss North of Larkway spoke of "intervention and guidance". For example, in relation to "play" she wrote that:

> "Subtle intervention and guidance is needed ... a teacher should not intrude on children's play [but] should show an interest in what is being done [and that] much depends upon the teacher being imaginative and intuitive, feeding in materials."
>
> (Notes for Teachers, Larkway)

Mrs. North did support some degree of freedom of choice for pupils in learning activities, but this did not necessarily mean a reduction in teacher control of these, for Miss North also stated that:

"It is the teacher's job to provide the situation and
climate ... then intervene and further the child's
learning within this context."

(Miss North, Larkway Interview)

She thus seemed to be regarding the teacher as "facilitator", in Richards'

terms. (Richards, 1979, p. 42). The control of the teacher is there but

less obviously so.

Another head pointed out that in some situations control by teachers

could be less visible while in others it could be more obvious. He

stated that: "There are occasions for both guidance and direction" and

added that children's freedom had to be limited: "both in the interests

of the child and of the school community". (Head, Ashley, Interview).

In contrast, Miss Lasky of Fairfield spoke of the importance of:

"encouraging independence and self-sufficiency". (Miss Lasky, Interview)

As noted in the previous section, the head believed in freedom for staff

as well as pupils, yet simultaneously saw it as her responsibility to

"dictate" both "organisation" and "methods".

From these various statements it seems that the degree to which

children can choose activities, partly depends upon heads' views of how

responsible they are, and their perceptions of the needs of the pupils.

(Partly because teachers also are concerned). 'Free choice' is thus

differently interpreted, with Mrs. Warner stressing the "structured

teaching" and Miss North "intervention and guidance". There can be

contraints for children in this area. In one sense, there would be in

any school, for children are there by compulsion, and also teaching

involves 'structuring' to some degree. Teachers in effect choose what

activities are available to be 'chosen' by the children. In this sense

total 'free choice' is impossible. In another sense though, constraints

do arise from heads' perceptions of the 'needs' of pupils. As noted,

Mrs. Warner linked her view of the need for structural teaching directly

to her perception of Moorland children lacking certain essentials. She saw

it as the teacher's role to define children's needs, while Miss North placed more emphasis on children discovering their own needs.

Moorland children seemed to be seen by Mrs. Warner more in terms of a 'group' than as individuals. The emphasis at Larkway was more on the individual. There, the head seemed to believe that pupils could take some responsibility for their own learning, while Mrs. Warner expressed the view that Moorland children were not capable of this.

However, these apparent differences could be a matter of stressing different aspects of the teacher's role according to circumstances such as the area of the school and the immediate present and its problems, with long term aims being similar. Mrs. Warner, for example, did say that one of her main aims was to encourage pupils to become "self-disciplined" with "a sense of responsibility for their own actions", as previously noted. Also the idea of education being "for the whole child", developing all potentialities, was not disputed. The idea that children's needs and interests should be considered was also agreed with even though, as noted, differences existed on how these should be defined.

In so far as these themes form part of the content, summarised in Chapter Three, of what some writers see as a "child-centred ideology", the statements by the head teachers do not present a uniform view. Their educational 'perspectives' seemed to relate, more clearly in Mrs. Warner's case, but to some extent also in others, to the particular school and the children in it for which they were responsible. That is, their perspectives seemed fairly firmly grounded in pragmatic reality.

In relation to a term like "child-centred" both Mrs. Warner and Miss North were very wary of using this to describe their "approach", even though Miss North's views might appear to contain more elements of its supposed content than Mrs. Warner's.

Miss North did consider that on the whole her school was "child-centred"

but pointed out that: "One should be aware that there are different inter-
pretations of infant theory". (Miss North, Larkway, Interview).

That this warning is apt is borne out by the fact, mentioned in
Chapter One, that 'progressive' is hard to define, and by the different
views within 'the infant tradition' pointed out in the historical chapter
on this.

Richards claimed that: "Primary education is seen as relatively
unproblematic" by some. (Richards, 1979, p. 40). The head teachers who
were interviewed did not appear to view infant education in this way.
Terms like 'child-centred' were not taken for granted, and not seen as
particularly relevant either. Also, in different ways, these head
teachers did appear to reflect on their role in providing "educational
frameworks".

Some of the themes, which emerged from these head teachers' state-
ments are not the whole content associated with the idea of a "child-
centred ideology", even if there had been uniformity. Some of the other
ideas listed as part of such an "ideology" refer to some organisational
features of the school, those which relate directly to its learning acti-
vities. One of these is organisation of the curriculum, here meaning
how activities which make up the formal knowledge as presented to the
pupils. The other is organisation of the pupils so that they can take
advantage of these activities. Both are important aspects of a head's
educational perspective, together forming part of the "learning
environment". They indicate how 'educational perspectives' are trans-
lated into effective practice as far as heads are able to influence this.
Accordingly, these two features form the subject of the two following
sections respectively.

SECTION FIVE : 'THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT' : THE ORGANISATION OF THE CURRICULUM
This section is concerned with head teachers' views on the way that the

learning activities which form part of the curriculum are presented to
pupils. It does not deal with the content of these activities though,
as this is mentioned in the chapter dealing with classroom practice and
teachers.

Infant schools, as the comments by the head teachers show, are
concerned with a range of tasks in relation to pupils. These cover
their "academic", "social" and "emotional" needs. Prominent among the
first are "the basics" or "the 3Rs", which themselves contain many
separate skills.

Taylor stated that:

> "the more general title 3Rs has largely replaced the
> finer distinctions of 'reading', 'writing' and
> 'number' ...."

because it had been difficult:

> "to maintain artificial boundaries between them"

as teaching approaches changed. (Taylor, 1971, p. 34-5).

However, even if boundaries became less rigid, these activities
could be (and in the researcher's own school were) given a particular
time, usually during the morning when children were thought to be
"fresher". Other activities such as art and craft, or 'nature study'
or 'story' were usually assigned to the afternoon.

In the researcher's own case, an attempt to alter this pattern met
with rebuke from the head teacher.

This 'traditional' pattern of infant school organisation was not
the choice of the heads of the main and subsidiary research schools,
however. Both these approved of the organisational form called the
'Integrated Day' which King stated was adopted by "most teachers" in the
schools he studied. In this study, the integrated day was found in some
form, in some of the schools observed, but not all, although too little

time was spent in each of the pilot study schools to get an accurate picture of all organisation details of this area. But the term 'integrated day' does not have one form in any case. Taylor stated that:

> "There is no reason at all to suppose that there is just one definable pattern which has title to the name 'Integrated Day'."
>
> (Taylor, 1971, p. 54)

Moran also reached a similar conclusion (Moran, 1978)

There are certain ideas associated with the term, however. Among these are the idea that knowledge such as the 3Rs should not be presented to pupils as if it existed in discrete entities such as 'reading', 'writing' or 'number' so that 'reading', for example, might come to be seen by children as 'reading the reading scheme books'. Instead, all should be treated as part of one experience, so that reading or writing occurred, for example, in connection with a number topic, which might also involve art and craft work. Categories like 'work' and 'play' are also not separated, but are equally part of, or means of, acquiring knowledge, including social as well as academic. All these ideas are part of what King called "the blurring of categories". There is also the idea that these activities have no special time allotted to them, but go on throughout the day.

'The Integrated Day' also has associated with it the idea of 'free choice'. As Taylor, also noted, at one extreme the integrated day was held to involve children's total freedom to choose among the activities - that is, in Mrs. Warner's distinctions, the 'what', 'when' and 'how' (and even 'where' in some open-plan schools). But most versions are less extreme in practice, with more or less, depending on circumstances of visible teacher control or direction of pupil movement among the activities.

Both Mrs. Warner and Miss North expressed some form of commitment to the integrated day, though the former tended towards more visible teacher control of events. Mrs. Warner said that she had developed an interest on

the idea whilst she was in her first teaching post, and also said that it

had been held up as an ideal during teacher training. Miss North said

that she had been:

"firmly committed to the idea of the integrated day
throughout most of my teaching career."

(Miss North, Interview)

but again noted that there were different interpretations, as with "infant

theory", and that teachers in the school followed slightly different

versions. As long as they were working in the "general style" that she

wanted, they were free to adapt this, according to the needs of their

particular classes.

Therefore, she did not offer one definition, but offered a view on the

general picture she would expect to see, though not all items would be

found in every classroom, she said.

These elements of an "integrated day" included: various activities

going on at the same time, with no fixed time (such as the morning) when

these must be done, and with children able to choose between them to a

great extent, although teacher direction might be necessary to reduce

pressure on resources; children "working at their own pace", though "guided

by teachers", with the use of graded activity cards in the 3Rs, a certain

amount of work to be covered, but not necessarily within a day and the

'integration' of "areas of knowledge". This last meant that: "Several

activities were brought together in topic work". An example was given of

a topic on oil rigs (which was later seen by the observer) which had grown

out of the interests of some children out of a teacher's talk. It had

involved reading, measuring, art and craft. Miss North stressed again

that "the integrated day" whatever the precise interpretation: "does not

mean that children can choose exactly what to do and when to do it", partly

because resources were limited. So children were usually divided into

groups, with one, or sometimes two, usually involved with one activity,

while others did something else. This could be 'play' for in her view

'work' and 'play' were both part of learning". (Miss North, Larkway).

Mrs. Warner in contrast did give a definition of the 'integrated day'.
She said that it meant a situation:

> "in which all activities operate together throughout
> the day ... work comes on alongside creative activities
> ... the day is considered as a whole with no specific
> time for work or play ... children working at their own
> rate ... where work is based on children's interests
> ... no fixed times for number, writing, art and craft
> and other activities."
>
> (Mrs. Warner, Moorland, Interview)

In some ways this is similar to Miss North's list of activities. But
there are differences. King wrote of the "blurring of categories" in
relation to the integrated form of organisation. However, in Mrs. Warner's
definition there was a distinction between 'work' and 'play'. Also, no
mention was made of integration in Miss North's sense, *the integration of
different knowledge areas*. In relation to 'work' and 'play', the distinc-
tion was present in the classroom, as shown later when discussing teachers
and pupils. It was not always very clear cut though, nor accepted by all
the teachers.

While Miss North said that *all the teachers at Larkway operated some*
form of 'integrated day', Mrs. Warner said that not all her staff did so.
She considered that one teacher in particular did not operate in this way
at all because in her classroom: "3Rs are done in the morning and art and
craft in the afternoon". Mrs. Warner also said that other teachers in the
school operated an 'integrated day' "in a modified form in various degrees".
One of these teachers, she said, used a "formalised version". Mrs. Warner
used the terms "formal" and "structured" to characterise this teacher's
approach. "Structured" meant in this case, she said:

> "timetabled ... knowing what is going on at a particular
> time ... deliberately plans which activities take place
> at what time ... when they [children] start and finish."

Mrs. Warner also said that this teacher did not integrate different activi-
ties. Writing, for example, was specifically "news" and "stories".

684

However, Mrs. Warner emphasised that the organisation of the curriculum did not remain static in any of the classrooms, and added that the integrated day was "too exact a term" to sufficiently define the organisation of the teachers' classrooms. She stated that:

> "On some days in one classroom all the children might be directed towards writing while in others all the children might start with 'choosing time', and the teacher take out small groups to work with."
>
> (Mrs. Warner, Moorland, Interview)

Thus the term 'integrated day' is capable of being variously interpreted. This is not just between schools, but also within schools, as heads and teachers may have somewhat different definitions, or indeed teachers may not approve of this form of organisation.

What is actually done can reflect the balance of power within the school and the personal style and experience of both heads and teachers can affect this. The differences and similarities between heads and teachers' views are examined in the next chapters when discussing teachers' perspectives.

This section has noted head teachers' views on the curriculum organisation. The next section considers the organisation of pupils.

SECTION SIX : THE 'LEARNING ENVIRONMENT' : THE ORGANISATION OF THE PUPILS

Sharp and Green said that in the case of "Mapledene" the head regarded vertical grouping, together with the 'integrated day', as important for the approach used in the school. (Sharp and Green, 1975, p. 51). They themselves noted its association with 'child-centred' education. (p. 45).

In the infant schools visited in this research various forms of the organisation of pupils were found, ranging from 'family grouping'; where all ages of infants are found within a class, to 'single-age grouping' where only one age group is found in each class. 'Family grouping' is another term for 'vertical grouping'.

The head teacher of each school decided which form of organisation should be used, although the decision as to which form to adopt was often made in response to external factors, as much as because of beliefs, as their comments indicated.

At Stone Street the children were divided into three classes; 'reception', with 4½ to 5 year olds, 'middle infants' of 5 to 6 year old, and 'top infants' of 6 to 7. Thus 'single age' grouping was used. The head gave no reason for this choice, other than mentioning "falling rolls". (Head, Stone Street, Interview).

The head of Rushside infant school said that "single-age grouping" was used at the top end of the school with other classes being "family grouped", containing 4½ to 6 year olds. The difference in the top infant classes was "because of the large number of 7 year olds in the school". She added, however, that in the following year the age composition would alter, and that would mean that "the numbers of 4½ to 6 year olds in the school are rising". Therefore, grouping policy could not be static. However, she added that the age composition of the prospective school population was not the only factor in her decision to use "single age grouping" for seven year olds. She said that she believed that "top infants" benefited more from: "being taught on their own". (Head, Rushside, Interview).

At Briarfield the children were divided into a reception class containing 4½ to 5 year olds, and two other classes which were "vertically grouped", containing pupils of five to seven years. The reception children were grouped like this in order to give them more attention, but the head said that "classroom doors always remain open. The teachers are not shut away from each other". (Head, Briarfield, Interview).

Miss Lasky of Fairfield stressed: "the development of responsibility" as the reason for her choice of family grouping. She said that this:

> "develops responsibility, helps children learn to think for themselves ... develop responsibility for their own learning."

> (Miss Lasky, Fairfield, Interview)

However, while Miss Lasky believed in family grouping, she said that
there had been restrictions on implementing it at Fairfield. In part,
as noted, there had been opposition from older members of staff. Miss
Lasky pointed out that Fairfield was affected by the Junior School. She
said that the previous head of the junior school preferred, in her terms,
"a more formal organisation" one feature of which was "single age
grouping". At this time Miss Lasky herself adopted family grouping for
most pupils except "the top age group". She said that this group was
left separate because it would have been "unfair to them" to then have
to change from family grouping to the junior single age system.

Miss Lasky said that now, however, the present head of the junior
school was more sympathetic to her views and that, as a consequence of
the change "family grouping" was now in operation throughout Fairfield.

Partly though, as noted, this was also a consequence of her
appointment policy.

Miss North of Larkway, in contrast, favoured single age grouping.
Here, there were, in the current year three reception classes, two middle
and two top infants' classes, although there was a degree of overlap in
the reception classes. In the previous year, the arrangement had been
three reception, two middle and one top infants class. The change to two
top infants' classes was due to extra numbers in that age range. The
three reception classes meant that no one class had too many new entrants.
Miss North said that she did not operate family grouping because she
didn't agree with it. She said that she thought that:

> "middle infants tend to get left, the tops are not
> stretched enough, and it is too much for one
> teacher to cope with."

Furthermore she felt that a teacher needed plenty of materials and other
resources to be able to cope effectively with family grouping, and there
were pressures on resources for economic reasons. (Miss North, Larkway,
Interview).

This is the kind of comment made in relation to secondary 'mixed ability' grouping and the pressures which can result for teachers when resources are perhaps scarce.

The head teacher of Moorland did favour family grouping. The actual policy followed was "partial family grouping" combined with "parallel grouping". There were two parallel "reception to middle infants classes" each containing $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 year olds, and two parallel "middle to top" classes of $5\frac{1}{2}$/6 to 7 year olds. The parallel form was due to: "fluctuating numbers from one year to another". (Mrs. Warner, Moorland).

The previous head of Moorland had adopted family grouping: "to avoid ... constant shifting up through the school caused by yearly intakes of 46". (Previous Head, Moorland, Record Book).

In practice the system at Moorland meant that when children started school at the beginning of the term in which they were five, they remained in one of the parallel reception classes until the following September, when they would be moved up. This meant that in the Autumn term those reception/middle classes contained children who were in their first term and those in their third term in the class.

Because of the staggered start some of these children were approaching six, and the 'top' classes ranged from just below six to just over seven, so some children might spend only two years in the infant school, while others might spend three. This was a matter that Mrs. Warner said concerned her very much, for its possible effect on children's progress.

Mrs. Warner herself favoured family grouping for two reasons. One reason (given to an informant) was that the new intake for each term, that is, reception groups, could be divided among two teachers, and so receive more individual attention. She thought that this was necessary because children developed at different rates. Family grouping was more suitable, therefore. The teacher had necessarily to treat the children as individuals

rather than as a homogenous group, because they were of different ages and thus had different requirements.

Mrs. Warner's second reason was one in accordance with her view of the "social role" of the school. She said that the social aspect of education was very important for the Moorland area. She spoke particularly of the children's need for "security and stability". This view was expressed by the previous head, who wrote of the "special needs" of Moorland children, saying that:

> "... travelling through three classes in 2½ years gives no security or time for a pupil-teacher relationship that will compensate for disadvantages."
>
> (Previous Head, Moorland)

This is a statement that the researcher would have liked more information on, but this was obviously impossible. It would have been interesting to know how this head thought that such a relationship could compensate, for what exactly and in what way. It indicates, however, that the 'social role' view of Moorland was not solely that of Mrs. Warner, the present head.

When Mrs. Warner introduced parallel grouping, she wrote that she hoped that:

> "this arrangement will give stability ... ensure that the the children do not have to be moved out of their classes except at the end of each academic year."

and not term by term as new intakes came in. She stressed that Moorland children: "need stability, and in general these children do not like change". (Mrs. Warner, Moorland, Interview).

The arrangements caused some strain on class resources, however. In September when there was a new intake, the reception-middle classes were small in number, around eighteen. This meant that there was plenty of choice for children. However this was reduced when more pupils came into these classes in the Spring and Summer terms. The security and stability

given by the system was thought to affect this.

The above statements show that head teachers have reasons for adopting the different forms of organisation that they do, and that these reasons mainly reflect their 'educational perspectives'. However, other factors affect their choice, not all of which they have control over such as fluctuations in pupil numbers, or junior school policies. Grouping policy was a compromise, in some cases, therefore, between educational beliefs and what seemed to be practical in particular circumstances. It was interesting to note that views on the integrated day and forms of grouping did not necessarily coincide, as they were said to in Sharp and Green's 'Mapledene'. Miss North's view on single age grouping, while favouring the integrated day, is another indication that heads (or other teachers) do not interpret situations in the same way. It also indicates that features associated with a 'child-centred ideology' are not necessarily found together in one school.

Hammersley argued that:

"organisation of classroom interaction is produced
by paradigmatic and pragmatic factors. In other words,
the form of classroom organisation is not simply shaped
by teachers' beliefs regarding the true nature of
teaching, how it should be in ideal circumstances, but
... also involves accommodation to the nature of the
circumstances in which the teachers work."

(Hammersley, 1977, p. 112)

For "teachers" Head teachers can be read. However, as stated in Chapter Three, the 'situation' may influence, even create belief.

Mrs. Warner herself stated clearly, as noted, that her own role as head was affected by particular circumstances, and factors, one of which was the "nature of the children". The last was viewed as relevant to the 'approach' that Mrs. Warner advocated. Thus, the actual practice, in terms of organisation, within the school was partially influenced by her perceptions of Moorland children. This is the theme of the next section.

SECTION SEVEN : HEAD TEACHERS' 'SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES'

As noted in the introduction, this section deals mainly with the views of the head of Moorland. There are three reasons for this, apart from the fact that Moorland was the main area of research.

First, as stated, only short times were spent in the pilot study schools, and other subjects were brought up by these heads.

Secondly, there was a different stress in other schools such as Rushside, Briarfield, Fairfield and Larkway in that when children were mentioned it was as individuals as a rule. With one exception, it was never 'these children' and never 'this area'.

The third reason was that at Moorland the stress was obvious in the first week of the research. Here it was very much on "the children in this area". Remarks about this were made almost at once to the researcher, which could mean that there would have been time for such comments to be made in the pilot study schools if this had been considered so important. Stone Street, for example, was situated in an area not as 'good' in some respects as Rushside and Briarfield, Fairfield or Larkway, as noted in "Setting the Scene".

The only general comment made by Miss North of Larkway which related to a group of children was on the subject of a small group of "travellers". These, she said, "had some special problems". She also stated that <u>all</u> children - not just "working class" children "need socialising into the ways of the school". She added that they had to become used to being with other children, and doing as they were told, "getting used to routines".

The head at Briarfield did not refer much to the "home background" of the children. She said that in fact she was "dubious about using terms like middle class and working class" in relation to children's homes "as they give the wrong impression".

The head at Rushside did use these terms, however. She stated that
"The children have come from a variety of backgrounds, working and middle
class". Neither head spoke of the children themselves as special cate-
gories because of their backgrounds. However, the head at Rushide knew
the Moorland school as she had taught there at one time, and said that
she thought that reading and writing by the children were "more advanced"
at Rushside. The implication was that this was because of the difference
in the area - and thus pupils' home backgrounds, which was seen as better
than Moorland.

Mrs. Warner, as noted, stressed the area, and the children's 'home
backgrounds'. Some general idea of the Moorland area was given in
'Setting the Scene'. This showed that for a long time it had been con-
sidered as a problem area. Moorland school records showed similar
definitions. In these a previous head described the area as: "a dumping
ground used to resettle problem families". An inspector described the
area as being one of "poor homes and linguistic poverty". Another wrote
of it as having: "depressing social problems". (Record Books, 1973-76).
The present head described the area as one in which home ownership was
rare, and where the physical state of the properties was poor and "rather
dilapidated in appearance". She claimed that "apathy" was a major
problem on the estate, with "an atmosphere of acceptance of the conditions
... some hopelessness ... prevalent in some streets". Mrs. Warner blamed
"the present economic situation" for some of the problems. The area was
reputed to be one of "high unemployment", and according to Mrs. Warner,
this was rising, bringing with it certain problems. She spoke of: "20%
... unemployment on Moorland estate among working class males", adding
that "... not working in the true sense leads to loss of dignity, apathy ..."
However, she argued that such "apathy" was "... not characteristic of the
working class in the past". (Mrs. Warner, Moorland, Interview).

Seabrook has likewise spoken of a loss of dignity, and claimed that

what he termed "the new poor" are:

> "a sorry caricature of the way many of the old managed
> to live in dignity and hope. Dignity and hope are
> denied them now."

(Seabrook, J., 1982, p. 74)

In both Mrs. Warner's and Seabrook's statements, the 'working class' seem

to be taken as a homogenous group. Also both may have a rather romanticised

view of past 'working class' life. Some accounts of working class life

in the past such as "The Dillen" (Hewins, 1982) and 'Ragged Schooling'

(Roberts, 1987) do not show much 'dignity and hope' then, but a struggle

to survive.

It might also be doubtful if all forms of work are beneficial either,

today. However, these 'historic' views of the area and its inhabitants

seem to affect perceptions of the children by the past and present head.

Previous school records, kept by head teachers referred to the

'problems' of the children. They were said to be:

> "disadvantaged ... handicapped by poor homes and
> linguistic poverty" and as "requiring social training".
> They were said "to face difficulties ... in reading and
> writing ... in speaking and generally relating thought
> to their surroundings."
>
> (Record Book, 1975-6)

In similar vein the educational psychologist was cited as saying:

> "I am struck with the large percentage of children with
> a variety of social and physical problems."
>
> (Record Books, 1980)

Mrs. Warner classified the children as a single group. Her defini-

tions of them, she said arose from her experience as a teacher in the

school, from information provided by the staff, from having visited

pupils' homes, and from contact with various "outside agencies" such as

the social services. Thus, her definitions can be seen as "socially

constructed".

Mrs. Warner classified the children by reference to the state of their

learning, and to their "social behaviour".

She said that when "these children" first came to school they lacked "essential pre-learning skills ... do not know how to listen, use crayons" and also said that "visual perception skills" were "limited" or "missing". Such skills were in her view: "essential ... for future learning and doing well at school". (Mrs. Warner, Interview). In terms of language development, Mrs. Warner considered that the children at Moorland had "limited vocabularies" and general language problems. However, Mrs. Warner did say that in spite of these problems many of the children were "very eager to learn". As will be shown later, some members of her staff disagreed with this view.

Moorland children were also seen by the head as not knowing how to play when they came to school, in the sense of being unable to play a game. She said that the children had to be taught what a game was before actually trying to cope with the concepts involved in the actual game itself.

However, some Moorland children were seen 'playing' on some rough ground near their homes on two or three occasions.

Mrs. Warner also claimed that children were unable to share. They were also said to be "aggressive" with other children.

The observer argued on one occasion that some of the children at least, did not seem to fall into these categories. Some comments about these children were quoted, such as "doing well" and "getting on nicely". Mrs. Warner accepted the argument but said that, in one instance at least, it was because "the parents are caring", a remark that seemed to go against her previous view of the estate as a whole.

Of another child that was 'doing well' she said that his progress was "almost miraculous considering his background", as if background might be

expected usually to determine achievement.

In fact 'home background' was blamed almost exclusively for children's behaviour at Moorland, both social and academic.

Mrs. Warner expressed the opinion that Moorland parents, on the whole, did not provide their children with the "right kind of experience necessary for learning at school", and also spoke of the children "lacking support" from the home.

Implicit in this statement is a notion of what counts as being the 'right experience' and 'being supportive' and also of what it means to be a 'proper' parent.

Mrs. Warner clarified 'lacking support' as meaning:

"lack of stimulation ... and a structure in the home
... lack of order and routine".

She considered that teachers would provide the necessary pre-learning and social training, together with 'stimulation' and 'structure', for their own children. Since teachers are generally considered to be 'middle class', this seemed a way of indicating that a 'middle class' home prepared child better for school than a 'working class' one.

Mrs. Warner used teachers as a model in another instance. As part of lacking stimulation, lack of support also meant that in her view children were not taken out much by their parents, and even when they were the experience was a limited one. She said that children "are dragged out to the shops".

Now children in a reception class had earlier been observed by the researcher recounting their 'news'. This included a visit to an aerodrome described by a small boy. The observer related this to Mrs. Warner, pointing out that parents <u>did</u> therefore, sometimes take their children out. Mrs. Warner said in reply that the child would not have been talked to

much about the aerodrome and that consequently he would have learnt little from it. She said that if teachers, in a parental capacity, had taken this child on a visit then it would have been discussed with the child. They would have used the opportunity to make sure that their child learnt something from it.

In contrast, Mrs. Warner considered that Moorland parents' discussion with their children consisted of "mainly one word answers ... just labelling", and said that parents used "a 'restricted code'." She claimed that most parents lacked any opportunity to talk to their children, and in any case had little to talk about because they had "led such humdrum lives themselves", in her opinion. She also said that parents in the area did not encourage their children to do things, or to complete a task.. The consequence of this view was, in her view: "a lack of application amongst Moorland children ... [they are] easily distracted". The previous head had written of the need to "compensate for such disadvantage".

Mrs. Warner saw both children and parents as deficient and in need of support. As noted, the parents were seen as unable to provide "the right kind of experience", for their children, both before entry to school and during their time at Moorland. Teachers as parents were used as a contrasting model, which perhaps indicates a view of the 'working class' parents and children, as needing to be rescued.

Grace drew attention to the presence in the Nineteenth Century of "the missionary ideology" among teachers in urban schools. He claimed that this was still current in the attitudes of present day teachers in such schools. These teachers were seen by Grace as: "a kind of secular priesthood dedicated to the work of civilisation". (Grace, 1978, p. 11).

'Compensation' perhaps replaced 'civilisation' in the late sixties and early seventies, following the Plowden Report, and the subsequent setting up of Educational Priority areas.

It is interesting to note that in Moorland school record book there was no mention of 'social problems' until the early seventies, but that from this period onwards these 'problems' relating to the children and their environment, figured prominently. Terms such as "compensate" and "disadvantage" appeared. One reason for this could have been that the problems did not exist in the fifties and early sixties. It was certainly the view of the longest serving teacher at Moorland that early in her career at the school the children had been better behaved, and there had been fewer 'social problems'. She said that in her view the nature of the area had altered during the last decade, and consequently 'discipline' problems in the school had become more noticeable. This view was supported by the previous head of Moorland who, as noted, thought the area had been used as a "dumping ground ...". Possibly, therefore, this head and then Mrs. Warner had changed their view of their role, and so recorded the 'social problems' as one of their main concerns.

As noted, in "Setting the Scene" Moorland had been designated as a Social Priority school, so there may have been a change in the area.

Mrs. Warner disliked the whole notion of Educational Priority Areas. She said that in practice it was an "extremely unfair" system. Moorland was one of only seven schools in the area to qualify for its status, but this categorisation did not mean that the school was better equipped or better staffed than other infant/primary schools, but that the staff received an "annual bonus" for "teaching under adverse conditions". It was this aspect that caused arguments. Mrs. Warner saw the designation as a Social Priority school as being:

> "divisive, setting teacher against teacher, school
> against school, district against neighbouring district."

and she strongly objected to the idea. She was also critical of the criteria used for such designation. She cited a case in the N.U.T. paper, "The Teacher", which she said highlighted the: "Anomalies and bitterness which have arisen between schools".

She said that seven criteria were used, and argued that:

> "as the cut off line on the original submission
> by the LEAs was to be the free meals, many local
> authorities relied heavily on this one criterion."

Mrs. Warner then cited a school in Gloucestershire whose head considered

that over reliance on this one criterion accounted for his school not

being designated, although it was over ninety years old, had few

amenities, and contained a high percentage of foreign pupils, and was in

a poor environment.

Mrs. Warner also said that she objected to the award of money to

staff, because she opposed:

> "in principle extra payments to certain teachers when
> what is needed is money to be channelled into the
> schools in which they teach to bring about an improve-
> ment in them."

She added that:

> "the bonus in your monthly pay cheque may be an aspirin
> for your headache at nine o'clock in the morning but I
> bet the headache is back by dinner-time because the
> stress conditions in the school are allowed to continue."

She argued that it was staffing levels in schools like Moorland which should

"be given priority", so that class sizes could be reduced. (Mrs. Warner,

Moorland, Interview).

In Chapter Nine some other criticisms of Educational Priority Areas

are noted.

Mrs. Warner, as stated, expressed concern for 'the whole child' and in

fact had a strong social consequence about the children at Moorland. This

was why she had such an interest in 'social welfare' aspect of her role as

she saw this. She said that she had initially taken up the post at Moor-

land because she was interested in the problems of inner city children

and wanted to work in priority schools.

However, Mrs. Warner seemed to see Moorland children, and their

parents, as if they were all in a single category. She seemed to make

major assumptions about parental behaviour, generally of a detrimental nature.

While some - if not most - parents may have been as she described, it is hard to see how she could have known whether all of them were.

This section has discussed, with particular reference to Moorland, the manner in which head teachers perceive children in their schools. From this it is suggested that such perceptions appear to be influenced by views of the 'social class' of their schools' catchment areas.

This was most marked in the case of Moorland, where the term "working class" was used to describe the area. In "Setting the Scene" the preponderance of occupations in the "unskilled" category was noted, but Mrs. Warner did not refer to within-class differences, but simply spoke of 'working class".

The section notes that heads in other schools did not speak in group terms of "these children" or "children in this area", but instead referred to individual pupils when they discussed children, for the most part.

As noted, Mrs. Warner considered that Moorland parents did not provide the right experience for school, in contrast to 'teacher parents'. This is an image of 'middle class' homes as providing certain kinds of experience which are more in tune with what the schools require. When Moorland was contrasted with her own school by a head in a 'middle class area', where reading, writing, and number 'standards' were thought to be higher, this was implicitly agreeing with Mrs. Warner's views in the 'two types' of home background. If middle class homes are seen by head teachers as presenting them with fewer problems in this respect, though providing others, as will be seen, then this could perhaps account for the differences in emphasis between, on the one hand, the 'individual child' in 'middle class' areas and on the other the 'group' at Moorland.

But such a view of middle class homes would be glossing over within class differences, just as much as with the term 'working class'. This was an area which, with more time, would have been explored.

The view has also been noted that all children require "socialisation" into school routines, and not simply those from working class homes. This point is referred to again in the following chapter. So Moorland children could have been seen in this light by Mrs. Warner, but as needing 'extra' socialisation perhaps, instead of in the more negative sense of being deficient in so many areas of learning experience.

The views that head teachers held of children have some bearing on how they perceive their relationship with parents, which is discussed next.

SECTION EIGHT : HEAD TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH PARENTS OF PUPILS

The authors of a book on head teachers at work noted that until recently there was little specifically that schools had to do in relation to parents. The 1980 Education Act had changed that position. They said that:

> "the policy content today makes this work mandatory: the·
> advent of parental governors and the publication of
> school aims and public examination results are specific
> ways in which legislation has brought parents closer
> to schools."

(Hall, Mackay and Morgan, 1981, p. 139)

There were some contrasting views, as well as some similarities, among the head teachers observed about the "specific" features of their relationship with the parents of the pupils in their schools.

Mrs. Warner of Moorland emphasised the importance of "co-operation" and "working together". She said that the school was "part of a community" and spoke of the importance of liaison between herself and various "support services", including "social welfare agencies", the NSPCC and "medical and ancillary educational services". In fact her view

was that this "social role" was inevitable because of the problems Moorland children experienced in their home lives. She said that she thought that many of the adults in the area were: "... apprehensive of the school and of those in authority" and added that: "this fear needs to be broken down". It was because of this, she stated, that she wished to promote "regular involvement" of parents in the school, and also because she thought that parents in the area "have a part to play ... a voice to be heard in their children's education". Thus, she said that she wanted parental involvement in the day to day running of the school.

In relation to parents who were members of the management body she first said of this body as a whole that it was: "a sounding board for any ideas I have" [and for parents] "a channel for parents' views". It was not possible to investigate this by attending a management meeting, however, Ellis stated in 1976, that is, before the 1980 Act, that in London:

> "In most schools, managing bodies are peripheral
> organisations making little attempt to influence
> schools."
>
> (Ellis, 1976, p. 88)

There were indications, as will be seen, that in some of the infants' schools, parents at least, do try and "influence schools". This was not so at Moorland, however.

Mrs. Warner claimed that she sought: "to delegate as much as possible for the parents to do" but added that: "Most initiative comes from the school ... parents need to be asked". She said that most parents of pupils at Moorland seemed content to let the teachers "get on with the job". They tended to have the attitude that this was what teachers were there to do - "their responsibility". She was trying to involve the parents more.

However, Moorland School did not have a Parent-Teacher Association. Mrs. Warner thought that this was not suitable for Moorland, as "parents would not attend meetings". Instead Mrs. Warner organised informal meetings

where parents were invited to come along for a cup of coffee and a chat to the head and a member of staff. She also sought to involve parents in some extra activities for and with the children. For example, one parent took a small group in the staffroom for 'cooking'. Some parents were also encouraged to help with art and craft activities, especially at Christmas. Some parents also served in the school tuck shop.

As Mrs. Warner had been fairly recently appointed, she was still in the process of trying to encourage greater parental involvement, and of trying to find out what parents wanted. A survey, undertaken at the head's request, found that parents were concerned about matters such as 'discipline' and "the use of new teaching techniques". The head then arranged a meeting for parents to come in and look at the reading schemes used in the school, and for teachers to explain the methods used. She said that parents thought that all the children did was 'play' but that they did not understand the importance of this activity.

Some parents were overheard by the observer talking about this meeting. One asked another whether she had gone to the meeting. The other parent replied that she had not, because she thought that it would have been "a waste of time [they] don't tell you anything you don't know already". (Parent, Moorland).

This comment suggests that some parents may have been less enthusiastic over involvement than Mrs. Warner hoped, or at least of this form of involvement.

