

***THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM: THE NATURAL EVOLUTIONARY
PRODUCT OF TWO DECADES OF DEBATE AND DEVELOPMENT?***

Or a device for keeping the world Tory?

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ABSTRACT

The concern of this research is the theory and practice of the National Curriculum that was established in law in England and Wales through the passing of the Education Reform Act (ERA) of 1988. Its contribution to knowledge lies first in my close textual analysis of the government's theoretical exposition of its proposed National Curriculum in The National Curriculum: a consultation document (DES, 1987). Its major contribution is to pursue the principal question through three years of field research of the practice of implementation in a London borough's county high schools.

The theory is examined through a study of the documents which accompanied this legislative proposal, and analysed both through reference to the rhetoric specific to the proposal, and other relevant and contemporary literature. I endeavour to establish the origins and implications of the accompanying justifying rhetoric. I focus in particular on the concepts of *entitlement* and *differentiation*, frequently employed throughout the proposal and other supporting official documentation, and used both in justification and explanation of what was to be done.

I pursue the suggestion of the existence of a gap between the rhetoric of this proposal and the political intentions of the government first through a consideration of the political and educational context of the proposal's emergence. Then I attempt to reveal some of the subsequent reality of implementation through the field research.

These findings are discussed with reference both to my earlier analysis of the proposals, and the political context from which they emerged.

The extent to which the political programme of the Conservative Party, including its policies on education, depended upon the appropriation of language for its justifying rhetoric, and hence legitimisation of its activities, is considered throughout.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

In 1987 the Conservative government unveiled officially its plans for a National Curriculum for all pupils in all state schools for the period of compulsory schooling. The proposal was published as a consultative document (DES 1987), and quickly passed in to statute law as the Education Reform Act (ERA) in 1988.

The idea for this research project came from the apparent contradictions between the arguments for a National Curriculum employed by the government in its consultative document for a National Curriculum, and the political context from which the proposal emerged. In the justification and description of the proposed National Curriculum in the 1987 document there appeared to be a conscious and committed use of words and terms which were common in the educational discourse of the time, and whose use implied a consensus among those concerned with the provision and distribution of education. Yet the Conservative government and its supporters had a track record of vocal opposition to 'experts' and the educational 'establishment'. This government had acquired a reputation, through its legislative programme and its rhetoric, for being right wing and radical. It was also seen as substantially favouring and enriching a privileged section of the population, while retaining a populist appeal. This populist mode extended to education, and could be seen in a number of ways in the 1980s.

Industry and the market place were extolled as models against which schools and other education services could be judged and, with government guidance, reform themselves. Local Education Authorities were often portrayed

as meddling political *provocateurs*, broadly left wing in character and determined to subvert the education of young people by introducing them to unhealthy ideas. The message contained in government rhetoric urged an end to the influence of these dangerous people who had allowed standards to fall, as they promoted socialist ideas and compulsory homosexuality. Some prominent supporters of the Conservative government lamented what they saw as a fall from the standards of the old grammar schools. Thus the government introduced the Assisted Places Scheme (Salter and Tapper, 1985), to support able youngsters in their flight from comprehensive schools to public schools. The decay of the comprehensive schools was also often associated with the alleged prevalence of mixed ability teaching.

It was, then, a surprise to some observers of the politics of education to read in the 1987 consultation document not only of a curriculum introduced to raise standards (this being consistent with the rhetoric to date), but one which would be appropriately *differentiated* for pupils' diverse and varying needs, and which would be an *entitlement* for all pupils in state schools. These intentions were clearly spelled out, and repeated in subsequent official documents as the process of implementation proceeded. Such intentions and assertions might also have been found in the mission statements of many an LEA, particularly those whose pink hue had been consistently criticised by this government and its supporters.

In the beginning

Thus it was, intrigued by the conscious use of unremarkable (but unexpected) mainstream educational language in an educational proposal from this very radical government, that I began to develop the basis for the research. I would in particular explore the use of the key concepts of

entitlement and *differentiation* in the government proposal, and begin to consider a field research plan that might shed light upon the fate of these key concepts as the National Curriculum passed from policy to practice. As a working teacher in a high school in an outer London education authority I resolved to focus the field research on developments in the high school sector, particularly key stage three of the National Curriculum as implementation began, and I would make full use of the potential offered within practice in my home LEA.

It seemed to me then that the only real window on practice was hard evidence about what was happening in classrooms, and that in high schools every avenue to the classroom led through the heads of subject departments. They would, especially in the initial stages, absorb, filter and possibly re-shape the statutory orders, the non-statutory advice, and all other influences (such as school policy, LEA support and the variety of INSET experiences available). They had to write the department syllabuses, decide upon and manage what they considered to be the most appropriate form of organisation of pupils to deliver the curriculum (though this might also be affected by other school matters), and devise appropriate methods of assessing and recording pupil development. The National Curriculum was described essentially in subject terms, and implementation was to proceed through subjects. The heads of department in high schools would be important players in this process. It was clear from the first publications of the subject working groups' reports that beyond each subject's obvious simple public identity there now lay a more dense and complex world. This world, of the National Curriculum programmes of study and their associated assessment requirements, would promote heads of department to become experts in the very detailed and sometimes arcane technical matters of their subject's delivery, and the requirements to fulfil their

school's statutory duties.

Thus it was that I began to plan around the idea of using the experiences of heads of department in my authority's high schools as the main area of field investigation. To keep the project manageable I would choose two subject areas for investigation, History and Science, in the six fully maintained county high schools of the London Borough of Amalgam. Through the experiences of the heads of department I would track the implementation of the National Curriculum in these subjects in these schools.

Having submitted a draft proposal for my research in 1990, the first round of field work into the effects of the National Curriculum upon my chosen group of schools would begin in the spring and summer terms of 1991. I would narrow the focus in 1992 to one of these schools, across a broader range of departments, and then return in 1993 to my initial group of heads of departments in the two chosen subjects. The results of the field work would then be analysed in the light of earlier consideration of the key concepts which had accompanied the proposal and stimulated my interest. The final thesis would, then, look as follows.

The structure of the thesis

In Chapter Two, I outline the main provisions of the National Curriculum as contained in the relevant sections of the Education Reform Act of 1988. I consider how teachers might have been helped in their required roles as implementers of this proposal, and also give an account of each of my chosen target subjects, Science and History, at the time the research began. In Chapter Three, through a review of significant literature, I explore political developments since the Great Debate began in 1976 on the nature

and future of education. Further to this, I go on to establish what influences and intentions were shaping Conservative Party policy at the moment the proposal for a National Curriculum was formally revealed.

In Chapter Four I present a rationale for my chosen method of pursuing this research question. I explain how my first thoughts on this were reinforced by my subsequent analysis of the proposal for a National Curriculum, and of the political context from which it emerged, and how I then embarked upon a progressively focused, longitudinal, field research study in the high schools. The political analysis of the moment of implementation had made explicit certain foreshadowed problems for the National Curriculum, and so suggested certain areas of investigation.

This is followed by an exploration of the key concepts of *entitlement* and *differentiation*, employed by the government in justification of the proposal for a National Curriculum. I attempt to establish the extent to which these terms had by this time acquired a connotation within educational discourse, and a meaning for individual teachers. Then I consider the implications of these connotations and meanings for the use of the terms in the context of the National Curriculum.

In the next three chapters I discuss the empirical research. In Chapter Six the borough context is described prior to an account of the first round of field research in 1991. An interim conclusion is attempted, before I go on in Chapter Seven to relate the findings of the more narrowly focused study of one school, Springfields, in 1992. In Chapter Eight, with the final stage of the field research in 1993, I return to the themes suggested by both previous rounds of investigation as I go back into the six high schools.

In Chapter Nine I present a summary of the accumulated evidence gathered through three years of field investigation, throughout which I refer to my earlier analysis of the key concepts of *entitlement* and *differentiation*. Chapter 10 is more speculative; it contains a discussion of how schools *might* have systematically proceeded with the implementation of a curriculum deemed and required to be *for all*, and also to be *appropriately differentiated*. The chapter then concludes the research by responding directly to the research question, stated and elaborated on in Chapter 1: on the basis of these findings, was the National Curriculum indeed the natural evolutionary product of two decades of debate and development?

The conclusion stands as a mark of how things were in 1993; but in the fast changing and tumultuous political world of 1994 a major revision of the National Curriculum was embarked upon, and in an epilogue I consider the implications of this revision.

Chapter Two

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Introduction

In this chapter I first describe the statutory basis of the National Curriculum, and its main requirements as thus established in law. I then describe the state of the proposals in Science and History by the summer of 1991, the beginning date of the field research. Finally, with reference to some significant writings on the processes of implementing educational innovations, and the proposed method to be adopted by the government with this reform, I consider what support might legitimately have been expected by teachers as they were obliged to introduce the National Curriculum into their classrooms.

The National Curriculum

The Education Reform Act (ERA) of 1988 established by statute a National Curriculum for England and Wales for all pupils in state schools aged 5-16, the age of compulsory schooling. Alongside the new curriculum were established new assessment arrangements. These included the compulsory public reporting of pupils' levels of achievement at ages 7, 11, 14 and 16. The results of externally devised and set tests (SATs) would comprise an element of these reported levels.

The new curriculum and its assessment procedures were first unveiled in full in the DES (1987) publication The National Curriculum 5-16 : a consultation document (in which the government put forward its arguments in favour of the proposed curriculum), and were established in law in the 1988 Education

Reform Act (ERA). The National Curriculum and its assessment procedures were described in the ERA thus:

The Curriculum

1---(2) The curriculum for a maintained school satisfies the requirements of this section if it is a balanced and broadly based curriculum which--

- (a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and*
- (b) prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.*

2--(1) The curriculum for every maintained school shall comprise a basic curriculum which includes-

- (a) provision for religious education for all registered pupils at the school; and*
- (b) a curriculum for all registered pupils at the school of compulsory school age (to be known as "the "National Curriculum") which meets the requirements of sub-section (2) below.*

(2) The curriculum referred to in subsection (1)(b) above shall comprise the core and other foundation subjects and specify in relation to each of them --

- (a) the knowledge, skills and understanding which pupils of different abilities and maturities are expected to have by the end of each key stage (referred to as "attainment targets").*
- (b) the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to pupils of different abilities and maturities during each key stage (in this chapter referred to as "programmes of study"); and*

(c) the arrangements for assessing pupils at or near the end of each key stage for the purpose of ascertaining what they have achieved in relation to the attainment targets for that stage.

3---(1) the core subjects are ----

(a) mathematics, English and science

(2) the other foundation subjects are-----

history, geography, technology, music, art, and physical education.

(extracted from the ERA,1988, chap 40, part i)

In addition, the years of compulsory schooling were to be marked by a new nomenclature. A child would pass through eleven years of schooling numbered and named Y1-Y11. These eleven years were to be divided into four *key stages*. At the secondary level there would be two stages. Years 7-9 (ages 11-14) were to be key stage three (KS3), and years 10-11 (ages 14-16) were to be key stage four (KS4). At the end of each key stage it was intended that there would be assessments of the programmes of study, and statements of attainment for that stage. The details of the programmes of study and assessment arrangements were to be decided:

4---(2) The Secretary of State may by order specify in relation to each of the foundation subjects---

(a) such attainment targets;

(b) such programmes of study; and

(c) such assessment arrangements;

as he considers appropriate for that subject.

The foundation subjects were to have syllabuses (programmes of study, PoS) decided by subject working groups set up by the Secretary of State.

Although the content would be decided by the working group, and agreed by the Secretary of State, the length of time allocated to subjects of the National Curriculum, and the methods of teaching to be employed, were *specifically* unspecified:

4---(3) An order made under subsection (2) above may not require--

(a) that any particular period or periods of time should be allocated during any key stage to the teaching of any programme of study or any matter, skill or process forming part of it; or

(b) that provision of any particular kind should be made in school timetables for the periods to be allocated to such teaching during any stage.

Thus the Secretary of State held considerable power over what was to be taught. This power allowed for executive amendment of what was recommended by the subject working groups, and subsequent adjustment as the Secretary of State saw fit. The following part of the act stipulated that no qualifications were to be awarded to pupils of this age group without approval by the Secretary of State, or by a body designated by the Secretary of State for this purpose (Part 1, chapter 1, section 5). Thus the Secretary of State held considerable power also over the examination boards, which presided over the GCSE and other qualifications awarded to school students at the end of their compulsory schooling.

Consultation, and some early criticism

Provision had been made for public consultation at all stages, beginning with The National Curriculum 5-16 : a consultation document (DES, 1987). That document attracted a substantial response, predominantly favourable to the

idea of a National Curriculum, but with reservations about the actual proposals outlined in the proposal. Among the main criticisms were that:

- * the description of the curriculum in terms of subjects could be restrictive
- * there was no clear provision for cross-curricular elements, as there was for subjects
- * testing children at ages 7,11,14 and 16 seemed excessive treatment.

Nonetheless, the curriculum proposals of the subsequent Bill and Act were mostly as in the 1987 proposal. (The political debate surrounding the curriculum proposals is discussed below in Chapter 3 on the political context, and again in Chapter 5 on *entitlement* and *differentiation*.)

There was to be consultation also as to each subject working group's proposal for programmes of study, and statements of attainment. This would be carried out by the new National Curriculum Council (NCC), which would subsequently advise the Secretary of State. The intended role of the NCC was described in the 1987 document (paras 45-51). It would consult on impending developments or amendments, advise the Secretary of State, and keep the curriculum under review. It would also offer advice to schools as to how the National Curriculum might be implemented, though such advice would be non-statutory.

Assessment

Assessment of pupils' achievements was to be through measurement of

their progress through each subject's attainment targets. These targets were to be clear objectives of what pupils might have learned:

Attainment targets will.....establish what children should normally be expected to know, understand and be able to do at around the ages of 7,11,14 and 16, and will enable the progress of each child to be measured against established national standards.

(DES, 1987, para 23)

The report of the Task Group on Assessment and Testing (TGAT), set up by the government in July 1987, recommended (DES, 1988a) that subjects could be divided up into *profile components*, based on important areas of each subject's knowledge and activities. The number of each subject's profile components would be a matter for each subject working party to determine. Within these components would be established the attainment targets for that subject (ATs). Each attainment target would then be divided into ten levels of achievement. Each level would carry a description (or set of descriptions) called a *statement of attainment*, and it would be against these descriptions, or *criteria*, that children's achievements and progress would be measured. Teachers would be required to assess children regularly against the attainment targets in their subjects. There would also be externally devised and set tests (SATs), and both teacher assessment and SAT assessment would be combined in a final report for each foundation subject. It was intended that schools make public their students' results at the end of each key stage.

To control, supervise and review the testing and reporting procedures of the National Curriculum the government proposed to set up the School Examinations and Assessment Council (SEAC) (DES, 1987).

The impact of the TGAT report

For many commentators (eg Whitty, 1989), the National Curriculum had among its goals the desire to diminish the roles and power over education of the teacher establishment and the LEAs. The role of assessment and testing might be to control what was taught. Publication of test results for groups of children at ages 7, 11, 14 as well as public examination results at 16, might be designed more to check on teachers and schools rather than promote pupil learning. The tail (the test) might come to wag the dog (the curriculum): *teaching to the test* might become the dominant mode of curriculum planning within the National Curriculum (Gipps, 1988).

Yet the TGAT report was generally welcomed on its publication by the establishment though by some to be in its sights. Professor Lawton (1989) commented that the report "was firmly embedded in sound curriculum principles" (p. 53). Lawton welcomed the talk of "teacher assessment", and decided that the proposals were essentially "formative" in nature, that is that they were to feed back into pupils' learning, not merely or mainly to be used for purposes of control, for comparing teachers and schools. Lawton felt a compromise had been reached between the bureaucrats' need for data on schools' performances, and the professionals' need for teacher involvement and judgement in testing and assessment.

Lawton's view was supported by Maclure (1989). He thought the TGAT report:

Envisaged a system of 'formative' assessment drawing heavily on teachers' observations as well as on 'standard assessment tasks' and other tests. (p. 11)

Reactions to the TGAT report by a profession concerned about the possible deleterious effects of a national testing system were subsequently summed up by ex- Chief HMI Eric Bolton (1993) thus:

Disquiet on the latter ground (testing) was substantially dispersed by the report of the Task Group on Assessment and Testing(TGAT) and its acceptance by the Secretary of State as defining the principles on which National Curriculum assessment would be based. (p. 42)

However, both Lawton and Maclure refer to a letter leaked from the office of the Prime Minister (The Independent, 10/3/88) which raised doubts about the proposed system; about both its apparent complexity, and the desirability of such a high level of teacher involvement. This perhaps prompted MacLure to advise:

It was clear that the TGAT report and the principles it adumbrated were only a beginning. A great deal would depend on how the scheme was developed. (p. 16)

Gipps (1988) thought it very likely that the system of assesment of pupils across ten levels, formally tested from the age of seven, could naturally lend itself to *differentiation* of pupils by grouping, either by *streaming* or by *setting*. In an article titled Trick or Treat she revealed her cautions about the TGAT report:

TGAT's real trick has been to adopt educative forms of assessment or at least their rhetoric, in which the student competes against his or her self, and much is under his or her control, and to harness them to the highly competitive arrangements required by GERBIL, while cloaking them in the benign language of 'formative' assessment

and 'profiles of attainment'. These forms of assessment can be used formatively and possibly even diagnostically, but make no mistake: the competition and comparison will be malign for many children and are likely to be more powerful in their impact than the positive aspects.

(p. 6)

Thus the assessment proposals, notwithstanding the initial optimism engendered by the TGAT report in professional circles, had the potential to become a central issue of the National Curriculum implementation. They might provoke competition between schools and teachers; they might lead to separation of children; and they might dictate the curriculum, ie, what is taught and how.

The Proposed Timetable of Implementation

The National Curriculum was to be introduced progressively. The immediate priority was to introduce the core subjects in 1989: Science, English and Mathematics. These subjects' working groups had been set up in 1987 to report in 1988, although the English group would not report on the 11-16 age group until 1989. Thus English at key stage three was due to begin in September 1990. Mathematics and Science would begin in key stage three in 1989. The other foundation subjects would be introduced thereafter as the planned subject group reports were published and accepted. The History timetable had a 1991 start scheduled for key stage three, but in the meantime History, as with all the other foundation subjects, was to be taught for a 'reasonable' time until the full statutory requirements took effect.

The assessment requirements were to be instituted as each full programme of study and its attainment targets were in place. For Science and Mathematics this meant an unreported assessment in 1992 at the end of key stage three,

and a full reported assessment in 1993. The first reported SAT assessment for History in key stage three was provisionally planned for 1994.

At each stage in the process the Secretary of State was required by the act to carry out a consultation procedure. When the subject working groups (set up by the Secretary of State) completed their deliberations, a period of consultation followed their published recommendations. The Secretary of State was then to draw up a draft order, which in turn was accorded a period (one month) during which responses might be made. The orders could then go ahead, and the programmes of study and attainment targets had then by law to be followed by schools as directed by statutory order.

The state of the proposals in the summer of 1991

Science

The working party had duly met and reported and, having followed the procedures outlined above, the final statement of programmes of study and attainment targets was published as Science in the National Curriculum (DES/WO, 1989). The working party had decided upon seventeen attainment targets (ATs) for Science. For the purpose of reporting pupils' progress in these attainment targets to parents and others, in the planned stages of reported assessments, it had been decided to divide these into two *profile components*. Attainment Target 1, the Exploration of Science, would be one profile component, and Attainment Targets 2-17, Knowledge and Understanding of Science, would comprise profile component two. DES Circular 6/89 expressed the following view of the effect this decision should have on how schools were to teach Science:

Although they are not part of the statutory requirements established by the present Orders, it is the Secretary of State's view that, in drawing up their schemes of work forscience, schools should be guided by the weightings recommended by the NCC, in considering the relative importance in the curriculum of the aspects to which the weightings relate. These are:

Science

<i>Key stage</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
				<i>%</i>
<i>1) Exploration of Science</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>2) Knowledge and Understanding of Science</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>70</i>

(p. 9)

The first attainment target, Exploration of Science, was concerned with the acquisition of the basic skills of Science. Pupils would learn to:

- i. plan, hypothesise and predict*
- ii. design and carry out investigations*
- iii. interpret results and findings*
- iv. draw inferences*
- v. communicate exploratory tasks and experiments*

(DES/WO, 1989, p. 3)

While AT1 was concerned primarily with practical skills and their application, the other ATs were to do with:

Knowledge and understanding of science, communication and the applications and implications of science (ATs 2-17)

(ibid, p. 6)

The attainment targets carried statements at each of the ten levels of

attainment as recommended by the TGAT report. These were *can do* statements about what pupils might be expected to demonstrate at each of the specified ten levels, in other words *criterion statements* against which to judge attainment, and were called *statements of attainment*. Each level statement was often sub-divided into several of these *can do* statements. For example, AT3 level six was to have six separate criterion statements contained within it.

By the summer of 1991 the proposed Science curriculum outlined in the 1989 document Science in the National Curriculum (DES/WO, 1989) was already under- going revision, while concurrently being implemented in schools. The year 9 cohort of 1991-1992 was due to sit the first SAT in Science for KS3 in June 1992, having begun the KS3 Science curriculum in September 1989 in year 7. Proposals published in May 1991 carried suggested new "streamlined" Orders which would reduce the seventeen attainment targets to five targets. Some teachers began the process of adapting their planning/ recording/ assessing procedures to shape the previous seventeen into the new five (eg Doyle, reported in the TES 1/11/1991). In September 1991 the NCC published a Consultation Report which proposed reducing the draft five attainment targets to four.

The revision of the Science curriculum specification mainly revolved around the attainment targets, of which there were seventeen in the 1989 version, although this process of reduction would throw up other issues. The accompanying body of statements of attainment within the seventeen attainment targets amounted to around four hundred. There had been much talk about the difficulty of organising an effective system for managing the sheer weight of assessment and recording involved, and the resulting problem of distilling the products of such frequent assessment into easily readable and understandable form, for example for public reporting. The

DES therefore set SEAC the task of reducing this body to more manageable proportions. The seventeen attainment targets were eventually reduced to four:

- 1) Scientific Investigation
- 2) Life and Living Processes
- 3) Materials and their Processes
- 4) Physical Processes.

AT 1 would be assessed by teachers in school through continuous assessment, and the others through externally devised and set tests (SATS), marked by the teachers to a pre-determined marking scheme, and externally moderated. Each target would have equal weight in a final assessment grade, ie 25%. There would not be any reporting of attainment levels through *profile components*, as originally envisaged.

The reduction in the number of attainment targets provoked strong reactions in some quarters. Wragg (1992b) suggested that the Science curriculum had become in essence :

Biology, chemistry and physics, with some scientific enquiry thrown in.

Boyle (1992) mourned the passing, as he saw it, of "the Nature of Science " (AT17) from the new orders; and Dobson (1992), a member of the original working party for Science, warned of a "disaster" in schools as the pruning exercise had ignored the logic of the original proposal for Science.

These amendments to the National Curriculum Science orders were an ironic twist for a subject area which had gone through a decade of debate over the nature of Science and Science teaching, and felt a degree of agreement had been reached. Jennings (1992), in a pamphlet entitled National Curriculum

Science: So Near And Yet So Far, judged that the original Science proposals published in 1988 for consultation had been:

received with a remarkable degree of general approval by Science teachers.....little division of opinion about the proposed content and aims.....largely due to a decade and more of groundwork that had been undertaken under different auspices. (P 3)

This observation echoed a contemporary (1988) view:

ASE, HMI and the Secondary Science Curriculum Review have all made their respective bids into the aims/intentions/content argument, and the degree of consensus is striking. 'For all from 5-16' as noted earlier is beyond debate, as is the 'broad and balanced' notion.

(Nellist, 1988, p. 278).

Nellist also identified:

more emphasis on the processes of science, more emphasis on science in the real world context, and less on straight 'knowledge acquisition'.....
So for the student, then, there has been over the past few years a shift, sometimes significant, in the balance of their science diet.

Textbooks and specific courses do seek increasingly to inject elements of the applied and the technological; 'real world science'; more of science the useful and less 'science the beautiful'. Attempts, too, have been and are made to build in social and economic dimensions.

(p. 276)

Science teaching had, then, recently led to the ideas of *relevance to society*, to emphasising the *processes* of Science, and latterly to the idea

of *science for all*. Science for all had brought with it the move to *balanced* Science courses in many schools, with Science being a core subject for all pupils. These elements of a Science education were seen as what were proper, and what children were *entitled* therefore to expect. The initial development of National Curriculum Science had sustained these ideas, and the original designers of the Science programme on the original working party, like Dobson, had come up with something they (and others) felt had reflected this.