On another occasion parents of children in the nursery at Moorland were invited to a film which showed the ways in which children could be prepared for school. In the light of Mrs. Warner's view that parents did not provide "the right kind of experience" needed for school, the presentation of this film could be seen as a means of alerting them to what they should be doing.

It could also be seen as a form of 'socialisation', with perhaps "missionary" overtones, and behind it perhaps a notion of the ideal client". (Becker, 1962, p. 107).

Thus, Mrs. Warner did seem to want some parental co-operation and involvement, and made efforts to encourage parents, though not all, or not many responded, as far as could be seen (and noted by Mrs. Warner herself).

Also, Mrs. Warner did not, apparently, believe that parents could help in all things. As noted in the section on head-staff relationships, in the staff meeting on "screening", when a teacher suggested asking parents to help on "visual discrimination", Mrs. Warner rejected the idea, saying that they lacked adequate knowledge to do so. She defined herself and her staff as "fellow professionals", with "expertise". Yet she had placed in the staffroom an article on working class parents helping their children learn to read. However, in view of her comments about Moorland parents as *seldom talking to their children, and unable* to help them learn even if they did take them out on visits by some chance, it was unlikely that Mrs. Warner saw Moorland parents as able to teach their children very much.

Therefore, her attempts to involve parents may have been both an attempt to help them "overcome fear" and also as an attempt to gain support for the school, to "convert" the parents, *as well as to "socialise"* them into providing better "experience" for their children. It is possible that parents suspected this, and resisted the view. Hence their apparent content to "let teachers get on with the job".

Something like a similar effort at 'socialisation' seemed to be present at Larkway.

Here, Miss North operated special "parents' workshops". There were meetings which were held in order to inform parents about the "philosophy

of the school" and its aims and objectives. In these meetings certain members of staff briefly discussed and demonstrated the methods they used. For example, during the period of observation here, a "workshop" was arranged for those parents whose children were about to start school for the first time.

Miss North told the parents who attended that she wanted to make the transition from home to school "as easy as possible". She welcomed the parents and said that she hoped to encourage liaison and good relationships between them and the school staff.

Miss North said in an interview that parents tended to have fixed ideas about what their children should be doing at school, and the age by which they should be able to do things. She saw these "parents' workshops" as a means of "widening parents' outlook" and informing them about the nature of practice at Larkway.

Later, in a written reply to a query, she stated that the workshops had originally been started to allay suspicions at the change in "methods and approach to learning" when she became head. This had needed "many meetings with parents and staff". She added that when children were seen to be doing well: "a relationship of mutual trust was generally established" although she stated that: "Naturally, some parents were not convinced", but that when staff demonstrated they they were as concerned as parents that the children should "fulfil" [their] "potential" most of these then "accepted the status quo" of the changes.

Mrs. North pointed out that some parents could pressurise children. She remarked that however much she and her staff:

> "advocated that undue pressure should not be exercised [and that] The urge for self-fulfilment through the child sometimes overcame reason, particularly in the field of reading."

This comment seems indicative of a certain view of some 'middle class' parents. It was not clear why wanting to read should be part of "an urge

for self-fulfilment". It seems, though, as if reading falls into the sphere of 'professional expertise'.

Miss North gave another indication that parents could be a problem requiring 'management'. She wrote that:

> "Obviously children on suburban housing estates where
> mums are very friendly with each other are often the
> victims of unfair comparison."

Such comparison would presumably result in pressure on the school by the parents whose child came off worst.

However, Miss North stated that:

> "It is perhaps indicative of a certain success that usually
> the second child was handed over with 'no strings' attached."

She summed up her view of "good liaison" by saying that much was done "unconsciously". It involved "consistency" and:

> "having (and demonstratively having) a caring attitude
> [having] a willingness to be involved in occasions
> outside school (Church, playgroup, senior citizens etc.)
> [and also] making school an extension of the community -
> an open house to other groups."

She said that "in other words" this meant:

> "being the school's representative in the wider world
> outside - after all 'Education exists to further
> virtuous circles'!"

Many of the views expressed by Miss North on her role (and her staff's) in relation to parents were similar to those stated by Mrs. Warner.

Both spoke of the school as part of the community, and of the need to involve parents. The main difference was in their view of the attitudes of parents. Mrs. Warner seemed to see most Moorland parents as "apathetic", perhaps not communicating with their children and fearful of authority.

Miss North, on the other hand, seemed to find Larkway parents perhaps too interested at times in their children's work, and consequently pressuri- sing them and the teachers. She also had attempted to "convert" parents, seemingly successfully, although this had taken time. Perhaps, given a

longer period, Mrs. Warner's efforts also might have been more successful.

In spite of these differences both Mrs. Warner and Miss North appeared to be prepared to, in a sense, take the school to the parents, and try and encourage their involvement, with Mrs. Warner perhaps more so, in some ways. She seemed to place less stress on telling the parents what teachers were doing and more on involving them in some activities in the school.

In contrast, Miss Lasky, head of Fairfield, held a very different view of the relationship with parents.

At Fairfield, the parents of the children were perceived as a threat. Mrs. Lasky saw herself as being in the position of, having: "to protect the meek" - the "meek" being the staff - from the parents! These were regarded as "pushy".

When discussing parents as managers she expressed very firm views. She saw parents as: "potentially very influential". She spoke of the pressure that they attempted to exert on herself and her staff. She said that the managers at Fairfield, but particularly parent managers, wanted a greater voice in curriculum matters, but that she and her deputy blocked any attempts on these lines. It would thus appear that Ellis' view that management bodies made "little attempt to influence schools" does not necessarily apply now. This does not mean, however, that any attempts that they do make will be successful, if faced with a determined head.

Miss Lasky considered that if the parents were allowed to have a say in what went on in the school then:

> "they would take advantage, and try to run
> the school [and would] attempt to pressurise
> teachers in the school."

In her view Fairfield parents had no place in decision making. She stated

emphatically that: "They shouldn't have any". Like Miss North, she said that in her view parents held very fixed ideas about what their children should be doing in the school. Therefore, although she thought that they should be encouraged: "to help in some areas, such as needlework, or art and craft" this should not be extended to other parts of the curriculum. She said: "I am opposed to any involvement of parents in areas such as mathematics, reading and writing".

Miss Lasky referred to the parents of Fairfield children as having: "predominantly professional backgrounds, ... managers, teachers, lecturers ... a British Rail Senior Official".

(Miss Lasky, Fairfield, Interview)

It is possible that these parents, particularly the teachers, could have regarded themselves as possessing similar knowledge to the head and staff.

Thus, Miss Lasky, in seeking to confine parental help to the less prestigious areas of the curriculum, could be seen as defending the 'professional expertise' of the teachers.

Becker argued that:

> "the teacher conceives of herself as a professional with specialised training and knowledge in the field of school activity ... To her the parent is a person who lacks such background and is therefore unable to understand her problems fully. Such a person ... is considered to have no legitimate right to interfere with the work of the school".
>
> (Becker, 1970, p. 152)

It has been pointed out that Mrs. Warner of Moorland did see herself and her staff as "professionals". Miss North of Larkway saw parents as having "fixed ideas", and thought it was her responsibility, as noted, to "broaden parents' ideas". That is to make them perceive the value of her methods and to recognise her "expertise".

Thus, all three heads, although in slightly different ways, seem to

707

be using their "professional knowledge" as a defence mechanism to assert their status in relation to parents, to defend themselves and their staff from encroaching too far in pursuit of their "legitimate rights" under the 1980 Act.

In order to minimise the danger that parents, particularly well informed and articulate parents, can present to the heads' and teachers' authority, these heads seem to be trying to channel parental involvement, which in one way or another they encourage, into relatively non-controversial aspects of school life, where they are less likely to challenge teachers' "professional expertise". This seems consonant with Watson's definition of ideology as including "justification" or the defence of interests of a group, noted in Chapter Three.

The head teachers seem to attempt to "convert" or "socialise" parents into an acceptance of their aims and methods, and into being 'good' parents who provide the "right experience" for their children in the view of the school. This 'right experience' differs according to the school, however. In the 'working class' school it is "communication" and pre-learning experience. In the 'middle class schools', it is not having fixed ideas and thereby pressurising children (and staff). 'Good' parents also do not interfere with aspects of the school that are the teachers' responsibilities.

The relationship of head teachers to parents thus seems an area where difficulties and problems are present, having the potential to upset the smooth working of a school in the way heads hope to organise it.

This relationship is thus an important aspect of the role of the head as "manager" of people, as has been indicated in this section.

This discussion of the relationship of heads with parents concludes this chapter on head teachers' perceptions of their role in its various aspects.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed various features of head teachers' perceptions of their role. It records that all heads perceive some aspects of their role similarly. On others there are differences.

'Power' and 'authority' are assigned to head teachers in external definitions of their role. All the head teachers were aware of this. Their delegated legal responsibility, as part of their status, is one which all heads recognised.

The chapter noted that all the heads had to 'mediate' between various interested parties, such as managers, parents and staff. This required skills of 'management'. Heads thus have to be able to explain their aims and approaches.

It has been suggested that personal style and experience aid them in this, but all heads were able to be explicit.

All heads, in their relationship with their staff had, from their own statements, considerable power to control, though they might exercise this indirectly. Their powers of appointment were shown to be an important factor in the establishment of their authority. By these heads sought to gain staff whose views are consonant with their own perspectives, and in this way to establish some degree of shared views, and so develop a feeling of unity.

Heads sought to be thus 'leaders of a team'. The length of time a head is in school seemed important in this respect. In the short term, heads seek to 'convert' their existing staff. Thus, heads appeared in the long term to have considerable power to restrict their staff within an 'approved framework' or 'pattern', while meeting some resistance in the short term. Thus, all heads shared some common concerns with the 'status' aspect of their role.

All heads wanted to have staff who held similar views to their own because of their 'educational perspectives' and the wish to see their preferred approach working throughout the school, in the long term. The chapter has shown that the head teachers seen expressed both similarities and differences in these perspectives. Most heads agreed that education should be concerned with the 'whole child', and also that account had to be taken of children's 'interests' and their 'needs'. The latter, however, were shown to be defined differently. Some elements of head teachers' educational perspectives seemed part of the content associated with "the child-centred perspective", but the heads did not describe their approach in this way. They were wary of doing so, aware of different interpretations of the term. In general heads' educational perspectives appeared to be related to the particular situation of their individual schools.

In the organisation of the curriculum terms often linked to 'child-centred' approaches such as the 'integrated day' and 'free choice' were interpreted differently by head teachers, with 'free choice' showing most disagreement over the principle.

These differences were shown to be, in part, related to different perceptions of children's "needs". The heads are also shown to approve of "guidance" or indirect control by teachers, or direct control or "structuring", depending on circumstances. The heads seemed thus to constrain children within acceptable limits as well as staff, although their reasons for this were different.

The organisation of pupils was shown to take various forms. Such organisation appeared in part to be related to head teachers' 'educational perspectives', but it was also affected by other factors, such as "fluctuating numbers". The evidence showed that there was no necessary link between any version of the 'integrated day' and a particular form of grouping of pupils, unlike the view of the head of 'Mapledene'. (Sharp and Green, 1975).

The chapter indicated that head teachers' perception of children, and of their 'needs', appeared to be influenced by the particular 'situation' of each school, especially the social class of their catchment areas, either implicitly or explicity. The 'working class' area was seen as presenting children lacking requisite skills, and they were seen as a homogenous group. This contrasted with the heads in middle class areas, who spoke of children in individual terms. A view was noted, however, that all children, not simply 'working class' ones, require "socialisation" into school routines as distinct from those of the home.

It has also been brought out that parents were seen by all head teachers as presenting them with actual or potential problems of 'management', but that the nature of these also varied according to social class. In the 'working class' area, parents were seen as "apathetic" and the main problem, consequently, was mainly seen as how to involve them in the school at all. In the 'middle class' areas the main problem was seen as how to limit parental interest to defined aspects of the school, and thus deflect a possible challenge to "professional expertise". This concern, however, was not absent in the 'working class' school. It was shown that all heads in various ways, thus attempted to "convert" or 'socialise' parents into an appreciation of or acceptance of their approach.

Apart from this, the head teachers did not present uniform views about their educational perspectives, the organisation of the learning environment, or their perceptions of pupils and parents. Their views on all these aspects of their role appeared to be related to the individual situation, including, in part, their own "personal style".

Therefore, although the heads could be seen in Sharp and Green's phrase, as important "reality definers" for their schools, they did not seem to share a single common perspective, apart from the status aspects of their role. (Sharp and Green, 1975, p. 47).

711

The chapter has indicated, however, that how heads perceive their role, in all its aspects, has consequences for all the relationships within the school, with staff and pupils, as well as for those external to it. The head's influence can, therefore, very much affect the school as an organisation, although teachers can have their own influence.

The next two chapters are concerned with teachers' views. They discuss in turn what are termed the 'social perspectives' of teachers, that is, their ideas about pupils, and then their 'educational perspectives' or their views of the curriculum, learning and teaching. These two chapters are related, because ideas about 'the way children are' can affect what teachers think it necessary or possible to do in relation to presenting activities in the classroom. They are separated therefore, only for convenience, because more teachers were seen than head teachers. Reference is made to the views of heads, indicating areas of agreement or disagreement.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE 'SOCIAL' PERSPECTIVE OF TEACHERS :

THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF THE PUPILS THEY TEACH

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter included the educational perspectives of head teachers, that is, their views of their teaching aims and approaches, and their 'social' perspectives, their perceptions of the children in their schools and their parents.

This chapter and the one following explore these issues in relation to teachers. The ordering of the two 'perspectives' is different for teachers because, for head teachers, their views of their role led directly into what they considered to be the purpose of the school, so the 'educational perspective' part was placed before the 'social', as a matter of convenience. In placing the 'social' perspective of teachers before the 'educational', the aim is to show that, for Moorland teachers in particular, their perceptions of 'the way children are' affected their educational aims and approaches. So the two chapters are meant to be taken together.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to show the extent of teachers' perceptions with regard to their pupils, and their views of parents. It relies mainly upon data from Moorland, since this was the main research school, and the one where negative assessments were most frequently heard. References are made where appropriate to other schools, however.

Delamont stated that teachers operated at a number of levels in their discussions of children. At one level, the most general, their perspective: "... concerns the intake of the school shared by all the staff". (Delamont, 1976, p. 55). Another level was said to be that which was: "... held by all teachers about sub-groups of children". (p. 55). A further level was said to include:

"... perspectives shared by sub-groups of staff about
pupils as a whole or about specific groups they teach."

(p. 55)

She also noted a perspective which included: "... perceptions of

individual teachers about specific pupils they teach". (p. 55). Apart

from the idea of sub-groups of staff which, as noted in Chapter Three,

seems more applicable to secondary schools, it was found that the teachers

observed did define children at various levels on something like these

lines, if not exactly. The first section of the chapter discusses these

levels in turn. First, it notes that there were perceptions of pupils

which related to children at the particular school. Secondly, perceptions

which related to groups within a school, such as classes, and also to

groups within a class, are noted.

Finally, perceptions which related to individual pupils are recorded.

The second section of the chapter discusses the nature of teachers'

perceptions of 'children in this school', that is, how pupils are defined

or 'classified' in terms of attributes. Inevitably there is some degree

of overlap with the previous section.

The material in this section comes mostly from observations at Moorland

for that is where such definitions or classifications were most apparent

in teachers' 'social' perspectives. In the other schools which were

visited, this kind of definition was mostly absent. Teachers there tended

to refer more to individuals. The second section attempts to show the

complexity of teachers' definitions. It indicates that teachers distinguish

between social and academic behaviour. The former may be negatively

assessed while at the same time the latter may meet with approval. Examples

relating to individual children are used to illustrate these points. It

is shown in this section that teachers' definitions may be neither universal

nor static, for definitions of 'individual children' may vary from one

teacher to another, also, it is acknowledged that children may change in

the classroom situation. However, there may still be an overall view of 'the way children are'.

The third section notes teachers' perceptions of pupils' 'home background'. In the previous chapter it was remarked that the head teacher at Moorland claimed that 'the way children are' in the school was attributable to their 'home background'. This section indicates that most teachers at Moorland held a similar view. In connection with this, the 'Inadequate Mother' hypothesis is referred to. (Baratz and Baratz, 1970). It is argued that Moorland teachers in particular comment on 'parents', and the home in general, not solely on the mother. It is the home which is seen as inadequate, and the area is seen as composed of 'poor homes'.

The fourth section considers briefly whether teachers have an idealised picture of family life, which may have a class basis. This section also considers the extent to which teachers' views are generally influenced by social class, albeit on a limited level. This section also discusses the notion of 'cultural capital', the idea that some children may come to school equipped with 'appropriate' skills and attitudes, which others lack. (Bourdieu, 1966). Some reservations are expressed about this concept, in particular the view that teachers are somehow unaware of inequalities, and also that schools do not attempt to counteract these. The question is raised, however, whether schools like Moorland are the site of a clash of cultures.

The fifth section attempts first to show that within Moorland, while there may not be total consensus among teachers about 'home background', conflicting views were not necessarily made visible. However, the section secondly does point to some degree of consensus, in one respect, between two schools which were defined by the head teacher of Moorland as being "very different" in terms of the need for 'social training'. The notion of 'schooling', or socialisation into the ways of school as distinct from

home, as necessary for <u>all</u> pupils, is examined in relation to the idea that children in a 'problem area' alone needed such 'social training'.

The final section of the chapter considers the behaviour of children in school which is gender related. This is discussed not because teachers themselves made much reference to it but because generally they did not. Such behaviour seemed largely 'taken-for-granted'. It is discussed because gender stereotyping is socially acquired behaviour, like other aspects of children's behaviour in school. The latter were discussed, but not the former.

These, then, are the concerns of this chapter.

SECTION ONE : PERCEPTIONS OF PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL, GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

1.   <u>Perceptions of Pupils at School Level</u>

Most teachers at Moorland spoke about 'the way children are at this school'. Their general behaviour, which was difficult in many cases, was regarded as due to their home background. On the other hand, in other schools some "naughtiness" was regarded as natural. A teacher at Briarfield, for example, said that all children needed "guidance" because:

> "They need to know what they can and cannot do .... They
> are testing you all the time. That's part of growing-up."
>
> (Teacher : Briarfield)

Similar comments were heard in other schools, but not at Moorland. Only once did one teacher, Mrs. Knowles, state that two children were "naturally naughty". Teachers at other schools tended not to refer to pupils at the school level, but rather either about a small group within the school or individuals. For example, one teacher at Fairfield pointed out a group of boys in the Deputy's class. She said that those boys:

> "... have always been a nuisance."
>
> (Teacher : Fairfield)

Both Fairfield and Larkway were said by their respective heads to serve a predominantly middle-class area. Moorland, by contrast, served what was

seen by its teachers as a mostly "working-class area". It appeared rather like Burnley Road in King's study. King, according to Gibson, appeared to find 'social class' not important in teachers' definitions there. (Gibson, 1979, p. 81). However, King noted that Burnley Road teachers did recognise, although "(indirectly) the children as being working class". (King, 1978, p. 133).

As noted in 'Setting the Scene', Moorland teachers usually referred to the area as having "poor home backgrounds" rather than in specifically class terms, as in Burnley Road, but at Moorland the term 'working class' was also used, particularly when "middle-class" homes were contrasted with "the homes in this area". It was also used to refer to the area in the questionnaire.

The children at Moorland were generally viewed as presenting problems for teachers, whereas the Head at Larkway considered that in general there were few problems in her school. This may have been one reason why Larkway teachers did not as a general rule talk about 'pupils in this school'. This suggests that the class background of an area may influence teachers' perceptions of pupils. As will be shown in the following chapter, teachers at Moorland claimed that there were things that would be done in "a more middle-class area" but not at Moorland.

At Moorland talk about the children 'as a whole' took place in the staffroom, as the head pointed out in the previous chapter. In one sense it could be argued therefore that definitions were shared and perhaps 'typifications' built up, because teachers not only exchanged views about the children at a whole school level but also at the individual level. One teacher there acknowledged that such talk did take place, but said that she saw it as a means of helping other teachers:

> "get to know the children" [and] "keeping teachers informed."

> (Teacher : Moorland)

However, the staff did not all see the children in quite the same way even though discussions of this nature took place. This is shown in a later section where agreements and differences in perceptions are noted.

The children at Moorland were variously described in negative terms as: "aggressive" or "apathetic". (Mrs. Knowles, Mrs. Neaves). The head perceived them, as noted, as lacking in social skills, as did the nursery teacher. (Mrs. Warner, Mrs. Raynor). The head, however, as noted in the last chapter, did not see them as 'apathetic'. On the contrary, she saw them as:

> "keen and interested and eager to learn."
> (Mrs. Warner, Moorland)

Both Mrs. Knowles and to a great extent Mrs. Neaves, frequently complained about the children's 'apathy' and general lack of interest in school activities. As will be shown later, not all the teachers at Moorland shared exactly the same views about children's 'home background' as important for what the school could and should provide. Two teachers, Mrs. Martin, the deputy, and Mrs. Dale, one of the reception class teachers, seemed partly to reject views held by the other teachers. Yet enough was said about 'home background' at Moorland to strike a chord with a comment reported about St. Saviour's school in Toxteth, Liverpool. In one of the 'Toxteth Reports' it was said that:

> "One primary teacher who visited it and several other
> primaries regularly before last year's riots commented
> that like many of these schools, St. Saviour's seemed
> obsessed with the difficult home backgrounds of many of
> their pupils rather than with the children's potential.
> They saw 'bashing the basics' as the only solution."
> (Bayliss, Doe, Garner, Lodge and Hempel,
> T.E.S., 1982)

Moorland did seem similarly obsessed, but there was also the idea of 'social welfare' and providing 'what good homes do' and Moorland homes did not.

The next part of the section looks at how 'school perceptions' link to those of particular classes and groups.

718

2. Children in Particular Classrooms or Groups Within Them

King argued that teachers defined pupils in their classes "... and by extension the children in this school" and added that:

> "The typification of the 'children in this school' [were] partly constructed from those of the individual children."
>
> (King, 1978, p. 86)

The definitions or 'typifications' used by most teachers at Moorland in relation to 'children in this school' were also used in relation to a class and individual pupils.

Mrs. Knowles, for example, described the children in her class as "apathetic" in relation to learning, and "aggressive" in terms of behaviour, as well as applying these terms to 'children in this school'. She remarked of the children in her class that:

> "they lack concentration ... they're not interested in anything."

Two other teachers at Moorland said that language skills of children in their class were "poorly developed", and related this to their home background.

Within a class teachers also identified particular groups. For example, Mrs. Raynor, the Moorland Nursery teacher, distinguished between the morning and afternoon group of children. The former was defined as:

> "more mature ... more settled."

in contrast to the afternoon group who were seen as:

> "less settled ... cannot concentrate for very long ... don't volunteer for activities."
>
> (Mrs. Raynor, Moorland)

Questions about these comments in relation to observations of differences in the two groups elicited the information that it was the practice at Moorland to start children at the nursery with afternoon attendance. So this difference was accounted for by the fact that the 'morning children' had been in the nursery from two terms up to two years, while the afternoon children had only recently started attending, or had been there for a term

or so. Thus this distinction was at least partly based on changes as a result of being 'socialised' into the nursery over time, as well as partly due to physical development.

In Larkway school two teachers identified a particular group known as "The Travellers". They were also seen as a special group in the school as a whole. It was argued that this group of children had specific   ! problems. They were said to have, for example:

> "problems settling in ... difficulty fitting in."
>> (Mrs. Corby, Reception, Larkway)

They were also said to:

> "need a lot of attention. They have to fight for what they have."
>> (Mrs. Stephens, Deputy, Larkway)

This group seemed to be regarded in something of the same light as some of the 'working class' children at Moorland.

Teachers could pick out groups of children for good reasons. At Moorland, for example, Mrs. Neaver identified one group whom she considered were:

> "interested in what I have to tell them, they're really keen and interested."

This was in relation to a topic on space. The group contained mostly boys, although one girl was included. This view contrasted with this teacher's view of the class as a whole at not being particularly interested in what went on in the classroom.

As well as referring to groups, teachers also identify and comment on individual children.

3. <u>Perceptions of Individual Pupils</u>

Teachers referred to individual children in their classes quite often, and often detrimentally. Comments were made in the classrooms and staffrooms. For example, it was said of one boy that:

"He has a mental age of about three."

And of another:

"Charlie is a nasty child."

At Fairfield teachers were in the habit of visiting each other's classrooms after school, and discussing various matters including the exploits of individual children.

For example, the researcher recorded the following.

> "Mrs. A came into Mrs. N's classroom. Mrs. N told her about an incident that had occurred in the playground which concerned a child in Mrs. A's class. She said that this child had been rolling about in a puddle in the playground and had got his clothes soaking wet. Mrs. N said that the dinner lady had told the boy to stop. The boy had answered her back, saying: 'Who do you think you are telling me what to do?' "

(Observation Notes, Fairfield)

This incident not only shows that class teachers are kept informed about children in their charge, but also that children in school have clear perceptions of adults in a school as being either 'teachers' or 'not teachers', and responding differently accordingly. King noted this fact. (King, 1978, p. 4). This point was raised in Chapter One in relation to the research role and participant observation.

The pre-reception teacher at Fairfield made comments to the researcher about individual children. She said of one child that he was "very bright" but added that his "background" was responsible for him not doing very well at school. She also said, though, that this boy had had his eyes tested, and a deficiency corrected. The eye trouble had also been a reason for his lack of progress in reading. Now, as a result of eye correction, his reading had improved.

The same teacher defined another child as "thick". Again she stressed the importance of 'home background'. She claimed that this boy's brothers had all "been in trouble". They were "all delinquent". She said that she expected that this boy would "go the same way". (Observation Notes, Fairfield).

These comments indicate that 'home background' if 'poor' was seen, as at Moorland, as a reason for children not doing well at school. The difference is that these comments were not made about 'these children', but at the level of 'this child', the individual. As only a short time was spent at Fairfield the recorded comments may not have been representative. However, comments about children's 'home background' began in the first week at Moorland. It was the thing that most struck the researcher. As remarked in Chapter Four, there was therefore time at Fairfield for any similar views there to have emerged.

At Moorland a record was kept of each child's progress in the 3Rs. The record also included comments on behaviour, about relations with peers, and about any problems at home. Not all teachers at Moorland agreed with this use of records, as is shown in the final section of this chapter, especially in relation to adverse comments.

With these references to individual children, the first section of this chapter is concluded. The examples given in this first section have indicated that teachers did operate at a number of levels in developing their 'social perspectives' *in relation to children*.

The section has also indicated that teachers were aware of social class differences, and used this knowledge either directly or in terms of 'home background' to account for some problem with children.

Delamont spoke of "shared perspectives" concerning the intake of schools. (Delamont, 1976, p. 55). However, in the case of Moorland, there was not entirely a shared perspective regarding pupils and their 'background'. The staff were not completely united in their views. As with most infant schools it was a small staff so "sub-groups" could not be said

to exist. It was rather a matter of some individual differences.

As noted in the previous chapter, one head teacher considered that a 'shared ethos' existed in her school regarding the nature of the intake and teaching beliefs. However, with regard to Moorland, and views of the relationship between 'home background' and children's progress such a shared view was not totally present.

The next section discusses the <u>nature</u> of teachers' definitions of, or perspectives on, children.

SECTION TWO : THE NATURE OF THE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF 'CHILDREN IN THIS SCHOOL'.

Ball, in his study of a comprehensive school, argued that teachers' perceptions of 'Newsom' pupils contained ideas about pupils' attitudes rather than their ability. These were their attitudes to school, teachers and work. 'Newsom' pupils were regarded as apathetic, awkward and un-co-operative. (Burgess, R., 1981).

Three teachers at Moorland also appeared to classify Moorland pupils in terms of their attitudes to school and the activities provided. For example, the children were considered apathetic, in that they did not take much notice of displays in the classroom. Mrs. Knowles spoke of pupils' 'lack of interest' in this respect. She stated that:

> "They don't take any notice of pictures on the wall.
> . They're not interested in anything."
>
> (Mrs. Knowles, Moorland)

Mrs. Neaves also complained about children not taking much notice of what she put up on the wall. Her comments were made, however, during the first weeks of the year when she had only been with the particular class for a few weeks. Later she remarked that some of the children were "interested". As noted in the previous section, this was in relation to a topic on space.

Mrs. Knowles saw children's 'lack of enquiry' as another expression of apathy. She said that:

723

> "They don't enquire about things on the wall, like displays,
> or about the work they have to do."
>
> (Mrs. Knowles, Moorland)

It was argued that some Moorland children were just not willing to put in the amount of effort that the teacher thought was necessary in order for them to make progress. Mrs. Neaves said that:

> "Some won't try ... are lazy. It's not because they are
> not intelligent. They are quite capable of doing the
> work."
>
> (Mrs. Neaves, Moorland)

Children at Moorland were also defined in terms of their general behaviour.

Mrs. Raynor, the nursery teacher, and Mrs. Knowles, one of the reception teachers, and Mrs. Neaves all described Moorland children as being "aggressive". Instances were cited of children biting each other, kicking one another, and snatching toys, the latter especially in the nursery. Mrs. Raynor thought that the children in her care were:

> "like little wild animals who have no idea of how to
> behave themselves."
>
> (Nursery, Moorland)

King noted a similar comment. (King, 1978, p. 99).

Kohl commented also on: "... the myth of children as 'animals' ... in "ghetto schools"." (Kohl, 1971, p. 69).

Mrs. Raynor thought that there existed a great deal of "latent aggression" in the children in the school as a whole.

Mrs. Knowles also described the children in general as "very aggressive" and in the case of one child in particular, as "vicious".

In terms of peer relationships Moorland children were seen as having problems. For example, Mrs. Raynor said that:

> "They lack social skills."

She also said that Moorland children, particularly when they started school,

> "have no idea of sharing."
>
> (Mrs. Raynor, Moorland)

Mrs. Knowles similarly stated that:

> "they lack social training."
>
> (Mrs. Knowles, Moorland)

Mrs. Raynor complained about children's lack of general tidiness. She said that:

> "They leave toys on the floor, and mess the paints up.
> They put paper down the toilets."
>
> (Mrs. Raynor, Nursery)

The school records, as noted, apart from registering progress in the 3 R's also show the importance for teachers in their assessment of pupils of children's ability to integrate with their peers. For example one comment recorded was:

> "At first he clung to an adult ... now he is extending
> ... contacts with peers."

Of another boy it was said that:

> "He quickly made friends and became a sociable member of
> the group."

Another child was said to be, by contrast:

> "completely individualistic, rather unco-operative."
>
> (Records, Moorland)

Mrs. Knowles also spoke of children refusing to co-operate, or do as they were told. She mentioned a previous class that she had taught in the school. She said that with this class she had almost been reduced to tears because a group of boys had refused consistently to do anything she told them, and had in fact:

> "made my life a misery."

This problem of children being 'difficult' is referred to in Chapter Eight.

It was argued by one teacher at Moorland that when Moorland children started school that:

> "They do not know how to play together."

The same teacher stated that in her view:

"They do not know how to play at all."

(Teacher, Moorland)

Mrs. Neaves also spoke of children as not being able to:

"play properly."

These teachers thought that the children had no "proper place" to play,
and that consequently much of their time was spent playing "in the street".

Children themselves mentioned other places they played in, one of
which was a fairly large area of wasteland. They did not seem to find
'playing together' a problem, for Moorland children were seen on occasions
doing just this on the waste ground and elsewhere. For example, a group
was seen playing 'Cowboys and Indians' in the street.

Ward considered that children and adults view play in entirely
different ways, and that the former "... will play anywhere with anything".
Ward also argued that the children he spoke to liked to explore, and in
fact wanted: "... exploration accompanied by fear and risk". (Ward, 1978,
p. 102). He also argued that children displayed different characteristics
in different situations. He said that:

> "When children are herded together in the playground,
> which is where educationalists ... psychologists and
> the social scientists gather to observe them their
> play is markedly more aggressive than when they are in
> the street or in wild places."

(Ward, 1978, p. 38)

This seemed a reasonable comment in view of what the researcher saw of
Moorland children out of school.

Teachers' views of what counted as 'playing' seemed to differ from
those of the children. They did, as noted, speak of 'proper' places to
play whereas the children played anywhere, and did not appear to lack
places to play. Moorland teachers also saw the children as needing
security. The children themselves liked playing on the waste ground, where
there was space. The teachers saw playing in the street as a problem, but
the children did not. The teachers' comments suggest that they had a limited

conception of 'play', and one based more on observation of children in school situations and a particular view of the Moorland area.

In terms of preparation for school, the nursery teacher at Moorland, like the head, Mrs. Warner, considered that Moorland children were ill-prepared. Mrs. Raynor said that:

> "Many of the children don't have pre-learning skills
> and are just not prepared for school."
>
> (Mrs. Raynor)

Mrs. Dale, a reception teacher, also spoke of having to do more work on 'pre-learning skills' with reception age children at Moorland than she had had to do in a school in which she had previously taught, one in:

> "a more middle class area."

This comment supports the suggestion previously made that teachers were aware of social class differences in relation to the area.

Moorland children were also perceived as deficient in language. Mrs. Martin, the deputy, stated that:

> "Their language development is poor."

She felt that the children needed more oral work. When the researcher commented that Mrs. Martin seemed to do a great deal of this anyway, Mrs. Martin said that she thought it was through oral work that children learnt most, but added that:

> "I can't do as much oral work at Moorland as I would with
> top infants at the school *I taught in before.*"

This happened to be in a different catchment area, "more middle class". When asked why, Mrs. Martin said that *her present class "lack concentration".* However, asked why she thought this was, she shrugged and said:

> "That's how they are."
>
> (Mrs. Martin, Moorland)

Another teacher, Mrs. Dale, agreed that the quality of children's language was poor. She also stated that:

> "These children need plenty of oral work because of their
> poor language development."
>
> (Mrs. Dale, Moorland)

Mrs. Dale also spoke of the children's speech as being like that of their parents, "restricted". This suggested that she was using Bernstein's concept of 'language codes'. Mrs. Warner, the head, also said that parents used "a restricted code", as noted in Chapter Four. This view of the language of children and their parents needs some discussion, because of the apparently uncritical acceptance of a much debated distinction. Richards noted that Bernstein's views altered over time. (Richards, 1978, p. 36). She also pointed out that what Bernstein referred to as: "... the working class is the unskilled working class".

As noted, Moorland teachers and the head did not differentiate between different kinds of working class either. Richards pointed out that in any case the term "unskilled" was a general category which covered, for example, those of limited ability, those who could only do unskilled work through disability, those unable to find work relevant to their training, and women with domestic commitments which restrict them to certain jobs. (Richards, 1978, p. 38).

In 'Setting the Scene' it was pointed out that an analysis of fathers' occupations at Moorland showed that it was far from true that all Moorland 'working class' families could be classified as 'unskilled'.

Bernstein himself did not say that <u>all</u> working class families used 'restricted code' and <u>all</u> 'middle class' families used 'elaborated codes', but only that there was a tendency for the former to do so. However, he also noted that the forms of control in families, 'positional' or 'personal' with which the codes were linked, could occur in both 'middle' and 'working class' families, though still stating that what he termed the "traditional working class family" would be more likely to use 'positional control'. Bernstein noted the importance of context for the use of particular codes. (Bernstein, 1971, p. 144-161).

Richards stated that Bernstein's admission that middle-class groups

could use 'restricted codes':

"... did not go far enough to remove the erroneous belief
that has dominated the educational scene for long: that
working class speech is inadequate in general terms."

(Richards, 1978, p. 43)

This still leaves open what is meant by 'working class' speech, though.