The changes were seen by many as political in character. Boyle (1992) saw consideration of the nature of Science now "mysteriously disappeared into the Whitehall equivalent of the Bermuda triangle". Dobson (1992) described "muddle and misunderstanding" which was "fleetinglly illuminated by flashes of political prejudice". Denley (1991) suggested "subtle changes of emphasis towards more traditional values". He sums up the view of those who saw political motives in the developing saga of the National Curriculum Science programme:

A second but related set of questions concern the map-makers- who are they and what are their motives? At the start of the process the Science Working Group consisted of people with a genuine interest in science education (including teachers). As the map has been through successive re-draftings it has been possible to detect a much stronger influence of central government.....The story of the national curriculum has been that of a tug of war between those driven by ideology in one team against another team attempting to use it to create something which will take science education forward.

Sweetman (1991) agreed with these suggestions:

*It is clear there has been an ideological battle fought over science.
.....the social responsibility of the scientist has all but disappeared
from the curriculum.*

Among the battles waged through the re-drawing of the attainment targets was the shift in emphasis back to a traditional separate science approach to designing the curriculum; this appeared to be confirmed when the new SATs for KS3 in 1992 were planned to be pencil and paper exercises conducted in an examination hall. The 1991 pilot SATs had contained practical experimental elements, but these would now be dropped.

The results of this revision for teachers in the summer of 1991 were several, and among these were:

- * those teachers who had moved diligently on with developments as they had occurred, and produced recording/reporting schemes for the complex mass of attainment statements for each pupil, had worked to no practical effect. They would have to revise their schemes, or drop them;
- * with SATs imminent for the 1990-1991 cohort as they completed KS3 in 1992, teachers would be concerned about precisely which parts of the programmes of study would be tested through the SATs. They would be concerned also about the final weighting attached to AT1 when the test results were aggregated for public reporting;
- * the revision of the attainment targets might have an effect upon what was taught. If there was no attainment target, would it be taught?;
- * testing might lead to more setting as teachers were concerned for their test results.

History

The original proposals of the History Working Group had, simply, suggested a curriculum framed by chronology which encompassed what were seen to be the most important areas of study. Kenneth Baker, Secretary of State for Education in 1988, had stipulated that at the core of school history should lie the history of Britain. The Final Report (1990) contained a compulsory *core* of History Study Units (HSUs). These ran from The Romans in key stage two through to Britain in the Twentieth Century and The Era of the Second World War in key stage four; via Medieval Realms, The Making of the United Kingdom 1500-1750, and Expansion, Trade and Industry 1750-1900, in key stage three. In addition, there was a variety of *options* available at each key stage from which teachers were to select their choices (DES/WO, 1990, p. 26-28).

There were to be four attainment targets in one *profile component*:

Profile component: historical knowledge, skills and
understanding

Attainment target 1: Understanding history in its setting

Attainment target 2: Understanding points of view and
interpretations of history

Attainment target 3: Acquiring and evaluating historical information

Attainment target 4: Organising and communicating the results
of historical study

(DES/WO, 1990, p. 115)

There were debates over both the content and the methods recommended in

the group's report: the *what* and *how* of History. The brief of the working group was summarised by its chairman Michael Saunders Watson in an accompanying letter to the Secretary of State published with the final report:

*to ensure that pupils will gain a proper grasp of chronology,
to increase the emphasis on British history, and to look again
at our approach to historical knowledge to ensure that it can be
assessed.*

(DES/WO, 1990)

For History teachers the summer of 1991 was one of protracted political debate, and revision of the original proposed orders. By the summer of 1991 the debate over History continued to revolve around the nature of the programmes of study, the content; and the nature of assessment, the attainment targets and the statements of attainment against which pupil progress would be tested and assessed.

A major concern was the sheer weight of prescribed content suggested in the History Working Group's Final Report (1990) and subsequent orders, the "huge problem of overload" (Dickinson and Keelan, 1989, p.51). Given the normal allocation of time for school History, this indeed seemed a race against time (sic), and the need to comply with these demands might compromise other aspects of History teaching (discussed below) which had become equally as valued as the acquisition of knowledge. These concerns were acknowledged in appendix 8 of the Final Report, in a discussion of responses to the Interim Report. The Report itself ran to 185 pages excluding preface and appendices.

Many people thought that the struggle over content had been fought on an overtly ideological level. The demands that pupils should learn more of their own country's History, at the expense of World History, has been

referred to as a demand for more *heritage* History, and the argument for this as the *heritage argument*. But by the summer of 1991 the argument about content had become *slightly* less contentious than the matter of the *how* of History, although it is often difficult to separate these issues. The working group's chronological framework had been *broadly* accepted. They had accorded schools some flexibility by incorporating the Optional History Study Units, which allowed schools to devise *some* courses of their own within a prescribed choice of themes or topics, as well as the compulsory core units. Major concerns included the sheer bulk of required study, and the lack (for some) of a well-researched rationale for the Working Group's selection of topics for the programmes of study (discussed, for example, by Lee (1989) in Dickinson and Leelan, (1989).

This confusion over a rationale for selection of topics was compounded early in 1991 when History at KS4 was made optional by a high level (Secretary of State) last minute revision of the orders for History. Along with that decision, another decision was made to include the study of World War Two in KS3 as The Era of the Second World War. Its earlier, traditional, and (some would say) logical place was in KS4. The reason for the swap was to include it in the curriculum of *all* pupils, now that History was optional in KS4. It seemed to some that a decision of that nature broke any rationale that *might* have been claimed for key stages 3 and 4; and *entitlement* to History was now to be restricted to key stages 1-3. Martin Roberts of the Historical Association described the result (TES, 6/12/91) as "a dog's breakfast". Another commentator, one of the original History Working Group, described these changes thus:

*The result is bland, innocuous, an evident political compromise;
It lacks cohesion, consistent quality, bite, flavour and authority.*

It is unlikely to commend itself to any serious historian.

(Hobhouse, (1991), in the TES, 5/4/1991)

Others reflected upon the effect the changes might have on teachers, for example the move from KS4 to KS3 of the programme of study on the Second World War, and with that the study of the Nazi Holocaust :

After all the controversy generated by last-minute changes to key stage 4 History , key stage 3 History teachers are now left holding this unplanned and unwanted baby. They feel ill-informed , unprepared and bereft of the time and resources necessary to deal with the subject.

(Klein, (1992), in the TES, 17/4/92)

The matter of assessment and testing, and their impact upon what is taught, was another important issue. Successive Secretaries of State for Education McGregor and Clarke had reportedly expressed being 'alarmed' by the lack of demand in the attainment targets for *historical knowledge*, and so by early 1991 the attainment targets had been re-drawn by executive fiat to include a strand titled '*historical knowledge and understanding*'. There were now *three* attainment targets :

- 1) Knowledge and understanding
- 2) Interpretations of History
- 3) Use of historical sources

A report of the National Curriculum Council in December 1990 explained this new emphasis in the teaching of History in the National Curriculum as being "firmly based on learning historical information". A knowledge of recent developments in the teaching of History might help to understand the issues involved here.

A tradition had emerged in the 1980s which emphasised pupil enquiry in learning of History, in pursuit of the objective of acquiring such skills as:

- * An awareness of the nature of evidence
- * An appreciation of change and continuity
- * An understanding of cause
- * Historical empathy
- * An ability to pose historical questions
- * A sense of chronology and time (HMI, 1985, p. 2-4)

These, said HMI, were characteristics that should, at various levels of age and ability, accompany school History teaching. The success of the Schools Council History Project (SCHP), devoted to the concept of learning History through personal enquiry, and the incorporation of that course and its traditions into the new GCSE courses established by the Conservative government in the 1980s, underlined the acceptability of this form of learning and the pursuit of these kinds of objectives (eg, SEG, 1988, p. 419; p. 441). Empathy for the past, and the use and evaluation of evidence, were now ranked in value with knowledge and understanding of the past in the prestigious world of the 16+ examinations. *Differentiation* was to be achieved at this level by *outcome*, by setting questions accessible to all ability levels and establishing different levels of response by post hoc means. In the paper History from 5 to 16 (1988), HMI referred back to their 1985 document, thus underlining again the broad, and establishment, acceptance of the 'new' History in schools. They also referred, in their section on aims (p. 3), to the need for History to be concerned with "attitudes and values", with "the process of enquiry", and with "toleration of a range of opinions", among other things. The objective of acquiring historical information might be valuable, but the "skills" of History were equally so, and were necessary for

young people learning History.

By the time of the determination of the History contribution to the National Curriculum, a prominent counter-position had been established. Chris McGovern (TES, 22/5/90) led the public campaign *against* the inclusion of *skills* as major components and objectives of contemporary history teaching. He explained that:

Historical knowledge has been discredited to such an extent that it does not even get a mention in the proposed attainment targets for assessment under the national curriculum.

This reaction quickly gathered momentum. Under the headline "This history is bunk", in an attack on a text published to resource national curriculum History and the teaching of skills in History, McGovern was quoted as saying:

They are peddling a form of history unrecognisable to most parents. They may as well teach fairy tales.

(Daily Mail, 15/10/1992)

Mr McGovern and his colleague Dr Freeman had received public praise in a letter from Prime Minister John Major, for their work against the "insidious attack on literature and history in our schools" (TES, 16/10/92). Both were appointed to SEAC's History Committee in 1992. Changes to the orders were expected in the near future, and the influence of these two revisionists might be influential (Sweetman, in Guardian Education, 10/11/1992).

History had, then, established a recent tradition of enquiry, of the importance of process, and of questioning, to accompany the study of the

past. This tradition was supported by a broad church of the history establishment, which included those teachers wedded to the Schools Council Project (and/or its aims and methods), HMI, and the GCSE examination boards. In addition, History had acquired the strong support for its place in the school curriculum from Secretaries of State Joseph (in 1984) and Baker (in 1987), both of whom envisaged it as part of a core *entitlement* to the age of 16 (Roberts, TES, 17/4/1992), with Baker's support having been sufficient for History to become a core subject of the National Curriculum in the 1987 proposal document.

However, a reaction to the retention of skills elements in the assessment process, and other matters such as the amount of British History compared to European and World History, had met with powerful political support, and might involve further revisions to the orders.

The consequences for teachers, of recent developments in the National Curriculum for History, might include the following:

- * an awareness that knowing facts would be a major part of History in the future, this importance underlined by the assessment and testing arrangements;
- * that testing arrangements might affect what is taught, and how it is taught;
- * the need to make sense of a vast body of prescribed knowledge in the restricted timetable allocation normally accorded History in the school curriculum, and the potential effects of this upon pedagogy;
- * a public reminder that History in the National Curriculum was an area of public concern and debate, not simply an issue about pupil learning to be resolved in schools, and there was much concern about the place of British History.

To sum up the state of the subjects

There were public suggestions that both the Science and History orders had been subject to political interference: and there were many practical matters to tax teachers. HMI had reported in Science Key Stages 1 and 3: A Report by HMI on the First Year 1989-1990 (DES, 1991b) that Science teachers in secondary schools were "uncertain" about the assessment requirements of the National Curriculum. By 1991 Science and History teachers were still uncertain about the role of SATs in testing and assessment. The final nature of these was still undecided at this point in the development of the National Curriculum. It was intended that the September 1991 cohort would sit the first proper History SATs in 1994 at the end of their key stage 3.

This was the background to this research for teachers of History and Science, one of confusion and rapid change, against which these teachers were required to introduce the National Curriculum, and prepare their pupils for the assessment and testing regime in prospect. I next consider what help they might have expected to receive in this process.

Support for the teachers in implementation

A Theoretical Perspective

Change, as we know from a substantial body of literature, is a complex process. The introduction of the National Curriculum was, and is, a complex process. It is rooted in a series of proposals which radically affect schools in a number of ways, and from a number of directions (Lawton, 1989; Coulby and Bash, 1991; Bowe et al, 1992).

Within the literature on change much has been written about the relationship between a proposal, the manner of its implementation, and the nature of the ultimate reality in the classroom. In considering a small but significant selection of important writing on change from the past three decades, from Bennis (1966) to Bowe et al (1992), it can be argued that there is wide acknowledgement that the successful implementation of any proposal in a form which comes close to its original conception is best served by the sharing of a common purpose between its designers and its implementers. The role played by the implementers is crucial to success.

Bennis (1966) wrote of the need to expand our understanding of change by addressing the process more. Implementation of a proposal should include "understanding of and commitment to a particular change". Gross, Giacuinta and Bernstein (1971) confirmed this view in their review of the research literature on change innovation. They suggested that the reality in implementing change was more complex than the simple model of a powerful change agent (eg government) imposing its will on its clients. Change was a process fraught with potential pitfalls, and a situation could occur where teachers:

*initially favourable to organisational change may later develop
a negative orientation to an innovation as a consequence of the
frustrations they have encountered in attempting to carry it out.*

(Gross et al, 1971, p. 38)

House (1978) noted that successful implementation required more than simply communicating the project to those required to adopt it. Success depends upon how the communication is received by those required to implement. McDonald and Walker (1976) saw teachers "negotiating" change in the classroom, emphasising the active role played by teachers in

such processes, and the need for initiators of projects to engage with the school and classroom practitioners.