As noted in Methodology, linguistic ethnomethodology suggested the
indexicality of speech, that is, in conversations between people who
share some 'understandings', these are not made explicit in speech, but
are part of the underlying rules. In a similar way in a classroom
situation, whether looking at something the teacher is showing them or
at pictures, children may not see the need to use words other than pro-
nouns in description or 'telling the story'. As Stubbs noted in dis-
cussing the Hawkins (1969) experiment with pictures, the language used
by children takes account of the fact that both parties can see the
pictures. (Stubbs, 1986, p. 68). So children in school situations, par-
ticularly young children, could think it unnecessary to 'elaborate'.
Lawton suggested that when required to do so, the working class boys he
studied could switch 'codes', although they had some difficulty. (Lawton,
1968).

Richards stated that in her work she had evidence based on:

"samples of speech obtained from close on a hundred
lessons [which] contain a large number of instances of
code switching by working-class children, some as young
as seven years of age."

(Richards, 1978, p. 44)

However, she added that undoubtedly some children could switch more
easily than others. However, there are many differences between individual
children in any skill.

As noted when discussing the recording of data, the researcher tried
out the idea of asking children about the story in a set of pictures. This
was not in any sense a real experiment, as was stated, and it was a very
small group of children. Nevertheless, it was found that when asked to:

"tell me the story as if I couldn't see the pictures", the children were able to do so, even if with a little difficulty.

Labov indicated that in informal or non-threatening situations, non-standard English speakers were less inhibited than in the formal interview context. (Labov, 1972, pp. 198-212). Schools are formal situations, so just as with 'play', children's speech behaviour might be different. In the case of parents, they, like their children, when talking to teachers, may both see no need to use 'elaborate' speech anyway in a face-to-face situation, and also may feel inhibited in the presence of teachers, particularly if they have received the impression, as Moorland parents may well have done, that everything they did with their children was 'wrong'. The argument is that Mrs. Warner and other teachers would need to see both parents and children in a much greater range of situations before they would effectively judge whether the speech of both could automatically be classed as "restricted" at all times.

Apart from being seen as having a limited language and to have difficulty in expressing themselves, the children were also considered to have little to talk about in any case. Mrs. Knowles, for example, considered that the children brought into school little in the way of 'useful' experience from home. Their experience was seen as limited. In this Moorland teachers appeared to be in agreement with the head. Given this view of the children, their language and their experience, it is surprising that the children had managed to function at all outside school.

In terms of what children could actually do at school it was argued by Mrs. Neaves that top infants at Moorland could not reach the same standard of writing as pupils at a "more middle class" school which she had visited during an in-service course on writing. She spoke of the "pages and pages" of writing which had been done by "top infants" at this school, which had been on display for teachers attending the course. She

stated that:

> "The children in my class can't do as much writing
> as 'Fernside' top infants."
>
> (Mrs. Neaves)

This is another indication of the perception of 'social class' differences.

However, Mrs. Neaves said that courses like this one did not take into account the problems that teachers had to face in schools like Moorland. Another teacher agreed with this remark, and said that she thought that courses ought to be arranged where teachers could discuss the problems they faced with one another. It was impossible not to have some sympathy with this point of view, because undoubtedly the children did present quite severe problems,in classroom at times. However their 'social perspectives' were considered, the teachers did have a need for more help with some of these at times difficult children.

Although most children at Moorland were seen as behind those in other areas, a few children were acknowledged as "bright" academically, and it was considered that such pupils would "hold their own" in a top infants class in any school. This particular statement was made in the staffroom in the context of a particular discussion.

A supply teacher came into the school to take over a top infants' class while their teacher was away. She mentioned in the staffroom that she had had difficulty with one boy. She had heard him tell his friends that he wasn't going to do what Mrs. ----- told him because <u>she</u> wasn't his teacher. This shows that children do tend to recognise the authority of the class teacher and are not sure of the status of strange adults in the classroom, such as a researcher, as King noted. (King, 1978).

However, in this case other members of staff acknowledged that this particular boy was a "problem", and categorised him as "odd". The conversation turned to other children in the class in question. The supply teacher said that she thought that one of the children was "bright". How-

731

ever, she then asked other teachers if they considered that this child would be so classified in a different school, or whether he stood out as such only by comparison with other Moorland children. The rest of the Moorland staff were of the opinion that the boy would be so regarded elsewhere. Only one teacher actually replied, but the rest of the staff, including the Head, nodded their heads in agreement. As noted in the previous chapter, the Head at Moorland did consider that "standards" at Moorland, in terms of attainment, were not generally as high as those in a school in which she had taught previously, one with a more "middle-class area". This comment was supported by the head at Rushside, who had known Moorland. She said that:

"reading and writing are much more advanced at Rushside."

(Head, Rushside)

The question of comparison with other schools came up again when a student working with one of the staff, Mrs. Dale, at Moorland, asked whether teachers at Moorland expected as much from Moorland pupils as they would have from those in other schools. The student remarked afterwards to the researcher that the teacher had been "upset" by the question. The same teacher was also annoyed by an observation recorded by the researcher and shown to her, about whether a boy could have a particular book. The teacher's comment to the boy may have been misunderstood by the researcher, but it was recorded. The 'upset' this, and the student's question, caused the teacher may indicate that a sensitive issue had been touched on, teachers' expectations of pupils.

It was found very difficult, or rather nearly impossible, to probe this area and get beyond the 'front' put up.

Mrs. Neaves did not think that Moorland pupils lacked intelligence. She said, as noted, that:

"they are quite capable of doing the work."

but were "lazy". But the 'work' set would not have been the same that would

be provided for a 'middle-class' pupil.

Mrs. Neaves, together with Mrs. Knowles and Mrs. Martin, considered that Moorland children's attention span was short. As noted, Mrs. Martin, the deputy, said that in her class she could not do as much oral work as she would have liked because:

"The children cannot concentrate for very long."
(Mrs. Martin, Moorland)

It was frequently said of the children also that they:

"just don't listen."
(Mrs. Knowles, Moorland)

Mrs. Warner, the head, also stated that many Moorland children "lacked confidence" and therefore gave up when tasks became difficult. As noted, Mrs. Neaves also mentioned this, and said that some children:

"just won't try."

Mrs. Knowles similarly reported a lack of confidence and unwillingness to try "new activities". An example of this was observed in her class.

A child was observed to be just sitting and staring at her book. The teacher had previously told the children to copy some shapes and colour them in. When asked by the researcher why she wasn't doing this, the girl replied:

"I can't do it ... I'm no good at this."

She added:

"My mam says I can't do anything. She ses I'm daft."

This little girl was only five, and had been in the school for a term. It seemed to the researcher very sad that she had such a view of herself. Her remark, however, indicates that where children have low expectations of themselves it is not necessarily a consequence of teachers' expectations. Mrs. Knowles did, however, accept that the child was "very slow".

It was the view of most of the staff at Moorland that children did not bring much from home in terms of "relevant experience", and that this

was why the children were not properly prepared for school, as Mrs. Raynor claimed. Another teacher at Moorland commented:

> "They have not had the experience ... maybe it's because of where they live."

which is an indication of the view held about the area.

However, teachers at other schools also raised this issue of 'lack of experience'. At Fairfield, for example, one teacher remarked that:

> "Some of the children have so little to write about because their experience is so limited."

Fairfield, as noted in 'Setting the Scene', was considered by a member of staff to have children who came from "mostly professional backgrounds", and none as being from "really poor" homes, although it was said to contain "pockets" of "farm workers' children".

Another teacher, also at Fairfield, who was explaining to the researcher why she did not allow children to "write on their own" also spoke of children's lack of experience. She gave examples of children's writing.

> "I can see a boat and I can see a dog. The children often write like this because they lack experience to drawn upon. They have nothing to write about. Most of these children when they go home either watch TV or play outside all the time."

This seemed an odd comment from a school set in a "very middle-class area". Since the area did contain the aforesaid 'pockets' of 'farmworkers' children', it would be an indication that teachers in general may make assumptions about 'working class' homes. Also, though, it was not clear on what this teacher based her assumption about children's home activities. She was busy in the classroom at the time and this comment was an 'aside' to the researcher. From the researcher's own experience from a language course as well as from teaching experience, the researcher thought that children's writing in this way had more to do with the general development of language than simply being attributable to 'home background' experience.

At Larkway, where opinions about the 'class' of the area differed as shown in 'Setting the Scene', one teacher also remarked of her class that:

"These children don't bring much from home."

As stated, the head of Moorland considered that Larkway was situated in a good area compared to Moorland.

It has been stated that teachers' assessments of pupils referred to behaviour and attitudes to school as well as academic performance.

Both Murphy (1975) and Leigh (1977) considered that teachers in their definitions of pupils in the classroom did so distinguish between general and academic behaviour. Murphy, for example, stated that teachers:

> "appear to have distinct models of appraisal, one which pertains to the social, the other to the academic."

He added that they also maintained:

> "a distinction between their liking for pupils and their academic performance."
>
> (Murphy, 1974, p. 33)

Leigh, however, although agreeing with the distinctions, considered that such dimensions might overlap. (Leigh, 1977, p. 318).

Teachers at Moorland did appear to distinguish between children's social and academic behaviour. Mrs. Knowles, for example, negatively assessed the social behaviour of one child in her class, a boy called Charles, as:

> "vicious ... nasty ... a thoroughly bad lot - will never be any good."

This seemed a long way away from King's view that teachers attributed "innocence" to a child. (King, 1978, p. 13). 'Background' might be responsible for the 'way children were' but there could be, as here, an element of personal blame.

Mrs. Knowles frequently complained to the researcher about the behaviour of another child in the class, this time a girl called Susan,

of whom she said that:

"She refuses to do as she's told - has a loud voice -
I don't <u>like</u> her."

She also said to the staff during break one day that:

"<u>Susan</u> has been <u>really</u> naughty this morning."

She also remarked to the head, who was in the staffroom then that:

"She's being really silly this week."

To really drive the point home she later said to Susan herself that:

"You are being a very silly girl this morning."

(Mrs. Knowles)

Clarricoates states that when girls behaved badly:

"... they were categorised as 'sillys' by teachers, who
found their behaviour puzzling."

(Clarricoates, 1987, p. 193)

Bennett et al (1984) however, found that "silly" was a:

"... common description and applied more to boys than
girls."

(Bennett et al, 1984, p. 134)

At Moorland, it was sometimes said of boys, but more usually girls.

Whilst making negative assessments of these particular children with
regard to 'social' behaviour, Mrs. Knowles assessed their academic
performance in positive terms. She said, for example, that Charles was:

"... capable of doing very good work"

and that Susan was:

"... a good reader."

Susan was in fact allowed to choose supplementary readers from a box.

Thus, even with a teacher whose definitions appeared the most fixed
and negative in some respects, the overall perception was not uniform.
Furthermore, teachers' perceptions, whether of children's social behaviour
or their academic performance, were not static.

Hargreaves argued that research concerning 'typification' should be

aware of the changing nature of teachers' definitions of pupils. In his view:

> "... these are not fixed entities which can be tapped
> arbitrarily at any point in time ... typifications have
> a developmental career ...."

He argued therefore that:

> "... the interactionist model should be sensitive to the
> changing nature of definitions and meaning."
>
> (Hargreaves, 1977, p. 278)

In this study the term "changing-definitions" is used to refer not just to the process to which Hargreaves referred but to variations in perceptions of children between teachers, as well as with the same teacher. At Moorland perceptions of individual children varied from teacher to teacher. Children identified as a problem by one teacher were not necessarily so perceived as such by another. The nursery teacher wrote of the aforesaid Susan, in Mrs. Knowles class then, as being when in the nursery:

> "... a very happy little girl."

Another teacher, in the main school, however, wrote that Susan:

> "... has had some difficulty in conforming - fitting
> into the school situation."
>
> (Class Records, Moorland)

Charles, also referred to previously, was described by his first teacher at Moorland as:

> "... a lovely child"

in marked contrast to the sentiments expressed by Mrs. Knowles.

The teacher in Charles' next class knew that Charles came with a bad reputation from Mrs. Knowles' class. However, a student remarked that this teacher went out of her way to be "nice" to Charles, and said in fact that she liked him. Such changes in perceptions as between teachers indicates that teachers and children react to each other as people, so that personality differences affect perceptions, as well as general staff-room talk.

The head allocated many so-called 'problem' children to Mrs. Martin's

class. One of the other teachers stated that children were placed in this

class if it was thought that they required a "firm hand". It was thus

acknowledged that this teacher was "a good manager". Leach cited

Kounin's (1970) view that differences between teachers in the same school

could be related to differences in management skills. Leach himself

stated that there were:

> "... differences in the perceptual frameworks of teachers
> who experience few problems as opposed to those who
> experience many."
>
> (Leach, 1970, p. 189)

Mrs. Martin in fact did not altogether see Moorland children as a problem,

or at least not to the same extent that Mrs. Knowles, for example, did.

Differences between teachers are discussed later, however.

Within individual classrooms, teachers acknowledged that pupils could

change, particularly over time. Mrs. Raynor, for example, described

changes for the better in children's behaviour in the nursery as they grew

older. The younger children were seen as:

> "... less settled, unable to concentrate for very long on
> an activity ... less amenable to discipline, ... more
> undisciplined."

Older children, in contrast, were described as:

> "... more mature, more capable of doing more complicated
> puzzles ... more of a nursery group than a collection of
> individuals."
>
> (Mrs. Raynor, Moorland)

This is indicative of children's development, as noted in the previously

referred to distinction between 'morning' and 'afternoon' children.

In Mrs. Knowles' class, while certain children were classified as being

a problem in some way when they started school, it was noted that this

would change. For example one boy, Mark, was said not to:

> "... join in anything when he first came to school.
> Before Christmas he would not paint, draw or write."

However, later, in the next term Mrs. Knowles said of him that:

"He tries hard - is reading and showing an interest in everything."

Another child was said to have been:

"... very stubborn at first but she's more amenable now."

<div align="right">(Mrs. Knowles, Moorland)</div>

Even with children like Susan, whom Mrs. Knowles had said that she disliked, perceptions were not wholly fixed. For example, Mrs. Knowles, apart from criticising Susan, also said of her that:

"She has a good side. . Last week she was really good."

This comment was made when the head was present, and was said in a 'public voice' to the latter while looking at Susan. It could be seen as a form of encouragement for future 'good behaviour'.

Teachers' perceptions of the children in their classroom also alter with the composition of the group, which can also vary over time. Mrs. Knowles recognised this factor of differences between year groups. She acknowledges that this affected her perceptions. She stated that:

"The nature of the class changes. Some years are more difficult than others - have more difficult children. In other classes ... few difficulties."

She described the class of which Charles and Susan were members as:

"... a really difficult class."

The following September when she had a new class she described them as:

"... a nice little lot ... coming along nicely."

<div align="right">(Mrs. Knowles, Moorland)</div>

A teacher at Rushside also stated that she did not like the class she had that year. Most people with teaching experience would recognise that some years classes can be more difficult than others, sometimes for no apparent reason.

Thus, the definitions of teachers about pupils can never be taken as the one 'true picture' of their views, for definitions can vary over

time. As King stated, such definitions, which he termed "typifications" were:

> "... not fixed labels [but] were modified in association with changes in the children."
>
> (King, 1978, p. 67)

This section has shown that the type of definitions that teachers made of pupils contained references to children's attitudes to school and the activities provided, and to relationships with other children. It has been shown that teachers distinguished between behaviour and ability/ attainment, so that in the same child negatively defined behaviour would co-exist with positively defined attainment. Also, 'perceptions' of individual children varied over time.

It has also been indicated that where behaviour was defined as poor, or when attitudes to school were negatively assessed, these were often attributed in some way to 'home background', often with a social class connotation. This was particularly so in the case of Moorland, but as noted, was not unknown in other schools. The next section examines teachers' views about children's 'home background'.

SECTION THREE : TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CHILDREN'S 'HOME BACKGROUND'; THE AREA AND PARENTS

The problems that Moorland children were perceived as having were attributed to 'home background' by most Moorland teachers, including, as noted in the previous chapter, the head. The area in which the children lived was regarded as 'deprived' and as one with increasing problems, as noted in Mrs. Warner's 'perceptions of pupils and parents'. The teachers cited unemployment as a particular problem on the Moorland estate. Mrs. Martin spoke of:

> "... increasing unemployment."
>
> (Questionnaire : Moorland)

However, as noted in Chapter Two, at the time of the research 68% of Moorland parents were employed.

Mrs. Martin also thought that divorce had increased in the area. There has, however, been perhaps an increase in society generally.

Like the head, most Moorland teachers described the estate as neglected. It was seen by one as:

"... a rather neglected housing estate."

Another stated that it was:

"... a council estate parts of which are neglected."

It was also considered that the problems in the area were increasing, and it was stated that during the last ten years:

"... a larger proportion of problem families have moved
into the area."

Another teacher remarked that there were:

"... a higher proportion of single-parent families."
(Teachers, Moorland, Questionnaire)

However, Moorland was not the only area to have a number of one parent families, as Table 2 in Chapter Two indicated. A Larkway teacher stated directly that in their catchment area there were:

"... some one parent families and broken homes."
(Questionnaire : Larkway)

The picture that the Moorland teachers presented of their catchment area was similar to that presented by the head teacher, her predecessor, and by various 'welfare agencies'. The images remained fairly constant over time, as indicated in Chapter Two. It was noted in that chapter that in some respects Moorland was similar to an *inner city school.*

Quinton argued that a 'stereotype' existed of inner city life, an image or characterisation which had become fixed over time. (Quinton, 1980). The accumulation of views expressed by local reports, social services, H.M.I.'s and the school indicate that the Moorland area has been so stereotyped. Certainly the images conveyed have tended to harden and become fixed.

Quinton also argued that the stereotypes of inner city life included a characterisation of families there as often poor. (Quinton, 1980).

Moorland, as noted, did seem to exhibit some features associated with inner city life such as unemployment and some housing set in drab surroundings. Blackstone argued that features ascribed to inner city life were also often characteristic of peripheral areas of cities, such as post-war housing estates. (Blackstone, 1980). However, Moorland was a pre-war estate, yet the comparison stood in some respects.

Having noted that 'inner city' families are often seen as 'poor', it seems useful to point out that the term 'poor' can refer to both 'material lack of resources' and also to a lack of 'emotional' resources. Teachers at Moorland in relation to 'material resources', argued that Moorland parents:

> "... are not necessarily materially badly off."
>
> (Mrs. Raynor, Moorland)

This view was echoed by a health visitor who came to the school and said to the researcher that:

> "... the majority of parents are quite well off financially
> ... materially well off."
>
> (Health Visitor, Moorland)

Thus 'unemployment' and consequently lack of money, was not seen as the main issue.

Both the Health Visitor and Mrs. Raynor said that they thought that Moorland children were given plenty of toys at home. However, Mrs. Raynor considered that these were usually of poor quality and less durable than the toys with which the children played at school. She saw them as having little value other than to keep children occupied. However, 'school' toys are necessarily made to be more durable, and usually have some educational purpose in the teacher's view. There seems no particular reason why 'family' toys should have such a purpose, and parents see children as soon

tiring of things anyway, being young. The children seemed to enjoy the toys they had in the street, and enjoyment has a value.

The nursery teacher also referred to 'emotional poverty'. She considered that whilst many Moorland parents were materially quite 'well off,' this contrasted with their 'emotional' position. She spoke of many of the parents as being:

> "... emotionally starved."

It was also argued that some of the parents simply could not cope with marital responsibilities. One teacher said that:

> "Some parents do not know what they want and get married
> too young when they are not really ready for marriage."
>
> (Mrs. Knowles, Moorland)

She added that they had difficulty with life in general, She said that:

> "... some of the mothers are simply unable to cope ... do not
> know how to run their lives."
>
> (Mrs. Knowles, Moorland)

She regarded some mothers as unfit to look after themselves, let alone their children. She saw them as being in some cases little more than children themselves.

Mrs. Knowles also considered that parents neither controlled nor trained their children. She said that there was:

> "... a lack of control at home. The children can do as
> they like there."
>
> (Mrs. Knowles)

Mrs. Raynor similarly spoke of this lack. She attributed indiscipline at school to a lack of basic training of children in the home. She said that:

> "The parents don't train their children and there is a lack
> of order in many homes."
>
> (Nursery, Moorland)

The school records reflected similar views. For example, one comment was:

> "... is very naughty, obviously ... untrained at home."
>
> (School Records, Moorland)

Another 'problem' for the school was what was seen as the "irregular family relationships", which existed in some cases. These relationships, or either parent leaving, were considered to have a damaging effect on the children. For example, one girl, Susan, was a 'problem' in Mrs. Knowles' class. Mrs. Knowles said that this was partly because of:

> "... problems at home ... her <u>father</u> is not her <u>real</u>
> father. Her mother is co-habiting with another man."

Of another child, Michael, it was said that he:

> "... has suffered a lot of upset ... his father left the
> family."

On one particular occasion in Class One the researcher was present when a girl, usually quiet, had a "temper tantrum", as the teacher described it, in the classroom. The teacher, Mrs. Dale, explained this unusual behaviour as being due to the girl's father just having returned home from prison. This was said to have had an unsettling effect on the girl. It had happened, she said, on more than one occasion.

Moorland parents were seen as providing insufficient stimulation for their children to develop interests, and as doing little to widen their experience. Mrs. Knowles remarked about parents that:

> "They never take their children anywhere, never read to
> them, and ... the children are just dragged out to the
> shops. They cannot be bothered."
>
> (Mrs. Knowles, Moorland)

These considerable assumptions are seen as explaining why the children had little to write about, because, as noted in the previous section, they were seen as bringing nothing from home in the way of "worthwhile" or "relevant" experience. It is difficult to understand why being 'dragged out to the shops', even if the statement was accurate, was so reprehensible. It was not clear what else young mothers could do with their children if they had to go shopping.

Children's perceived language deficiencies were seen partly as a consequence of parental deficiencies in the way they talked to their children.

744

Mrs. Dale claimed that:

> "The parents don't really talk to their children, and even
> when they do it's mostly shouting, telling them to do
> something."

<div align="right">(Mrs. Dale, Moorland)</div>

As noted previously, the head had expressed similar views.

Another thing for which parents were blamed was the alleged greater
'precociousness' of Moorland children than others of the same age. When
this comment was made by Mrs. Knowles, the researcher asked:

> "Why do you think that the children here are precocious?"

Mrs. Knowles replied:

> "Well, it's their background - the way their parents talk
> about sex at home in front of the children."

<div align="right">(Mrs. Knowles, Moorland)</div>

This matter had been raised in the staffroom when Mrs. Knowles told
the rest of the staff that she had found some children in her class
"giggling" round a picture in a book of a "naked boy and girl". Another
teacher recalled a similar occasion where she had had to remove a book
from the book corner because certain pages depicting a boy and a girl had
become so disfigured and tattered. It was not regarded as 'natural' for
children of that age to show so much interest, but it may well be. It
was not clear where the evidence, if any, of parental talk of the alleged
kind came from.

It has already been stated that the head of Moorland saw both Moorland
parents and their children as "deprived". This term was used by teachers.
For example, one Moorland teacher said that:

> "This area is more deprived than others I have taught in."

Such 'deprivation' affected parental attitudes, and parents in turn were
seen as responsible for their children's problems.

Baratz and Baratz referred to what they termed "The Inadequate Mother
Hypothesis". This argued that it was the mother's behaviour which produced

children who were:

> "... linguistically and cognitively impaired."
>
> (Baratz and Baratz, 1970, p. 36)

Because of this 'impairment', children were unable to learn. The 'inadequate' mother failed to provide adequate social and sensory stimulation, and her home life lacked order. Also, according to the hypothesis, this mother did not talk much to her children, thus hindering intellectual growth and language development. (Baratz and Baratz, 1970).

The teachers at Moorland <u>did</u> talk about the mothers, but included 'families', 'parents' and 'the home' in their judgements. For example one remarked that:

> "The children's problems are a consequence of inadequate families."

As noted, 'parents', neither 'trained' their children, nor were 'interested' in them. The 'home' similarly provided no 'training'. However, the 'home' was occasionally praised as well, as in the following comment from the Moorland records:

> "Her language development is good. She is well cared for, and has obviously been cared for at home."
>
> (Class Records, Moorland)

The 'home' was more usually criticised. Mrs. Raynor saw as one of her aims providing what "good homes" did. By implication, Moorland homes were "bad". The "good home" provided social and basic training and 'relevant' experience, and prepared children properly for school. These were precisely the features Moorland homes were said not to provide. (Nursery, Moorland). Thus, part of the 'recipe knowledge' of Moorland teachers was that the 'families', 'parents' or the 'homes' did not provide what the school thought that they should, and this was why the children were as they were.

This section has indicated that Moorland teachers had an awareness of Moorland as a 'problem area'. Most of the teachers there made judgements about the family background of children, and attributed many of the diffi-culties exhibited by the children in the classroom to 'deficiencies' in the

parents. The parents were generally seen as lacking in ability to 'train' their children in effective social skills and so prepare their children for school. Family relationships were often stigmatised.

The next section considers whether these comments, many of which are placed in the school records, may possibly arise because of an idealised picture of family life.

SECTION FOUR : THE 'IDEALISATION' OF FAMILY LIFE, 'CULTURAL CAPITAL' AND 'CULTURAL CLASH'

1. The Idealisation of Family Life

It could be argued that in describing the 'deficiencies' of Moorland children in relation to what 'good' homes were thought to provide, that Moorland teachers held a rather idealised picture of family life, and, moreover, that this was based on a view of 'middle-class' families.

Elsewhere in this chapter and in the chapter on the Heads it has been remarked that Moorland parents were seen as poor providers of the necessary skills required by children to make progress at school. Mrs. Warner, for example, thought that parents seldom talked to their children, and when they did, it was not as 'middle-class' parents did.

The Study Commission on the Family (1982) stated that some:
> "public and private services"

(amongst which the educational system may be counted)

> "are organised upon explicit or implicit views and
> values about the respective rules and responsibilities
> of different family members."

> (Study Commission on The Family,
> 1982, p. 39)

The same report also stated that a: "traditional view of the ideal family" influenced professional attitudes. (p. 38).

This Report made no mention of the possibility that members of certain 'professions' might make use of the concept of social class in relation to this 'ideal family'.

Murphy argued that teachers do not necessarily conceptualise children in terms of class origin. He himself queried:

> "whether such a category as social class significantly structures the teachers' conceptions of reality in general and of classroom reality in particular."
>
> (Murphy, 1974, p. 327)

He did, however, note that class has been: "... accepted as a critical constituent of teachers' expectations". (Murphy, 1974, p. 327).

As noted, some teachers at Moorland and one or two of the staff at Larkway did refer specifically to social class when comparing their present pupils with those that they had taught elsewhere. Mrs. Raynor, for example, described the children's background as "working class", and stated that the children in the nursery were:

> "... like virgin material"

and that:

> "nothing can be taken for granted, not like in a middle-class area."
>
> (Mrs. Raynor, Nursery, Moorland)

What could be 'taken for granted' in the latter area was defined as "social" and "basic" training, and the development of "pre-learning skills" by the provision of 'educational' toys and picture books.

Mrs. Dale of Class One, as noted in the previous section, also claimed that the children needed more time devoted to 'pre-learning skills' than children had required in a school in which she had previously taught. This had been situated in:

> "a more middle-class area."
>
> (Mrs. Dale, Moorland)

Mrs. Martin of Class Three said, as also noted, that she could not do as much oral work at Moorland compared with pupils she had taught in what she also called a "more middle-class area". This teacher, as will be shown, was less inclined to make judgements about the parents. Nevertheless, she did see the area as "having problems".

As shown in "Setting the Scene", Larkway school was considered by its head to be situated in a 'middle-class area'. Her staff were shown as not totally in agreement. Two of Larkway staff saw their area differently.

One of them regarded the parents as:

> "upper working class ... economically well-off - you can tell by the houses."
>
> (Teacher 1, Larkway)

The other teacher said that the majority of the parents had been:

> "rehoused from a council estate."

and that they were:

> "working class ... lower ... not upper or middle-class ... not like the middle-class."
>
> (Teacher 2, Larkway)

On the other hand another member of staff did agree with the head of Larkway's view. This teacher described Larkway's catchment area as:

> "... mainly middle-class ... good area - good houses, ... mainly professional, but also a large proportion of working class children."
>
> (Teacher 3, Larkway)

These comments show that teachers do operate with notions of social class, whatever the difficulties of definition.

It can be argued from the comments of Moorland teachers recorded in the previous section that 'poor home background' and 'problem area' might subsume notions of 'working class' even if this term was not always directly used. This could also be true of the Fairfield teacher's remark about an individual child's background.

Since the 'backgrounds' of Moorland children were compared to 'middle-class' homes, it seemed that this latter home was held as the ideal. Middle-class homes either implicity or explicity, were seen as better at preparing the children for school, both socially and in terms of pre-learning skills.

In this respect such families resembled what Becker termed "an ideal client". He made the point that members of:

> "service occupations ... typically have some image of the ideal client, and it is in terms of this fiction that they fashion their conceptions of how their work ought to be performed, and their work techniques. To the degree that actual clients approximate this ideal, the worker will have no 'client' problem."
>
> (Becker, 1952, p. 107)

Moorland 'clients', the homes and thus the children, did not approximate to the 'ideal', and did present problems therefore. Teachers' perceptions of 'class' and the alleged attributes of Moorland families appeared to have some influence on what they thought they would do, in cognitive terms, in the classroom. The 'missionary' emphasis on training in social skills seemed to have priority. The head's views on such 'child-centred' ideas such as individual free choice of activities was noted in Chapter Four.

The views that most teachers at Moorland in particular, though also elsewhere in relation to individuals, appeared to have about 'working class' backgrounds have some resonance within sociology. In particular Bourdieu's concept of 'cultural capital' seems relevant. The notion of 'deficiency' is inherent in this. It has a somewhat 'taken for granted' set of assumptions, however. The next part of this section therefore discusses this concept.

2. The Notion of Cultural Capital

Bourdieu has argued that through the family individuals acquire linguistic and social competence. Some children arrive at school disadvantaged, however, because they lack this competence or 'cultural capital'. He argued that working class children were more likely to be disadvantaged than children from 'middle class' homes, for:

> "middle class children receive from their parents not only encouragement ... but also an 'ethos' of getting on in society and an ambition to do the same at and by means of, the school."
>
> (Bourdieu, 1966, in Dale et al, 1976, p. 111)

This is a view that seems similar to that held by most Moorland teachers
about the difference between families of different social class.

The view is also not new in sociology. As Johnson pointed out, much
research in the Sociology of Education has been concerned with how far
family attitudes affected, and were perhaps even crucial to, children's
progress at school. (Johnson, 1973, p. 35).

Teachers at Moorland were certainly concerned about parental attitudes
in relation to 'necessary skills'.

Bourdieu also claimed that schools implicity favoured those who
already possessed 'cultural capital', whilst making unfavourable judgements
about those who did not possess it. He argued that by this social advantage
was turned into educational advantage. Those who benefited from the educa-
tional system most were therefore those who already possessed 'cultural
capital'. (Bourdieu, 1966, p. 112).

Implicit in this view appears to be the idea that teachers are unaware
that social inequalities may affect children's ability to make use of the
resources provided by the school. There also appears to be the assumption
that, in making "unfavourable judgements" teachers do not attempt to
alleviate the effects of these inequalities.

Now Moorland teachers did, on the whole, make 'unfavourable judgements'
about the 'home backgrounds' of children. This did, however, show that they
were very much aware that in contrast to children from "good homes", those
in a "more middle-class area", Moorland children lacked, or were unequal
in possession of, certain necessary 'experience' and skills. Whether or
not their view of 'middle-class' homes was based on certain assumptions which
may or may not have been valid, Moorland teachers did see it as their place
to try and reduce such 'inequalities' and disadvantage.

Mrs. Warner, for example, saw the role of the school as very much "social

welfare". Mrs. Rayner specifically saw as her primary aim at Moorland the

attempt to provide for the children what a "good home" would do. The

development of "social skills" was part of this provision, as a necessary

pre-requisite for academic learning. Thus, education at Moorland was seen

as 'compensating' for the effects of 'poor home backgrounds'.

It could be argued that the idea of 'compensatory education' is in

itself unfavourable to children from 'backgrounds' so classified, because

attention is distracted from the possible effect of the school itself.

As Bernstein noted, the term:

> "implies that something is lacking in the family, and
> so in the child. As a result the children are unable to
> benefit from the schools. It follows then that the school
> has to 'compensate' for the something that is missing in
> the family and the children become little deficit systems.
> If only the parents were interested in the goodies we
> offer; if only they were like middle-class parents, then
> we could do our job. Once the problem is seen even
> implicitly in this way, then it becomes appropriate to
> coin the terms 'cultural deprivation', 'linguistic depri-
> vation' etc. And then these labels do their own sad work."
>
> (Bernstein, 1971, p. 192)

What the 'sad work' does, in Bernstein's argument, is to give teachers

"lower expectations" of pupils:

> "which the children will undoubtedly fulfil."
>
> (p. 192)

As noted, Moorland families were seen as deficient in many respects, and

the children were generally seen as "linguistically deprived".

It is possible that by laying so much stress on the acquisition of

social skills, and claiming that children were unable to work by themselves,

Moorland teachers were restricting the children's cognitive development,

as a consequence of the general expectations regarding pupils' attitudes,

and even abilities, as compared with children in other areas and their

families. This would be the overall and unintended consequence of an

'idealisation' of 'middle-class' backgrounds, despite individual teacher

differences.

The idea that pupils from different kinds of home backgrounds might have different amounts of 'cultural capital' does seem to assume that there is <u>one</u> 'culture' to have more or less of. There is, however, another idea, which is that different social groups have different 'cultures'.

Bernstein, for example, seemed to be thinking in these terms when he said that if children were seen as "culturally deprived" and their parents as "inadequate" then "... the spontaneous realisations of their culture" were reduced in value. (Bernstein, 1971, p. 192).

Singleton said of schools, in relation to this idea, that they:

> "must be seen as the arena for cross-cultural conflict and other transactions between representatives of different cultural systems."
>
> (Singleton, 1974, p. 32)

King discussed the view that what he termed "the professional status culture of infant teachers" might be more similar to "elements of the status culture of the middle-classes than of the "working classes"." His conclusion was that:

> "in terms of teacher-child relationships, models of behaviour and forms of knowledge, infant education has a closer affinity to their equivalents in the families of the middle-classes than those of the working classes."
>
> (King, 1978, p. 14)

Thus, "in crude terms", infant education could be seen as "... more middle-class than working class". (p. 147). However, in discussing the notion of "cultural deficiency", which he dismisses as "sociological nonsense" (p. 148) much as Singleton said that those who spoke of "cultural deprivation" were not "... speaking the anthropologists' language". King raised the issue of what, if cultural relativity was accepted, what the alternative for infant education might be. It was not easy to define a 'working-class culture'. Also, since in the schools he studied, the "value-judgements" of the teachers in respect of infant education were:

> "posed as intrinsically valuable for all young children irrespective of their sex, social origins, or social destinies."
>
> (p. 149)

753

King added that:

>"From this point of view infant education may be regarded
>as the most egalitarian sector of English education."

<div align="center">(King, 1978, p. 149)</div>

However, King, in noting earlier the idea that infant education might be
seen as a 'middle-class' institution, had expressed some "reservations"
about this. For example he pointed out that:

>"it was not the case that all or even most middle-class
>children did better than all or most working-class children
>in the same school."

<div align="center">(p. 147)</div>

However, he had noted that at Burnley Road, "the most working-class"
school, children were defined as: "being poor in progress and
behaviour". (p. 98). Thus, the problem, if infant education was seen as
"middle-class", but "egalitarian' in that its principles were thought to
apply to all children, would be whether all schools were in fact getting
the same curriculum. It would be whether 'all or most' working class
children did worse than 'all or even most' middle-class children when in
different schools. Children defined as "deficient", as most Moorland
pupils were in some respect, due to their "home background", much as at
'Burnley Road', may not be given the same content, in terms of degree,
in their curriculum. At Moorland, as noted, comments were made that
pupils did less work than in schools in "more middle-class areas", and
that certain things could not be done. They also did not distinguish, as
King does (p. 147) within classes. So in a sense they would be considered
to be treating unequally those with less advantages not in terms of giving
them more (except socially) but less.

However, King, in stating the difficulty of defining a specific
'working class culture' made a valid comment in relation to the idea of
'culture clash'. Richards noted, in relation to this concept, the
influence of the media, especially television, in reducing cultural
differentiation. Moorland teachers blamed television for its effect on

children's imagination, but did not recognise the possible beneficial

effect pointed out by Richards, who stated that, in relation to language:

> "The presence of television in the majority of homes,
> including very poor ones, has made sure that from an
> early age children will hear standard English spoken,
> accompanied by visual material which will aid under-
> standing. It is not unlikely that in some homes children
> hear more language by way of the television than from
> their own parents."
>
> (Richards, 1978, p. 55)

Thus, 'cultures' might not be so very different.

The problem at Moorland, however, was that, whether or not the concept

of 'cultural clash' is valid, the teachers did, as noted, see children

virtually as coming from a different 'culture', in terms of 'family

background' and language 'deficiency' and ideas about 'play'. The children's

parents were compared to 'middle-class' parents in these respects. This had

consequences for what they saw children as bringing to school.

This section has briefly considered whether Moorland teachers in

particular used an idealised version of family life as a comparison for

the family background of children in the school. It has argued that they

appear to, and that ideas of social class underline their categorisation

of children's 'home background' as "poor".

The concept of cultural capital has also been noted, and it has been

pointed out that there are similarities between Bourdieu's views of what

'middle-class' families provide and the views about these expressed by

Moorland teachers. Nevertheless the efforts by Moorland teachers to

'compensate' for these 'deficiencies' have been noted, although criticisms

of the idea of 'compensation' were pointed out. It has been suggested that

this effort itself may have adverse consequences for the children's

learning.

The concept of a 'culture clash' was also briefly discussed. The

view was noted that infant schools might be 'middle-class' institutions,

but that this left open the question of what this might mean for 'working-class' pupils. It was, however, pointed out that the problem was whether teachers in schools with such pupils might perceive such a cultural difference, and so consider, as Moorland teachers seemed to, that the children brought nothing of value to school from their homes.

SECTION FIVE : AGREEMENTS AND DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN TEACHERS ON PUPILS AND THEIR HOME BACKGROUNDS

1. Moorland Teachers

As stated in the first section there were some differences between Moorland teachers on 'the way children are' and their 'home background'.

Taylor cited the argument of Kohn and Fielders (1961) that women relied more on stereotyping when making judgements about other people, and evaluated them on less information than men. (Taylor, 1976, p. 31).

Although Moorland, like most infant schools, had an 'all-female' staff, this did not mean that all the teachers held exactly the same views and relied totally on 'stereotypes' when talking about the children. Two members of the staff, Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Dale, specifically spoke about "the dangers of stereotyping" in comments by teachers on children's behaviour. This was brought out in a discussion between them which was concerned with school records and their use. No other teachers were present in the staffroom on this occasion. Both of them said that they did not read the reports which were sent on to them when children were moved into a new class. They said instead that they preferred to rely on their personal observations of these children in their own classrooms. Mrs. Martin said to Mrs. Dale that a child who had an unfavourable report would take this with 'him' throughout 'his' school career. She herself, however, considered that children could change, so teachers should be careful when making adverse comments. Mrs. Dale agreed with Mrs. Martin's view. However, neither made their view of the disadvantage to children in using school records to record behaviour public.

This was shown on the occasion when school records were being discussed in an official staff meeting later the same day, In particular, the discussion centred on how these records should be filled in, and, in addition, whether the reports that came up with the children from the nursery were detailed enough, or helpful to the teachers in the main school. Neither Mrs. Martin nor Mrs. Dale attempted at this meeting to question the use of school records to record behaviour and other matters.

As stated in Chapter Four, Mrs. Warner had spoken to the researcher about teachers sharing their views in staff meetings, and of them being involved in decision making.

The two juxtaposed episodes above would seem to indicate not only the existence of a possible conflict in views, but also that some teachers might not have regarded staff meetings as the place where their 'real views' should be expressed.

However, there is another possible explanation for Mrs. Martin's reticence in particular. A student working in the school informed the researcher that the head was trying to encourage Mrs. Martin, who was the deputy head, to become more involved in decision making.

Mrs. Martin, however, as noted in Chapter Four, regarded it as being the head's business to make decisions. This could account for her not saying much in staff meetings, which was usually the case. Mrs. Martin was, though, somewhat reticent in general in expressing her views. This made her a difficult person to interview and establish some personal relationship with.

In fact, it took the better part of a school year to do so. One possible interpretation of this reticence is that a hidden conflict did exist between the head and the deputy at Moorland. The researcher came to know that Mrs. Martin had not been the head's choice as deputy. Also

there were differences in teaching styles between the two. Children tended to behave 'well' in Mrs. Martin's class. As noted in Chapter Four, they did not always do so with the head. As noted, Mrs. Martin was acknowledged as a good manager.

With regard to views about children, both Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Dale did say that Moorland children had problems. They mentioned, for example, their "poor language development". Mrs. Dale, as noted, explained this by saying that parents did not really talk to their children. Also, on one occasion Mrs. Martin remarked to the researcher that she wondered whether it was any use teaching anything to her class because:

> "They have enough problems to cope with."
>
> (Mrs. Martin, Moorland)

However, on another occasion, this time in the staffroom, when Mrs. Knowles and Mrs. Neaves were talking about children's problems at Moorland, Mrs. Martin remarked in a somewhat light-hearted way, that she and Mrs. Dale:

> "... just get on with the job of teaching."
>
> (Mrs. Martin)

This may have been her way of indicating her disagreement with the continual stressing of 'home background' without open conflict.

Mrs. Martin did not hold exactly the same views of Moorland parents as those of Mrs. Warner, the head, and Mrs. Knowles, especially.

This was brought out during the visit to Moorland by an adviser. In the course of this the adviser came into Mrs. Martin's classroom, where the researcher happened to be at the time. In conversation with Mrs. Martin, the adviser commented that she had seen a number of unemployed men standing about, some by their gates, on the estate as she approached the school. She remarked that:

> "You would have thought that they would be busy digging the garden rather than standing around doing nothing, seeing that they are unemployed."
>
> (Adviser, Moorland)

Apart from wondering how the adviser knew that the men were necessarily unemployed, the researcher was curious about Mrs. Martin's expression as this comment was made. It was so studiously non-committal. As the researcher by this time knew Mrs. Martin a little better, this expression was interpreted as annoyance. Later on, in the staffroom, when no one else was there, the researcher asked Mrs. Martin whether, in fact, this interpretation was correct, and if so, why she had been annoyed. Mrs. Martin replied that:

"Yes, I _was_ annoyed."

She said not only had she not agreed with the adviser's comment, but also that, in her view, it was not the teacher's place:

" ... to make judgements about parents just because their way of life is different to teachers'."

She added:

"Who are _we_ to make judgements about parents?"
(Mrs. Martin, Moorland)

However, by remarking that children in her class had enough problems to cope with, and about their 'poor language development', Mrs. Martin seemed, implicitly at least, to be making _some_ judgement about parents.

Mrs. Raynor made a similar statement to that of Mrs. Martin on making judgements. She said that teachers had no right to tell parents how to run their own lives. She added:

"They are in need of someone just to listen to them ....
They don't need to be told what to do."
(Mrs. Raynor, Moorland)

but again had a view of them as deficient in respect of 'skills'.

However, as shown, many teachers did make judgements. In saying what families do not provide they are implicitly putting forward their 'idealised family' as 'better', and sometimes these judgements were explicit.

Thus, there was no absolute consensus regarding the nature of Moorland parents, although a high degree existed.

The teachers at Moorland did not necessarily interpret their role in relation to pupils and parents in the same way as the head did.

The head, as noted in Chapter Four, saw the main tasks of the school as 'social welfare', and also as developing communication between the school and the community and encouraging parental involvement. Such views were not necessarily shared by the staff.

The main difference between the head and Mrs. Martin, for example, was that while they both recognised that the area had problems, Mrs. Martin did not agree with the social welfare emphasis. She saw her main task as "teaching the children". Mrs. Knowles similarly regarded teaching as her main concern. Welfare was regarded as "the parents' job".

Both Mrs. Knowles and Mrs. Neaves also interpreted parental involvement somewhat differently from the Head. As they saw it any wish by parents to become involved in the life of the school was not an indication of interest in the school but rather of a desire to place more responsibilities on to the teachers because they themselves could not be bothered. Teachers, as well as Heads, thus differed in their interpretations of 'service' to 'clients', as well as in their views of the 'clients' themselves.

Mrs. Raynor, the nursery teacher, did, however, share Mrs. Warner's view that parents needed to be 'educated' because they lacked the necessary skills to be "efficient parents". Mrs. Raynor did believe that the parents cared about their children even if they lacked the skills to help them at school.

Mrs. Knowles, on the other hand, believed that the majority of parents were "not interested" and "cannot be bothered".

Quinton argued that there was little evidence to suggest that socially disadvantaged parents did not care about their children, and that such

disadvantage did not necessarily imply that there was no supportive

relationship. It usually meant rather a lack of skills and resources:

"to help facilitate cognitive and intellectual
development."

(Quinton, 1980, p. 66)

Teachers saw themselves as the persons who were able to develop the

necessary skills. In Chapter Four it was noted that Mrs. Warner argued

that teachers, not parents, were those who were equipped with the

'professional' expertise and appropriate knowledge. The idea that parents

could help teach their children to read was raised, as also noted in

Chapter Four. This was when Mrs. Warner, the head, placed in the staff-

room a copy of an experiment entitled the "Bellfield Experiment". This

documented a joint project in which parents and teachers combined to teach

children to read.

One teacher, having read this, did suggest that parents might become

more involved in this task, but this suggestion did not meet with general

approval. The head herself thought that the parents of Moorland pupils

lacked the appropriate attributes. Mrs. Knowles, when asked by the

researcher what she thought of the article, replied categorically that:

"It would never work here."

She added that in her view the teaching of reading was the teachers'

responsibility. They were the ones "trained to teach reading", whereas

the parents "don't have the necessary skills".

Thus, when the head spoke of encouraging community involvement, she

distinguished in practice between the teachers and the parents, a division

based on the idea of 'professionals' and 'non-professionals'.

As noted in Chapter Four, other schools had a somewhat uneasy

relationship with parents, though in 'middle-class' schools this was for

rather different reasons.

At Moorland the 'partnership' between teachers and parents was not really seen as an equal one, but rather one in which the head in particular, and some other staff, adopted a somewhat didactic attitude to parents. It was the teachers' task, in this view, to remedy "deficiencies" in parents and their attitudes. The head saw the role of herself and her staff as one of 'educating' the parents.

Mrs. Warner, as noted in the previous chapter, had the view of herself and her staff as being a team. The relationship was one, accordingly, in which she saw herself as consulting with them, and discussing ideas. This did not appear in practice to be what happened. Teachers, as noted in Chapter Four and earlier in this section, did not, on the whole, openly state any disagreements they had with the head's policies. Mrs. Martin's attitude was to remain quiet. This contrasted with the deputy at Larkway, who was not afraid of stating her point of view, as noted in Chapter Four. For example, Mrs. Martin, along with Mrs. Dale, did not, as remarked earlier, publicly question the use of school records despite their considerable reservations expressed in private. Nor did Mrs. Martin express in public her view that judgements about parents' way of life were in appropriate for teachers.

Even where teachers did put forward in public a different viewpoint or idea, the head seemed not to take it up. On two occasions, for example, Mrs. Neaves did just this. One of these was noted in Chapter Four.

On this occasion Mrs. Neaves remarked in the staffroom that she thought that there could be an alternative explanation for the increase in 'poor behaviour' that the teachers had noticed over the last decade. She raised the issue of lead in petrol as a possible cause. Her statement was simply ignored by the other teachers.

On the second occasion two teachers were discussing the children's 'problems', and why they had so many. Mrs. Knowles, one of the two, stated plainly that it was due to their:

"lack of ability to concentrate."

Mrs. Warner expressed agreement with this statement. Mrs. Neaves said:

"Well - er - I don't think so."

Again this tentative alternative was ignored.

These incidents, and the lack of openly expressed disagreements in other cases, do not quite accord with the heads' view of a team, for this term would seem to involve some free discussion of ideas. This did not seem to happen at Larkway, where the whole atmosphere was different, and there did appear to be more co-operation between teachers and no real differences in general outlook between teachers and the head.

When teachers at Moorland were interviewed, on the other hand, they did not refer to any differences between themselves and the head in terms of their views about the children, or of teaching styles. These differences were, however, present. For example, the head encouraged parents to come into school one afternoon a week. Each week one teacher was selected by Mrs. Warner to talk to the parents about any problems. The teachers all complained about these sessions, and did not regard them as useful. This issue, though, was never raised when the head was present.

The question of working together as a team was raised in the nursery unit. Here Mrs. Raynor said that she and her assistant (N.N.E.B.) with whom she worked closely in the nursery, made a point of never arguing in front of the children. This was because in her view it was very important to give the children an example of adults working well together, since so often at home the relationship between parents was an acrimonious one. The nursery teacher, like Mrs. Warner in the main school, emphasised the importance of providing:

"... a happy, cheerful atmosphere."

However, in the nursery, the two members of staff were not seen or heard to disagree away from the children either. They appeared to have a

friendly relationship. Their working well together seemed a consequence of this. It was not a forced co-operation. This was confirmed in response to a direct question by the researcher.

It could be argued that Moorland teachers did not express open conflict because of a similar wish to present themselves as working together, as an example to the children. It could also be, however, that these teachers were suspicious of 'outsiders' in much the same way as were those at 'Rushside', whether or not for the same reason, and therefore hid 'conflict' as far as possible, particularly where they were not entirely sure of the researcher's role.

This section has argued so far that there was a general lack of consensus amongst Moorland teachers about their role in relation to children from different home backgrounds. Most Moorland teachers thought that their approach to pupils in a 'middle-class' area would be different, with less time needed to 'train' children socially and more emphasis on cognitive development. However, a comparison between two schools that were regarded by the head of Moorland as being "very different" in terms of area - a conclusion already questioned - reveals a degree of consensus in relation to the need for 'social training'.

2. 'Social Training' or 'Schooling' : Consensus in Two Schools

Mrs. Warner regarded Larkway School as one situated in an area unlike that of Moorland. In her view, teaching at Larkway could not be the same as it was at Moorland. The nature of the children at Larkway was, she considered, different because of the area. Mrs. Warner, together with others of her staff, held that because of their 'poor family background' Moorland children specifically required "social training" and to be taught "basic skills", those connected with pre-learning.

A reception teacher at Larkway, however, held somewhat similar views about children's needs, but related these rather to the concept of "schooling"

or socialisation into school routines.

She defined "schooling" as:

> "learning to listen, concentrate, clear away, learning
> to share and get used to routine."
>
> <div align="right">(Reception Teacher, Larkway, Interview)</div>

She said that many of the children came to school not knowing:

> "how to clear away."

and that also they:

> "are not used to sharing with one adult." .

She argued that most children found it difficult to adjust at first, because the school situation was so different from home.

At home, for example, children were generally used to the more or less undivided attention of one adult. At school though, they had to adjust to sharing one adult's attention with a large number of other children.

The routine of daily life was also different in school, and took some adjusting to.

As noted in Chapter Four when discussing 'Perceptions of Pupils', Miss North of Larkway also held that all children needed "socialising" into school ways.

This aspect of social training would appear common to most schools. For example at Fairfield a teacher of 'pre-reception' pupils of 4-5 years old said that she stressed "social and emotional development" at this age. There were some rules that children had to get used to. (Fairfield). Mrs. Rayner at Moorland, although she argued that at Moorland "social" and "basic" training was important in view of the children's "social problems", nevertheless said that "getting used to routine" was an important function of any nursery, regardless of area. A Larkway reception teacher also spoke of 'schooling' as necessary when children started school.

Thus, it can be argued that all children have, in starting school, to adjust to the requirements of 'institutional' life. All children have to undergo, therefore, a process of 'socialisation' into the routines and rules of school as distinct from home. Being 'in school' requires of children, as Silberman stated: "a set of psychological adjustments". (Silberman, 1971, p. 2). For one thing, they have to adjust to compulsory attendance, and some physical constraint from movement.

Dreeban also noted this process of becoming a 'school child' rather than just a child in a family. He argued that the first grade of the American school system - which, except for age corresponds to a reception class in an English infants' school - is one in which:

> "a formal ... process of separating children from the family begins."
>
> (Dreeban, 1971, p. 174)

He added that this meant that children had to give up:

> "in certain situations, principles and patterns of behaviour they have come to accept as family members."
>
> (Dreeban, 1971, p. 74)

They have to adopt behaviour teachers think is appropriate to the school setting.

Although Dreeban argued that children had to give up family patterns, a comment by Mrs. Rayner, the nursery teacher at Moorland, seemed to suggest that family and school patterns were not wholly separate, particularly in the nursery. She spoke of aiming to provide in the nursery:

> "what good homes usually provided."
>
> (Mrs. Raynor, Moorland)

By implication, Moorland homes were not 'good'. This is an indication of the 'idealisation' of family life, and of social class as a factor in structuring the attitudes of teachers, for Mrs. Raynor had made it clear that 'middle-class' homes were those in mind, as noted in the fourth section of this chapter.

The 'family' image of the nursery seemed present in Mrs. Warner's mind when she described Mrs. Raynor as a "mother figure" to whom the assistant could "look up". It was not suggested to the researcher that the head perceived herself in such a role in relation to staff in the main school, however.

It may be that the distinction between the family and the nursery is less clear than that between the family and school. It has already been stated that there were some differences between the nursery and the school in terms of aims. In the following chapter these differences are explored further.

Nevertheless, the nursery was part of the school. As such, even here children were learning to adjust to a different routine. As shown later, there were 'rules' that they had to learn. Jackson regarded the learning of these 'rules' as essential if the children (and teachers):

>"are to make their way .... in the social institution
>called the school."
>
>(Jackson, 1971, p. 20)

Jackson referred to these "rules, regulations and routines" as "the hidden curriculum". (p. 20).

King, however, argued that this is in fact not hidden at all. She stated that:

>"such a perspective is ahistorical, ignoring the
>fact that schools were designed to teach such things."
>
>(Apple (with King, N.), 1980, p. 45)

Such a view is sustained by consideration of the origins of infant schooling discussed in Chapter Nine.

Also, Mrs. Warner, Mrs. Raynor and the Larkway teacher who spoke of 'schooling' were all aware of what they were about. Ideas about 'social training' or 'socialisation' were part of their 'social perspective'. This seemed the case for most of the teachers seen. Part of this 'training'

involved making the children aware of the 'rules' and routines. Thus, this could hardly be called a 'hidden curriculum'. Of course teachers did not say to the children, 'Now I'm going to teach (or socialise you into) you the rules and routines', but they soon made this evident. Mrs. Knowles, for example, said that while she did not talk directly about 'rules', the children:

"soon learn what they can and can't do."

Or rather, it was clear to them what was expected of them, even if they did not always conform. Chapter Eight shows that children are aware of 'rules' and 'routines'. Bennett et al also showed teachers making 'rules' clear through demonstration. (Bennett et al, 1984, p. 136).

'Socialisation' may not be described in precisely the same terms as it was in the nineteenth century, but is nevertheless fairly explicit. The views found fitted well with a Durkheimian view of the role of the school in introducing children to 'social norms'.

This last part of the section has indicated that 'socialisation' into school routines was seen by teachers, especially those of pre-reception children but also those of reception age groups, as an essential part of the process of becoming a 'schoolchild'. The processes involved in this 'separation from the family', and the new 'social skills' that children were thought to have to acquire, could thus be seen as common to all children beginning school. They could be classed as part of 'schooling', and therefore not as being unique to the 'needs' of Moorland children, as some staff there seemed to believe.

Nevertheless, when children were catalogued as 'deficient' in so many ways, as Moorland children were, 'socialisation' into school routines seemed to carry with it overtones of 'rescuing' the children from the effects of 'bad' homes, not just ordinary separation from the family. As noted previously, Moorland parents or 'homes' were seen as "deprived" or

"inadequate". When children, families and homes are seen in this way,
Bernstein stated that:

> "All that informs the child, that gives meaning and
> purpose to him outside the school, ceases to be valid and
> accorded significance and opportunity for enhancement
> within the school. He has to orient towards a different
> structure of meaning, whether it is in the form of reading
> books (Janet and John), in the form of language use and
> dialect, or in the pattern of social relationships. Alter-
> natively, the meaning structure of the school is explained
> to parents and imposed upon, rather than integrated within,
> the form and content of their world. A wedge is progressively
> driven between the child as a member of a family and community
> and a child as a member of a school. Either way the child is
> expected, and his parents as well, to drop their social
> identity, their way of life, and its symbolic representations
> at the school gate."

(Bernstein, 1971, p. 92)

In many respects, this did seem to be what was required of Moorland children,

and their parents, for the children were seen as bringing little of value

from home to school. Even when it was said that it was not the place of

teachers to make 'judgement' about parents, these seemed implicit in

comments about the children's 'deficiencies'.

Overall, this section has shown that there existed a high degree of

consensus between Moorland staff about the nature of the area. Earlier,

a similar consensus was shown in their general views of children and

parents as 'deficient', even though, earlier it was shown that with

individual children definitions could change. However, this section has

also shown that although Moorland teachers held similar views, these were

not identical. There were differences in emphasis between them with regard

to the task of the school in relation to the 'problems' of the area, and

their role in relation to pupils and parents. The differences existed

particularly between some staff and the head. It was noted, however, that

such differences were not made public.

The final part of the section discussed the idea that 'socialisation'

into the routine of school was an experience common to all children re-

gardless of area. It showed a general agreement on this point among

teachers in different schools. Nevertheless, it was suggested that where pupils and their parents were seen as "deficient", 'socialisation' might entail more separation from 'the family' than elsewhere.

The next and final part of this chapter considers the question of pupils' gender related behaviour, and whether this entered into the 'social perspectives of teachers.

SECTION SIX : TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES AND PUPILS' GENDER-RELATED BEHAVIOUR

The notion of pupils' gender related behaviour is discussed in relation to teachers' 'social perspectives' not because the teachers in the schools made frequent direct references to it, but because, on the contrary, such behaviour was seemingly taken for granted. However, ideas about gender were implicit in some comments. Teachers did not appear to make great efforts to overcome the effects of early stereotyping, this went largely unremarked. Even where, in one case such an attempt was observed, it was not very successful because the children, boys in this instance, re-sisted the teacher's efforts, as noted below.

King noted the pervasiveness of sex differentiation, and its 'taken for granted' nature. (King, 1978, pp. 67-9).

Clarricoates stated that:

> "Gender differentiation is a pervasive influence in all schools and affects many dimensions of school life."

She added that:

> "while the school and the educational system may
> determine the formal structures in classrooms, this
> does not preclude the pupils themselves influencing
> what takes place."
>
> (Clarricoates, 1987. p. 188)

It is not surprising if the teachers in the study seemed to take gender related behaviour for granted, or, even if they wished to do so, found it hard to alter pupils' perceptions of gender appropriate behaviour. It has been noted that sex-stereotyping begins very early in children's

lives. (France, 1986, pp. 50-66). Thus gender rules tend to be perceived in the family and outside well before children start school, as noted by Whyte. (Whyte, 1983, pp. 14-19).

Two simple examples observed by the researcher while the research was in progress indicate this. The incidents took place in respectively the street near the school and a doctor's surgery. The incidents related to dress. The importance of this for girls was noted by France, who pointed out that wearing certain clothes restricts girls' freedom in activities. (France, 1986, p. 50).

Both incidents observed concerned youngish mothers in their twenties, with young pre-school children and toddlers.

In the first case, not far from Moorland, the child was looking at a baby in a pram, who was wearing a yellow dress. The child asked his mother, "Is it a little girl?" The mother replied:

> "I don't know. If it was a little girl it would be wearing pink. Little boys wear blue."

King recorded a teacher as approving blue for boys and pink for girls. (King, 1978, p. 46). It appears to be a prevalent notion in many walks of life.

The second case, in the surgery, involved a little girl who was waiting to see the doctor, and getting very bored with doing so. She was also cross because she was wearing a dress, as her complaints to her mother indicated. She said that she would have been more comfortable in trousers. She asked, "Why can't I wear trousers today?" The mother replied;

> "Well, you're going to playschool afterwards and you wear a dress for that."

Thus, children may very well have clear notions about appropriate behaviour and dress, and activities, by the time they reach infant school. This was apparent in some of the activities observed by the researcher.

It was noticeable in all the schools observed that *where there was a* Wendy House or 'home corner' in the classroom that girls tended to use it more than boys, and to use it in particular ways. Girls were most often to be found playing 'mother' and doing 'housework', activities like making tea, washing up, going shopping and playing mothers with babies. In talking, the notion of 'Daddy at work' was heard. When boys joined in with girls in the Wendy House it was usually as 'Daddy' or a boy in the 'family'.

One example, showing the division of gender roles, is taken from Class 1 at Moorland. Here a boy was joining in with two girls. The boy said: "I'm the Daddy". He said that he had to go to work soon, but spent a few minutes playing with the 'baby', a doll. The girls 'washed up' after breakfast, and the boy then pretended to go off to work. The girls vacuumed. Then the boy came back from work, and said, "I'm going to read the paper", and sat down while the girls prepared a 'meal', washed up and put the baby to bed.

The teacher did not interfere at any time to suggest a different division. Whyte similarly noted that girls, and domestic activities, seemed predominant in the Wendy House. (Whyte, 1983, p. 32).

When boys did use the Wendy House, it was usually in a different way. In one instance a group of girls had been as usual carrying on a 'domestic' role when it was decided to go 'to the seaside'. A group of boys came to join in at this, and the Wendy House area was turned into a train. The children all dressed up. One boy became the engine driver, and a girl the ticket collector. However, in this instance, they eventually changed roles, and no-one said to the girl, "You can't because you're a girl". It may be that children are now more used to seeing women in public transport.

In another example of a boy in the Wendy House, this time from Larkway, he was making a cup of tea. This time, though, it was not a house but a

'cafe', and he was engaged in a game with the teacher, who was a temporary 'customer'.

Boys also appropriated certain toys, much as the girls did the Wendy House. In most classrooms observed, Lego and bricks were the toys usually involved, and boys were the ones most often found to be 'playing' with these. Thomas also noted that boys tended to dominate the use of constructive toys. (Thomas, 1986, p. 110-111).

Generally this differentiation went unremarked. In one instance however, it was commented on by a teacher. It was in a classroom at Moorland, where the researcher noticed that the boys not only dominated the use of these toys but seemed actively to resent girls using them, especially the Lego. A boy was heard to say to the teacher, Mrs. Neaves:

> "Please, Mrs. Neaves, Sally's playing with the Lego.
> <u>Girls</u> don't play with Lego."

The researcher asked about this. Mrs. Neaves agreed that the boys <u>did</u> dislike the girls using this apparatus. She explained that she had attempted to change the situation at one time, by an experiment in which she called for free choice of activities. When 'Lego' was announced, some girls had put up their hands and been chosen. Mrs. Neaves claimed that the boys were "outraged" and the pattern soon reverted to 'normal'. She set up this 'experiment' a second time for the researcher's benefit, saying:

> "I'll show you what happens."

She did, and the boys behaved exactly as she had predicted. This instance shows that it may be difficult for teachers to change children's perceptions of their gender behaviour even if they wish to do so. In P.E. at Moorland the head's policy was to make areas like 'gymnastics' and 'football' available to both boys and girls. But although some boys and girls made 'cross-gender' choices, the majority did not.

However, in many instances teacher appeared rather to reinforce children's perceptions of appropriate behaviour for boys and girls.

For example, it was observed that generally boys and girls were lined up separately for assembly and marked separately in the registers.

Another example of reinforcement came in a P.E. lesson, again at Moorland. The teacher said to the girls first:

> "I want you to race to the other side of the yard. See who can get there first."

The girls raced across and back, and came to a standstill in front of her. the boys were then sent across. They shouted as they ran, making quite a noise. The teacher said:

> "I think the boys ought to try this again. See how quietly the girls did it." ..

This comment could be taken as reinforcement of the notion of girls as 'quiet' and boys as 'noisy'. Another instance of possible reinforcement occurred in an art lesson, also at Moorland, when girls were told to make "a witch's hat" and boys a "pirate's hat".

Girls' and boys' behaviour in general seemed to conform to stereo-types. When it did not it was seen as a reason for comment. On one girl's record in Class 1 it was stated that:

> "She plays with the boys, never with the girls."

It was noticed by the researcher that boys seemed less ready than girls to 'tidy up' at the end of activities. One teacher explained this by asserting that girls were already used to more responsibility in this area. They were:

> "expected to help their mothers in the house"

whilst boys, on the other hand:

> "from an early age are used to playing out in the street. They aren't expected to do things like that at home."
>
> (Teacher, Moorland)

The division was taken for granted as well established.

The drawings that children did showed similar differences. Girls

usually drew houses or family scenes, while the boys usually drew things associated with action, such as 'fast cars', fighting, war scenes and so on. TV programmes were mentioned as the source of boys' ideas, especially items like 'Spiderman' and 'The 'A' Team'. These were blamed by Mrs. Dale at Moorland, for example, for boys' lack of imagination, but the possible influence of TV on girls' ideas was not mentioned. Their pictures were mostly seen as unremarkable, as was most girls' behaviour.

When writing their own 'stories', boys similarly often wrote about fighting of some kind, soldiers, war or aeroplanes, or things seen on TV. On one occasion at Moorland Mrs. Neaves was going round looking at the writing. Looking at one boy's work she said, in a weary tone:

> "Not aeroplanes and war again. You can write about that
> for now but try and write something different next time."
>
> (Mrs. Neaves, Moorland)
> (See also King, 1978, p. 39)

Girls wrote of homes, or their friends, or 'being a nurse'. King similarly noted this pattern in children's writing. (King, 1978, p. 68).

On the other hand much 'story' writing came from something the teachers had talked about or a story they had read. In these cases both boys and girls wrote about the same things.

'Topics' chosen by boys and girls showed differences. At Briarfield, for example, one group of six children were doing topic work on one afternoon. Of the three boys in the group, two were writing about dinosaurs and one on space. Of the three girls, two wrote about flowers and one about butterflies.

In Mrs. Knowles' class at Moorland 'dinosaurs' were also a topic. Eight children had chosen this when this activity was observed. One boy and one girl were painting a dinosaur made out of paper. Another five boys and one girl were making models of dinosaurs with plasticine.

Topics like 'oil rigs' at Larkway, and 'transport' at Moorland, seemed

of more interest to boys, although the latter did include the idea of 'going to the seaside', which both boys and girls wrote about. In Mrs. Neaves' class at Moorland, she had made some booklets and put them on her desk to see what the children would do. Some children asked what they were for. She asked these children what they could write about. She said that they had suggested the topics of 'Space' and 'Spring'. She later commented that it had only been the boys who had chosen to write about space, but added that one boy had chosen to write about 'Spring' along with the girls doing this. Mrs., Neaves, however, was unusual in commenting on such differences.

Boys' behaviour in general seemed to present teachers with more problems than girls', as is noted in the chapter on classroom control, apart from Class 2 at Moorland where girls were equally difficult. For example, at Briarfield it was observed in the reception class that 'basics' such as reading and writing did not take place in the morning but were assigned to the afternoons. Questioned about this, the teacher said that her main reason was that:

> "... when the boys first come to school they take more
> time to settle down than girls. If I let them 'play'
> then by lunch time they are more ready for work."
>
> (Notes, Briarfield)

Thus, to allow the teacher to cope with the boys, the girls had to adjust to this pattern whether it suited them or not.

In another example at Fairfield, a student was working with one class, Mrs. Parkinson's. On one occasion the teacher left the room to go to the hall. While she was away four boys started shouting, running round the room and disrupting a game which was being played in the Wendy House. When the teacher returned three of these boys had found something else to do, but one continued to be noisy, and was reprimanded by the teacher.

The student was later described as "too soft and motherly" and criticised for not enforcing silence when reading a story, and allowing

children, especially boys, to "get away with things". Eventually the
class teacher split the class, and gave the student just the girls to
work with, a clear indication that girls were seen as less troublesome.

Even if stereotyped behaviour was mainly 'taken for granted', it is
important to point out again that children can and do have their own
ideas about appropriate gender behaviour, including efforts at control
over boys by a woman. These ideas can, as noted, result in children
themselves constraining a teacher's efforts to alter the effects of stereo-
typing, in so far as this behaviour is not just seen as natural develop-
ment. This was brought out again at Moorland when the researcher was
chatting in the hall to a group of children who were soon moving on to
junior school. Asked if they were looking forward to this, a boy remarked:

> "I shall be glad to get to junior school. I'll have a
> man teacher. It'll be better."

Asked why it would be better to have a 'man' teacher, he replied: "A man
will make me work harder". The researcher asked, "Don't you work now?"
Boy: "No, we just play".

This is an interesting comment on children's views of the infant
school and its activities. How far it reflects parental views is
uncertain. The view of a man teacher as one who would make you work is
also interesting. In Chapter Ten it is noted that at first women were
not regarded as suitable for infant teaching. It was considered that they
would be unable to control the pupils.

Also, these children, asked what they most liked about school, gave
as their responses; girls, "chatting with friends" and boys, "playing
games with friends" and "playing with boys". Work activities were not
mentioned at all, although teachers plan these with children's needs and
interests in mind, as they see these. The children's comments suggest
that children have their own view of their 'needs' and 'interests', and
these do not necessarily coincide with those of the teachers.

This section has considered the idea of gender-related behaviour of children in infant schools, and whether this entered into teachers' 'social perspectives'. The conclusion is that it did, in a negative sense, in that it was mostly a 'common-sense' part of their ideas, and 'taken for granted' for the most part. The influence of children themselves, and the effect of pre-school learning in this aspect of life was noted.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed what were termed teachers' 'social perspectives'. It has shown that teachers' perceptions of children in their schools existed at different levels, from the 'whole school' down to individual pupils.

The chapter has shown that teachers were aware of social class differences. At Moorland particularly, though not exclusively, the concept of 'home background' was utilised to account for children's difficulties. It was indicated that teachers distinguished between behaviour and 'academic' ability. Where 'social' behaviour was negatively assessed, it was seen as due to 'background'. It was shown that Moorland teachers saw Moorland as a 'problem area', whereas in other schools, 'problem groups' were sometimes seen within an area. Moorland staff were shown to often make judgements about parents, and homes were seen as deficient. Moorland families were generally regarded as lacking particularly the ability to provide their children with necessary skills, social or cognitive. The parents were considered not to talk to their children, and consequently these had poor or no language. They were also seen as unable to play together. However, the researcher noted that Moorland children were seen 'playing' and talking to each other outside the school. Teachers seemed to define 'language' and 'play' in a school specific way, or made assumptions about what the children and their parents did together. Families in the Moorland area were compared directly and unfavourably with "middle-class families". The use of 'restricted code' to describe their and their children's speech was

noted and critically discussed.