Bowe et al (1992) suggested that a subject dominated curriculum, such as the National Curriculum resembled in its early descriptions and methods of implementation, places great responsibility on heads of department to "interpret" key texts and make sense of the proposals for themselves, and those in their departments. They further suggested that those current changes would best be understood:

in terms of a complex interplay between the history, culture and context of the school and the intentions and requirements of the producers of policy texts.

(p. 119)

In other words, the school context and its key players in change will affect what happens. Not to involve those key players in change in the process in a positive way might lead only to a superficially obeisant position, to *successive approximation* of the change (Eveland, Rogers and Klepper, 1972), or *false clarity* (Fullan 1982). That may not be change at all. This can be understood when an increased workload is not matched by appropriate help for those required to implement the changes:

There is a strong tendency for people to adjust to the 'near occasion' of change by changing as little as possible.

(Fullan, 1982 p. 29)

Fullan (1991, p. 69) cites Huberman and Miles (1984), who:

remind us that by this early implementation stage, people involved must perceive both that the needs being addressed are significant and that they are making at least some progress

towards meeting them. Early rewards and some tangible success are critical incentives during implementation.

In an article in the TES (9/10/1992) Fullan drew some conclusions about the mechanics of educational change. Although he claimed now to "take a different tack" from some of his earlier conclusions, his remarks about the role of teachers in planned change read as a contemporary commentary of what has been described above. On meeting aims he thought :

The complex goals of change are skills, creative thinking, and committed action on the part of teachers.

He spoke of *vision*, and its role in the change process. It was "necessary", but took time to be understood:

And shared vision, which is essential, must evolve through the interactions of organisation members and leaders.

He concluded that :

Governments can't mandate what matters.....Policy makers have an obligation to set policy.....but to accomplish certain kinds of purposes -in this case , important educational goals- they cannot mandate what really matters.

Fullan was clearly asserting the need of policy makers to involve teachers in the process of change:

Visions die prematurely when they are mere paper products churned out by leadership teams

This is a forceful re-assertion of the fact of teachers' roles in the mechanics of change, and the need for policy makers to involve teachers in the evolving processes. And there was also much contemporary advice from those at the cutting edge of the National Curriculum, and its implementation, for the policy makers to heed. These points were not not unknown to those proposing the new changes, or those who were concerned to see them brought into the classroom. For example, the History Working Group considered that the National Curriculum proposals would:

break new ground and will therefore have implications for initial and in-service training for teachers.

(DES /WO, 1990, p i)

This was underlined in the same report in the section considering the responses Interim Report (Appendix 8). The Working Group reported that :

Heavy INSET implications were foreseen.

In a one day conference in November 1989 at the Institute of Education, London University, to consider the Interim Report of the History Group, a session was set aside to consider just this one aspect of implementation. John Branfield, a County Inspector for History, advised:

We are now at the half-way stage in developing a National Curriculum for history. We ought to be beyond a halfway stage in developing the appropriate strategies and arrangements for professional development that can support future work in the history curriculum.

(Branfield, 1989 p 33)

Branfield referred to a recent proliferation in INSET provision as "lumpy", suggesting that the term embraced a variety of activities, with varying degrees of success reported by teachers. He then argued for serious consideration to be given to the needs of History teachers in the National Curriculum, with programmes targeting the identified needs of the new situation. Finally, he offered a ten point list to aid the consideration of planners engaged in INSET provision. His arguments demonstrated awareness of the potential value of support for teachers in implementation was present at LEA inspector level. And indeed the DES policy document of 1987 had explicitly stated that LEA inspectors would be one of the major groups providing support for teachers as they set out to implement the National Curriculum (DES. 1987, para 85).

The Third Supplementary Report (DES, 1988b) of TGAT dealt solely with the matter of "a system of support" to facilitate implementation of its assessment and testing recommendations. It stressed also the obvious links between assessment and the teaching of the curriculum, pointing out that these ought to be coordinated. It also referred to the government's own previous experience of the implementation of the GCSE and recommended building upon that.

Thus there was, at many levels, a considerable awareness expressed about the need for support for teachers. Also, there was a considerable body of research evidence on the mechanics of change to underline this awareness. It might reasonably be suggested, then, that a proposal intent on more than bringing an awkward teaching establishment *into line*, ie genuinely concerned to establish in practice the rhetorical aims which accompanied the proposal, could have been expected also to reach teachers on at least the following three levels:

- * sharing and developing the vision of the aims of *entitlement* and *differentiation* which were written large in justification of the proposal for a national curriculum;
- * at subject level, to share and develop an intention of how these concepts might operate, and how the subject might be organised with these in mind;
- * how the subject areas, the first layers of implementation, would fit into a whole curriculum aim, and subsequent practical patterns of the whole curriculum delivery.

The issue of support for teachers through the process of implementation is taken up in Chapters 6-9, concerned with the field research of 1990-1993, and also returned to in Chapter 10 as I consider the extent to which the field research has informed the research question.

Conclusion

By 1991 the National Curriculum was undergoing implementation and revision simultaneously. This could increase the difficulties of those people responsible for seeing the changes into schools. The proposals for History and Science, and those for assessment and testing, had been published and were still being discussed and developed. There were suggestions in some quarters of political motives lying behind the changes, although reasonable practical necessity was also frequently claimed by those making the changes as the main reason for revision.

From the original proposal, and recent developments, several possible implications for the implementation of the National Curriculum could be envisaged. I have spelled these out, and suggested that some potential difficulties could have been tackled by adopting strategies for support that were frequently publicly discussed. These implications are pursued in the field research, and their effects upon the extent of the government's achievement of its stated goal of an *entitlement* curriculum which is properly *differentiated* are subsequently considered. First, though, I discuss the political context in which this proposal emerged.

Chapter Three

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

Introduction

The focus of this research is the gap that might exist between the rhetoric of a policy proposal and that policy in practice. The possible existence of a gap between the rhetoric that accompanied the publication of the 1987 Consultation Document for a proposal for a National Curriculum (as later enacted in the Education Reform Act of 1988), and the broad intention in terms of desired changes in practice, was first suggested by various commentators in 1987. Some suggested that there was a political lineage in its development which contradicted some of the reassuring rhetoric, and which would inevitably be reflected in the policy in action. This chapter explores the various political elements which shaped the Education Reform Act of 1988, including the National Curriculum. It is pursued through a review of the significant texts issued by the government between 1987 and 1990. It attempts to reveal something of the political origins and character of the legislation.

Margaret Thatcher and a decade of Conservative Government

First elected in 1979, Mrs Thatcher went on to two more election successes which left the Conservative Party as *the* party of the 1980s. Her administration was pledged to radical reform across a wide range of issues, and her successful re-election is often attributed to the creation of a popular national appeal that contrived to reach non-traditional Conservative Party supporters. Themes embraced by her government included "nationhood, national role, destiny, heritage and tradition", and she "successfully ...conflatedthe aspirations of democracy and free enterprise capitalism" (Coulby and Nash,

1990, p.4). Coulby and Nash identified also the popular 'de-bunking' of so-called experts, a trend especially prominent in her attitude to education and those who ran it.

Mrs Thatcher's government was influenced by a number of pressure groups often identified as belonging to the New Right; these included: the Institute of Economic Affairs; the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS); and the Hillgate Group (Chitty,1989). The Institute of Economic Affairs was set up in the 1950s, and among its most recent leading publicists has been Stuart Sexton, one-time adviser to Sir Keith Joseph, and director of the Education Unit of the Institute. Sexton was influential on the neo-liberal wing of the New Right, and had been a contributor to the Black Papers of the 1970s, in which he advocated the application of laissez-faire market principles to the provision of public schooling. In an essay entitled Evolution by choice (Sexton, 1977) he combined an attack on comprehensive schooling with an argument for a market framework for schools in which there would be only a "minimum curriculum" prescribed (p.86). The Centre for Policy Studies was established by Keith Joseph and Margaret Thatcher in 1974. It was at the heart of New Right thinking. Its initial purpose was to challenge the orthodoxy of the then leadership of Prime Minister Edward Heath:

The CPS was an organisation independent of the Conservative Party which could think the unthinkable (for example, the virtues of free markets) ..(and which)... also established a variety of study groups whose aim was to develop new ideas and policies. One of these - the Education Study Group - would be.....committed to challenging the ideas of the educational 'experts' of the left, and turning what was seen as the one-time politically unthinkable into the everyday commonsense wisdom of tomorrow.

(Knight, 1989, p. 90-91)

The Hillgate Group was a neo-conservative pressure group of the New Right which joined the others in a critique of the woes of the comprehensive system of schooling. Education was identified as an important target for popular and radical reform, and the Education Reform Act (1988) (and the National Curriculum) was the government response to the variety of pressures these groups imposed on Conservative Party thinking about the nature and role of education.

Even so, the National Curriculum has been described as

the result of a number of different, even contradictory ideological pressures.

(Lawton, 1989, p.52)

The New Right and their ideas were responsible for many of these contradictory pressures which influenced the Conservative Party. In education the New Right have been seen as the inheritors of a series of criticisms of comprehensive education contained in the Black Papers of the 1960s and 1970s, and re-stated in the 1980s by the Hillgate Group, among others. As Chitty (1989) has pointed out, within itself the New Right contains contradictory elements of thought.

It is common to discern two major philosophical factions within the New Right: neo-liberal and neo-conservative (Quicke, 1988; Whitty, 1989). The neo-liberals espoused market values and practices and wished to extend these into the public sector. For example, in education they argued for the removal of state control, and that parent (consumer) choice should be exercised through a 'voucher' system of funding education. The neo-conservatives stood for the defence of tradition, values and heritage, including the idea of a strong state to uphold these. These two factions often appear at odds with each other, and it has been pointed out that the neo-liberal

pressure on Mrs Thatcher, which resulted in the weakening of teacher and LEA power and a growth in headteacher and governor power, has been off-set by a neo-conservative strengthening of the state, in its control over what was taught in state schools, the National Curriculum. Whitty (1989) suggested that the success of the New Right lay in submerging what could be called short term contradictions in support of a project which in the long term would satisfy both. Put very simply, the prescriptive National Curriculum would work upon consumer consciousness (parents, pupils, even 'ordinary' teachers) so that eventually, especially with the demise of the old liberal education establishment (ie the teacher unions, the teacher trainers, the Inspectorate), there would be no need of prescription. In the short term, as Maclure (1989) suggested, setting schools free of LEA control was only really feasible if they were forced to operate within

established conventions, reinforced if need be by ministerial authority, within which their independence could be exercised.

(ibid p xiii)

The National Curriculum was to be largely determined, in its structure and content, by the influence upon the government of the various New Right ideas for education, whose combined impact on Mrs Thatcher's administration is now considered.

The Thatcher Years : Authoritarian Populism and the Influence of the New Right

This phrase was coined by Hall (1980) to express the mixture of popular appeal allied to determined conviction politics that he saw as one of the major characteristics of Mrs Thatcher's administration which passed, among other measures, the Education Reform Act of 1988. This "authoritarian populism" sat at the head of a broad Conservative church. An early typology (Dale, 1983)

identified these separate sects in that church as: industrial trainers; old Tories; populists; moral entrepreneurs; and privatisers. Conservative thinking simultaneously exhibited conviction and compromise. Knight (1989) pointed out that it was not only possible, but quite natural, and commonplace, to have a foot in more than one of these camps within the party. He argued that there was no single identifiable uncomplicated political idea running through that administration, nor through what were to become its educational policies, including the National Curriculum, although a prominent feature was Mrs Thatcher's "preference for market forces" (p.151). Maclure (1989) observed the dominant political rhetoric of education in the 1980s as primarily concerned with education's relationship to the market place in some way. And the balance between the interests in Dale's typology can be seen to have shifted in education towards the 'industrial trainers' through the 1980s (eg through developments such as TVEI), the result of the triumphant dominance of a political ideology which

substituted an individualistic, 'enterprise ' culture for the once-fashionable collective virtues and imperfections of the Welfare State.

(Maclure, 1989, p149)

Yet there were more complex origins which could be detected in the overall thrust of policy than a simple correspondence between the needs of the market place and the supply of labour, and in the National Curriculum the new subject of Technology had to find its place among a clutch of traditional subjects in a traditional curriculum structure which appeared to be:

derived from an educational philosophy markedly different from that of the " new vocationalism".