The chapter indicated that Moorland teachers at least seemed to have an 'idealised' picture of family life, and one based on views of middle-class families - in Mrs. Warner's case those of teachers. Ideas of 'social class' seemed to permeate their remarks on 'home background', whether implicity or explicitly. The similarity between Bourdieu's idea that middle class families possessed 'cultural capital' and Moorland teachers' views in particular, was pointed out. The question of a possible 'culture clash' was also raised. The chapter pointed out, however, that in 'middle-class' areas teachers might hold similar views in relation to 'working-class' children as did those at Moorland. Not being presented with large numbers of 'problem children' such views were muted, expressed only in relation to individuals or small groups, rather than the 'whole school'. Such areas were "farmworkers' children" at Fairfield and 'travellers' at Larkway.

The chapter has suggested that Moorland teachers' perceptions of social class differences had some influence on what they thought it necessary, or possible, to do in the classroom, and could thus have consequences for children's progress, in cognitive terms. The question as to whether lower expectations were held of Moorland pupils in relation to those in 'middle-class' areas was shown to be a sensitive one.

The chapter has also pointed to the existence of differences between the staff at Moorland in their views about pupils and parents, and between the head and some staff in views about the role of the school. The 'social welfare' aspect stressed by the head was not wholly accepted by staff. The 'teaching' role was given more emphasis by two teachers, especially the deputy. However, to some extent most teachers did seem to agree with the general view of Moorland families as 'deficient' in some respects, particularly in relation to the development of language skills. There seemed some inconsistency in the views of the deputy head and the nursery teacher about

not making judgements about parents. They seemed by implication to be making these to some extent, in the first case about language development in the home, and in the second about social training.

The chapter has also noted that differences between the staff and the head were expressed either in private conversation with like-minded staff, or in discussion with the researcher. They were not made in the presence of the Head. This points to the importance of context for the expression of ideas.

It was indicated in Chapter Three that the effect of 'the situation' was important in shaping teachers' perspectives. At Moorland, this 'situation' included, apart from the area, the 'within school' aspect, the relation-ship between the head and the staff, which differed from that at Larkway. It was pointed out in Chapter Four that the head at Moorland, like the one at Stone Street, was relatively new, while Mrs. North of Larkway had been in post for many years. This feature seemed to have a bearing on the degree to which disagreements were made public. It was remarked in the chapter that the deputy at Moorland was not the head's first choice, and the deputy did appear to hold different views to the head. At Larkway, also as noted in Chapter Four, the head and the deputy had had a long and harmonious partnership and harmony appeared to characterise the school. The nursery staff at Moorland also appeared to have a partnership, and were not seen to argue either publicly or away from the children.

At Larkway, the deputy appeared sufficiently confident in her position and in her relationship with the Head to be able to express any views, even if these diverged from those of the head. This did not happen at Moorland. While this may have been due to personality factors, as the deputy was rather quiet, some of her private comments, such as that about "getting on with teaching" and about it being "the head's job to make decisions" indicated a conflict of views. Also, as noted in Chapter Four, Mrs. Warner, when

appointed as head, had previously been the deputy for two years, after relatively short teaching experience. This may have been a factor affecting staff views, although since they would seldom talk about the head it was difficult to assess.

The chapter has also noted the suggestion by teachers of younger children at Moorland and elsewhere that 'schooling', or the process of initiating children into school rules and routines, and 'separation from the family', was a necessary part of all children's experience. Acquiring the necessary 'social skills' was seen by the Moorland nursery teacher as not being a process confined to Moorland children.

The chapter also noted that gender related behaviour by pupils appeared to be a largely 'taken for granted' aspect of teachers' 'social perspectives', for such behaviour was seldom remarked on, unlike other aspects of behaviour.

The next chapter looks at teachers' 'educational' perspectives, their views about their aims and approaches in the organisation of learning.

CHAPTER SIX

TEACHERS' 'EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVES'

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter was concerned with the 'social perspectives' of the teachers observed, which included their definitions of children in the school area, in particular classrooms, and as individuals.

This chapter discusses teachers' 'educational perspectives', or their views about what should be taught, and how teaching of this should be organised so that children could learn it.

In the discussion of head teachers' 'educational perspectives', several themes were shown to be present. These are recalled briefly.

With regard to the content of education, the need for teaching the 'basic skills' was stressed, but also a concern was expressed for the education of 'the whole child' through other activities. There was the idea that children should learn through experience and exploration. Another theme was that children developed at different levels. Yet another was the idea that teaching should take account of children's 'interests' and 'needs', although what these might be were differently defined.

With regard to the organisation of learning, a range of views was also expressed in relation to the idea of 'free choice' by pupils among the activities provided, and teacher control of activities, and the idea of direct structured teaching, as against the idea of the teacher as the guide or 'facilitator' of learning. Another theme was that of 'the integrated day', about which there were different views as well as different conceptions. There were also differences in relation to the organisation of pupils.

The themes that emerged during discussions with the teachers were similar to those of the heads. There was general agreement on the content

of the curriculum, and on the idea that development in terms of learning went through stages, through which children went at different rates. In the course of such development, their 'perceptions of reality' could alter. Associated with 'development' was the concept of 'readiness'. Another theme was that children had different 'needs' and 'interests'. Allied to this were ideas of 'individualism', whether teaching should be geared to the individual child. Different views were expressed in relation to these ideas. Again, 'the Integrated Day' was another theme, and associated with this were ideas about 'free choice' and teacher direction of activities.

The first section of this chapter presents a comparison between a nursery and reception classes in one of the infant schools, as seen by their respective teachers. This is done in order to highlight the 'aims of an infant school' as a distinct entity, in a general scene. What an 'infant school' is for is an important part of infant teachers' 'educational perspectives'.

The second section discusses what teachers saw as the main elements of the infant curriculum as a whole, such as the 3R's and other activities. The actual content of these various elements is not considered here, however. Teachers' views on the curriculum are, again, an important aspect of their perspectives.

The third section considers in turn the basic themes which emerged from discussion with the teachers observed on how children learn and how teaching should be organised, that is, their views on learning and teaching. These ideas are perhaps the major aspect of their 'educational perspectives'.

The final section is concerned with what teachers saw as the main influences in the development of their perspectives, and what they considered to be the main constraints on what they could do. Both are linked together in the last part of this section when 'the work situation' is discussed.

SECTION ONE : THE IDEA OF AN INFANT SCHOOL, VIEWS FROM THE NURSERY AND
RECEPTION CLASSES

Before discussing teachers' views on the content of the curriculum and on
learning and teaching, it seemed useful to show a view of the distinctive
quality of an infant school as seen by a teacher in Moorland nursery, and
two teachers of reception classes in the Moorland infant school proper.
The comparison points to the essential features of an infant school as they
see it, and puts the teachers' 'educational perspectives' in some sort of
general context. Although Moorland had its own special characteristics
there was a view of the infant school as such even there.

Weber, who studied nursery and infant schools, noted the idea in the
Hadow Report that the nursery school should be the model for the infant
school. Ideas about this are also noted briefly in Chapter Ten of this
study. Weber herself stated that:

> "That the nursery school has had and continues to
> have a strong influence on the infant school has
> been insufficiently evaluated".
> (p. 60)

It was not clear exactly what she meant by this, and she did not expand
the statement. She seemed to be suggesting that the nursery school was a
model, however, for she also stated herself that:

> "The nursery school, as described, became the acknowledged
> model for those changes in the two year infant school that
> guaranteed continuity for children of 5-7."
> (p. 62)

Although Weber noted the relaxed and happy atmosphere in nurseries, and
informal work in infant schools, she did not provide a great deal of
evidence in teachers' own words for her descriptions, but quoted from
other studies. Also, she did not contextualise her observations. Weber's
rather 'flowery' style makes it difficult to assess her book. This is
not helped by her habit, in relation to discussion of nursery and infant
buildings, of apparently arguing from one to all. (pp. 19-20 and 62-64),
(Weber, L., 1971).

Cleave et al, in contrast to Weber, found, in their study of the transition of children from pre-school settings to the infant school, that there were differences in the concerns and the provision of activities in the two settings.

They found that in the pre-school settings, there was a major concern to provide security and care. There was also a concern to provide children with certain 'social experience'. This included weaning the child away from home and "mummy", that is, the development of independence. Part of this was helping children with dressing themselves and looking after their personal belongings, as well as coping with the toilet 'Social experience' also included, however, the idea of mixing with and sharing with other children, and other matters associated with preparing children to start 'school'. The basic skills for this included things like the use of a pencil, and the writing of their own names by children. It was argued that in pre-school settings, the accent was upon the individual and his or her 'needs', and the development of 'potential'.

Cleave et al argued from their observations that when 'nursery' and infant school provision were compared it was found that there were changes in the nature and content of the activities provided. There was an increased emphasis in the infant schools on "verbal symbolic skills", and literacy and numeracy tasks. There was also a change in the attitude towards activities, which included a distinction between 'work' and 'play', for example. (Cleave et al, 1982).

Similar definitions between the nursery and the infant school at Moorland were found.

The nursery and the reception teachers were all in agreement that there were differences in aims between the nursery and the infant school.

Mrs. Raynor, the nursery teacher, for example, saw the infant classroom in contrast to the nursery, as a:

785

"... much more formal situation.'"

She was asked what she meant by this.

Researcher   "What do you mean, Mrs. Raynor, when you say
             it's much too formal?"

Mrs. Raynor "Well, the children have to do what the
             teacher tells them to. It's more directed,
             directed by the teacher."

Researcher   "And it's not like that here in the nursery?"

Mrs. Raynor "No, because that sort of situation is not
             suitable for this age group. It's not a formal
             situation with all the children sitting down,
             being told what to do. Free choice is an
             important part of the nursery."

This view is interesting, since what some have regarded as a feature of

'progressive' primary education is here assigned to the nursery, that is,

it is happening 'somewhere else' than in the infant school proper.

Mrs. Raynor went on to say that the nursery situation was:

"... deliberate policy, and I would not have it any other way."

She added that in the nursery she tried to:

"create an atmosphere in which the children can explore
[except in] potentially dangerous activities like cooking."
                                    (Mrs. Raynor, Moorland)

Mrs. Dale, one of the 'reception' teachers, also, like Mrs. Raynor,

described the infant school reception class as a "more formal situation"

than the nursery. She considered that in the latter the emphasis was more

on social training than the acquisition of 3R's skills. Mrs. Knowles,

another reception age teacher, saw the nursery school as a preparation for

school and "more formal work". Mrs. Raynor herself acknowledged that in the

nursery the primary aim was a social training. As noted in the last

chapter, she saw such 'socialisation' as necessary in any area. Both

reception teachers were thus emphasising that the nursery had social and

preparatory functions in contrast to their own reception function in the

infant school, the teaching of reading, writing and number. Mrs. Knowles

considered that the nursery experience prepared children socially for

starting school, with any teaching of reading and number skills being

indirect. In the reception class, in contrast, there was:

"more direct teaching of the 3Rs."

(Mrs. Knowles, Moorland)

Mrs. Dale similarly saw the nursery as a place where:

"children learn to fit in with one another, where
children get used to routine."

(Mrs. Dale, Moorland)

The reception teachers thus gave the impression that when the children

had acquired these 'social skills' in the nursery, then they in the

infant school could start to teach reading, writing and number.

However, the nursery also provided some teaching of skills apart

from social training. Mrs. Raynor listed these as:

"manipulation, co-ordinating and listening skills, fine
and gross motor skills, sorting shapes and counting."

She added that:

"I don't do anything which has no teaching value."

(Mrs. Raynor, Nursery)

There were some differences in conceptions of 'play' in relation to

the nursery and the infant school.

The nursery teacher believed that 'play' was important in the nursery.

She stressed its relevance for the teaching of skills such as those she

described as provided by nursery 'teaching'. She stated that:

"In the nursery children learn skills, but do it through
play. The children think that they are just playing
but this is not all they are doing. Play is the best
way of learning at this age."

(Mrs. Raynor, Moorland)

In one respect Moorland was different from some other pre-school settings.

Mrs. Raynor considered 'play' as an especially important feature of the

activities provided at Moorland. It was in her view part of her job to

teach the children how to play, since she did not consider that they

knew how to.

A nursery teacher at Fairfield infant school placed less emphasis on play, however she stated that:

"I don't believe that pre-fives should play with toys all day."

She believed that the children there came to the nursery class:

"ready to start reading, recording numbers and even simple computation."

and that they:

"have had enough of 'playing' at home before they start school."

The nursery teacher at Moorland did also say that by the time children had been a year in the nursery, then they did become bored with playing and were:

"ready to start school."

Mrs. Knowles believed that 'play' in the reception class was more teacher directed. It was pointed out to Mrs. Knowles that many of the 'toys' and 'games' appeared in both settings, for example Lego, bricks and paints.

Mrs. Knowles agreed that this was so but said that:

"play in the nursery and school are different even though the toys and games are similar, and the equipment - um - water, sand."

The researcher asked: "How is 'play' different in school?" Mrs. Knowles replied:

"Well, as I said, it's more teacher directed."
[She used sand as an example]
"The children are developing concepts - balance - weight - not just playing with it on their own."

She went on to say that the teacher would direct the child, and introduce concepts like "heavy" and "light".

In the nursery the children themselves never distinguished between 'play' and 'work'. They spoke of: "... doing the housework" and other games in the Wendy House, and 'playing' with the Lego and bicycles and other 'toys'.

In the infant school reception class, however, children seemed to have developed this distinction. In Mrs. Knowles' class the following exchange was recorded, after an assembly and hymn practice. Writing books were given out and all the children were told to draw a picture about "harvest festival" and write about it. This was a class activity. The researcher was sitting at one table on which were some games, bricks and plasticine, which, because of the hymn practice, had not been put away as on the other tables. One boy said to another who was sitting next to him, who happened to be a 'new' boy in the class, and who was fiddling with the plasticine:

> "You're playin' with plasticine an' you haven't done your work. I'm tellin' on you. [Raises voice] Mrs. Knowles, Jason's playin' with the plasticine."

The researcher asked the first boy:

> "Why can't Jason play with it? It's on the table."

Boy 1   "He can't, he hasn't done his work."

He prodded Jason's 'writing book' with a finger and said firmly:

> "You've got to do your writing first."

Jason scowled at him and carried on with the plasticine. Mrs. Knowles turned round from marking another child's work and told Jason to "get on with" his writing. He started to, reluctantly.

The teachers in the reception classes appeared to distinguish between activities. The words 'work' and 'play' were used, as in the example below:

> Teacher (Mrs. Dale) "Susan, have you done your work?"
>
> Susan (after nodding, said to the researcher) "I've finished all my work now."
>
> Researcher "What work have you done, Susan?"
>
> Susan "Writin' and sums."
>
> Researcher "What are you going to do now?"
>
> Susan "Choosin' ... 'cos we've finished our work. (Turns to teacher) I've finished my work Mrs. Dale, can I play with the ...."

Boy   "Can I play with the Lego Mrs. Dale? I've finished my work."

Mrs. Dale discussed the various toys and games in the classroom. She said that she thought that the children regarded all activities such as Lego, bricks and other construction toys and reading and number games, as "play" and thought of "work" as writing and doing number (sums). She herself distinguished between "construction toys", which she did regard as "play", and the games such as Word or Number Lotto, or any which involved "visual discrimination", which she regarded as important for learning specific skills. The children did refer to using sand, or wooden blocks and the Wendy House and so on as 'playing' and anything which involved writing something down as 'work'.

This section, in comparing a nursery with reception classes in an infant school, has indicated that the infant school was perceived by both the teachers in the two settings, and by the reception children, as the place where more 'formal' instruction or teacher direction of activities take place, and where, in the minds of the children at least, 'work' and 'play' began to be seen as separate. However, it was also indicated that the boundary between the two settings might not be a hard and fast one. Moorland nursery emphasised 'social' aims but did not see 'play' as just that, but as an important means of acquiring some skills. Certain 'games' in the infant school, seen by the children as 'play', were designed to teach learning skills. Also, the Fairfield 'nursery' teacher, who also said she stressed 'social and emotional skills, thought 3R's work could begin with some children.

Nevertheless, for most children, the 'infant school' seemed the start of real school life, and the teachers appeared to see it as such.

The next section outlines what the teachers saw as the main components of the infant school curriculum. Ideas about this are an important part

of their 'educational perspective'. They contain ideas about the purpose and special features of the 'infant school'.

SECTION TWO : THE ELEMENTS OF THE 'INFANT' CURRICULUM

The main components of the infant school curriculum as teachers saw them were "the basics" or "3R's", together with 'Art and Craft' in various forms, music and physical education. There were also views that "social" and "moral" training were important areas, but apart from Assembly there was no special allocation of time for these. They were seen as being achieved through other activities.

Teachers' views about the curriculum were gained from 'conversations' about 'the daily routine'. These were supplemented at Moorland and Larkway by the use of a questionnaire. 'Notes for Teachers' were also referred to, and pupil records. There were thus a range of sources for acertaining their ideas.

Observations in all the schools indicated the importance of the 3R's in the curriculum. As noted in the Review, other studies have noted this. Bassey, for example, pointed to the high percentage of infant teachers who said that maths and writing were daily requirements. (Bassey, 1978). Galton and Simon also reported that a high proportion of time was devoted to the "basics". (Galton and Simon, 1980a). Similar findings were reported by Barker Lunn (1984) and the DES Reports of 1978, 1982 and 1985.

Likewise King had stated in his study of infant schools that:
> "There can be no doubt about the primacy that all the
> teachers gave to what they variously called the 'basics',
> the 'academic side' or the three R's."
> (King, 1978, p. 24)

He added that although children might be able to choose "when" to do these 'basics', they could never choose whether or not to do them at all.

The accuracy of this statement was confirmed in the present research.

In no school was it found that the "3R's" were regarded as just one set of activities among others. On the contrary, they were seen as the most important element of the infant school curriculum, though this did not mean that other areas were seen as <u>un</u>important.

In those schools where a form of 'the integrated day' (a concept discussed later) was practised, the importance of the 'Three R's' can be gauged from the fact that, even with a high degree of pupil choice in the selection of activities, teachers exerted some pressure to persuade children to start with these particular ones, apart from the reception class at Briarfield, where the boys gave problems, as noted in the last chapter.

At Stone Street, the pattern was that 3R's work was done in the morning. The reasons for this were that it was important "to get the children used to work" and also "to get them settled down". It was also because there was "more time in the morning session". The children were also seen as "better able to concentrate then". (Observation Notes, Stone Street).

In four of the Rushside classrooms seen, the teachers said that they usually started with 3R's work in the morning, for similar reasons to those given at Stone Street. One of these, however, said that her pattern was flexible because, in her view, children were sometimes "fresher" in the afternoon. If that seemed to be the case, 3R's work would be done then. She reacted, she said, to her perception of the children when they came in in the morning.

In Class One, most of "the basics" took place in the morning, but some number activity also went on in the afternoon, to which some children were "directed". In Class Five where, like Class One, a "version of the integrated day" was found, the teacher said specifically that she "directed children to the 3R's first", because, in her view, there were those:

> "who would choose to play games or paint nearly all
> the time."
>
> (Notes, Rushside)

At Briarfield, where all activities were available all day in two classrooms, children had to do some 'basics' each day.

At Fairfield, where again 'the integrated day' was said to be operating, a teacher again said that she preferred to start with 3R's work, and made this "fairly clear". This was, however, not just to make sure that all the children did their "work", but also because otherwise some children would choose the same things all the time.

Also at Fairfield, another teacher said that the type of 'integrated day' she used was not the one depicted in books on the subject (none of which were specified) nor the one she had been taught about at college. She said that in her class children did not start "from their interests". She said that books:

> "don't seem to mention things like bonds to ten or
> phonics, but you <u>have</u> to do these."
>
> (Mrs. Parkinson, Fairfield)

This comment points to one feature of the 'Three R's' work, that is, its necessity. It is not an essential part of the 'infant curriculum' just because teachers choose to teach it. It is required by external authorities, as well as expected by parents.

For example, in the researcher's own school, County Council records required the recording of children's progress in language, both oral and written, and in mathematics. These were the largest sections, although other aspects such as social development were also given space. Similar forms were mentioned in the research schools, and were seen at Moorland. These forms accompany children to their next school. Thus, local authorities expect children to be taught the 3R's.

The fact that parents can put pressure on schools was noted in Chapter Four, when heads mentioned this. Parents see the 3R's work as the main task of the school and want to know above all how their children are "getting on" in these areas. The deputy head at Larkway School said that when children were in the top infants and "the junior school" was approaching, parents were conscious of this and so put increased pressure on teachers to do "more" reading, writing and number. This was what parents were concerned with. They didn't really see areas like "Art and Craft" as "work". They were not concerned, she said, with "what was on the walls" but what the children had in "their writing and number books". At the "workshops" run by the school for parents, the researcher noted that some parents were expressing this kind of single-minded interest when the children started school.

Thus, it is not surprising that teachers in the research schools stressed the 3R's.

The nursery teacher at Moorland, who stressed "social training", did however see introducing children to "learning skills" as an important component of what she classified as "basic skills", the teaching of which she thought of as part of her job. The "learning skills" included items such as "listening", the learning of "basic colours" and "sorting shapes" and "counting", all of which she saw as part of developing:

"language and number skills."

That is, foundations of the 3R's under another name.

The other teachers at Moorland all acknowledged that a major aim of the infant school was to teach the '3R's' even though the head stressed the 'social welfare' role of the school. In relation to a questionnaire item which said that: "The purpose of the infant school is to teach the 3R's" three of the four teachers "agreed", the other "entirely agreed". However, the problem of the 'scaling' used was noted when discussing the use of this questionnaire in the 'Methodology' chapter.

Mrs. Knowles, one of the reception teachers at Moorland, had said

earlier that:

"I see my main task as teaching the three R's."

(Mrs. Knowles, Moorland)

Other teachers at Moorland also mentioned the importance of teaching "basic

skills". This was especially important, it was said, because the children

were so lacking in certain areas, such as language development. Because

parents had not provided essential "pre-learning skills", helping children

to acquire them, and then make progress in them, was very much their task.

Besides language, the acquisition of 'number skills' was a major aim.

In relation to 'number', Mrs. Martin, who taught middle to top infants,

said that she tried to ensure that all the children she taught:

"knew the four rules."

(Mrs. Martin, Deputy, Moorland)

Mrs. Dale mentioned other attributes of 'number', such as recognising shapes,

and discriminating between characteristics in 'sets', for which she used

Lego blocks.

Mrs. Dale stated children with 3R's work, although this could carry

over into the afternoon. Mrs. Knowles tended to prefer to have it done in

the morning. Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Neaves both said that they mainly did

3R's in the morning. Children who had not "finished their work" could do

so in the afternoon. However, in both classrooms, there was some flexi-

bility, in Mrs. Neaves class, a change around after Christmas in the overall

pattern.

In all classrooms the children all had to do some reading, writing

and number tasks each day. In Mrs. Dale's classroom, however, there was

not necessarily "written number work" every day. Sometimes children did

both "practical" and "written maths", but she commented that:

"they certainly do one or the other each day."

Another important curriculum task was oral work in both language and number.

At Larkway, in response to the same questionnaire item on the 3R's, four of the seven teachers including the Head, "entirely agreed", and the other three "agreed".

In 'conversations', the deputy of Larkway said that one of the most important of her aims was:

> "the development of language and reading ... to make
> children literate and numerate."
>
> (Deputy, Larkway)

Another teacher similarly stressed "the basics". She said that her aim was:

> "that the children in my care will acquire the basic
> skills."
>
> (Teacher, Larkway)

Thus, in all the schools seen, the teachers laid stress on the need to teach the "basic skills" or the "Three R's", even at Moorland where "social training" was also stressed, whatever the individual content of these activities.

However, there were other elements and other aspects which teachers saw as important and necessary in the infant school curriculum.

In every school, for example, the day included some work that would be subsumed under the category of 'Art and Craft', although this actually comprised a range of activities. It included painting or drawing, making collages, or modelling in either card, paper, modelling clay or plasticine, with 'junk' materials or Lego. It could be a class or group activity, or part of individual 'topic' work. 'Dressing up' was another aspect especially for younger children.

This part of the curriculum was seen as extremely valuable by the teachers, however, Mrs. Warner, the head of Moorland, thought that it was not so regarded by parents, nor did it seem to be at Larkway, as noted previously.

The teachers saw Art and Craft in its various forms as important for several reasons.

The nursery teacher at Moorland saw activities like these as aiding children to develop "manipulative skills" and "fine" motor control. These activities thus had an "educational value".

One teacher at Briarfield said that painting helped children develop a colour sense, "learning what colours make others".

Other comments from teachers in the pilot study schools included the idea that these activities could "reinforce the skills" gained in other areas, such as distinctions between shapes and sizes, or "visual discrimination" skills learned in language or number games which had this as one aim. It was also said that "making models together" or "working on a joint topic" were an important way of helping children "learn to co-operate" with each other. Another view was that in these various activities children would develop "hand-eye co-ordination".

At Moorland, one view was that Art and Craft activities had a "therapeutic value". They helped to make the classroom a "happier" place. This was one way of creating the "stable environment" which Moorland teachers saw as very necessary, given the problems the children had.

Art and Craft work was also seen as a means of "developing creativity" and "developing individual potential". Mrs. Dale also said that these activities helped with "imaginative play". They acted as a:

> "stimulus for the imagination, and also helped to
> widen children's interests."

Like the nursery teacher, Mrs. Dale also saw activities like these, especially modelling with plasticine and painting, as:

> "strengthening hands and developing fine motor control."

So did "cutting and sticking" activities, and these also helped with "shape discrimination".

At Larkway, the deputy mentioned the need:

"to encourage observation and develop an aesthetic
appreciation of the world around us.

Art and Craft activities were seen as one means of "developing sensitivity"

as well as:

"encouraging the fine control of hand and eye."

Topic work was encouraged at Larkway as a means of children learning to

find out things for themselves (also an aim in other schools).

Art and Craft work in connection with topic work was seen as a means

of "extending experience", and also of "reinforcing knowledge", for a topic

which included model-making, for example:

"can use skills from other areas like number."

Painting and model-making could also act as a "stimulus for writing".

Thus, in the schools seen, all the various aspects of 'Art and Craft'

seemed a range of purposes. They were not 'just play' as some parents

seemed to think, but were seen by teachers as an integral part of the

curriculum, extending and reinforcing work done in the 3R's, as well as

encouraging 'sensitivity', 'imagination' and 'aesthetic sense'.

Musical activities were not seen a great deal. They were not seen at

all in the pilot study schools, but this was probably due to spending

relatively little time in any one classroom, or any one school.

At Moorland, in the "Aims and Objectives" it was said of music that:

"Musical activities and songs are a feature of school life
from nursery through to top infant. Specialist musical
experience, including playing the recorder, are introduced
to classes of children during the school week."

(Document, Moorland)

In the nursery, children did "action songs" quite often. These were said

to both help "children's language", helped them "to express themselves"

and to "improve co-ordination".

On one occasion Mrs. Raynor was observed to get the children to sit down

798

in a large circle. They were given a large drum and some small ones, tambourines, 'jingle bells', 'clappers' (castanets) and 'shakers' of various kinds. Mrs. Raynor put on a record with a "bouncy Scottish tune" and the children accompanied this on their instruments. Mrs. Raynor said she had just decided that "it would be a nice thing to do", but added that she thought it would help the children "distinguish sounds" and "learn about rhythm" as well as helping them learn about:

"playing and working together."

The top infants in the main school were taken for recorder practice by Mrs. Dale as her speciality. Mrs. Neaves, however, was in charge of music in the school as a scale post. Music was seen as an important part of giving children "new interests", as well as "improving co-ordination".

Musical activities with classes tended to take place in the hall, where the piano was, and children were also withdrawn for music for 'recorders' on occasions. This was why musical activities were not seen very much in classrooms. Mrs. Warner did, however, come into Class 2 sometimes to take the class for music, using instruments such as tambourines, triangles, maraccas and a drum, with the class divided into groups. This was one of the ways of teaching rhythm.

Mrs. Neaves was observed taking a class in the hall, also for 'rhythm' work. Coloured sticks were given out by the girls. A poem was read out by Mrs. Neaves, who then beat out the rhythm of it with two sticks. The girls and then the boys also did this. They had to beat out the rhythm to several poems. This activity had a dual purpose. Apart from teaching "rhythm" and "hand-eye co-ordination", it also "helped children's language". This was also said in relation to hymn practice, which was sometimes given to all the school in the hall. Thus music, like Art and Craft, did not have a single aim.

At Larkway, the Notes for Teachers said that:

"Music is an integral part of the school day."

In line with ideas about children's choice, these notes also stated that:

"Just as children are free to choose to listen or not to
a story so they are equally free to join or reject the
group making music in the classroom."

The Notes also said that:

"As we expose them to good literature we also try to expose
them to good music."

They further stated that:

"We aim to accept music as part of children's language
development and consequently make it an integral part
of the daily programme."

(Document, Larkway)

The top infants teacher had a scale post for music. Children were some-

times taken from classes into the hall. Not many musical activities were

seen at Larkway, because at the time the school was preparing for a special

event which was taking much time as well as effort. However, a group was

observed doing "rhythms". The teacher said that they were following a TV

programme.

Sheets were given out on which were printed different rhythms. The

teacher said and clapped these, and the children repeated them. Different

instruments were then produced and the 'class' was divided into groups,

each with different instruments, beating out different rhythms. One child

asked: "Why can't we play the rhythms backwards?"

The teacher replied crossly:

"I'm getting fed up with your voice. When you're in my
class you'll have to be quieter."

The researcher was not sure of the context of this, such as whether the boy

had been making comments before in the 'class'. If not, the boy's suggestion

seemed interesting, as indicating perhaps a wish to explore rhythm for

himself.

At Larkway, the hall contained a "central music corner" which could

be used by individuals and groups "by request".

Apart from music, physical education was another area which was thought to help in children's development. In the pilot study schools, because they were visited on some afternoons, PE periods were not seen. However, when asked if this was seen as important, teachers agreed that it was. Among the reasons given were that "it develops co-ordination" (Fairfield) and also "helps them settle down to work". A comment from Rushside was that:

> "it helps children develop confidence in themselves."
> (Rushside)

Another view was that:

> "it develops motor control."

It was also said that:

> "movement is natural to young children, they need to
> move about."
>
> (Observation Notes, Rushside)

At Moorland the 'Aims and Objectives' stated that:

> "Physical skills and control are developed gradually and
> a mixture of activities to develop gross and fine motor
> control are practiced within the PE lesson."

The nursery teacher used the terms 'gross' and 'fine' motor control in describing physical activities in the nursery. She saw it as important that the children used a variety of apparatus. Partly this was because she considered that children would not have the chance to use many of the things, such as climbing frames and other large apparatus at home. Partly it was to help them develop "gross motor skills" through the:

> "large movements involved in using apparatus."
> (Nursery, Moorland)

Physical activity was also seen as important for "social training". Because children could not all use the apparatus, such as bicycles, at the same time:

> "they have to learn to share."

Another importance of physical activity and movement generally was that children did not know how to play together, and they could learn to do this. Also, children were seen as "aggressive", and physical activity

"helps them work off their aggression."
                                                (Mrs. Raynor)

Other teachers also spoke of children's physical development, and the
need to give children some "freedom of movement". It was also stated
that many Moorland children "lacked physical co-ordination". It was
considered that children had no real place to play at home, and so were
not "physically extended". (Mrs. Knowles). It was also said that the
children needed to learn "how to play games" and "how to play together".
(Mrs. Dale). Physical education was necessary, not just for "developing
co-ordination" and "motor-control" but for "social reasons". It was a
form of 'social training'.

At Larkway, the Notes for Teachers stated that:

> "Our main aim is for the children to get to know their
> bodies, to be able to use them with pleasure, know their
> limitations and capabilities, to have courage to extend
> themselves fully and to realise that movement can be
> tremendously exhilarating and expressive. In fact, another
> means of communication."   .
>
>   (Document, Larkway)

One teacher at Larkway said that with so much work done in groups in the
classroom, 'Physical Education' was useful because the whole class could
be "brought together" then. Another said that it was important to "get
the children out of the classroom" sometimes. PE was seen as useful
because:

> "it is one means of teaching children to be independent."

but it was also seen as:

> "helping children to develop socially." ..
>
>   (Teacher, Larkway)

As in other schools, developing "co-ordination" was seen as an important
aspect of PE.

'Nature' and its study was something else that most teachers said was
a necessary part of the curriculum. 'Nature' tables were present in all the
classrooms except at Moorland. Here there was an 'Interest Table' in the

hall, and in some classrooms. These could include 'natural' objects.

One reason given by teachers for the study of nature was that it:

"helps children notice the world around them."

Another linked idea was that:

"it teaches them to observe - they can distinguish, for
example, different kinds of leaves."

(Fairfield)

It was also considered that a study of 'nature' would help children "explore
their environment". It "develops their interests" was a frequent comment.

At Moorland, the study of 'nature' was seen by the head as a way to
introduce children to scientific activities, something she was concerned
to develop in the school as she saw a gap. In Mrs. Neaves' class, for
example, the 'interest' table contained different rocks and stones, as
Mrs. Neaves was interested in geology, and wanted to involve the children.
The display was part of a topic she was developing on 'The Earth'.

At Fairfield and at Larkway, 'nature' was seen as a useful source of
ideas for topic work, and at Larkway particularly it was seen as linking
several "areas of knowledge" such as drawing or painting, writing and
number (counting, and recognising shapes and colours).

The Notes at Larkway stated that in this area:

"there was a variety of encounters and explorations
that can arise out of the child's own interest. The
teacher's job is to exploit the situation, extend it,
supply the necessary information, provide relevant
books and pictures from which the child can extract
information and confirmation."

(Document, Larkway)

Larkway teachers said that they agreed with this approach.

Ideas about the necessity of social and moral training as part of the
curriculum were expressed by teachers. This was not an area explored in
the pilot study school, but comments about 'helping children co-operate',

or "getting used to being with other children" or "learning to behave himself in school", all of which were heard, indicates that teachers see such 'training' as underlying much of the activity in the classroom. Assemblies were not seen in these schools but they were at Moorland. In the 'Aims' it was said of these that:

> "the communal assembly in which all children participate, does not follow the doctrine of any particular denomination, but seeks to develop an awareness of natural phenomena and beauty and to reinforce the moral, social and personal values which we are seeking to establish in the schools and in the children for life beyond school ...."
>
> (Document, Moorland)

Durkheim would have found the comment on 'moral and social' values quite consonant with his views of education.

Themes which the head used in assembly were often taken up in the classroom by teachers. For example, the subject of one was "helping one another" and various ways of doing this were mentioned. This was taken up in one classroom, and evolved into a discussion of 'People who help us'. Another theme was 'friendship, and living together'.

The nursery teacher said that her main aim was "social training" of this kind. She said that this meant:

> "children learning how to share ... how to behave ... learning to co-operate with one another - to live together harmoniously."
>
> (Nursery, Moorland)

The two reception teachers said that they agreed with the idea of helping children to co-operate, and with trying to make the classroom "a happy and stable" place. (Mrs. Dale). On the view that teachers should try to develop in children 'certain standards of behaviour', one of the questionnaire items, there were differences in Moorland teachers' views. One reception teacher 'entirely agreed' with this, while the other "neither agreed nor disagreed". One 'middle-to-top' teacher 'disagreed', while the other teacher of this age group and the head agreed. Mrs. Knowles, the

reception teacher, neither agreed nor disagreed. She did not see it as her job to teach behaviour to Moorland children. Mrs. Martin, the Class Three teacher, who disagreed was, as noted in the last chapter, ambivalent on the idea of making judgements about parents, and this extended to the children.

Nevertheless, all the teachers expressed ideas about helping children in the school develop "understanding of each other's needs", and "learning to be nice to each other". Mrs. Martin expected children in her class to "behave themselves" and order was a feature of her classroom. It was perhaps the idea of 'fixed standards of behaviour' to which she objected, although this interpretation was not one the researcher had intended. This is an indication of the problem of item wording in questionnaire design, and the difficulty of making unambiguous statements.

At Larkway, the Notes for Teachers used quotations to summarise the aims of religious education there. These spoke of satisfying basic needs and building bridges into the future, on "exploring and clarifying" experiences which:

"later religious language and story will influence."
The Notes continued in the head's words:

"in other words, our approach to RE is basically the
same as in other facets of learning. The child must have
the experiences and we as teachers must be able to enlarge
and enrich these experiences. We have to start with what
the children are capable of knowing and what they do know,
not what we think they ought to know."

This, teachers agreed, was an approach which was in line with the 'philosophy' of the school and their own approaches.

Moral and social training, one teacher said, was one of the aspects of the curriculum as important as the 3R's. It was part of providing, she said, for the "all round development" of children. She added that this included:

"learning to live with each other, understanding each
others' needs, and being caring, thoughtful and considerate."
(Teacher, Larkway)

The Deputy in a similar manner spoke of children needing:

"to begin to develop a sense of social responsibility."

(Deputy, Larkway)

Another teacher, in Class One, said that one of her aims was to:

"try to establish a code of behaviour, and respect for
each other."

(Teacher, Larkway)

In relation to the questionnaire item on 'standards of behaviour',
Larkway teachers were more united in response than Moorland staff. Of
the seven, which included the head, six "entirely agreed", and the other
"agreed" with the idea that one purpose of the infant school was to teach
these. This was an interesting finding in view of Moorland teachers,
especially in the nursery and reception classes but also in others, often
stressing the need for 'social training'.

This section has attempted to summarise what teachers saw as the main
elements of the curriculum of infant schools.

It has shown that the 3R's have the greatest stress. Even at Moorland,
with the head's 'social welfare' approach, and other teachers' ideas of the
need for 'social training', these 'basics' were given prominence.

It is hard to see how it would be otherwise in any infant school, given
the pressure from local authorities wanting records of attainment in these
'skills', and parents wanting their children to progress in them, and the
expectations of junior schools.

Nevertheless, the section has shown that in all the schools there was
a general concern to develop all aspects of children, social, emotional,
aesthetic and moral, as well as academic.

This did not mean, however, that the content of what came under all
the various activities comprising the curriculum was identical in all schools.
Nor did it mean that all the teachers held identical views, even in one

school, of how it should be taught.

The next section examines teachers' views on pedagogical principles, another aspect of their 'educational perspectives'.

SECTION THREE : TEACHERS' VIEWS OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND THE ORGANISATION OF TEACHING

This part of the chapter discusses teachers' views on how children learn and how they should be taught. These, like their views about what should be offered to children in the infant school, the 'curriculum', form a very important part of their 'educational perspectives'. These views centred around the various themes identified in the introduction to this chapter, though this does not mean that views were unanimous in all respects.

Teachers' views included ideas about <u>when</u> something should be taught. <u>When</u> here did not refer to a particular time of day, but was used in the sense of the appropriate time to introduce children to a particular learning experience such as reading. Around this theme clustered the concepts of development through different stages and at different rates, and the related concept of 'readiness' on 'showing an interest'.

Teachers also had ideas about the <u>basis</u> on which teaching in general should be organised. These related to the concepts of 'needs' and 'interests'. Ideas about the importance of these were closely related to teachers' views on <u>how</u> teaching should be organised, whether at the level of the individual, the group or the whole class, which also related to their views on 'development'. It also partly relates to views on how pupils should be organised, in single age or family groups.

Other aspects of <u>how</u> teaching should be organised concerned the organisation of the curriculum. The related concept was 'the integrated day'. This involved another sense of <u>when</u> curricular activities should be provided, either at particular times or through the day. Related to this were the concepts of free choice and teacher direction, or <u>when</u> the

activities should be done by the pupils. This also links in part to ideas about the organisation of pupils.

Although these views on the when, what and how of learning and teaching, and the related concepts, are in fact closely linked. They are only separated as far as possible for easier discussion.

Teachers' views about learning and teaching were thus complex, involving a number of ideas at various levels, and with different interpretations of most of these ideas.

1. Development and Readiness

First, teachers in the various infant schools considered that different, or individual children, might need to have certain activities introduced to them at different times, rather than all children in a class starting on the same number or reading book at the same time. This was because teachers held the view that children go through stages of development at different rates. The concept of development in relation to children covers both their physical, emotional, social and cognitive growth. The previous section noted teachers' views on the curriculum which included ideas which related to the need to help children develop in the first three of these aspects.

In this section, therefore, cognitive development is referred to, although this cannot, as teachers' views on the curriculum indicate, be wholly separated from the other aspects.

Cognitive development refers to children's capacity to know or perceive ideas or events, their ability to 'understand'. Teachers acknowledged that this capacity did not develop at a fixed rate in all children, nor was it necessarily related to chronological age, but was partly related to previous experience. Cognitive development in children, like the other aspects, was seen as going through stages.

There was a general idea of what children at a particular stage should

808

be capable of. For example, in relation to writing, the guidance notes

at Rushside expressed the view that:

> "In the top group, children should be able to write in a
> clear hand, with bold lettering, from a simple copy, a
> writing or reading card, and from a reading book."
>
> (Rushside)

It was acknowledged that children were at different levels, as when a

Briarfield teacher remarked about 'work', that:

> "Each child does something at his or her own level."
>
> (Briarfield)

At Fairfield also a teacher, talking about <u>not</u> teaching as a class,

said that children:

> "are all at different levels, none are at the same
> stage."
>
> (Fairfield)

A Moorland teacher also stated that:

> "Children develop at different rates."
>
> (Mrs. Knowles, Moorland)

A Larkway teacher stated that it was necessary to:

> "Provide activities suited to each stage of the child's
> development."
>
> (Teacher, Larkway)

These ideas were common.

Although development was said not to be at a fixed rate, nor attached

to particular ages, in general discussion, children <u>were</u> compared to others

of the same age, either in terms of being more advanced or slower.

Two teachers at Fairfield, for example, were discussing a 'reception'

child, seen as more advanced than others of the same age.

> Teacher 1 "Look at this ... he's only reception and look what
> he's done. [Shows Teacher 2 a page of sums]
> He started with these ... and then went on to this
> card - all <u>this</u> week."
>
> Teacher 2 "Yes, it's very good for reception. You don't expect
> that."

Teacher 1   "... and his <u>story</u>. It might look trashy, but
               the content <u>is really</u> good."

Teacher 2   "Did he write it himself?"

Teacher 1   "Oh, yes!"

In the same school, another teacher remarked to the researcher that

she was going to take a "remedial group" of top infants who were due to

go up into the junior school in the autumn. She spoke of these children

as being "behind" others of their age group in phonic work.

At Moorland, similarly, Mrs. Dale remarked of a child in her class

that:

> "He has been in this class <u>two terms</u> and <u>still</u> can't write
> his name."

Although she was emphatic that she had no "fixed idea" of development,

especially of development at a particular age, her tone in making this

comment suggested that "two terms" was too long to learn writing one's

name.

Mrs. Knowles at Moorland considered that children had to go through a

"play stage" before they could start reading. She cited the case of

Tony, a child whom she said had required "a whole year" for this. It was

why she thought that children who had been in the nursery were better

prepared for school.

Mrs. Martin, into whose class Tony went, commented of him and another

boy that:

> "They couldn't read at all when they came up. I don't
> know <u>what</u> they had been <u>doing</u>."
>
>   (Mrs. Martin, Moorland)

However, she considered that Tony did not have a "learning difficulty"

but a "social" one. He was "very young" for the group. Mrs. Martin saw

Tony as "immature", and thought that the following year she would be able

to do something with him. Mrs. Martin, who was noted in the previous

chapter as saying that she tried to ensure that all the children in her class knew the "four rules" of number by the time they left her class, also mentioned "average children" as being able to do this. Some children, on the other hand:

"would never get past addition."

by this time.

All these comments indicate that "stages of development" are at least partially seen as related to particular ages, even if in terms of 'average' children.

This may, however, be no more than a pragmatic recognition of individual differences in ability.

As noted, 'cognitive development' involves 'perception'. In terms of 'seeing' this also seemed related to children's ages.

Views were expressed about what children of a particular age could do, in terms of their perception of things. It was considered, for example, that children from five to seven years of age perceived the sky and its relation to the earth in a different way from older children. On one occasion at Briarfield, when the children were painting, it was noticed both that the 'skies' were all blue and that the horizon and sky were separate.

This was a mixed-age classroom. King, who made a similar observation in infant classrooms, stated that:

"Teachers did not find this acceptable in the paintings
of older children."

(King, 1978, p. 37)

It was not exactly clear why the teacher in question there found such representation less acceptable in older children than younger ones, although there was possibly a 'developmental' explanation.

The teacher at Briarfield merely observed, when asked about the sky-horizon issue, that:

> "Well, I think children see things as either black or white, no in-between."
>
> (Teacher, Briarfield)

This was rather a funny remark in the context of a comment on the colour of the sky as seen by children. It did not explain much, however. Teachers do not always reflect upon what they do, or the children. This came out at Fairfield, where this same issue came up again. The teacher with whom it was raised did find the representation of sky and ground, with sky as a blue line at the top, with space between the two, acceptable with children of five to seven.

The researcher had again commented on the way children had drawn the sky and land, and asked the teacher why she thought that the children had done this. The teacher replied:

> "Well, that's how children of their age see the sky and grass. As they develop they'll paint the sky meeting the ground."
>
> (Teacher, Fairfield)

At the same time the observer and teacher also talked about the colour of the sky in the paintings. The observer remarked:

> "They all seem to paint the sky blue ... but it isn't always that colour. I mean, look at it outside now."

It was very dark outside, with a grey sky as in King's example. (King, 1978, p. 36).

The teacher said candidly that she could offer no real explanation, adding that she had not thought about it.

This discussion had an amusing sequel. The following week when the researcher returned to this classroom, the children's paintings showed skies of different colours. When this was noticed and commented on by the observer the teacher said that the observer's previous remark had made her think. When the observer said, "Oh, dear", being rather embarrassed by the

effect of the previous query, the teacher said:

> "Oh no, I wasn't angry ... it seemed such a sensible comment.
> I just couldn't think why I hadn't thought of it before."
> (Teacher, Fairfield)

This incident indicates that there is perhaps a 'taken-for-granted' or 'common-sense' idea of children's perceptions in some cases. However, ideas about children's views of 'reality' seem mixed. The same teacher later talked about "doctoring" children's paintings. This raised the issue again of how children see things. She said, in relation to pictures of zoo animals which were put on the wall:

> "I do sometimes doctor paintings. Those cut-out animals
> on the wall are not the original shape. Look at this one
> David made. He made the neck too wide."

Observer   "Perhaps that's what he thought a giraffe looked like."

Teacher   "No, I don't think so. If I hadn't made the neck narrower
some of the children would be bound to have noticed and
quickly told me it wasn't the right shape."
> (Teacher, Fairfield)

It seemed odd that the children would clearly see whether an animal was the right shape or not, but not whether the sky outside their classroom was always the same colour. It may be that they could see a difference in the sky as with animals, but that as the teacher had never bothered about colour before in the way that she worried about pictures before display, so that she 'doctored' them, so the children may have perceived sky colour as unimportant also, not 'what teacher wanted'.

Also, the zoo animals were meant for display, so this may have been a part of the teacher's 'presentation of herself' to others, such as colleagues. Or again, it may have been because the zoo animals were seen as strange, and therefore in need of careful description, whereas the sky was seen as familiar.

The difference indicates that teachers may not necessarily be consistent in their views of what is possible at particular developmental stages.

The teacher concerned was very busy that afternoon and there was no time then to follow up this topic. No further visits were possible, hence the speculative nature of the above reflections.

This part of the section has shown that teachers consider that children go through stages of development at different rates. There appeared to be ideas about what children could do and perceive at different ages. There also appeared to be some expectation that children would 'on average' reach a particular stage at a particular age, since children were compared in terms of being 'ahead' or 'behind'.

The ideas that teachers held about development meant that at any one point children were seen as being at a particular stage. Teachers then had to make decisions about when to introduce children either to the first or succeeding stages of a learning activity such as reading and writing or number, and so on.

To do this, teachers employed the concept of 'readiness', sometimes defined as 'showing an interest'.

An Ashley teacher said, for example, that when children showed "an interest" in something, they were "ready to learn" because in his view, children:

> "learn best when they want to learn."
> (Teacher, Ashley)

At Stone Street the reception teacher of $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 year olds said that she did not do much number work because she thought that:

> "... the children aren't really ready, they're too young."

She added that some children did recognise "bonds to ten" but also that:

> "Not all the children are ready to do this."
> (Teacher, Stone Street)

A teacher at Briarfield said to one child who had taken a work card and did not seem sure about what to do, that:

> "You'd better stop that because you don't know what
> you're doing."

She sent him to get a different card, and said that he was not "ready for

that level" yet. The problem was that he could see other children doing

that type of card in number and wanted to do the same. (Teacher, Briarfield).

A teacher at Fairfield, when asked about the 'reading scheme', said

that she preferred a "multiple scheme" as giving a greater range of choice,

but she added that:

> "It needs a great deal of experience in order to assess
> when children are ready to progress from one level to
> another."

When asked how children were started on number work cards, the same

teacher explained this by reference to one child who had come from

another school and could not write numbers. Therefore "it was no use" her

starting cards. She said that she had given this girl various number

recognition tasks, progressing to those recording answers. By the time

the girl had gone through these, the teacher said:

> "She was ready to start on the work cards."
>
> (Teacher, Fairfield)

The notion of 'readiness' was also referred to by Moorland teachers.

Mrs. Knowles used it, for example, to refer to children who had come up

from the nursery. These children, in her view:

> "come to school ready to get on with finer motor
> skills ... holding a pencil."

In contrast, those who had not been in the nursery had not, she thought,

been through the "play stage" and were therefore not always:

> "ready to start formal work."

Mrs. Knowles, asked when she knew when to start children on reading, said

that she sometimes waited until children "showed an interest" before

starting reading skills and work on reading schemes. She looked at whether

children seemed to notice words, or classroom displays, or took an interest

in stories. The teacher went through "flash cards" with small groups each day, and this activity also demonstrated if a child was 'ready' for reading. If children asked her what the words "said" on the flash cards, this was taken as a sign of interest in the written word. She said that:

> "If a child shows an interest, and knows a few words on
> the flash cards, and can find them on the display boards,
> then I think he is ready to start his first reading book."

However, she said that it was not always possible to wait until this 'interest' was shown. She remarked that:

> "I don't always rely on interest. It depends on the indi-
> vidual. Relying on interest doesn't always work because
> some children are lazy and won't do anything unless pushed."
>
> (Mrs. Knowles, Moorland)

Thus 'readiness' was a matter for judgement, based upon knowledge of individual children.

Larkway teachers also indicated that 'readiness' was something they considered. A reception teacher, for example, said of one boy that he was:

> "not really ready to start tracing."

Another reception teacher, speaking about parents buying books from the reading scheme, said of one girl that she was "over anxious" as a result of _her_ parents doing this. The teacher thought parents who bought books "didn't understand", and said of this particular girl:

> "I don't think that she is really ready for reading yet."
>
> (Teacher, Larkway)

The concept of 'readiness' then, was used by teachers to decide when a child should be introduced to an activity, but it was not used uncritically. This decision was seen as requiring judgement and knowledge in assessment of individual children, based upon 'professional expertise' and experience.

2. Needs and Interests

Teachers also had views about the basis on which teaching should be organised, which were partially related to the concept of development.

These could be summarised as the idea that teaching should take account of children as having needs and interests. This aspect of their perspectives is seen as closely related to, but not absolutely identical with the ideas on how teaching should be organised, hence it is considered separately.

The concept of children's 'needs' was used by many teachers, but was interpreted in a number of ways, as the following examples indicate. Also, not all teachers emphasised the importance of taking account of 'needs'.

A teacher at Ashley, for example, said that although it was important to consider children's 'needs', these were not necessarily the major factor, other factors had to be considered as well.

At Briarfield, a teacher used 'need' in relation to discipline, and related this to development. She said that children:

> "needed to know what they can and cannot do in the class-
> room, because they're testing you all the time. That's part
> of growing up."
>
> (Teacher, Briarfield)

At Rushside, another definition of 'need' was in terms of specific task instruction. One teacher said that:

> "children need to be shown how to use tools such as
> pencils, or paint brushes."

Another remarked that children:

> "need a great deal of practical experience."
>
> (Rushside)

At Fairfield, the pre-reception teacher used needs in terms of provision of different learning experience. In her view, as noted, pre-five children would start 3R's work. She said that these children:

> "do not need to play with toys all day."

Another teacher also used 'needs' in a negative sense, as a reason for not providing an activity which occurred in many infant classrooms. She said that:

> "Children in this area don't need a story."
>
> (Fairfield)

Fairfield was seen as a good area by most if not all teachers there, and also by some staff at Moorland.

At Moorland, in response to the questionnaire item which used the general statement that 'children's needs should constitute the curriculum', Mrs. Martin "entirely agreed" and three others and the head "agreed". Mrs. Neaves alone "disagreed". Her reason was that it all depended on how needs were defined. As noted, there are various ways of doing so, so this seemed a sensible comment.

The nursery teacher, like other Moorland teachers, had in 'conversation' spoken of the "special needs" of Moorland children. Compared to other children she had taught:

> "the children need to learn more basic skills ... need
> a stable and secure atmosphere."

Mrs. Martin saw 'needs' in relation to Moorland children in terms of a specific requirement. They needed "more direction" than children in other schools because of their inability "to cope with free choice", she claimed.

Mrs. Dale also saw a specific lack in terms of language, as did Mrs. Martin. Mrs. Dale said, as noted, that:

> "The children need more oral work because of their poor
> language development."

She also said of children in her class that they:

> "need a longer time to do pre-learning skills."

This was given as a reason why she directed children to certain games such as 'sorting' or 'matching'.

Mrs. Knowles, who also spoke of the general 'special needs' of Moorland children, showed that 'need' could also refer to individual requirements, not necessarily negatively. She said of one boy who was allowed to continue making a model instead of doing flash cards that:

> "He doesn't need any practice. He knows these flash cards
> already."
>
> (Moorland)

At Larkway children's 'needs' were considered important. The Larkway response to the same questionnaire item on the curriculum and 'needs' was that of the seven teachers, including the Head, six 'strongly disagreed' with the statement. Only one, a middle infants teacher "neither agreed nor disagreed".

'Needs' were sometimes spoken of in general terms, as when a teacher said:

> "In teaching we need to consider children's needs."

It was also stated in 'Notes for Teachers' that:

> "Children develop at different rates, and therefore have a wide range of needs."

It was not specified what these might be.

It was also defined in specific ways. One of the reception teachers said that new entrants "need schooling". This meant, amongst other things, that they:

> "need to be taught to put things away."

'Needs' was also interpreted as a specific lack in a learning skill. The 'Traveller' children, for example, were said to:

> "need special help with visual discrimination."

Another view of 'needs' was that children sometimes "needed" individual help, but also sometimes they needed to be taught as a group. This was nothing to do with numbers. It was a view of how children learnt things.

Thus, the concept of 'needs' was used by teachers in a number of ways. Although there was general agreement that children's needs constituted an important basis for the curriculum, these needs were spoken of in general terms, in principle, or seen in specific ways, as related to particular learning experiences.

In either case, children's 'needs' were defined by the teachers, not the children.

As well as 'needs', some teachers talked about children's 'interests' as something around which school work could be structured. Again 'interests' was a term interpreted in different ways.

A Briarfield teacher, for example, spoke specifically about 'topic work' as being based upon what children in her class were interested in, and wanted to find out about. She saw children having an interest in something as an important means of helping them:

"to learn and find out for themselves."
(Teacher, Briarfield)

Children could thus choose to write about something which interested them. However, this teacher did not distinguish between children having an interest already, or developing one as a consequence of what she provided.

A Rushside teacher was more specific in this respect. Speaking about reading, she said that children already had:

"a natural interest in the family, home and toys."

Therefore, these topics could form the basis of "early reading activities" which could be:

"based on the sentence method."

So children's interests which they were seen as already possessing were utilised to help them progress in one of 'the Basics'. (Teacher, Rushside).

Another Rushside teacher spoke about "stimulating children's interests" by giving them topics on "birds" which she wanted them to do. An earlier topic had been based on "autumn" for the same reason. As mostly town children, she thought that they would not have the same 'natural knowledge' as country children about such things as different types of nuts. So she was trying to extend knowledge by trying to awaken their 'interests'. (Teacher, Rushside).

A Fairfield reception teacher also considered that children in her class had "limited experience", and consequently "little to write about".

Trying to "get them interested" in a topic was done because talking about

this, using different words, and in an order, meant that children:

> "have to remember the words, and the order in which
> things are said. It helps them with with their writing."
>   (Teacher, Fairfield)

So again topic work was seen as 'developing an interest' or 'extending

experience' but this time to help with a specific task, writing.

Another Fairfield teacher also saw children's 'interests' as something

to be developed through topic work and the purpose of this the improvement

of skills in other areas such as shape recognition in number, or ability

to write by themselves. She also considered that children had "limited

experience" because at home they "mostly watch television" or else "play

outside". So topic work gave them:

> "something to write about, it broadens their ideas."

There was a topic on flowers, drawing and cutting different shapes, and

also the planting of seeds and bulbs. (Teacher, Fairfield).

At Moorland, a questionnaire item which stated that: "Children's

interests should constitute the curriculum" received a strong degree of

agreement. The nursery teacher and the head "agreed", Mrs. Martin "strongly

agreed" and Mrs. Dale and Mrs. Knowles also "agreed". Only Mrs. Neaves

"disagreed".

As noted previously, Mrs. Knowles complained about the children's

lack of interest in anything at school, and their failure to enquire about

the world around them. However, she modified this in the case of some

individual children. One child was said to be:

> "interested in everything."
>   (Mrs. Knowles, Moorland)

Such comments were not heard very often.

Although Moorland teachers said 'interests' were important, these were

not noted on class records.

Mrs. Neaves, who had "disagreed" with the statement about 'children's interests' believed that some children were "apathetic" towards things at school. However, like Mrs. Knowles, she described some pupils as being:

"interested in what I have to tell them."

She considered that it was an important part of her job to:

"stimulate interest."

That was the main reason why she did topic work with the children. However, she added that:

"If I'm doing a topic and the children's interest worsens,
then I abandon it."

(Mrs. Neaves, Moorland)

Mrs. Neaves introduced the topics, not the children.

In general Moorland teachers defined Moorland children as not having many interests. Like the Fairfield teachers in respect of a few children they saw nearly all Moorland children as having limited experience and so not bringing much in the way of interests to school. So one aim was to try to broaden children's experience. An attempt was made to provide bright classroom displays. This was particularly noticeable in Mrs. Dale's classroom and in the nursery. Mrs. Neaves' room also had some colourful art work on the wall about topics like space. Mrs. Warner herself went to some pains to decorate the hall according to different themes, to try and awaken interests which, in general, children were not seen as already having. However, the nature of the building made such efforts less impressive.

At Larkway, in response to the same questionnaire item on 'interests', five of the seven teachers, including the head "entirely agreed", and the remaining two agreed. Thus, stronger overall agreement was expressed than at Moorland.

A great deal of topic work was done at Larkway. One of the teachers said that her own approach, apart from following the reading and number schemes was:

"to base work around a topic."

Thus topics, built around "something which interests them" involved a number of 'basic skills', reading, writing and number, and also helped children:

"become independent learners."

(Teacher, Larkway)

The Deputy at Larkway also said that an important part of her job was:

"basing work on children's interests."

However, like Mrs. Neave, she added that:

"I wouldn't continue a topic if the children weren't interested in it."

(Deputy, Larkway)

This point was reached, she considered, when children:

"stop asking questions about it, or stop bringing something themselves."

(Deputy, Larkway)

This demonstration of 'having an interest' was important. It confirmed the teacher's perception of that interest.

It has been shown that teachers expressed views about the importance of taking children's interests, or lack of them, into account in the curriculum, although 'interests', like 'needs' was interpreted in different ways. How teachers defined the children they taught had considerable influence on how they saw their task in relation to these 'interests'. Where what children brought from home was dismissed as being of no value, this task was seen as being to awaken interest. Where children were seen as 'having interests', and these were valued, the task was to develop or extend these. 'Interests' were, in general, seen as most important in the 'topic' area of the curriculum. Children had to do 'basics' whether 'interested' or not. However, topic work <u>was</u> seen as a means of developing and reinforcing skills required in other areas, such as 'the basics'.

3. Individualism

Although children's 'interests' were partly defined by teachers, either

because of a perceived lack or because children brought something to school, it will be said that in both cases the aim of the teachers was to extend children's experience, both in general and in relation to 'the Basics'.

The idea of children developing at different rates, and having 'needs' and 'interests' which should be taken into account, and the fact that the two latter concepts were interpreted in different ways, were seen as influencing teachers' views about how teaching should be organised, whether at the level of the individual child, or the group or the class. The concept of individualism seemed an important component of teachers views about learning and teaching although the degree to which it was stressed in organisation differed.

Individualism, or taking account of children as individuals, was variously defined as meaning the idea of children working at their own pace simply because they developed at different rates, and the idea that each child was different, and should be treated as an individual. Thus, on two counts, 'individualism' appeared to involve the recognition of each child's separate 'needs'. As noted, 'needs' was defined differently, sometimes specifically and sometimes in general terms, especially in relation to Moorland children.

Teachers disagreed about the extent to which children could be taught as individuals, as well as about whether they should be.

At Stone Street, for example, a teacher was observed writing sums on a blackboard. When asked who they were for, she replied that they were for the:

"whole class to do as revision."

She said that she often taught the class as a whole. She stated that:

"I teach new concepts as a class and find that even the
poorer ones get something from it."

This reference to the use of class teaching to introduce 'new concepts'

824

was heard in other schools. She added, however, that:

> "I also do group work, but find time to teach individually
> as there are only 11 in the class. You can teach
> individually when the numbers are so small."
>
> (Deputy, Stone Street)

This comment indicated an awareness that, even when individual teaching

was preferred, numbers were a constraining factor.

In two classrooms at Briarfield children were observed to be engaging

in different activities. Some were using work cards. One teacher said

that this was because children were individuals, and were at different

levels, and so they were:

> "working through these cards at their own pace."
>
> (Class C)

The reception teacher at Briarfield said that when she wanted to

teach something such as "a new concept in mathematics", she taught the

children as a class. She thought that this way was better when introducing

a new idea because, in her view:

> "Children learn better this way."
>
> (Class A, Briarfield)

As noted, this was also heard at Stone Street.

At Rushside, the Deputy, in the course of a discussion on 'integration',

went on to talk about 'individual teaching'. She said that:

> "I don't agree with it. I don't think children can be
> taught like that."

She added that she thought that children needed to be taught in groups,

particularly:

> "and when you are introducing new concepts."
>
> (Deputy, Rushside)

In the top infants classroom the teacher said that she did "quite a lot"

of classwork, particularly in certain areas such as number work and

phonics, for example when "a new sound" came up. She said that in these

cases she used classwork because she considered that it:

"will really bring it home to them."

Both these teachers were expressing a view heard elsewhere.

She also said that the class was:

"divided into groups for maths, reading and writing."

Asked on what basis were the children grouped, she replied:

"On ability."

In Class One the researcher commented that no classwork had been seen. The teacher said that she did not take the class as a whole for many activities. When asked why, she stated that:

"The children are all at different levels. None of them are at the same stage in work. So most of my work is at the individual level, so that the children can work at their own pace and level."

(Teacher, Rushside)

Thus, within one school contrasting views on individual teaching were expressed.

At Fairfield, the Class Four teacher said that most of her work was organised on an individual basis. When asked what she meant by this, she replied that it meant:

"Children being able to work at their own pace."

When asked if she ever taught the children as a class she replied that she did "writing practice" with the class. She also said that she taught in groups for "phonic work", although the groups were not "fixed". She said that on the whole, being a "family-grouped" class, it was:

"impossible to really teach the children as a class because they are all of different ages, and so they're at different stages."

(Teacher, Fairfield)

This comment was another indication that stages of development were linked to particular ages. However, in one way it was an odd comment, because even

in a single age class, children can be at different stages.

Another Fairfield teacher argued that teaching in a group was useful when children started in a new class, but said that she ended up teaching individually. She said that:

> "When the children first come into a class they naturally
> fall into groups .... Each group might start off doing
> the same work, but after a week or so one group will have
> split up again, so that you find you can no longer teach
> them as a group."
>
> (Teacher, Fairfield)

At Moorland, teachers agreed that it was important to take account of individual differences. It was stated several times by different teachers that children were 'at different levels'. However, the stress laid on the importance of individual teaching varied. It was observed that children in the classes were grouped for many activities. This seemed a general school policy. The groups were mostly based on age, not ability, but the pattern was not always the same.

Mrs. Dale, describing the way she worked, said that:

> "It's mostly individual, because the children in the class
> are all so different... It would be difficult to work in
> groups."

However, pragmatically, this view was modified, for she also stated that:

> "grouping becomes necessary sometimes. When the class
> size increases then it is impossible to teach individually."

At the beginning of the year there had been some 'grouping' seen, in that different activities had been set out, and some children had done one, some another. By the spring term, however, there were definite groups, sitting in fixed places each with its own name. Mrs. Dale said that she had grouped the children on the basis of ability. She had changed the pattern because:

> "the class is now too large to organise any other way."

But this did not mean that all the children in a group did exactly the same activity. She said of children doing sentence work that the words chosen by the teacher for the children to copy were:

"words chosen with each individual child in mind. They
are specific words from his present reading book, which
he needs particular practice in."

(Mrs. Dale, Moorland)

The children were sometimes taught as a class, for oral work or handwriting.

Like Mrs. Dale, Mrs. Knowles considered that her teaching was

"individual". In her view, this was because:

"The children are all at different levels, and work at their
own pace. You can do this with a class of seventeen -
individual work."

However, again like Mrs. Dale, she felt that once numbers rose "above twenty"

then "individual teaching" became "difficult".

Children were observed to do some activities in groups. Mrs. Knowles

said that there were two basic groups, based on age, but that within these,

it was still:

"mostly individual work - each child working according
to his or her ability."

She added that because of the children's differences:

"you cannot work completely either in groups or as a
class."

(Mrs. Knowles)

In relation to "age grouping", it was stated that, when doing phonic work,

two children from one group did this activity with the other groups. This

suggested that grouping, when it was used, was also partly on ability.

Also, quite a lot of activity was done with a class, such as all the

children together writing 'stories'. However, children again worked "at their

own level".

Mrs. Martin said that she did:

"quite a lot of class teaching."

She remarked to the researcher that:

"You probably think I'm old fashioned but it works."

She said that she did this with "oral work" and "writing practice" and

"drawing". At other times the children were grouped. At the start of the year, two age groups, 'reds' and 'blues' did not sit separately, but they did by the Spring term. In the early part of the year 'tables' were directed to activities, with both 'reds' and 'blues' but by the Spring, it was 'reds' or 'blues' assigned separately. The reason for the more flexible grouping was that earlier "the children were all at different stages". It was therefore more difficult to group then. Now it was much easier.

Mrs. Martin also said that she put 'reds' together, because there were children going up to the junior school, and she wanted them to get used to working together. However, she stated that even if a group was doing the same activity, the grouping was by age and not ability. Each table:

"has children of mixed ability."
so that:

"even when they're working in groups the work is individual."
That is, it was related to ability.

Apart from the 'social' reason - children going to junior school - Mrs. Martin considered that having children in groups made it easier to organise activities. However, she said that "grouping" was "flexible". Although it seemed that 'fixed groups' existed for '3R's' work, for other activities a random selection operated.

Mrs. Neaves in Class Four, said that she sometimes taught individually, and sometimes at the group or class level. Which she did at any one time, she said,

"depends on the mood the children are in."
She had two basic groups, like Mrs. Martin, based on age. Mrs. Neaves said that:

"each group goes through the same work at their own level."
The groups, she said, were not fixed for all activities. For example,

"interest books" were given to children when they could "read well and fluently". Children from both 'reds' and 'blues' might have been given these. These were 'topic books', but Mrs. Neaves said that she always knew beforehand what topics were going to be done. She said that she also had particular pupils in mind for some topics. Also, children from 'reds' and 'blues' were sometimes selected for other specific activities, such as "writing a story". Sometimes, children worked 'individually' when they could choose to do a painting of their own, or play with a game.

Class teaching was given for such things as oral work, writing practice and "story time", and painting sometimes, if the teacher wanted a theme worked on by everyone. Mrs. Neaves' pattern changed somewhat after Christmas, as will be noted later in discussing the integrated day.

Thus, at Moorland, although it was noted that children were at different levels, and teachers considered that such individual differences had to be considered, group work, and sometimes class teaching, was more usual than children working-entirely on their own. However, grouping was flexible, so that children were not necessarily doing all activities in the same group. There were also differences in the degree to which teachers structured activities.

At Larkway, teachers disagreed about the degree to which teaching should be individual.

One teacher at Larkway thought that it was better to teach children in a group, especially when introducing "new concepts and skills". She believed that children learnt better that way. She said:

> "If the children are at the same level it's better if they
> work together. They can learn from each other and help
> each other."
> (Teacher 2, Larkway)

She remarked that she thought that her approach contrasted with that of the reception teacher next door. She said:

"My approach is a less individualistic one than ...."

This teacher did not totally disagree with 'individualism'. In fact she stated that:

> "In the ideal situation, the teacher would treat each child as an individual."

She said that smaller class sizes would enable her to to give more individual attention.

Grouping children was not just undertaken because she thought they could learn better that way, it was also done to enable her to give individual help. She said that:

> "Sometimes I have two or three groups all doing the same
> activity, but I have found that if I do that then ...
> all the children need help at the same time. It's
> difficult to help individual children then. Therefore
> I have to have groups doing different things while I
> work with one group ...."
>
> (Teacher 2, Larkway)

Another teacher at Larkway argued that:

> "You cannot have children all doing the same thing because
> they work at different rates."
>
> (Teacher 3, Larkway)

She said that she worked with groups when possible:

> "for example, number work with those at the same stage."

The deputy at Larkway, in contrast, said that in relation to "topic work" she organised ones that the whole class could do. When asked if she did individual topics she replied that:

> "I don't let children do this because it would be
> impossible to organise in a class of thirty."
>
> (Deputy, Larkway)

She also said that she grouped children "for administrative reasons", so that not all children were doing the same thing at the same time. Comments like this, and similar ones in other schools, indicated that teachers considered that numbers constrained classroom practice, and also materials.

One Larkway teacher mentioned individualism in a way that suggested a

different sense to 'development'. She said that:

> "In my classroom I try to create a relaxed atmosphere in
> which children feel free to express their individuality."
>
> (Teacher, Larkway)

This seemed to refer more to personality. It was not the way in which

individuals was usually seen.

Although teachers in most schools said that it was important to

consider children as individuals, what this meant in practice was the recog-

nition that children were at different stages of development and so at

different levels, so individualism meant mostly working through material at

their own rate, in groups as decided by the teachers.

Makins, reporting the results of a survey into what some 3,000 children

of five to eleven thought of primary school, concluded that:

> "Work is individualised in the sense that individuals are
> on different pages of maths and English schemes. It is
> not tailored to individual likes, talents or aptitudes."
>
> (Makins, 1980, p. 17)

This would be said of much of the work seen in these infant schools, espec-

ially in "the basics", and where work cards were used. There was some

scope for individual interests in other parts of the curriculum, but even

here work <u>could</u> be organised on a group or class basis.

Grouping in some form appeared as the pragmatic answer to the problems

of numbers, of material resources and of space (size of classrooms).