(Quicke, 1989 p 15)

Apple (1989) detected a struggle to "re-structure common sense", to underline

the necessity of the continuing leadership of the party, with education having been chosen as one of the battlegrounds upon which the struggle is acted out. He argued that:

the movement away from social democratic principles and an acceptance of more right-wing positions in social and educational policy occur precisely because conservative groups have been able to work on popular sentiments, to reorganise genuine feelings and in the process to win adherents.

(p.5)

Dale (1989) offers an explanation of such intrusions into the everyday lives of ordinary people. Two major aspects of a Conservative political project would be:

contributing to a context not inimical to its continuing development, and providing legitimisation for its activities.

(p x)

One element of the appeal to popular sentiment was the 'de-bunking' of experts in the field. An influential right-wing propaganda publication, The Salisbury Review (a periodical of the New Right, edited by this time by Roger Scruton of the Hillgate Group), was prominent in this campaign, even turning its scorn on its own party when it felt reform was flagging, or losing its original bite. In 1990 Ray Honeyford, an ex-primary school headteacher and major public exponent of common sense right wing views, wrote a piece for the Review about what had been happening to the National Curriculum. He was quite clear about what the original policy priorities had been. He refers to the DES leaflet for parents, National Curriculum- A Guide for Parents (DES,1988), and suggests that by 1989 and the publication of a guide for teachers, From Policy To Practice (DES,1989), there had been some slippage between intention and practice. The enemy is the old liberal establishment, and they had been allowed to slip in through the back door of the National Curriculum Council. The language used

exemplifies both the style, and the targets, of the vocal New Right:

In plain simple English parents were told of the new dispensation in their children's schools: proper, established subjects were to be taught, there was to be an end to pupils dropping important subjects too soon, all children were to be regularly tested, and transfers between schools were to be made easier since there would be a high level of agreement about the nature of the curriculum in all schools. There is no mention in this document of 'the whole curriculum', 'skills', 'themes' or 'dimensions' - nor any other of those weird and woolly notions in which 'educationists' communicate. Neither the political operator nor the liberal sentimentalist could take any comfort from this source.

(Honeyford, 1990, my emphasis p.11)

Jones (1989) agreed that education had been chosen by voices influential upon those in government as an arena in which to win popular support. Jones describes the work and output of, for example, the important Hillgate Group as aiming in education :

*to find those points of intervention into everyday life
that can give it popular appeal.*

(p. 54)

The curriculum proposals of the ERA (1988) could be seen to pay considerable attention to the traditional basics (English and Mathematics), and the needs of industry in terms of improving upon basic skills and know-how (Science and Technology). This combination could be seen to unite to some extent, temporarily, the old Tories and the industrial trainers. The proposals would also become embroiled in enormous controversy in areas not obviously related to either of these imperatives. The History proposals were bitterly fought over, and that struggle exemplified both the complexity of the pressures contributing to the National Curriculum, and those concerns of the

government and its supporters to promote a cultural climate over a broad front conducive to its prolonged existence in office (Coulby and Bash, 1990 ; Lawton, 1989 ; Chitty, 1989 ; Whitty, 1989). It is worth considering the case of History in more detail.

The Struggle over History

History, (and in a similar way, for similar reasons, English), was one of the battlegrounds of the National Curriculum chosen by the Right to put sloppy, progressive and subversive ideas to the sword. Dickinson and Keelan (1989) observed that no sooner had the 'new history' (described as predominantly skill based rather than knowledge based, and concerned with the processes of historical enquiry, such as the use of evidence, rather than the simple acquisition of important knowledge) been sanctioned by the GCSE examination boards, under the aegis of the government, than:

Critics of the 'new history' emerged, notably Robert Skidelsky, Alan Beattie, Stewart Deuchar and Helen Kedourie. With remarkable efficiency they found outlets for their views via Centre for Policy Studies publications, the Campaign for Real Education.....

(p. 5)

The result, they thought, was

that there is now more controversy about history than about any other subject in the curriculum.

(ibid)

Jones (1989) agrees with this view. These attacks by the right were not only more prevalent, but part of an overall political strategy:

Increasingly in the later 1980s, the right involved itself in these curriculum wars. For several reasons, its chosen battlefields were the teaching of English and of history. The kind of understanding of

culture prevalent on the right led it towards these areas, and it was there that its political project could most easily take hold, in developing themes of identity and nation.

(p. 64)

Whitty (1989) pointed to Kenneth Baker's preoccupation that the History curriculum should

have at the core the history of Britain, the record of its past and, in particular, its political, constitutional and political heritage.

(quoted in TES, 20/1/1989)

Whitty saw this as symptomatic of the New Right association of the school curriculum with the re-constructed consciousness necessary to the success of the long-term political project. Coulby and Nash (1990) provide an account of Mr Baker's successor, John McGregor, wielding the scissors on the final report of the History Working Group in a manner Mr Baker would have welcomed. They conclude:

The case of History indicates the extent to which the entire school curriculum is open to political and politicised interference.

(ibid, p.21)

Thus the battle over the History curriculum can be seen as another strand in the process of re-structuring common sense. It included measures that were explicitly targeted at 'lefty' policies and History teaching, such as Peace Studies and multi-cultural History. It fitted neatly within a more broad context and strategy. These policies and practices were associated often with so-called 'lefty' LEAs, another target of the New Right:

The politicized Local Education Authorities will be deprived of their major source of power, and of their standing ability to corrupt the minds and souls of the young.

(The Hillgate Group, 1986, p. 18)

The new History curriculum struck out in a new direction. The emphasis on Britain, and particularly the positive virtues of nineteenth century economic imperialism, might also reinforce the aimed-for cultural hegemony of the Conservative Party in the re-structured common sense it was promoting:

Education was chosen as the arena for political contests.

(The Hillcole Group, 1990, p.2)

This group, set up by some academic educationists who sought a platform from which to respond to the liturgy and legislation of the right, also thought the History curriculum to have been chosen as a vehicle for pursuing Mrs Thatcher's vision of culture and heritage. Knight (1989) identified the very clear and deliberate manner in which leading Conservatives had created a strategy which sought every opportunity to promote a common-sense acceptance of its views, and particularly so in education. He gives an account (ibid, ch.5) of their deliberate appropriation of the "best words", such as "freedom" and "choice" and "standards" in their attack on Labour's "homogenisation" of education. The continued appeal to common sense agreement with the political views of the Conservative Party could also be detected in exchanges in the House of Commons between Mrs Thatcher (eg Hansard 26/7/90) and the Government front bench, and the Opposition front bench, on the nature of and need for a National Curriculum. At one point Education Junior Minister, Bob Dunn, explained to Parliament that a National Curriculum was necessary because of schools which taught:

peace studies, gay rights, lesbian activities, anti-police

activities and a whole range of things. (Hansard, 15/12/87, p.86)

Apple (1989) offers a similar description to Knight of this conscious strategy across a wide terrain of political life and opportunism:

*It seeks to intervene 'on the terrain of ordinary common-sense',
to 'interrupt, renovate and transform in a more systematic direction '
people's practical consciousness.*

(Apple, 1989, in Dale, 1989, p.7)

A common sense element could perhaps be detected in Kenneth Baker's appeal to Britain's heritage as the basis of National Curriculum History, and it can be seen to accord with the ideas of the New Right, as in this attack on the Commission for Racial Equality's Swann Report (1985), Education for All:

*The native British have a right to preserve their way of life and
this must mean that it is their culture which predominates in our
schools. (Yet) their (British) heritage must move over to allow
room for multi-culturalism. They are to be treated as people
whose interests are entirely secondary.*

(Pearce, 1986, p. 141)

The History proposals thus offer one example of how the forces at work on Conservative Party thought became reflected in the National Curriculum. They both touched an ideological nerve, and were capable of being harnessed to the task of constructing the desired cultural hegemony.

The Language of the Debate over Education

As Knight (1989) has demonstrated, it was important to the Conservative Party advisers to strike the right note, adopt the right phrases, in pursuit of their intentions, and the necessary popular support to maintain an appropriate active legislative programme. I therefore turn to the language employed in the public political debate over Conservative Party educational policy.

Apple (1989) argued that the key political concept of *equality*, so necessary to

the reality of life in a democracy, and so close to debates on educational policy and the distribution of resources, had undergone re-definition in the 1980s. He observed that notions of group disadvantage, and the employment of the state to overcome these, had given way to a popular anti-statism:

*keeping government 'off the backs of the people', and
(a philosophy) of 'free enterprise'. (p. 6)*

Apple argues that thus a selfish, individual, view of society is legitimated as disadvantaged groups are seen to be drawing off valuable resources to which others may also claim to be entitled. He notes the promotion of "individual choice" as a guarantee of equality, and its extension to the notion of the market place in education, the idea that if parents are offered "choice", the problems of disadvantage will disappear. The chosen "good" schools will achieve the "excellence" that repeated Conservative rhetoric promised, through "raising standards". The Pursuit of Excellence (1983) and Raising Standards of Education (1987) were the chosen rhetorical titles of the respective Conservative Party manifestos on education. Knight (1990) has shown how, for Sir Keith Joseph, (Education Minister 1981-1986), "excellence" and "differentiation" went together. Although the intention may have been the stretching of the best through *separation*, the term was used to connote a caring concern for *all* children:

Our key perception was differentiation. We equated the stretching of children, at all levels of ability, with caring.....For too long popular high expectations of children had led to popular disappointments. Large sections of the nation were eager for improvements. We wanted to satisfy the thirst for good education.

(Sir Keith Joseph, (1986), quoted in Knight, (1989), p.152)



Hardy and Porter (1990) support this analysis of the creation (and appropriation) of a language and discourse appropriate to the political project of the Conservative Party:

The discoursepresented by Tory politicians past and present holds as fundamental the interests of all individuals. 'There is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women and there are families' (Margaret Thatcher February 1989).The language is not just a ' language of unity', it is also a language that seeks to shift political discourse from that which sees the interests of the masses in the institutions of the state, to the interest of the masses in the pursuit of self interest through those institutions.'I want parents to have a greater say over which schools their children go to.' This language has been repeated on a number of occasions as Government Ministers have sought to encourage us all to buy a part of the institutions and the economy. This under the banner of freedom of choice.

(Hardy and Porter, 1990, p.177)

Possible Implications of an Appropriation of Language

We need at this point to consider the possible significance of this appropriation of language for the key concepts which underpin the National Curriculum, namely *differentiation* and *entitlement*. If they are employed to legitimise the distribution of educational resources, it is important to establish how they are situated in the new ideological discourse.

Differentiation, catering for differing needs, (and satisfying the demands of disadvantaged groups and individuals), may be seen in this new context to be best done by giving individuals *equality of opportunity* in an educational

system whose structure more and more comes to resemble the free enterprise models of industry. Yet the disadvantage of children from disadvantaged groups can be the result of a complex history of accumulated neglect and deprivation. Passing on responsibility to the existence of *individual equality of opportunity*, may only confirm them in their relative disadvantage. Children's starting points on their educational journeys are quite different, and differentiated treatment such as setting or banding or separate schools may be an inadequate and unjust response to some children's needs:

The notion of individual choice in an unequal society is heavily ideological.

(Hardy and Porter, 1990, p.178)

However, this was the situation towards which the National Curriculum was pulling, with its authors still publicly laying claim to the concept of equal opportunity; only its new meaning was several shades, and several practical implications, removed from that which ran through the post-war consensus being systematically disturbed. Jones (1989, p.3) described this consensus as being essentially for an "undifferentiated expansion of education", while the Conservative project aimed for "a much higher degree of targeting and selection". *Equality* of opportunity, of access, of treatment and of care might now mean less to those whose starting points lagged behind others.

Entitlement to a state school curriculum might come to mean no more than the right to have what is strictly laid down by statutory order as a minimum requirement of schools to provide, although *entitlement* is a term which had acquired a very specific connotation in the education debate of the past two decades (discussed more fully in Chapter 5). It had become customary for LEAs to recognise the role schools can play in tackling group institutionalised disadvantage, as well as individual disadvantage, and to commit themselves to positive efforts to overcome this. The strong connotation

that *entitlement* had acquired by the 1980s can be seen illustrated in the criteria described by two London LEAs for the guidance of their schools and teachers. The first comes from the LEA whose high schools form the research group for this study, a LEA controlled by a Conservative Party group at the time of the statement quoted below; the second comes from a LEA controlled by a Labour Party group. A consonance can be detected, at the least a consonance of analysis and intention:

All learners are entitled to a curriculum which provides them with a wide range of educational experience, which allows them to understand the multicultural and plural nature of society and which challenges basic inequalities in race, gender and ability.

(London Borough of Amalgam, 1990)

and: *Education will be seen as a basic right under which all people are able to exercise that entitlement as and when they need it, throughout their lives. Education is, for many people, the only way of facing institutional disadvantage and giving people choices.*

(Islington Council, 1989, p.4)

Entitlement here has the flavour of a policy intention that recognises the power of the curriculum to *enable* those individuals suffering from group or individual disadvantage to compensate in some way, to level out the inequalities. Greater efforts might have to be made to create equal access to the curriculum for those who start with a disadvantage. It might be suggested that one effect of the public 'conflation' of the principles of the market place with the ideal of democracy might be that :

The key provisions of the Act (ERA 1988) replace the principle of equal access to state education for all, with the principle of differentiation in the market place. (Ball, 1990, p.4)

Differentiation had been employed consciously by 'professionals' to denote a process of recognition of the needs of individuals within a common provision (see below ch 5). Ball was suggesting that the concept of needs was shifting, and that a market place definition would be lacking because:

The market has no morality, there is no place for notions like social justice. (ibid p.18)

Differentiation had become another key word of educational politics, and subject also to special interpretation. Knight (1989) pointed out that for the Conservative thinkers *differentiation* came to be associated with a return to the "excellence" and "standards" which prevailed before the introduction of comprehensive education. Comprehensives were characterised as great levellers, producing a "homogenised" population. The Right stress on *differentiation* was portrayed as a sensitive reaction to the needs of the bright child, particularly the bright working class child. Whitty (1989) observed that an initiative such as the Assisted Places Scheme, ostensibly aimed at the bright working class child, in fact employed *differentiation* as an effective form of selection. The Assisted Places Scheme contributed directly to the maintenance of separate schools with selective intakes. This line of analysis suggested that where *differentiation* appeared in the new National Curriculum arrangements it was possible that schools' responses might be to replicate the separation of the selective schools within the one institution, the comprehensive school.

The proposal of 1987 could be seen to appeal to common sense, offering as it did: "high standards for all", gained through "stretching the bright", and "more help for the others". All students were "entitled" to this treatment, and every "individual" would take up the "broad and balance" curriculum offer.

Even the title "National Curriculum" could strike a rhetorical ideological and

utilitarian (for the Conservative Party) chord (Hardy and Vieler-Porter, 1990), while siphoning off those aspects of a common provision consistently advocated by others as a desirable accompaniment of comprehensive schooling (Chitty, 1988).

If the main thrust of the National Curriculum was indeed to increase the power of central government over teachers and LEAs (Demaine, 1988), then the appropriated rhetoric which accompanied the proposal of the National Curriculum might be seen as a device to legitimate government action in the minds of ordinary people, the popular view, by contributing to what Apple (1989) referred to as "reactionary common sense" (p. 7).

Conclusion

The political context of the 1980s was seen to be one of sustained right wing pressure on a beleaguered and out-maneuvred liberal establishment. The New Right groups who dominated ideas in Mrs Thatcher's administration were determined upon a course of action in education which set out to reverse what was represented as a levelling, or homogenisation, of the population through the imposition of a system of comprehensive schools. While the dominant motif of that administration was the inspiration of the market place, also influential on the right in education was a traditionalist authoritarian defence of the virtue of a strong state as protector of the nation's values.

Education was chosen as a public arena in which not only great changes could be wrought, but public support courted for common sense measures. The long term aim was party political hegemony. Policy in education was to cut it free from those malign forces of the past (the left wing LEAs, the teacher unions, the 'liberal' establishment) and subject it to market force principles.

However, in the matter of the curriculum an authoritarian element of state direction was employed in defence of 'traditional values'.

Prominent in the justification for curriculum change was a suggestion that what was proposed lay in a tradition which would attract consensus. Many contrary opinions were expressed that this tradition (in which the proposals were said to lie) embraced a concern for all children which was substantially ignored by the substance of what was to come, except rhetorically. *Entitlement*, on this contrary view, might only be to what was on offer, while *differentiation* would mean separation of provision. These terms, it was said, had been appropriated in support of legitimation for radical policies.

In the next chapter I discuss how I set about devising a research method which might shed some light upon the eventual practical fate of these oft quoted terms, and thereby also shed light upon the intentions of the government's proposal and legislation for a National Curriculum for England and Wales.

Chapter Four

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research is essentially a case study of the implementation of the National Curriculum in secondary schools. The field work took place in the school academic years September 1990 to September 1993. The field data was gathered from the six county maintained high schools of the small outer London borough of Amalgam. The empirical research was designed to investigate the suggestion that some of the words which accompanied the National Curriculum, as explanation and justification of the initiative, were in the nature of legitimating rhetoric rather than practical intentions. In this chapter I first describe how I devised my chosen method for field investigation of this suggestion, and why. I then go on to discuss the merits of this method, both its strengths and weaknesses, locating it within theoretical paradigms. Finally, I explain why I believe the empirical enquiry to have considerable force in addressing the central question. I also include a discussion of my use of documents, and their analysis. Analysis of the documentation accompanying the proposal for a National Curriculum provided a starting point for this research, and would be used in subsequent analysis of the empirical findings. This was a key task because the issuing of various documents played a central role in the implementation of the National Curriculum.

The Research Design

Background

As discussed in Chapter Three, the Conservative Party had in many and diverse ways appropriated emotive words to their own political use. In education, among other words, the terms *differentiation* and *entitlement* emerged as key components of Conservative Party educational discourse. It was clear from a reading of the original proposal for a National Curriculum, The National Curriculum: a consultation document (DES, 1987), and the subsequent supporting literature, such as From Policy to Practice (DES, 1989), that much was made of the idea of a curriculum that was an *entitlement* for all children, and that such a curriculum explicitly should be *differentiated* as appropriate for all children. These terms, and their use in the promotion of the National Curriculum at the time of its proposal and implementation, are discussed in detail in the following chapter.

These terms had already a history of use, and connotations, in recent educational discourse. I therefore chose them as the means by which the rhetorical use of the supporting language of the National Curriculum could be measured against future practical substance, as the proposal moved through implementation from policy to practice. Put simply, if the use of *differentiation* and *entitlement* had been intended to indicate serious practical intentions, as indeed is explicitly stated in the original proposal (DES, 1987, paras 7,8) and subsequent documents (eg DES, 1989, paras 2.1, 4.15), such intentions might be determined by empirical investigation as implementation proceeded. This line of enquiry would make it necessary to unravel the rich connotations that had been accrued by these terms by the time of the National Curriculum proposal; and to establish the conscious use of these terms in the proposal and

other near contemporary literature of the government and its supporters and advisers (Chapter 5). This analysis would inform the design of the field work research, and in turn would be crucial in the analysis of the field research.

The field research design

The sites

I chose the high schools of the London Borough of Amalgam as the setting for the field research. As an employee of the authority this made it relatively easy for me to gain access, although there could have been problems associated with *familiarity*. These are discussed later in this chapter when I give an account of how the interview data was collected.

The authority is fairly small, with six county high schools, reorganised at the time of the beginning of this research into schools for 12-16 year olds. These schools were to be the particular sites of the research. As reorganisation had been accompanied by a conscious determination by the authority to create an equivalence of status, accommodation and provision among the schools, it could be assumed that there would be a homogeneity among this group which might strengthen the field results. The variables between schools are so infinitely complex that the narrowing of these in this way might carry with it a greater significance than if the schools had been qualitatively more different. The schools appeared to comprise a reasonable sample of "a larger universe of people, settings, events or processes" (Huberman and Miles, 1984, p.37). The opportunity presented by this situation was therefore potentially rich, and too promising to ignore, as I sought a design relevant to the research question. The fact that the sample was *relatively* easy to manage was also helpful, not to mention essential, for the lone

part-time researcher.

The data

Data was predominantly sought through interview. The implementation strategy of the National Curriculum was essentially a top down model. It envisaged policy statements (the National Curriculum outline) being elaborated upon by *subject working groups*. These group reports were to be brought into schools via their published recommendations (DES, 1987, annex B). The reports would be distributed to schools, where heads of department (HODs) would be charged with the responsibility of turning them into classroom practice. The reports would specify the *programmes of study* to be followed at each key stage. Heads of subject departments were thus the conduits through which the National Curriculum would pass from policy into practice. Advice would be forthcoming from the newly established National Curriculum Council (NCC) and the School Examinations and Assessment Council (SEAC) about the wider aspects of the curriculum and its assessment. This would be progressively available, and HODs and schools were to take note and modify their practice as necessary. There would be parallel influences upon the HODs; for example, headteachers and local authority advisers would be advised of necessary requirements (or recommendations) by the DES or its agencies, and these too would be channelled into the practices of schools (DES, 1989, section 9) through the activities of heads of department and their classroom teachers:

*The point is of course that the State must rely upon teachers
to 'deliver' the curriculum.*

(Bowe et al, 1992, p.16)

I decided upon one core and one foundation subject as the focus of research

in the schools: Science and History. These two subjects occupied prominent positions within the government's exposition of the need for a National Curriculum, and also belonged to quite distinct traditions. There had been substantial curriculum and pedagogical development in each subject area immediately prior to the introduction of the National Curriculum. Thus each subject had a clearly defined starting point against and through which to track the implementation of the new curricular requirements (each subject's recent past has been discussed in more detail in Chapter 2). The heads of each of these subject departments in each of the six schools were to be the principal sources of data about the developments ushered in by the National Curriculum, and the processes involved in doing so. *They* received the subject orders. *They* interpreted these for introduction into their classrooms, through the writing of syllabuses and schemes of work to implement the statutory orders. *They* were the target of advice and direction from the NCC, SEAC, local authority advisers and the headteachers in the schools. Their interpretation or accommodation of these orders would be in the particular context of the department's previous practice and tradition, and its personnel. It would also be within the particular context of the school. The HODs would be the major source of data relating to the school context of implementation, and the process of implementation.

Data would also be collected from a range of documentary evidence, which might include department documents, but especially school curriculum development plans, which the DES indicated were necessary to facilitate the planned implementation of the National Curriculum by schools (DES, 1989, para 9.12). Schools would also be required to provide curriculum information for parents through the school prospectuses (DES, 1989, para 7.1) and these too would be used in my analysis. The documentary evidence would offer a measure of triangulation to the accumulated data from the HODs, and

contribute to an understanding of the school situation within which the HODs were operating.

The interviews

In all, some forty four interviews were conducted. These were predominantly with HODs, recorded on tape, and they form the basis of the research findings. There was also an initial stage prior to the acceptance of this proposal for a research project in which all the HODs were interviewed without recording. This took place in 1990, and included interviews with the respective LEA inspectors/advisers for the two subjects. The point of these preliminary interviews with the HODs was to negotiate access to them, to agree upon the guidelines for our subsequent on the record discussions in the following years, and to establish the focus of my research. Notes were taken by me, and they helped in the later construction of an interview agenda. This agenda was also informed and shaped by the wealth of contemporary commentary on the National Curriculum. Thus the agenda for our meetings began to form, partially structured but open to unforeseen developments which could bear upon the central questions.

Although I planned to use a guide, or aide memoire, to ensure the interviews covered ground which a priori was thought to be appropriate territory for this enquiry, there was no intention or need to structure the questions or interviews beyond this. The sort of tabulated answers sought by highly structured interview surveys (cf Moser and Kalton, 1971, p. 271) were not at stake here. My research lay in the case study mode. It was more appropriate therefore to anticipate what areas might provide evidence through the "conversations with a purpose" (Burgess, 1984, p. 102) that I would have with my colleagues. Burgess suggests that "few field researchers have followed the structured

approach" (ibid, p.101), and in a discussion of one of his own research projects outlines an interview procedure (p.110) remarkably similar to my own subsequent experience.

I did, however, design a questionnaire for my interviewees to complete before the first round of interviews began. This was distributed and then returned before we met for interview, and could form the starting point for our discussions.

The Questionnaire

I determined upon the use of a questionnaire (see appendix A) prior to the first round of school interviews as I thought that some information could be easily and systematically collected in this manner, some aspects of the group's attitudes to the National Curriculum established (taking note of Moser and Kalton's (1971, ch.13.2) cautionary advice on question construction when seeking to establish the opinions or attitudes of respondents), and some time saved from that given to the interviews. At the very least the questionnaire would allow a lead in to each interview. At most, it might furnish some significant data. All data acquired in this way would be confirmed subsequently in the interviews.

The research design was focused on the experiences of the twelve HODs. The questionnaire responses, if significant, had the advantage of being a complete group survey. Any significant survey results would still be open to further empirical enquiry and confirmation through interview.