However, some teachers, as noted, thought that grouping was preferable

on educational grounds, as children learnt "better" that way, and some

thought that at least some class teaching was also beneficial.

Differences existed in all these views both within and between schools.

As a general point, teachers appeared flexible, doing what seemed best for

the children they taught in the light of circumstances as they interpreted

them.

4. The Integrated Day, Free Choice and Teacher Direction

A closely related aspect to that of the basis on which teaching should be organised was the actual organisation of the learning activities of all kinds which composed the curriculum and how this was best done. Views about this involved also consideration of when activities should be provided, either through the day or at specific times. In discussing classroom routine, the concept of the integrated day was raised, initially by teachers, although later their researcher also asked about this. associated with their views of this concept were views about when pupils should engage in the activities provided, that is, about the concepts of 'free choice' or 'teacher direction', which have been touched on indirectly when discussing 'needs' and 'interests' and 'individualism'.

Sharp and Green, in their study of Mapledene, found that the Head there regarded 'The Integrated Day' as an important form of organisation in the school. (Sharp and Green, 1975).

King stated that the teachers whom he observed operated different versions of 'the integrated day', although no examples from teachers' own views were given. (King, 1978). In this study diverse definitions and views were given by teachers. This indicated that the term 'integrated day' is not an exact one, and some teachers did question the relevance of the term. As noted in Methodology, teachers said that they operated 'different versions' of it, and some denied the use of any version in their classrooms.

At Stone Street, the pattern of the day was 3R's work in the morning and art and craft in the afternoon. The top infants teacher said that she started with writing first, and after break number work. If children had not finished this before dinner they did so in the afternoon. The reception teacher said similarly that the children all did writing and number at the same time in the morning. Any work not completed was finished off in the Art and Craft period in the afternoon. Children in both classes were

told what to do in 'the basics'. The reception teacher spoke of "free activities" in the afternoon, when children could "choose" from among bricks, dressing up, Wendy house play and painting. She also said, though, that children who finished their work before others in the morning could "choose" of these activities while the others finished.

Stone Street was organised on a single age basis. Teachers said it was easier to organise work the way they did because of this, given the small classrooms, but children, although doing activities as a class, were not doing exactly the same work, because they were at different levels. No teacher at Stone Street said they operated an 'integrated day'.

As noted in "Setting the Scene", Stone Street's head was comparatively new to the school. He was having difficulty in persuading 'junior' class teachers to change ideas, and the deputy in charge of the infants considered that, as junior trained, he knew nothing of infant practice, so he was having even more difficulty with the infants' teachers in trying to initiate change. Mrs. North of Larkway, as noted in Chapter Four, rejected the idea that junior training could result in such lack of knowledge, but the teachers at Stone Street thought that it did, and hence resisted the heads efforts to, for instance, move towards an 'open doors' policy.

As noted in the 'Interview' section of 'Methodology', the deputy head at Rushside said, in an unsolicited comment, that she used a version of the integrated day. By 'integrated' she meant "all subjects combined in some way". She was aware, she said, that there were different versions. She also thought that there were teachers in the school who worked in a different way to herself. As noted in 'Interviews', she said that she thought that some other teachers also used 'the integrated day', while others did not. These last, she considered:

> "we have quite a formal day, that's what they're used to ...
> what they prefer."

She said of those whom she thought used a form of integrated day, that her

version:

> "does not necessarily correspond with the one used by
> other teachers in the school."

The deputy said that the pattern she used had some reading and writing

and number work (for which the children were grouped by ability) each day,

followed by "free choice".

She said that she had always worked in this way, and whenever she got

the chance she would integrate. Thus, when children had finished their

'work', usually but not necessarily in the morning, they were free to go on

to other activities. 'Work' not finished in the morning could be completed

in the afternoon, or a group might start a number activity in the afternoon,

for example.

However, the deputy, although stating that she used 'integration' and

that children had some "free choice", also argued that "direction" was very

important, and indeed necessary, because, she said:

> "Some children try to get away with as little as possible
> and need constant pushing."

She also said that she tried to give the children the impression that they

had some choice. . In her words:

> "I try to go about it in such a way as to make the children
> think that they have a choice, but that's only a guise,
> really."

>   (Deputy, Rushside)

This comment was elicited by the 'bird project' observed, which was recounted

in the 'Interview' part of the Methodology chapter.

Class 5 at Rushside was the only other classroom of the six seen at

Rushside where some writing or number activities occurred in the afternoon.

Mrs. 'P' said that children had to start there in the morning. She explained

that she "directed" children to 3R's work, otherwise there were:

> "those who would choose to play games or paint nearly
> all the time."

>   (Mrs. 'P', Rushside, Class 5)

Of the other four classrooms, where 3R's work took place in the morning and Art and Craft in the afternoon, one teacher in 3A said that she did operate an integrated day, but had only just started. In Class 2 the teacher said that she used a version of the integrated day. 3R's work was usually done in the morning and art and craft in the afternoon, but sometimes children were allowed to do art and craft in the morning and continue with writing and number in the afternoon, but she told the groups what to do. She had had to "intervene" to prevent pupils all "gravitating to one activity". She said, however, that on the whole she tended to work with the "formal work" in the morning pattern:

> "especially if the children have been noisy and not
> done much work the day before."

(Mrs. 'E', Class 2, Rushside)

The Class 3 teacher also said that no group had any choice of when and what work to do.

The Rushside versions of the 'integrated day' were different to those found in other schools. However, there was a difference between the Rushside classrooms and Stone Street, even if both generally followed the same pattern of 3R's work in the morning. At Rushside, unlike Stone Street, the children did not all do writing or number or reading at the same time. At Rushside four classrooms were single-age, and four were partially family grouped, in that they contained reception children up to 6 year olds. The 'reception' were withdrawn in the afternoon to a separate classroom. Hence in four classrooms the children were at very different levels in the 3R's, although different levels also existed in the single age groups. No teacher said that she would prefer a different pattern. Rushside, like Stone Street, had a new head, but the Rushside head, unlike that of Stone Street, did not wish to interfere with teachers' classroom practice because of the influence of the previous head, whom Rushside teachers had resented. This seemed to have some bearing on the mixture of ideas on 'the integrated day' at Rushside, with some saying that they did use a version, and others not.

At Briarfield in two of the three classrooms all activities were seen to go on through the day. As noted, there was a difference for a specific reason in the reception class. Both teachers agreed that they did work with 'the integrated day', in that children could choose between the various activities on offer. The reception teacher said of these classes that:

"the children get used to choosing right from the start."
(Teacher, Briarfield)

However, as noted in the 'Interview' section of 'Methodology', choice was not entirely 'free'. The Class C teacher made it clear that children were told their tasks for the day, and then had the rest of the day to do them. These two classes were family grouped, and neither teacher objected to this. One said that it had advantages, because there were always older children who knew the ropes, so they could help new entrants, also, because of this, she had more time to work with younger children and "small groups".

Although directed as to their tasks, the version of 'the integrated day' used at Briarfield was obviously different to that used by the teachers at Rushside who said they worked with this pattern.

At Fairfield, all teachers said that they used 'the integrated day'. What they generally meant by this was that all activities were available throughout the day, although one teacher referred to it as "the integration of subjects". What she meant by this, she said, was that in maths there should not be a distinction between measuring, weighing and computation. This seemed to be 'within subject' rather than between-subject integration.

As noted when discussing the 3R's, another Fairfield teacher said that the version of 'the integrated day' she used was not one she had been taught, or had read about. This was the Class 2 teacher, who said that she "encouraged" the children to begin with writing or number when they came in the morning. She also said that in 'work':

"the older the children the more is expected of them."
(Class 2, Fairfield)

Another teacher similarly said that:

"I discourage children from starting a water activity,
or art and craft, in the morning, and try to get them
to do writing or number."

Asked why, she laughed, and said that:

"Well ... some children would always choose the same
activity if you didn't."

(Teacher, Fairfield)

Therefore, a certain amount of 'direction' was used.

Another Fairfield teacher considered that 'free choice' was suitable
for some children but not others. She gave the example of a group of boys
whom she had just separated from the rest of the class. (As noted in the
section of the previous chapter, on 'Gender', boys' behaviour was generally
more troublesome than girls).

The teacher said this separation was enforced because:

"They won't work on their own."

She added that:

"Some children can work on their own but others need pushing
and don't have any idea about completing different pieces
of work."

(Teacher 3, Fairfield)

She explained that the class she had that year was difficult. They had
come from other classes in the school, and had not been together as a class
for as long as children in the other 'family grouped' classes.

Fairfield was a 'family grouped' school, with quite small class sizes.
The teachers did not refer much to this, except that the Class 4 teacher
thought that it was impossible to teach a family grouped class as a class,
because of the different ages and stages, although, as noted, she did
"writing practice" with the class.

The pattern of 'the integrated day' at Fairfield was similar to that
of Briarfield. The head at Fairfield was a fairly strong character, and
staff acknowledged that she would not like them to operate a "formal day".

Since they did not, the head did not interfere with classroom work. As one teacher said, as noted in 'Interviews':

> "We wouldn't be here if we didn't want to teach an integrated day."
>
> (Teacher, Fairfield)

At Moorland, some teachers in the infant school proper said that they worked within the 'integrated day' pattern, while others did not.

Mrs. Martin, the deputy, said that she was "doubtful" about using the term 'integrated day'. She equated this with:

> "the idea of all activities occurring concurrently throughout the day."

In September Mrs. Martin said that the daily routine started with "choosing time". Usually this meant children playing with games such as construction toys, or a cutting out activity, or sticking shapes on paper. She said that the two latter activities were not combined, as the children would "get in a muddle". She said that she considered it best to have games first thing in the morning, because it enabled the children to "settle better". She said that otherwise there were children who might not come to school until the afternoon.

This idea suggested that children even at this age might be experiencing a degree of 'alienation' from school. Children in this class who were spoken to did in fact say that what they liked best about school was playing with Lego or bricks or talking to friends.

Mrs. Martin said at this time that she preferred to see activities like writing and number and reading going on all day. She did not like to see the children all playing with "games" at the same time becuase this would mean too many children moving around at the same time.

However, there was some discrepancy in Mrs. Martin's account of the daily pattern, because on another occasion she said that painting did not occur at the same time as the 3R's, but activities were separated into 3R's

839

in the morning and art and craft in the afternoons.

As noted, Mrs. Martin also used the word "formal" to describe her approach, which she defined as teaching the children as a class with all the children doing the same activity, and the teacher telling children what to do.

She said that she used quite a lot of "class teaching" because, although perhaps thought "old-fashioned", it "works".

When asked about the differences, Mrs. Martin said that a "flexible timetable" operated. Mostly "choosing" was done first, but not always. She also said that there was:

> "no particularly fixed order to the day. Sometimes I
> start with "choosing time", then take a group out to
> work with me."

> (Mrs. Martin, Moorland)

She did say that her pattern differed from 'the integrated day' because she directed children to specific activities at particular times, and told them when to finish. She said of 'free choice' in relation to Moorland that:

> "it wouldn't work here."

In her view, the children had enough problems to cope with already. She added that she had worked differently in a "more middle-class area". Moorland children seemed to be seen as deficient in terms of ability to choose.

However, 'direction' was not absent from schools like Briarfield and Fairfield where an 'integrated day' was accepted as descriptive of their approach. Nor would teachers there have equated 'free choice' with lack of direction of some kind.

Mrs. Neaves, the Class Four teacher, did not define her approach as 'integrated'. The observed pattern of activities was 3R's work in the

morning and Art and Craft in the afternoons. Children did, however, "finish off" writing or number in the afternoon. Also, selected groups might start a 'topic' involving writing or drawing in the morning. These were the "interest" books previously noted.

In the first term, children were seen to be directed towards activities. Mrs. Neaves said, as noted, that sometimes she taught individually, and sometimes at group or class level, but the children did not choose as a rule. yet Mrs. Neaves' class was seen by other teachers as less 'formal' than Mrs. Martin's. An informant said that the head teacher and Mrs. Dale, one of the reception teachers, allocated children who would be 'middle-infants' into Mrs. Neaves' class if it was thought that they could cope with "more freedom", and to Mrs. Martin's if it was considered that they were in need of "firm discipline" and control.

Mrs. Neaves, as noted, directed children to activities, yet this pattern changed after Christmas, and children began to have a degree of 'free choice' of activities. What had happened was that Mrs. Neaves had been very busy towards the end of the autumn term with finalising arrangements about Christmas decorations for the school corridor. This had been allocated to her as her "responsibility" that year. It was because she was so busy that, in her own words, she had:

"left the children to get on by themselves."
She said that at first, given this choice:

"all the children drew pictures most of the time."
However, she added that after a few days:

"some children came and asked me if they could do some
writing, or number, or work books."
Mrs. Neaves said that because the children seemed "to have got on so well" this way, and in fact had completed more work than when she had told them what to do and when, as in the rest of the term, that she had decided to continue in this way after Christmas. This she had done.

Given Mrs. Neaves' previous comments about selecting children for certain activities, and knowing in advance what topics would be done, it would seem that her attitude towards more 'choice' by pupils had changed as the result of an accidental situation. However, her approach was, as noted, seen as rather different to Mrs. Martin's previously.

Mrs. Knowles, one of the two teachers who had 'rising 5's to rising 6's' in her class, said of her approach that:

> "I don't really operate an integrated day, that is, where all activities go on at the same time. It's more formal."

As she, like Mrs. Martin, had introduced the term 'formal', the researcher also asked Mrs. Knowles what she meant by this. She said:

> "Well, 3R's work in the morning and art and craft in the afternoon, except 'choosing time'."
>
> (Mrs. Knowles, Class 2, Moorland)

However, she said that the pattern was not fixed. She did not, she said, "stick to a strict pattern" and said that:

> "The division between activities is not clear-cut."

As noted earlier, Mrs. Knowles said that she sometimes taught individually, and sometimes at the group or class level. She said, however, that she directed children. She felt that with younger children such direction was necessary because:

> "They won't get on unless they're watched over. You cannot leave them to do anything on their own because they wouldn't produce anything worthwhile."
>
> (Mrs. Knowles, Moorland)

This was a class specific comment, but echoed Mrs. Martin's general comment on Moorland children, with relation to 'free choice'.

Mrs. Dale, the other 'reception' teacher, with a parallel class to Mrs. Knowles, did, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, consider that both she and Mrs. Knowles were more "formal" than in the nursery.

Mrs. Dale also did use the term "integrated" to describe her approach.

She preferred the idea of "a flexible approach", she said. This meant, in her view, that there was:

"no rigid distinction between morning and afternoon activities."

Thus, "jigsaws", for example, might be put on in both periods, and also art and craft activities might be available in both.

It was observed that 3R's work was most done in the morning, at least it was started if not finished. It was noted that in the afternoons, a choice of activities were laid out, such as shapes to cut out, plasticine, Lego, as well as the sand and water trays and the Wendy House. The difference from the 'formal' pattern was that these activities were not necessarily always put out just in the afternoons. But what activities were available for the children was decided by the teacher. Also, which children did them was similarly decided, and the children had to put up their hands if they wanted to do a particular activity. They did not just go and choose unless told to.

As noted, Mrs. Dale regarded her teaching as "mostly individual", but group activity and class teaching also took place.

Moorland was a partially family grouped school, as noted. Within classes, the grouping tended to be by ability, although in Mrs. Martin's the 'top infants' were put together at times for 'social reasons'. Thus, the organisation would have been more like Briarfield or Fairfield, but approximated more to Rushside.

Although the head, Mrs. Warner, said, as noted in the Heads' chapter, that she was committed to the 'integrated day', she also thought that some of her staff did not operate in this way. She thought that Mrs. Knowles did not, and that Mrs. Martin used "a formalised version". As noted, Mrs. Knowles herself did not consider that she did, nor did Mrs. Martin. Nor did Mrs. Dale, whose class seemed no less "formalised" than

Mrs. Martin's. Only Mrs. Neaves, in the post Christmas period, seemed

to be operating with more of the 'free choice' that characterised Briarfield

and Fairfield, and, as will be stated, Larkway. Mrs. Warner did believe

that Moorland children needed more direct structured teaching. Teachers

on the whole seemed to agree with this, if not all with the emphasis on

'social welfare', as discussed in the last chapter.

As noted, Mrs. Warner was relatively new, and did not interfere much

with class teachers.

Moorland teachers on the whole saw "free choice" as not appropriate

for Moorland children. What happened in Mrs. Neaves' class, however,

suggested that Moorland children may have been able to cope with 'free

choice' if given more chance, and thus have been less different from

'middle-class' children than the teachers believed possible. As noted,

no teacher in Briarfield or Fairfield believed in total 'free choice', and

teaching was structured, in the sense that the teachers provided the

activities, and also used some initial direction at least. Nor was class

or group teaching entirely absent.

At Larkway, the Deputy pointed out that different versions of 'the

integrated day' existed. She also pointed out that teachers' views could

change with experience. She said that during her "career" at the school

she herself had tried different versions. Previously, she stated, she had

laid out various activities on different tables, and children had been free

to choose what activities to do. However, she had had to "abandon this

practice" because of the problem of:

> "too many children wanting to do the same activity
> at once."

(Deputy, Larkway)

Now, she said, she told certain groups what activities they had to start

with, although all activities were available throughout the day.

Other teachers at Larkway also said that they worked with 'the

integrated day'.

The Class One teacher was asked what she meant by this term. She countered by asking what the researcher thought it meant. The researcher said, neutrally: "Well, different activities going on at the same time, I suppose".

The teacher replied:

> "Yes, it does mean that, it's one version and I do work
> that way, but I really think of the integrated day in
> terms of, well, integration of subjects, yes, and as
> an organised day with flexibility."
>
> (Teacher One, Larkway, Reception)

Another Larkway teacher defined the integrated day as meaning:

> "all activities running concurrently."
>
> (Teacher Two, Larkway)

This was a slightly different version to that of the reception teacher.

A third teacher said that she worked with a version of the integrated day in which subjects were integrated. She said that:

> "I follow the integrated day approach. Work is based around
> a topic. This can involve reading and writing, drawing,
> craft and number work, depending on the topic."
>
> (Teacher Three, Larkway)

However, there were separate activities as well. She also had groups doing different activities, because children could not all do the same thing at once, a point noted by the Deputy and others.

'Free Choice' was seen as an aim at Larkway, in a modified sense. It did not mean that children were entirely free. One reception teacher spoke of the importance of encouraging independence, getting children to work on their own. She said that:

> "One of my main aims is to get children controlling their
> own learning ... encouraging them to work on their own
> by the end of the infant school."
>
> (Reception Teacher, Larkway)

Similarly, another Larkway teacher said that her aim was:

"mainly to give the children confidence and make them self-sufficient."

(Teacher, Larkway)

The Deputy at Larkway, who taught a top infants class, said that she agreed with "a measure of free choice" but added that she thought that children:

"need structure and progression."

(Deputy, Larkway)

As noted in the 'Observations' section of the Methodology chapter, in the reception classes groups of children were directed to various activities. Teachers said that the aim was to get children used to the idea of doing different things at different times, so that they were familiar with the pattern expected as they moved up into other classes. By the top infants, children were given the 'basics' tasks they had to complete, at the start of the day, and were expected to get on with as they chose, except for those the teachers wanted to work with directly. Thus, the reception teacher's aim was to prepare children for the more open pattern of the top infants. There was thus more difference between the pattern of top infants at Larkway than there was at Moorland. This difference was because teachers were 'training' children to "take responsibility".

As noted in the Heads' chapter, the head of Larkway who, like the head of Fairfield, was a strong personality who had been head for a long time, disliked 'family grouping', so that Larkway classes were 'single age'. Teachers said that they were in agreement with the heads' policies, no one said that they would prefer family grouping.

Thus, as with ideas about 'individualism', there were differences between teachers and between schools on the subject of 'the integrated day'. Where this operated there were different versions, and some teachers either disliked the term, or stated that they did not operate with

any form of it. Even in those schools where the pattern was said to be 'integrated', activities tended to be teacher controlled, and 'free choice' by pupils operated within clearly defined limits.

To summarise, this section has gathered together the views expressed by teachers on how children learn and how they should be taught. A wide range of ideas was found. There was some general agreement on some conceptual themes, as well as disagreement on others, something which was also found among head teachers. There were also differences between some teachers and their respective heads.

Before summing up the views which were found, it seems useful at this point to refer back to the section on 'Ideology' in Chapter Three, where the main points of 'the child-centred ideology' were listed, also to present the picture of a 'child-centred' teacher from Sharp and Green.

According to King, among the concepts of the 'child-centred ideology' was the idea that children pass through stages of development, and each child was seen as a unique individual. Sharp and Green noted a concern for the whole child, and notions of 'readiness'. King noted a view of the child as naturally curious, and learning best through play, when free to choose what was of interest to him. Sharp and Green added the idea of 'free choice' and education based upon a child's 'needs', with play as 'discovery'. King noted the view of education as the development of potential. Richards added the idea of the teacher as 'facilitator' of learning.

Some of these ideas were present in the views of some of the teachers, others were not.

Sharp and Green summed up the pedagogical approach of 'Mrs. Carpenter' whom they said:

> "tends to identify very strongly with the radical child-centred model of teaching in the school ethos."
>
> (Sharp and Green, 1975, p. 76)

Her classroom was said to be "fluid", one where children:

> "with a wide range in which to be self-directive pursue
> a wide range of activities, as they take their interest."
>
> (p. 77)

The classroom was said to be organised with the minimum of direction and structure by the teacher, in her view. She also said that she found it difficult to think of the class as a whole.

She also thought that routine working in groups set up by the teacher, or with the class as a whole, was not useful.

The classroom was organised with the 'minimum' of "routine and pre-planning", with all activities unstructured. There was therefore no set curriculum against which children's practice might be measured. Activities were available for children to:

> "'play' with, according to their own 'needs', and
> 'interests', and those of the group the children have
> voluntarily found."
>
> (p. 80)

Thus, Sharp and Green saw Mrs. Carpenter's classroom as centering on children's needs and interests, with the idea of 'readiness'. She saw their needs mainly in "emotional" terms. The teacher saw her task as one of making things available to the pupils, or as "putting things in their way", so that they would gain experience. (Sharp and Green, 1975, pp. 80-81)

No teacher in the schools observed would have agreed with all these features, and some would not have agreed with any. As Sharp and Green noted, however, this was a "radical" model.

The features listed as belonging to 'the child centred ideology', and the model above, are compared with the views stated by teachers in this study, although this was not the original goal of the research.

The teachers seen, in their views of the curriculum, did express a concern for the development of the whole child, socially, emotionally,

physically and cognitively, whatever type of organisation they followed, as did head teachers.

In this section, similarly, all the teachers including heads, seemed to accept that there were stages of development through which children passed at different rates, although it seemed from observations that teachers had some idea that by certain ages children should be at certain stages, that is, there was an idea of what children of a particular age should be able to do. Children did seem to be measured against some standard, as when they were spoken of as "bright", or "slow" or "thick", or "about average", (though the standard might vary between schools). This was unlike 'Mrs. Carpenter's' model.

There was also general agreement in the concept of 'readiness', although it was pointed out that a teacher could not always wait for children to 'show an interest'.

As noted in the Curriculum section, there was agreement across the board by both heads and staff on the 'need' to teach the 3R's. At Moorland there was a strong stress on the 'need' to teach 'social skills', but there were differences in the stress placed on this. However, teachers did not make many distinctions between 'work' and 'play', although there were some.

There was some agreement on the importance of taking the child's 'needs' into account. An Ashley teacher said that these were not the major aims, however. At Moorland, three teachers and the head "agreed" on this point, another 'disagreed'. There was much stronger agreement at Larkway among all staff. Teachers in other schools also spoke of children's 'needs'. What was clear was that these 'needs' were variously defined. At Moorland 'specific' needs were noted, and also at Larkway in relation to a small group. The head spoke of a wide range of needs. But the point was, however defined, the definition of 'needs' was made by the teachers, not the children.

There was similarly some general agreement over the idea that children's 'interests' were important in classroom teaching. Strong agreement was expressed at Moorland, with only Mrs. Neaves disagreeing, and a strong agreement also at Larkway. At Briarfield, Fairfield and Larkway 'topic work' was said to be based upon what children were 'interested in'. Topic work, in these schools, was seen as involving a number of skills. At Moorland, 'topic' work was seen as a means of stimulating 'interests', of which the children were thought to have few, as were a small group at Fairfield.

However, as with 'needs', 'interests' were largely defined by the teachers. Basically, they controlled the topics. If the children seemed to 'show an interest' the topic was pursued, and dropped as 'interest' waned. Thus 'interests' did not quite seem to mean what the 'ideology' suggested.

On the question of treating children as individuals, there was both agreement and disagreement between teachers and with the 'model'.

Children were seen as individuals in the sense that they developed through stages at different rates. Thus, they "worked at their own pace" through some activities, especially the 3R's.

However, on the issue of whether children should be taught as individuals, in any other sense, was a different matter. Some teachers, like the one at Stone Street, thought of such teaching as the 'ideal', not possible when numbers rose beyond a certain point, a view also expressed by Mrs. Dale at Moorland among others. Some teachers disagreed with the principle, however, as, for example, did the deputy at Rushside, who was one who considered that she used a version of 'the integrated day'. Several teachers said that they used groups, or even class teaching on occasions, especially when 'new concepts' were being introduced, because children were seen as 'learning better' that way. The teachers who used group and/or

class work some of the time included those who said that they operated an 'integrated day' and those who did not, so there was no clear distinction on the grounds of a particular philosophy. Also, no chidren formed groups 'voluntarily', as a matter of course. In the 'basics', children were grouped by the teacher on the basis of ability or age or sometimes both, and for other activities groups were usually assigned by the teacher, although there was a degree of flexibility to avoid too many children 'choosing' the same thing.

On the question of 'free choice', teachers expressed reservations even in schools where 'the integrated day' was said to operate. It did not occur at all at Stone Street, although the head there would have preferred a less formal structure. At Rushside, the children were generally told what to do, though in some classrooms there was some limited choice as to when. Here, the head was at the time not anxious to interfere with classroom organisation, because of the bad feeling still lingering over the attitude of the previous head. At Briarfield, no teacher totally agreed with 'free choice'. Children were told their tasks, but could decide when to do them, with a little persuasion to start with 'the basics', although except for the reception class activities were available all day. This was also the case at Fairfield. Here, the head considered that 'free choice' was important, because it encouraged "independence and self-sufficiency", but this did not mean an absence of teacher direction. One teacher said specifically that 'free choice' was unsuitable for some children. Children were "directed" to the basics first, if possible, but had some choice as to timing. At Moorland, the head did not believe that children choosing their activities was suitable, given the 'needs' of Moorland children, and teachers generally agreed with this, although, as noted, in one class a change occurred. The groups were told what to do and when, basically, although grouping was "flexible". 3R's work was mostly done in the morning, although there was not a wholly fixed pattern. At Larkway, the head supported a degree of free choice, under teacher direction.

851

They should "intervene and guide" (rather more strongly than 'Mrs. Carpenter's' model would suggest). The staff agreed with this. In the reception classes, groups were told what to start with, and 'choosing' was one activity, meaning using toys or games or similar activities. In the top infants classes, groups were still told what they had to start with, although this could be any one of a whole range of activities.

Thus, 'free choice' had a fairly circumscribed meaning. Even in schools like Briarfield, Fairfield and Larkway, no child was 'free' to do exactly what he chose and when.

Virtually all the teachers argued that some direction was necessary. The deputy at Rushside saw this as very important. At Briarfield and Fairfield teachers stressed the need for direction and the 'structuring' of activities, as did the head and staff of Moorland. Likewise at Larkway the deputy noted the need for "structure" and "progression" in activities. It might have surprised Moorland teachers to know that teachers in schools like Fairfield, a relatively wealthy area, were not wholly in favour of 'free choice'.

A wide range of views were expressed in relation to 'the integrated day' itself. As noted, teachers at Stone Street did not use this term, neither did all at Rushside. Of the three schools that said they did operate the integrated day, Briarfield, Fairfield and Larkway, and of the teachers at Rushside who said they did, most pointed out that there were different versions. The heads at Fairfield and Larkway similarly noted that there were different interpretations. They themselves were very much in faovur of the general idea, but so long as a general approach was followed, some variation was acceptable to these heads. At Moorland, where the head said that she was firmly committed to 'the integrated day', but with more visible teacher control, teachers did not use the term to describe their approach. The two teachers who said that they preferred

activities to go on all day in practice generally did 3R's work in the morning, and in any event, although stressing that their pattern was flexible, firmly believed in teacher structuring and direction of activities. The two reception teachers both described themselves as more 'formal' than the nursery, and the head saw Mrs. Martin as "more formal", a term the latter also applied to herself.

Thus, there was no clear pattern of 'the integrated day', but teachers at schools like Briarfield, Fairfield and Larkway were committed to some form, at Moorland there was no such total commitment.

There was no necessary correlation, either, between the forms of pupil organisation in schools and the use of any versions of the integrated day.. Rushside was partially family grouped, part not. Both Briarfield and Fairfield used family grouping, the latter head seeing this as developing responsibility in children. Larkway, however, used single age grouping, for the head did not believe in family grouping. So did Stone Street. At Moorland, there was partial family grouping with parallel classes. As noted in the Heads' chapter, the organisation of pupils was the head's responsibility and a range of factors, apart from personal preferences, could affect the exact form.

The views that teachers expressed about teaching and learning which have been reported in this section indicated that there were differences between teachers, including heads, both within and between schools, and sometimes between heads and teachers within schools, though this depended on circumstances. In some schools, there were more similarities than differences, in others, the differences were more apparent.

This study would seem to support overall the views of Richards (1979) and Hartley (1985) which were stated in Chapter Three, rather than King (1978) and not Sharp and Green (1975). Richards argued that different 'belief systems' were in operation in infant schools, rather than one.

Hartley found a wide range of views at school level. King, who also noted differences among teachers, considered that the similarities he found outweighed the differences. Hartley appeared to hold the reverse view. Sharp and Green seemed to take 'the 'child-centred ideology' for granted, and even King thought it was 'well established'. This research has indicated that this is not really the case in all the schools seen.

Certainly some elements of the ideas listed as part of the 'child-centred ideology' were present in the 'educational perspectives' of teachers, while others were not, or were interpreted so variously that they did not fall into a pattern. The fact that some features were present supports Richards' view that because teachers may not be 'progressive', it does not follow that they are 'traditional'. No such clear dichotomies were found.

There were, however, disagreements and different interpretations in relation to several 'key concepts' associated with 'the child-centred ideology', such as 'individualism', 'free choice', and 'the integrated day', even in schools which appeared to have more of the listed 'characteristics' than others.

Altogether, the 'educational perspectives' of the various teachers in different schools did not all seem to fall into the category of 'child-centred ideology' or 'progressive'. However, as noted in the Review, these terms are far from unambiguous.

Both Mrs. Warner of Moorland and Miss North of Larkway were wary of using the term 'child-centred' to describe their approach for this reason, although Miss North thought that the general approach within her school was, given the proviso that the term had different meanings. Teachers also avoided the term, speaking of themselves as "more" or "less" "formal", or "informal". Most teachers in some schools, and some teachers in others, seemed to be closer in general to the listed characteristics than others, but in no school did there seem to be a wholly unified set of beliefs that

were entirely consistent with the pictures presented of 'the child-centred ideology'.

The final section of this chapter discusses, with reference mainly to the questionnaire information from Moorland and Larkway, what teachers stated were the main influences on their 'perspectives' and then, what were seen by teachers as constraints affecting what they could do. These are brought together in 'the work situation' in the last part of the section.

SECTION FOUR : THE INFLUENCES UPON TEACHERS' 'EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVES', THE CONSTRAINTS UPON PRACTICE, AND THE EFFECT OF 'THE WORK SITUATION'

This final section of the chapter on teachers' 'educational perspectives' sets out what were stated by teachers to be the main influences on their approaches to teaching, and the main constraints on what they could do in the classroom. The influences that were mentioned are discussed first, then the constraints. Finally the effect of 'the work situation' in the light of both.

'Influences' and 'constraints' are seen as linked, but the relationship is a complex one. 'Influences' are seen as those factors, sometimes acknowledged and sometimes not, which have shaped ideas, while 'constraints' are seen as those recognised factors which are considered by teachers to restrict practice, but not necessarily to change their ideas. However, a perceived constraint such as 'the nature of the area' could at the same time form part of a generalised perspective about 'children in this area', or of a particular class, which could thus be seen as an influence.

In any research that deals in some way with attitudes, and 'perspectives' can be considered as a collection of attitudes, there is the problem that a number of variables can affect them, including personal history, age and general experience. No two individuals will have exactly the same mix. Therefore, trying to discover the main influences upon teachers' 'educational perspectives' presents problems, even if teachers are willing or able to discuss them.

King's view of infant teachers was that they experienced a par-

ticular type of training which influenced their beliefs. Speaking of a

man who was infant/junior trained, whom King regarded is working:

"in a typically infants' teacher manner."

King remarked that:

> "It seems reasonable to agree with his headmistress that
> courses specialising in infant education may produce a
> distinct kind of teacher. Colleges of education are
> the major institutions reproducing the child-centred
> ideology. Women (and men) 'become' infants' teachers
> through their encounter with the ideology."
>
> (King, 1978, p. 77)

Although King noted that what he called this "professional

socialisation theory" might need to be "modified" by asking what types

of person "choose and are chosen" for infant education, questions that he

does not attempt to answer, even to think that colleges might be the

main influence seems simplistic.

Hartley pointed out how difficult it is to assess the influences

upon what he termed teachers' ideologies. He said that an attempt to

do this:

> "implies that the researcher has access to the bio-
> graphy of the teachers and the history of the social
> contexts to which she has been exposed. the majority
> of teachers would have been exposed to contradictory
> strands of thought."
>
> (Hartley, 1985, p. 188)

While Hartley's study referred to primary schools, not specifically infant

schools, his comment seems a valid one, since it points to the range of

knowledge required.

King's view of colleges as the main influence seems suspect for

several reasons. For example, colleges may not always have presented

such an ideology. It cannot be assumed without a detailed study of their

past and their present programmes, and of teachers of different ages

about their history. Also, even if colleges now present the 'child-

centred ideology', or have done until recently, and this represents a unified system of beliefs, which is doubtful, this does not explain why all infant teachers should possess such beliefs. King's statement virtually ignores other factors. For example, it seems to assume that different personalities, themselves the product of particular backgrounds, will react in the same way to the allegedly similar presentation of belief systems in training. There is also the possible effect of age, and of experience of teaching in different work situations, which could mean the particular staff teachers are part of at any one time, particular children, or the particular school. All these form part of what Hartley called the 'social contexts', as well as general experience of life, such as bringing up children of their own, which can present teachers with different "strands of thought" from those of colleges.

However, acknowledging that there are all these possible influences does not help in overcoming the problems of discovering what these are. For one thing, finding out would seem to require answers to a large number of fairly detailed questions as to personal background, training and experience.

In the pilot study schools there simply was not time for these kinds of questions, and little for more general ones in this area.

At Moorland, the teachers were not particularly forthcoming in general 'conversations' and only one volunteered information as to where she had trained. They did, however, mention how long they had been at the school, and a little of their previous teaching experience. At Larkway, the researcher considered that teachers would have said more if the length of time spent there had been as long as at Moorland.

The questionnaire which was given to Moorland staff contained questions about training and experience. At Larkway, this part of the questionnaire was amended to give more open-ended questions about influences. As stated in

'Methodology', experience at Moorland affected the researcher's judgement in this area.

At the time of doing the research, interest in teachers' 'life histories' had not been widespread, so questions of this kind were not asked. Even questions about training were resented by two teachers at Moorland, according to Mrs. Warner.