Care was taken over the focus of the questions. They were to relate to the central concern of the research. The wording of the questions was

intended to avoid confusion, ambiguity and lack of clarity (ibid, ch. 13.3).

Early versions were trialled among colleagues, and adjusted where necessary. The final version emerged after much pruning of questions which did not meet the above criteria. The final criterion was that the questionnaire should be easy for the respondents to complete.

In the event, the use to which my questionnaire was put was substantially of the minimal prediction. It contributed to the formulation of an interview agenda, and helped on occasions to initiate or re-stimulate conversation. On one issue, that of support for teachers, where the results were such that they merited separate display, the significance of these was firmly grounded in the spoken and noted evidence of the interviews. The only other issue that led to separate display was that relating to the forms of pupil organisation adopted by the schools. Thus the prime purpose of the questionnaire was to engage the interviewees, and focus attention on certain areas of their professional lives that might prove significant in relation to the research questions. These would be explored more fully through the interview process.

Preparing an agenda

The theoretical questions were derived from two major sources. First, there was the official language of the proposal, accompanying the 1987 consultation document, the 1988 Act, and supporting and elaborating documents issued in 1989 and 1990 to clarify various issues for teachers engaged in implementation (eg DES, 1987, 1989, 1990). This is discussed in some detail in Chapter 5. Second, there was a wealth of contemporary discussion and analysis surrounding the proposal (discussed in some detail in Chapter 3). From these sources it was possible to begin the research with a clear idea of the issues

under investigation, and what might become significant indicators of what had been happening through implementation of the National Curriculum. These significant indicators might be seen as in the spirit of the *foreshadowed problems* of Smith and Pohland (1974). They could provide an early focus and agenda for the research, with an open mind about what might be found.

The research design is clearly within the naturalistic qualitative paradigm. Conventional theoretical extremes of this paradigm contrast substantially unstructured social anthropology with a neo-scientific research design, pre-determined and highly structured. However, it is now commonplace within the theoretical debate to find researchers acknowledging that the power of the paradigm is to exemplify issues of importance and concern, such as validity and manageability. And some avenues of research interest simply do not need the intensive resource investment of the anthropological paradigm:

Suggesting that the qualitative researcher use a standardized instrument or lay out a conceptual framework to orient the data collection effort is likely to raise the hackles of some people who, up to now, have done the most qualitative research: social anthropologists and social phenomenologists....They advocate a more loosely structured, emergent , inductively "grounded" approach to gathering data..... Highly inductive and loosely designed studies make good sense when researchers have plenty of time and are exploring exotic cultures, understudied phenomena, or very complex social realities. But when one is interested in some better-understood social phenomena within a familiar culture or sub-culture, a loose, highly inductive design is a waste of time.....

Predictable enough, most of the qualitative work now being done

lies between these two (paradigm) extremes. Something is known conceptually about the phenomenon, but not enough to house a theory. The researcher has a fairly good idea of the parts of the phenomenon that are not well understood, and knows where to look for these things- in which settings, among which actors, within which processes or during what class of event. (Huberman and Miles, 1984, p. 27)

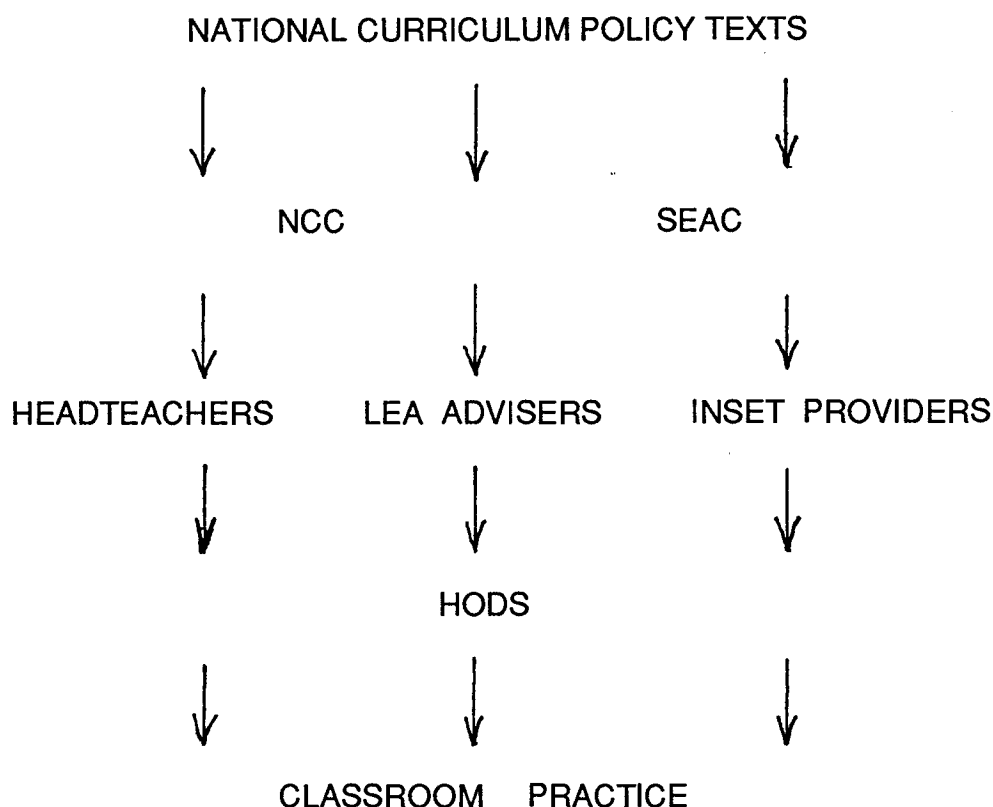
Similarly, in my research there is a clear focus (research problem). The terrain within which the problem is located is well known (ie schools). This knowledge naturally generates a partially structured design appropriate to that terrain, and a set of pre-research conceptual categories which might possibly be relevant to the resolution of the problem. This need not constrain the research process. Unpredicted categories of response were to be expected and welcomed. The interviews were not closed to this possibility. On the other hand, the pre-field research analysis of early 1990 yielded an understanding of the issues, and the location of the resolution of those issues (ie in schools, in this case), that allowed a fair degree of anticipation of where to look for answers (schools and their practices); and what sort of answers might be forthcoming.

All routes to the classroom led through the HODs. *Their actions would be* determined by a number of factors ranging from the central policy legislation and directives, to the particular school sites. Within the broad area of enquiry, which was clarified by the pre-field work analysis, it was possible to anticipate significant lines of enquiry, and to establish some a priori conceptual categories likely to relate to the enquiry. Huberman and Miles (1984, p, 29) support this beginning process as natural, and sensible:

Theory building relies on a few general constructs that subsume a mountain of particulars.....any researcher, no

matter how inductive in approach, knows which bins (labels) to start with and what their general contents are likely to be.

Thus in this study, knowing what was being looked at, why and where, it was possible to map out fields of enquiry, and within these fields to anticipate areas that would reveal significant developments in the implementation process. An initial simple framing plan was as follows:



Potentially revealing data from the interviews with teachers (HODs) might, for example, include the following:

- * teachers' understanding of the major concepts
- * teachers' intentions re these concepts
- * teachers' activities re these concepts
- * teachers' activities re the whole proposal

- * teachers' intentions re the proposal
- * teachers' schemes of work for the proposals
- * teachers' understanding of assessment and its purpose and use in the pre- National Curriculum context
- * teachers' assessment practices to date
- * teachers' understanding of the proposed assessment practices
- * teachers' grouping of pupils for learning
- * teachers' grouping of pupils for learning over time ie through KS3-4
- * teachers' teaching styles adopted
- * teachers' attitudes to the proposals, and leading concepts
- * teachers' perceptions of constraints on their activities
- * teachers' preparedness for implementation: INSET provision

Under each of these headings (or labels) which might be attached to data lies a network of interrelationships. Deciding which are more meaningful in answer to the main question forces a selection from the researcher. Not all can be pursued with equal profit, and there is a plethora of likely data and data categories to be found within each label. Huberman and Miles (1984, ch. 2) discuss this process of focusing and bounding the research data: that is, developing a conceptual framework that makes clear the variables being handled, and beginning to explain the relationships between them. Beginning with our knowledge of the area being studied, and some tentative categories suggested by theory and experience, we know what to aim for, and where, and can provisionally assign anticipated descriptive data to potentially useful explanatory, framing, conceptual categories. Huberman and Miles strongly advise early framing in the likely face of voluminous data in need of shape.

The potential breadth and scope of the data collected, and the potential for analysis, can be shown by taking just one likely source of interest, INSET

provision: that is, all the help given to teachers to assist them in their implementation of the National Curriculum. If we anticipate a possible response from teachers, namely that they have not managed to meet what they perceive to be the demands of the National Curriculum, asking them for an explanation of this could result in the descriptive categories set out below.

These descriptive categories are simply a common sense list of possible responses. The conceptual categories alongside represent the beginning of the process of shaping and making sense of the data. Additional conceptual categories could emerge from the descriptive data. Data might not fit neatly into only one conceptual category, and so the conceptual category column does not correlate precisely with the descriptive data column.

Teachers' Responses To Failing To Meet Intention In Practice

<u>Data categories</u>	
<i>Descriptive</i>	<i>Conceptual</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * poor INSET * lack of reality in proposals * inadequate funding * political expediency * political cynicism * bureaucratic inefficiency * school constraints * innovation fatigue * habit * poor self image 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * disingenuous use of concepts in proposal * politically driven proposal * bureaucratic confusion * natural teacher resistance to externally generated change * distance of policy makers * the need for shared meaning * organisational tension

These conceptual categories may or may not prove useful in the end, but it would be foolish to suggest that there might be any restriction to the research as a result of beginning with these. They are common sense possibilities. They do not preclude the data throwing up alternative explanations, or forcing a re-shaping or reformulation of conceptual categories.

Data collected may support the existence of these categories, and if so that might have some significance. Unexpected categories generated by the data may be explored and found valuable. At the same time, having a clear vision of the research focus and framework, and the sorts of questions that therefore follow, means that the researcher can be fairly ruthless about meaningful data generated but not considered sufficiently focused on the main question, supported by the conceptual framework. Unlike Smith and Pohland (1974), whose 'foreshadowed problems' were the tentative beginning of some analytical and conceptual clarity about a known question with an open answer, the questions around my research were open in a different way. There were very clearly argued predictions of the fate of the National Curriculum, derived from close analysis of the proposal and the political context from which it grew. I have contributed to this textual analysis of the proposal and subsequent legislation, and that analysis provides a conceptual framework for later analysis of the field data. This is not unusual. Bowe et al (1992) embarked upon their small scale (four school) study of the development of the National Curriculum in its early years armed similarly with a pre-field work conceptual framework for investigation.

However, this is not a verification study in the straightforward unambiguous manner of, for example, a quantitative investigation. While certain aspects of the research benefit from quantitative description and analysis, for example teachers' changing patterns of pupil organisation, these quantitative results still

require qualitative analysis and interpretation to have a bearing on the main question. As has been previously indicated, knowledge of the terrain on which the question might be resolved leads to a "common sense" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p.16-17, 25) focus for investigation, but not any foreclosing of possibilities.

Teachers' attitudes and interpretations of the processes through which they were passing were also considered significant, as well as such factual or statistical data as they supplied. It was therefore important to allow the interviews to remain *semi-structured*. The main interviews therefore started with a clear question, about the relationship between the National Curriculum proposal and the classroom reality, a clear vision of where the empirical answers to this question lay, and the potential categories into which the collected data might fall. The interview agenda was, then, simply determined and used as an *aide memoire* to ensure that potentially significant areas of the HODs' roles and experiences were not lost in these "conversations with a purpose" (Burgess, 1982). The agenda would also serve to stimulate some prior thought by the interviewees. The agenda for the first round of interviews, circulated in advance, was as follows:

AGENDA FOR AN INTERVIEW ON NC DEVELOPMENTS

Testing and assessment: experiences and impressions

Organising children for learning: impact of the changes

Training and INSET for the proposals: adequate and effective?

Links with other aspects of the curriculum / the whole curriculum

Purpose of the changes: *entitlement, differentiation*, raised standards

Impact of the National Curriculum on your area

Your feelings and attitudes about the new things.