It was hoped to use the questionnaire retrospectively in the pilot study schools, but this did not in the event prove possible. The head at Ashley, sent a copy to show to her staff, so that they could decide if they wished to co-operate, filled it in herself. Other schools did not wish to take part, althogh one might have, but this did not seen worthwhile.

Thus, for various reasons, including the inexperience of the researcher, certain questions about possible influences on perspectives were omitted in this research. However, some information which seemed relevant was gained. The questionnaire responses indicated that various factors influenced teachers' perspectives. For purposes of comparison, the heads' responses are given as well as the teachers'.

The head at Ashley, who said that she had been trained to teach 3+ to 8+ age groups and had been teaching over fifteen years, and between 11-15 years in that school, said in relation to the questionnaire item:

> "How adequate was your training in the light of your
> subsequent teaching experience?"

replied that it was:

> "Tolerably adequate."

In response to a question:

> "Has your approach altered during your teaching career?"

she replied that:

> "In different schools the teacher must to a great extent fit
> in with the philosophy and practices in the current school,
> so approaches are bound to alter."

When asked if any courses had been attended in the last five years, she

replied that she had, all covering infant work. Asked if these courses

had been useful, she replied that:

> "Contact with other teachers often more useful than the
> content of the course."
>
> (Questionnaire, Head, Ashley)

On the whole "experience" had been the "main influence on teaching".

Mrs. Warner, the head of Moorland, had trained for the 5-8 age range.

She had previously been at Moorland for six years, four as deputy and two

as head teacher. Previously she had taught for two years in her first

post, and one term in another school. Of her training and its adequacy,

she said that:

> "My one year post-graduate course gave me ιa philosophy
> and general approach which I have held to throughout
> my teaching career."

She said that her approach had changed, in that:

> "Now I do more direct and structured teaching of skills
> rather than rely on children discovering facts and skills
> for themselves. The change is dictated by the needs of
> children as perceived by me, and by experience and obser-
> ·vation of other teachers' methods."

She stated that several courses had been attended, either "weekend" on

"in-service residential", as well as "evening talks" on a range of topics.

Some of these had been "very useful" and "full of practical suggestions",

others less so.

The "main influences on teaching" had been:

> "Training and courses, children, one has taught and the
> teachers one has observed."
>
> (Head, Moorland, Questionnaire)

Mrs. Martin, the deputy, had trained for infant/juniors. She had been

teaching between 11-15 years, arid had been at Moorland for two years. Of

her training, she stated that it was:

> "Very good."

She said that her "approach had changed" and gave a range of reasons for this.

She stated:

> "Yes, Educational research influences one's thinking and
> working. Yes, every teacher must adapt to changing
> catchments, different teachers, different buildings,
> changes in class size, varying economic conditions."

This was quite a list, and illustrates very well how many factors can

influence teachers. In conversation she had previously also said that

the way she worked was because of her personality:

> "Of the way I am. That's how I like it."

She said that she had attended various courses, most of which had been

useful, and that:

> "... particularly valuable were the discussions with
> colleagues when analysing the course contents."

In response to the item on "Main Influences", Mrs. Martin replied that

these had been:

> "The Head Teacher, local education authority advisers,
> the response of children, a College of Education
> lecturer, my own teachers from school days, my own
> reading of research articles, experience, my colleagues,
> and the expectations and needs of parents."
>
> (Mrs. Martin, Questionnaire, Moorland)

Again, this was quite an extensive list.

Mrs. Neaves, the other top infants' teacher, was also infant trained,

for 5-7 year olds, had been teaching for over fifteen years, and had been

at Moorland for the same long time. She stated that her training had

been:

> "very adequate."

She made no comment about whether her approach had changed, or whether

she had attended any courses. She stated succinctly of the main

influences on her teaching that this was:

> "Experience."
>
> (Mrs. Neaves, Moorland, Questionnaire)

Mrs. Knowles, one of the two reception teachers, had also taught for

"over fifteen years" (in fact nearly thirty) and the same "over fifteen"

for "teaching in this school". In relation to her "training" she said that
it had been:

> "Very adequate at the time to methods and size of class
> in operation then."

> (Questionnaire)

In 'conversation', Mrs. Knowles had previously told the researcher that
she had trained for two years at a Welsh college, of which she said that
the "regime" was "very strict". Students had to attend all lectures, and
there was a "full day". Mrs. Knowles also said when she had started teach-
ing she could not carry out the ideas taught at college then because of
the class size, which as "around fifty". She also remarked that her first
headmaster was:

> "keen on pupils getting scholarships."

He told her that he wanted pupils to be able:

> "to read and write before leaving the infant school."

This had therefore been the main stress in the infant department.

Mrs. Knowles, in response to the item on whether her approach had
changed, said that:

> "Yes, each class and age group and the number of children
> in the class dictate to a limited extent the approach and
> methods."

She simply stated "yes" to the question on course attendance, and gave no
reply to the item on "Main Influences".

Mrs. Dale, the other reception teacher, said that she had been "infant"
trained. She had said previously that she had been teaching for four years,
two of which had been spent at Moorland. Of her "training", she replied
that it had been:

> "Very adequate, giving me a base on which to build."

She had stated earlier that she had been trained at a college in the West
Midlands. She said that her approach had changed:

> "Yes, to cater for the constantly changing needs of the
> children, and the nature of the actual class, e.g. size
> of class."

861

She stated that she had attended courses. Some of these had been:

> "useful, giving good practical ideas, others rather
> disappointing."

She stated that the "main influences" on her teaching were:

> "College, head teachers, other class teachers, the
> children."

<div align="right">(Mrs. Dale, Moorland, Questionnaire)</div>

Mrs. Raynor, the nursery teacher, said that she had trained for the nursery/
infant group, and had taught reception children. She had taught "over fifteen
years", between "0-5" at Moorland. She said of her training that, it had
been:

> "Very adequate as training for my first job and as a base
> to which experience is always being added."

She said that "yes", her approach had changed, because:

> "In the present school children need to learn more basic
> skills and need a more stable and secure atmosphere to
> be provided for them."

This was something that she had repeatedly stressed in 'conversations'.

Mrs. Raynor stated that she had been on several courses, including a
Nursery Project residential course, one on Music in the Nursery, and one
on Art and Crafts for Christmas, and meetings of the Nursery Teachers Group.
She said of these courses that they had been:

> "mostly very useful. New ideas and discussion of
> common problems."

To the item on "Main Influences" she replied simply:

> "Experience."

<div align="right">(Mrs. Raynor, Nursery, Moorland)</div>

As stated in 'Methodology', this questionnaire was not presented in
ideal circumstances. It was not administered by the researcher, nor com-
pleted privately, but after a staffroom discussion.

Nevertheless, the responses indicate that a number of factors appear
to have influenced Moorland teachers' 'educational perspectives'.

In contrast to King's view, 'college' did not seem the principal influence. The head and Mrs. Dale, who was relatively new to teaching, cited respectively the post-graduate training year or college, while Mrs. Martin cited "a lecturer".

The head, Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Neaves and Mrs. Raynor cited "experience". But this is such a broad general term. It was not clear from the responses what these teachers meant by it, and how it was distinguishable from other features they mentioned. All the teachers mentioned 'colleagues' or 'teachers' in some way as being an influence on their teaching. These could have been either past or present 'colleagues'. Only Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Dale mentioned 'the Head teacher' Mrs. Martin mentioned the educational authority and the 'adviser'.

All the teachers mentioned 'children' in some way. The effect of different catchment areas was noted as an influence by Mrs. Martin, and indirectly by Mrs. Warner and Mrs. Martin. However, as noted in Chapter Five, the influence of 'children in this area' was stressed continually in 'conversations' and the 'deficiencies' of the children and their consequent 'special needs' frequently stressed. The questionnaire responses did not adequately demonstrate the importance that they had attached to this aspect, nor the comparisons made between Moorland and other areas.

Mrs. Martin differed from the other teachers in giving a much wider range of influences, including 'educational research'. She also mentioned 'the needs and expectations of parents'. Other Moorland teachers in 'conversation' had mentioned parents, but not exactly as influences in their teaching, except indirectly through their apparent inability to prepare children for school.

All of the features mentioned by Moorland teachers could have been seen as forming part of 'experience'.

As also noted in Methodology, it was not possible to follow up this questionnaire in order to clarify statements, in particular what was meant by 'experience', and whether they meant 'colleagues' or 'the head' in their present school only.

The modified questionnaire presented at Larkway did, as stated, omit questions on training and length of training. Some of this information, however, was gained in 'conversations'.

The head at Larkway, as noted in the heads' chapter, was junior trained, and had taught for over thirty years, of which some fifteen had been spent at Larkway. She agreed that "a common approach" was used in the school.

She cited as "the main influences" on her teaching as:

"An exceptionally good Headmaster. Training College.
Plowden and Bullock. D.E.S. courses. Own personality."
(Head, Larkway, Questionnaire)

Like Mrs. Martin of Moorland, she thus noted the influence of her own teachers, and of her own personality.

The Deputy at Larkway, who taught a Top Infants class, had similar training to the Head, and also similar teaching experience. She also had been at Larkway over fifteen years. She said "Yes" to the idea of a common approach.

As to the "main influence" on teaching, she wrote very much as she later spoke. She stated that the influences were:

"A lot of common sense! Own experience: what has worked and what has not! Some courses at the Teachers' Centre. The Head teacher's wishes."
(Deputy, Larkway, Questionnaire)

She was the only teacher to cite 'common-sense'.

The first of the three reception teachers were infant trained, and had been teaching between five and ten years, of which between 0-5 had been

spent at Larkway. Like all the other Larkway teachers, she agreed that

there was a common approach. Of the 'main influences' she stated that:

> "My basic attitudes were developed at college. My present
> head, colleagues, and colleagues in other areas of
> education."

<div align="right">(Reception 1, Larkway, Questionnaire)</div>

The second reception teacher had been teaching for some four years, of

which two had been spent at Larkway. Of the "common approach", she added |

to "Yes" that the:

> "staff work together for the good of the child and of
> the school as a whole ..."

She stated that the "main influences" upon her teaching had been:

> "The experience of bringing up my own children. The
> methods already established at Larkway. My own
> experience in other schools. Various books."

<div align="right">(Reception 2, Larkway, Questionnaire)</div>

Apart from the Heads and Mrs. Martin, this was the only teacher to mention

reading, and the only one to mention her own family experience. This was

a surprising lack, for other teachers were known to have families.

The other top infants' teacher had received infant/junior training,

and had taught for between ten and fifteen years, of which nearly five had

been spent at Larkway.

She stated on the questionnaire that the "main influence" on teaching

was:

> "Colleagues."

While passing through the cloakroom one day she stopped to chat to the

researcher, asking about the research. In the course of this conversation

she remarked that:

> "Training provides the right attitudes but it doesn't tell
> you what to do. That comes with experience."

<div align="right">(Top Infants, Larkway, Questionnaire)</div>

The third reception teacher was infant trained, and had taught for between

five and ten years, of which between 0-5 were spent at Larkway. She stated

that the "main influences" were:

<div align="center">865</div>

"the approach and methods used in this particular school, by other staff. To a small extent the course attended at college."

(Reception 3, Larkway, Questionnaire)

The 'middle infants' teacher was a probationer, in her first post. As fresh from training, it could have been expected, if King's view of the influence of colleges was correct, that this teacher would have given this as the 'main influence'. She actually stated, however, that:

"As this is my first post, I would say that this school's approach has had the greatest influence."

(Middle Infants, Larkway, Questionnaire)

As at Moorland, a number of influences are listed.

The Head noted the prior influence on her own headmaster, and her own personality. The reception 2 teacher cited the experience of bringing up her own children, which might indeed appear relevant for teachers of young children.

The Head also mentioned Plowden, and the Bullock report on language, and another teacher noted the influence of 'various books'.

The Head, and four teachers, mentioned 'College'. One of the reception teachers noted that 'basic attitudes' were formed there, and another spoke of its influence "to a limited extent". In 'conversation' the top infants teacher who listed 'colleagues' as the main influence told the researcher that:

"Training provides the right attitudes but it doesn't tell you what to do. That comes with experience."

(Teacher, Top Infants, Larkway)

Thus, college training would seem to have some influence on attitudes, but did not seem the major influence on perspectives. This differs from King's view.

'Courses' were mentioned by the deputy and head. As noted in the Heads' chapter, she and the deputy, being junior trained, had gone on special infant courses at the time the school began. The reception 1 teacher also told the researcher that she had attended one or two short courses.

These again did not seem a major influence.

The deputy cited 'the Head's wishes' and a reception teacher also listed "my present head". "Colleagues" and "other staff" were mentioned directly by these teachers. Three others mentioned "the approach used in this school", which, as noted in the Heads' chapter, was very much the responsibility of the Head. In mentioning this, therefore, these teachers were indirectly noting the influence of the head, as well as other teachers. It seemed significant that it was 'this approach', not approaches. Apart from "common-sense", the deputy listed "my own experience", and so did the Reception 2 teacher. This meant teaching experience other than at Larkway.

It was noticeable that Larkway teachers did not list 'children' or 'the catchment area', unlike Moorland, although the children, and training them for responsibility, was a major concern.

As at Moorland, 'colleagues' were seen as an important influence. However, no Moorland teacher spoke of "the approach in this school", which was clearly a very strong influence for Larkway teachers, especially taken in conjunction with the references to the 'Head' and colleagues.

This was in accord with observations. At Larkway there was a clearly defined and similar general style in operation in the classrooms, although in the reception classes there was more direct control of children. These were 'training classes'.

At Moorland, there was no such clear agreement. Also, the head believed in 'the integrated day', but most Moorland teachers did not seem to.

Thus, at Larkway, the 'main influence' seemed to be 'the approach', and at Moorland, the 'children'. This suggested the 'area' and Mrs. Martin listed the different catchment areas as an influence.

As reported elsewhere, the nature of the Moorland catchment area was discussed in 'conversations' in adverse terms. Other writers note this influence. For example, Pollard found that in the case of 'Moorside', the view of the nature of the intake as 'working class' undoubtedly influenced:

"the way in which 'rules' were projected and enforced."

Pollard stated also that:

"an institutional bias will thus tend to be related to cultural forms within the schools' catchment area."

(Pollard, 1985, p. 142)

Rushton and Ward argued that the nature of the catchment area was an important influence upon teachers. They found that teachers in "poorer areas" tended to be more "traditional" than those in "good areas". (Rushton and Ward, in Telford, 1969).

However, as noted in Chapter Three and the last section, Richards pointed out that because teachers were not one thing, this did not mean that they were 'traditional'. This implied a dichotomy. He thought there were four 'belief systems' in operation, not two. (Richards, 1979).

At Moorland, the catchment area appeared to influence teachers' perspectives, but such influence was not clear cut. It has been shown that not all teachers agreed with the heads' stress on 'social welfare' and work with parents, seeing their task as teaching. Both the head and staff at Moorland believed in 'structure', however, teacher direction of pupils' activities, although not agreeing over 'the integrated day', Both Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Dale, and also the head, compared the approach they used at Moorland to those they had used in other schools. The two former specifically mentioned 'more middle-class areas', so seemed to have views about 'working-class pupils'. As noted in relation to Fairfield in Chapter Five, this was not unknown elsewhere.

Mrs. Martin particularly as noted in the last section was critical of

'free choice', seeing it as "unsuitable" for Moorland pupils. Children in 'other schools' they had taught in were seen by Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Dale as being more able to cope with 'free choice' and taking more responsibility for organising their time. Also, teachers in such schools could do more 'oral work' with children, who were seen as having 'better language development' than Moorland children, although Moorland children 'needed' oral work to develop their language.

However, it has also been shown that in such 'middle-class' schools 'free choice' was not axiomatic, nor was 'structure and teacher direction' absent.

At Larkway, for example, although the main emphasis was on the development of individual responsibility in children for organising their own time, this was trained for in the reception classes, and the Deputy, as noted, believe in "direction". The catchment area was not mentioned as having an influence at Larkway, and 'home background' was little mentioned, although one teacher did see some children in her class as bringing little from home in the way of 'interests'. Thus, she felt that it was part of her tak to 'widen experience'. She commented that parents came to her "astounded" that their children had acquired so much "general knowledge".

As noted in Chapter Two, the nature of the Larkway area was rather more mixed than Moorland teachers considered it to be. Therefore, Moorland teachers may have been unduly stressing the nature of the catchment area as an influence, but it did seem that views of 'working-class pupils' were a part of their perspective as they may have been with other teachers in other areas.

Another possible influence upon teachers' 'educational perspectives' was age. This was not mentioned in the questionnaires, but was brought up in conversations, especially in those with head teachers.

McIntyre, Morris and Sutherland found that age, along with experience, affected teachers' perceptions of their role, and that:

"older teachers tended to be more conservative and tough minded."

(McIntyre et al, 1966, p. 278)

On the other hand, Oliver and Butcher found no significant difference in teachers' attitudes related to age in three groups of teachers up to fifty years of age. However, they found that over this age teachers were 'significantly' more 'tough-minded'. (Oliver and Butcher, 1968).

The head at Stone Street, who wished to introduce new ideas, spoke of difficulties with older teachers, some of whom had 'thirty years of experience'.

As noted in Setting the Scene', however, the teachers saw their problem with him as his lack of knowledge of 'infant teaching'. It was this, rather than age, which seemed relevant to them.

However, both Miss Lasky of Fairfield and Mrs. North at Larkway stated that resistance to new ideas that they wished to introduce had come from 'older members' of staff.

On the other hand, the deputy at Rushside was near retiring age. As noted, she preferred to organise her classroom on "informal" lines. She compared herself to some other members of staff, including some younger teachers, who were, in her view, "more formal" than she was.

Also, at Moorland, Mrs. Martin was in her thirties, as was Mrs. Dale. Yet both were seen as having quite structured classrooms, and Mrs. Martin neither saw 'free choice' as right for Moorland pupils, nor regarded herself as operating 'the integrated day'. Mrs. Warner, in the same age group, was 'firmly committed' to the latter concept. Mrs. Neaves, one of the two oldest members of staff, had a less structured classroom initially, and perhaps inadvertantly, came to see some pupil 'free choice' as quite possible.

870

Both the Head and the Deputy at Larkway were 'over fifty' and were not apparently more 'conservative' than some younger teachers elsewhere.

Therefore 'age' did not seem to be a major influence on perspectives. 'Experience', on the other hand, which could cover many things, could either deepen existing attitudes, as it seemed to at Larkway, or modify them, in the light of changed circumstances, as seemed to be the case at Moorland.

This part of the section has considered what teachers said were the main influences upon their teaching ideas. The next part discusses what were thought to be the main constraints affecting what they would do in the classroom.

As with influences, teachers mentioned a number of features which were seen as constraints.

Space, or rather its lack, was seen by several teachers as a major factor constraining their practice. The head at Rushside commented on the lack of space in the corridors, especially noticeable at playtime. She also said that movement was restricted in the classrooms, given the class sizes. The staff also commented on this.

At Fairfield, the effect of lack of space was remembered. A teacher there remarked to the researcher how fortunate she was now to have such a:

"large, cheerful classroom."

She said this was such a contrast to the one in the school in which she had previously taught. She said of this classroom that:

"it was much smaller .... much less space for the children
to move about. I had to limit the children's movement, make
them sit in fixed places."

(Teacher, Fairfield)

At Moorland, in reply to a question about 'constraints' in the questionnaire, both the head and the nursery teacher mentioned lack of space, and Mrs. Martin said that the building itself was a constraint. Mrs. Raynor said that

the size of the nursery seriously restricted the activities that were possible and the way these were organised. It was noted in observations how small the nursery was. The head, to whom this was mentioned, said that:

> "We had hoped for better, but were told to be grateful for what we got."
>
> (Head, Moorland)

Mrs. Raynor said that the building was far too small for the numbers attending. She compared Moorland facilities with those of other nurseries in which she had taught, saying that these had been better off in terms of facilities and equipment as well as space.

Four of the seven Larkway teachers also said that lack of space was a constraint, in relation to the numbers of children. The deputy said that:

> "a large classroom is also needed if a truly integrated day is to be practiced."
>
> (Deputy, Larkway, Questionnaire)

Class numbers seemed in fact to be seen as a major constraint, particularly in relation to 'individual' teaching, as noted earlier when discussing influences. The deputy at Stone Street mentioned the effect of small numbers, saying that it was possible to teach "individually" because she had "only 17" in the class. Mrs. Dale and Mrs. Knowles at Moorland both considered that when numbers rose "above 20", it was difficult to teach individually. The head and Mrs. Martin also mentioned "class numbers" and "class sizes" respectively. At Larkway, the deputy and two other teachers all mentioned class numbers as a problem.

Some teachers also mentioned a lack of resources. For example, the deputy at Stone Street said that:

> "Work cards cannot be used because there is no card to make them with. There is a general lack of basic materials. Falling rolls have meant a reduced capitation allowance."
>
> (Deputy, Stone Street)

Teachers at Rushside, Briarfield and Fairfield did not complain about such a

lack. At Moorland, however, the head said that financial aspects were a constraint, and the deputy mentioned lack of equipment. Mrs. Neaves, Mrs. Dale and Mrs. Raynor mentioned "the national economy" as a constraint, but only Mrs. Dale specified a direct relationship with resources, since she cited a lack of ancillary help. One teacher at Larkway also said that there was a need for additional help, otherwise Larkway teachers said nothing about resources. This suggests that the catchment area of the school may have some effect on the resources available. Both Stone Street and Moorland had 'Priority' status, but as Mrs. Warner pointed out in the Heads' chapter, what this meant in practice was some extra salary for staff rather than extra money for equipment or extra help. Schools in 'better areas' such as Fairfield, appeared to have better resources.

Another constraining factor in the eyes of some teachers was authority relationships within the school. At Stone Street, the infant staff were critical of the head, believing that he knew little of infant practice, and should therefore listen to them, especially when ordering new equipment, for they knew better than he did what was required. At Rushside, teachers remembered the constraining effects of a head. Several compared the degree of freedom they possessed under the new head compared with the lack of it under the previous one. The latter had laid down a "formal syllabus" which teachers were expected to follow. This had laid down exactly what was to be taught in number, reading and writing, with specific times for activities. This head had also "checked up on everybody" criticising those teachers who departed from the pattern laid down. Staff said that they had had little or no control over decision making. The head had not listened to their views, but had made up her mind before a staff meeting began, so it had been thought pointless to say anything. In contrast, the new head did not interfere. The deputy stated that the head had said:

"Do what you like as long as the children are happy."

(Deputy, Rushside)

However, as noted when discussing 'the integrated day', some teachers at Rushside were 'more formal' than others. The deputy said that this was "the way they like it", so it may not have been simply the lingering influence of the previous head. As noted in the Heads' chapter, heads through their powers of appointment, seek to appoint staff over time whose views coincide with their own. There seems a fine line between such 'influence' and control, which heads cannot cross with impunity.

Some staff at Rushside may have objected less to formality as a principle, but have objected to the previous head for crossing over into direct control of classrooms, something which was not apparent at Fairfield or Larkway.

At Briarfield, a teacher complained that the head had not consulted staff about the choice of the reading scheme in operation. She said that:

> "I'm not really satisfied with it but there it is."
>
> (Teacher, Briarfield)

Lack of consultation may therefore be seen as a constraint, but there was little other obvious disagreement at Briarfield. This was also the case at Fairfield. The only criticism of the head heard there was when a PTA meeting was called by the head in the staffroom at short notice, in fact the following evening. A teacher who was not in the staffroom when this was announced was furious when she heard of it from another teacher in one of the classrooms. The researcher was present, and the teacher who objected to the meeting said to the researcher, in what seemed to the researcher quite an exasperated manner:

> "She does this all the time."

This teacher had a previous engagement at her own child's school, and criticised the head's lack of consultation. The head later said of this staff meeting on the P.T.A., hoever, that:

> "Take this meeting, we all decided about that. The need for it."

It did sound at the time, however, that it was more the head's decision.

Fairfield staff, however, were not generally heard to be critical of the head in any other respect.

At Moorland, as noted in Chapter Five, there was little open criticism of the head. There were, as noted, disagreements expressed privately sometimes over particular policies, such as 'social welfare' or coffee mornings with parents, which some staff saw as a "waste of time". The deputy was also observed, as noted, to stand back somewhat, and to consider that it was the head's task to make decisions. She was also one of the teachers who thought her task was to "get on with teaching". Mrs. Dale thought that the staff were friendly, and got on well together. It was not, however, obvious at Moorland that there was a 'team spirit', as there was at Fairfield and Larkway particularly. It was perhaps significant that no Moorland teachers cited the head as a constraint, while Mrs. Warner herself mentioned "teacher attitudes" as a constraint for herself. This suggested that the observer's impression of a lack of agreement, or 'team spirit' may have been accurate.

At Larkway, neither head nor staff complained in any way about each other. One teacher said in the questionnaire that she was influenced by "school policies", but added that:

> "I do not feel these are constraints because these policies are generally discussed."
>
> (Reception 1 Teacher, Larkway, Questionnaire)

This was in line with what the head, as well as other teachers, had said, and with what was observed.

Parents were seen as a constraint by some teachers. The Ashley head, for example, stated that "parental expectations" had an effect, and at both Fairfield and Larkway it was argued that parents were "pushy" in that they were too much interested in what their children were achieving in the 3R's. This pressure from parents was mentioned in the Heads' chapter and in the earlier part of this chapter in connection with the curriculum,

Mrs. Martin of Moorland mentioned "the needs and expectations" of parents as an 'influence', but the head, Mrs. Warner, cited "parent attitudes" as a constraint. In an indirect sense it could be said that Moorland staff in general saw parents as affecting their practice, because of the skills that they, the teachers, had to cultivate because of the deficiencies of parents, as noted in Chapter Five.

The only other factor directly mentioned as a constraint by any teacher was given by the Ashley head, who stated that the junior school curriculum affected work in the infant school. However, earlier in this chapter Mrs. Martin at Moorland had said that she grouped her 'top infants' together on age rather than ability because they would soon be moving to the junior school and needed to get used to working together. The need for school records to be kept, which would pass on to the junior school, also indicates that the next stage may well have a constraining effect, particularly with the pressure to record progress in the 3R's.

This part of the section has noted that teachers perceive a number of constraints as having some effect, although different teachers are affected by different features. The most common constraints appeared to be a lack of space, pupil numbers, and the style of the head. Lack of resources was a major problem for two schools, which were those in 'poorer areas'. Parents were also a problem in some cases.

The final part of the section looks at the total effect of the 'work situation', in the light of what teachers have stated about the factors which influenced their teaching and the constraints which affected them.

It was suggested both in Chapter Three and Chapter Four that the particular 'work situation' in which teachers find themselves may be the most important influence upon their present views as to what they should and can do. This 'work situation' would include many of the factors mentioned by teachers as an influence such as 'the head', 'colleagues', 'the

approach used in this school', the 'children' and 'the catchment area', as well as some of the constraints, such as 'class numbers' or 'lack of space' or 'lack of resources'.

The ideas that Moorland teachers held about the children they taught and the catchment area have been shown in Chapter Five to have a considerable influence on their views, and possibly as a constraint on their practice, ┃ although the questionnaire did not bring this out sufficiently. Moorland teachers stressed the need for 'structured teaching' and the provision of a 'stabler atmosphere'.

Moorland teachers did not mention 'the approach in this school' at any time, while Larkway teachers did, both in the questionnaire and in conversation. Larkway teachers seemed much more of a group than did Moorland teachers, as did those at Fairfield. Teachers at Briarfield worked in a similar pattern and so did teachers at Stone Street, although the pattern was different. This was not the case at Rushside or Moorland.

Mackenzie considered that individuals in a 'work situation' which was conducive to interaction might act as a group and share ideas. He argued that the way in which group membership affects perception depends upon the extent to which social discussion exists within the "work force". (Mackenzie, 1975).

All the teachers observed in the research schools worked in separate classrooms. It could be argued that this situation did not encourage interaction, especially given the time required for preparing activities. Since the existence of shared approaches, and thus shared ideas, was more apparent in some schools than others, the physical separation of classrooms was not of itself a barrier to interaction. What seemed crucial was the extent of discussion outside the classroom.

Miss North, as noted in Chapter Four, stated that she saw herself and

her staff as working together in a team, and explained how discussion of ideas was developed in various ways. Staff went on courses and reported back to colleagues, and discussion ensued. By contrast, there seemed very little open discussion at Moorland, as noted in Chapter Five.

It was noted in the conclusion to Chapter Three that the most important influence upon teachers might be the head, who was seen in Chapter Four as the most important 'reality definer' for the school, particularly over time. As noted in the introduction to that chapter it was a teacher at Rushside, not surprisingly, who pointed out that a head could have "a very important effect" on what a teacher could do. The previous head at that school was noted as a particular constraint there. Whether a head in a particular school was seen as an influence or constraint would seem to depend on the extent to which teachers agreed or disagreed with her views, and the extent to which the head was able or willing to ensure that her views prevailed.

Pollard stated that conflict between head teachers and staff was inevitable. (Pollard, 1985, p. 28). He also considered that some researchers had too readily assumed equity between the perspectives of the head and the school (meaning teachers). He mentioned Sharp and Green in this context. (p. 122).

Pollard also stated that King sought to explain:

> "through the perspective and policies of the head teachers ... the major social assumptions and educational priorities which were predominantly maintained in each school."
>
> (p. 125)

As noted in Chapter Four, there is a danger in relying too much on the notes and statements of head teachers about the schools.

Hartley also stated that the "ideologies" of teachers could not simply be reduced to the 'official ideology' of the school, that is, of the head. (Hartley, 1985, p. 121).

Certainly in the schools observed there was not always agreement between the views of the head and the staff, or between teachers in a school, as this chapter has indicated.

It was suggested in Chapter Four that the time that a head has been at a particular school might have an effect on the possible development of a group feeling, or 'institutional bias', or 'shared ethos'. As noted in Chapter Three, Pollard stated that what he termed the 'institutional bias' of a school tended to:

"reflect the perspectives of those with most power."
although such a bias was not static, since it was subject always to: "a degree of challenge and negotiation". (Pollard, 1985, p. 116).

At Stone Street and Rushside, the heads were of recent appointment at the time. At Stone Street the staff of the infant department disagreed with the head's views, and at Rushside there were different approaches used by teachers, with the head not wishing at the time to interfere. At Moorland, also, the head had only been in post two years, although serving previously as a deputy for four. It could not be said that a united approach existed, although there was some agreement about the children's difficulties, their special needs, and the area. Neither the overall aims nor the means of achieving them were necessarily similar.

Both Fairfield and Larkway heads spoke of difficulties, especially with 'older staff', when first appointed. At these schools and Briarfield the heads were of long standing, and in all there was a more united approach, with staff not disagreeing in major ways with the heads. It could be said that in these schools there was a degree of 'shared perspectives'.

However, as shown earlier, heads were aware of their formal position, and saw it as their responsibility to make decisions about the approach and the organisation, and sought to bring about changes they thought necessary in their schools. They acknowledged that this would involve conflict,

879

at least in the short term, between themselves and some staff, although
they would seek to minimise this by consultation, and to reduce it in the
long term by appointing staff whose views were similar to their own.
Miss Lasky of Fairfield and Miss North of Larkway made this very clear.
The staff in these schools recognised this feature, as when the Fairfield
teacher said that:

> "we wouldn't be here if we didn't believe in the
> integrated day."

Staff at Larkway agreed that there was a "common approach" and that they
worked as a team.

The head at Moorland stated that if she could not get the staff she
wanted she would leave. It was noted earlier that the deputy there was
not her first choice. This suggested that heads might not always be able
to appoint the staff they would like, at least in the short term, for there
are others, such as managers, involved in this process. Over a longer
period, a head seems more likely to be able to exert more influence. How-
ever, as in the case of the Rushside head, even a head of long standing
cannot control teachers too directly without problems, so managerial skill
is involved, as well as a reasonably flexible personality. The heads of
Fairfield and Larkway, while being strong personalities, did seem to have
this skill.

This final part of the section has discussed the idea of the 'work
situation' and the effect of the head within this, which may be considerable.

Overall, the section has considered what teachers stated were the main
influences on their perspectives and the main constraints upon their
practice. It noted that there are many possible influences, and that it
is not possible without a detailed study of individual biographies, to know
all these, many of which may not be consciously known in any case. Using
questionnaire material, the section has pointed out that college, while
important, may not be the major influence on teachers' perspectives. Most

teachers referred to factors which seemed related to their present 'situation', both as influences and constraints. These features related to 'Heads', 'colleagues', the 'children', the area the 'approach', or the class sizes or lack of resources. This suggests that 'the work situation' in all its aspects, has an important role in shaping teachers' perspectives and practices.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the range of ideas which teachers expressed in relation to the content of how infant school curriculum should be taught, and ways of organising their teaching and pupil learning.

The chapter began by comparing a nursery to reception classes in the infant school. This showed that the infant school was regarded as the place where formal learning began, learning which was more teacher directed, and more concerned with basic skills.

In discussing the curriculum of the infant school, comments from various sources indicated clearly the primacy of 'the basics' or 3R's in the schools seen. This accorded with findings of other researchers. However, this stress did not mean that other areas were neglected. What also comes across clearly was the general concern by the teachers seen for the development of the whole child, not just cognitive but physical, aesthetic, social and moral. Though work in other areas of the curriculum was seen quite often as a means of reinforcing the basics, each aspect also had its own particular value for all-round development of the children.

A number of ideas were expressed as to how the teaching and learning of this curriculum should be organised, given the concern with 'the whole child'. Teachers considered that children developed at different rates. In cognitive terms, these were stated as not being related to particular ages, but it was clear that there were concepts about what the 'average' child at a particular age should be able to do. Hence some contradiction emerged between theory and practice in this area. There was also a certain

'taken for grantedness' about teachers' views of 'development'.

It was clear that teachers had a strong sense of their own professional expertise in discussing themes related to development such as 'readiness' ('showing an interest'), children's 'needs' and 'interests'. These were matters calling for teachers' judgements. They were also variously defined, which indicates the degree of subjectivity in such judgements.

On concepts such as 'individualism' and 'the integrated day' there was a wide range of ideas expressed. Teachers disagreed most on 'individual' teaching, not only on whether children could be treated individually, but also on whether they should be. 'Individual' development was mostly seen in terms of stages of development rather than personality. There was general agreement that even if individual teaching was thought desirable, any decision on this was affected by pupil numbers. In general, a good deal of group work and even whole class work at times, was seen as useful, balanced with notions of individual development. This whole area was again a matter of professional judgement, requiring flexibility.

On 'the integrated day', with its related ideas of free choice by pupils, there were first a number of definitions, even with those teachers and those schools which considered that they did use this form of organisation. Secondly, some teachers disagreed with the concept, and preferred a more 'traditional' organisation of the day. No teachers supported the idea of unrestricted pupil choice amongst activities. It was evident that, both in terms of content and of pupils using materials, that teachers structured the day and directed activities, sometimes directly, sometimes more discreetly. It was also clear that even in those schools of teachers more oommitted to the practice of integration, there was pressure on children to do 'the basics' first.

What emerged must strongly form the discussions of the teachers on their educational perspectives was the lack of a single overall belief

system which might justify the term 'ideology'. While some features attributed to a 'child-centred ideology' were present among some teachers in some schools, there was no consensus in definitions of these, and a considerable range in terms of actual practice. There was thus disagreement in this respect in relation to the work of King and Sharp and Green, and agreement with the views of Richards expressed elsewhere.

When discussing the factors which had led to the development of teachers' 'educational perspectives' it became clear that there were many influences. It was pointed out that it was impossible to know all of these. However, again in disagreement with King, it was clear that college was not the main source. 'Experience', in all its ramifications, including their present 'work situation' and the constraints found there, seemed the strongest influence. This suggests that teachers' 'educational perspectives' are influenced more by pragmatism than ideology.