Thus central to the field research was the gathering of information about what teachers were actually doing. Once that was established, I could explore the relationship between actual practice and what had been argued, in Chapters 2 and 5, to be the intentions implied by the rhetoric which had accompanied the proposal for a National Curriculum

Data Collection

The Documents

The use of documents played a major part in this research. Documents were used by the government first to propose educational policy (The National Curriculum- a consultation document (1987)), then to state policy (ERA 1988;

DES, 1989), and finally to implement policy (eg DES, 1989; NCC, 1990, statutory subject orders, etc). In order to establish the intention of the government's National Curriculum it was necessary to engage in a close textual analysis of these and other relevant documents: a process of "acute, and patient, logical inference" (Thompson, 1972, p.155). The documents selected for analysis beyond the central policy documents were predominantly those which, by inference from the central texts, had been seminal and influential in the development of this formulation of policy (and these are discussed in Chapter 5).

As this proposal was very much rooted in the political context of the time of its formulation, much reference is made to literature from all shades of political hue, but more substantially from academic commentary upon both the broad political context, and the place of the policy within that (Chapter 3). Thompson (1972, p.154) suggested that the study of facts begins to acquire meaning only "within an ensemble of other meanings". The textual analysis of these documents was thus contextualised in the political climate that gave rise and home to them. The fact that this proposal was a political creature, and the suggestion that political proposals come wrapped in rhetoric sympathetic to their chances of public legitimation, meant that the textual analysis needed to be located within a clear statement of the political framework. Thus (to borrow from Thompson again) it might acquire

*sensitivity to tone,...awareness of the inner consistency of text
and of the significance of imagery. (p. 156)*

Thompson was writing about the employment of the methods of literary criticism in the writing of history, but the point holds when considering the publication of government policy documents. These adopt a deliberate tone, and make careful use of language, fully understandable only in the

context of that *ensemble of meanings* referred to earlier, in this case the political and educational context of the moment of formulation and enactment of policy. Thus any reading of the text needs to avoid a simplistic literal interpretation (the "intentional fallacy", Codd, 1988, p.239) and explore *various features of the text itself and the context in which it is interpreted.*

However, in the analysis of the central terms *differentiation* and *entitlement*, I intended to circumvent the issue of possible researcher bias by reference *initially* only to the actual texts, and any references clearly made within *them* to other texts. The further question, of how meanings are enhanced by consideration of the political context, was introduced as a second stage of enquiry. This was possible, but not directly implied by the documentation. This question would lie at the heart of the field research, to be determined empirically at the points of implementation, the school sites. Analysis of these terms and their use was therefore initially rooted in their actual use in the documents, and their stated purpose for so being there. Conjecture about hidden agendas or meanings, suggested either by the manner of these terms' employment in the texts, or those commentators who located the proposals within a wider political project, was established as problematic at this stage of the research.

The documents were important in another sense also. They not only stated government policy, but were a key element in its implementation. The reports of subject working groups eventually acquired the status of statute law. They thus became documents to which teachers *had* to refer, for they contained the *programmes of study* which teachers were required to follow. HODs would read these texts and act upon them. Implementation would depend upon *how* they were read, in conjunction with all the other

influences upon HODs. Consideration of how this might happen, and its impact upon the research, was assisted by a discussion by Bowe et al (1992) about the nature of this process.

Bowe et al drew attention to the fact that what happens in schools is the result of official policy intentions and policy texts (a text being, for example, the programme of study for any subject) being encountered by those who must do the teaching. Teachers may find *space* in which to interpret the National Curriculum to their own inclinations, or to the particular context of implementation. Building on the work of Barthes, Ball and Bowe employ a distinction between *readerly* approaches to policy texts, and *writerly* ones. *Readerly* approaches would treat the texts as unproblematic and act upon them accordingly. A *writerly* response would join in with the texts in an interaction which might, depending on the inclination and context of the *reader/writer*, result in something emerging markedly different from intended policy, or from a simple *readerly* response. The opportunity, or the absence of it, for the HOD to make a writerly response to the texts would inevitably affect my emerging views about the implementation of the National Curriculum.

Documents available from schools were also employed. Official school documents such as the school development plan and the school prospectus were used, both to act as a form of triangulation in the development of an understanding of the school context, and an understanding of the curricular impact of the proposals across the whole school. Department policy documents were rarely available because the HODs were still working to come to terms with the programmes of study. Producing department syllabuses was the priority, and as implementation progressed amendments or developments to these became the new priority as

adjustments were made to the programmes of study, or as new assessment procedures were introduced.

The Interviews

The questionnaire had elicited some basic information about each department, and in several cases was used as a starting point for discussion. But in most cases, the interviews began naturally as *conversations* with colleagues about their recent experiences at work. The agenda served its purpose as an aide memoire, ensuring that aspects of the HODs' work had not been overlooked by the informality of the occasion, and could be pursued at the end. The tape recorder was switched on when introductions had been completed and both parties had been made comfortable. It was switched off after the conversation had become naturally exhausted, and the interviewees had been invited to reflect upon any significant omissions that occurred to them.

A number of issues concerning the interviews had been considered prior to carrying them out. These included familiarity, the bias of the interviewer, the relationship of the interviewer to the interviewee, confidentiality, and the interviewees' own agendas of concern with regard to the National Curriculum and its implementation.

Familiarity may lead the researcher to unwarranted prior assumptions about the situation being investigated. Such assumptions may prejudice the conduct of research: for example, the manner in which it is gathered, or the manner in which certain avenues are pursued; or the researcher's perception of the significance of certain data. Indeed, this research began with a prior agenda, and an *a priori* set of conceptual categories which guided the construction of the final agenda, as well as lying in wait for use in

subsequent analysis. Stephenson and Greer (1981) discussed in detail these potential problems. They offer as a solution to such hesitancy about the validity of findings in a familiar setting, the strategy of maintaining an "artificial naivete", being aware of such possibilities and being ready to see beyond the immediate and obvious.

The issue of familiarity was resolved through the idea of *semi-structured* interviews. The pre-determined agenda was a strength. It helped to structure and focus the direction of the interviews. The possibility of too much focus and control was balanced by leaving the agenda open to the interviewees to roam as they wished, providing that in the end we had returned to what I considered to be essential parts of my agenda. The *conversations with a purpose* also allowed us to roam outside of that agenda if the interviewees led that way. With the tape running throughout, all that was said was available to subsequent scrutiny, analysis, and discard if not relevant. Being familiar, and cautious of that familiarity, is a natural dilemma to some extent of all human research pursuits. The positive side of this is the value that can be derived from an insider's knowledge of the terrain. The use of a teacher's expertise and interest as a starting point in educational research has been acknowledged in several major research projects (Burgess (1984) cites himself (1983), Lacey (1970) and Ball (1981) as falling into this category).

Of more potential trouble was my own role as one of the HODs whose department would be part of the field research. I could not pretend to interview myself. My dilemma was resolved in several ways. I could easily provide data about such matters as organisation of classes and frequency of INSET. They were non- controversial, independently verifiable, matters of fact. I determined to avoid any charge of allowing my own views or opinions to affect the rigour of the study. Where I had previously determined that certain

opinions or attitudes were potentially significant, what I *did* permit was the elicitation of these from the documentation of my own department, even though I was clearly the author, and was expressing comments about school developments in the course of my own work. These documents included department reviews for the school governors, or the department policy document. Also, I did allow myself to complete the questionnaire I had prepared for the HODs. Any points at which my inclusion in either a whole group of HODs, or the group of subject HODs, was important to demonstrate a trend or tendency of a whole set of respondents was grounded either in the objective state of affairs (eg the grouping of children), or the documentary evidence (eg the department 'vision' of the role of my subject expounded in the department policy document), or in my direct practical experience of such matters as INSET provision.

Perhaps the issue of bias was thus thrown into greater relief than it might otherwise have been. The safeguards against that are explicitly considered throughout this discussion of methodology, while the strengths of being a participant are asserted.

One of these strengths was the ease of access to fellow teachers and schools. The teachers were universally accommodating, although they frequently remarked upon how overwhelmed they were by the pace, demands, and weight of change, and hence how precious was their time. Access may not have been offered by all had collegiality not been a factor. And familiarity also eased the issue of confidentiality. Standard reassurances were made to the group that the authority, the schools, and the personnel, would all be anonymised in the reporting and attribution of the data. While the teachers seemed to rest relatively easy with this proposition, two of the schools' headteachers were unwilling to release their school development plans.

Their prospectuses as documents in the public domain were therefore used in the depiction of the schools' positions (Chapter 6). As the research continued beyond the first round of interviews, there were no recorded anxieties of any kind by the HODs in relation to confidentiality.

Recording and analysing the interviews

The tapes were run throughout each interview and switched off only after the interviewees had the opportunity of adding some concluding, possibly summarising, comments, or reflecting upon their own concerns that our conversation had not touched upon. It was rare at this point for anything more than a brief summary or re-emphasis to be forthcoming, suggesting to me that the *aide memoire* agenda and *conversations with a purpose* mode had fulfilled their intentions.

The first thing done subsequently, immediately following interview, was to record any factors or impressions that might be thought to reflect upon the interview data, such as impressions of the interviewee's attitude that might not be explicit in the data, or any circumstances that might similarly be significant. On one memorable occasion, for example, the respondent's silence on a matter was due to a reluctance to become involved in overly critical appraisal of someone else's role in the process of implementation that s/he had experienced. This was quite clear from the body language of the moment, but would not have appeared similarly on the tape transcript.

"The data generated by qualitative methods are voluminous" (Patton, 1978, p.297); and so the transcription of the interview tapes was not an option for me. The time was not available, nor was there any funding. The interviews were subsequently played back and noted. A running commentary was

written as summary notes, and comments of obvious significance re-run and recorded word for word, in case they would be needed as quotes to exemplify points. Annotation and some coding of data took place simultaneously. The tapes were re-run as necessary to establish what was said, and reference made to post-interview notes where these could illuminate the meaning of what had been said by reference to the context of the interview.

Noting was followed by sorting and coding. Patton (1978) offers a common sense straightforward description of this process:

I begin by reading through all of my field notes or interviews and making comments in the margins or even attaching pieces of paper with staples or paper clips that contain my notions about what I can do with the different parts of the data.

(p. 299)

This was a beginning to the process of content analysis, aided by the a priori analysis of possible data categories, but also open to new categorisation and interpretation. As I began to develop ideas about the data I had collected, I found the method of devising *matrix displays* of qualitative data advocated by Huberman and Miles (1984) to be helpful in suggesting patterns of meaning and possible explanations. Responses to these matrix displays were mainly of the "first squint" variety (suggestive, impressionistic), sending me back to the data for a more thorough search. The value of a simple display as explanation and revelation can be seen in the table in Chapter 6 on teachers' reactions to INSET provision. However, for the purposes of this research the process of matrix display construction was more important as part of the process of continuous reflection upon the data and its interpretation rather than final summative explanation. For example, in just one instance of a response to a direct question (about experiences of INSET), the possibilities of significant meanings pertaining to

the research question required me to devise numerous variations of display of the findings. There were the obvious subject group cross-site responses to be displayed; there were site by site displays; there was the whole respondent group display (Miles and Huberman's *meta matrix display*). These matrix displays were a useful part of the process of searching for meaning and interpretation, forcing returns to the notes and summaries for support and further illumination.

I returned to the raw data time and again as interpretations suggested themselves and verification from other sources of data was sought. This process closely mirrored that described by Patton (1978). In a chapter titled Qualitative Analysis and Interpretation, Patton describes succinctly how the process might develop:

Focus in analyzing qualitative data collected from in-depth interviewing and fieldwork comes from the evaluation questions generated at the very beginning of the evaluation process: during the conceptual, question-focusing phase of the evaluation. (p. 296)

The task is to do one's best to make sense out things. A qualitative analyst returns to the data over and over again to see if the constructs, categories, explanations, and interpretations make sense (p. 339)

A frequent concern of this type of research is the extent to which the preconceived ideas of the researcher are allowed to creep into the design, the process and the final analysis of the research data. There is no easy way to refute this possibility. Comparisons are often made between the satisfaction

of hard objective quasi-scientific numerical data, and the subjective frailty of qualitative data analysis. There is no escape from that distinction, but Patton (1980, p.336) suggests:

Numbers do not protect against bias- they merely disguise it.

Bias can appear in any form of research. The most satisfying attempts to reconcile these concerns about the putative weakness of the qualitative method when adversely compared with the objective status of the quantitative data researcher, have defiantly accepted the differences. The aim of the qualitative researcher is to remain "neutral" (Guba, 1978), or "impartial" (House, 1980). The credibility of the eventual findings rests with their relationship with the data within which they are grounded (Patton, 1980, p.337).

Their acceptance will be a matter of "plausibility" (House ,1980). My response to these potential charges has been to try to demonstrate in this chapter an awareness of the issues; to provide a clear exposition of the research problem; to describe clearly which sources were used, and why; and in so doing to provide a natural history of the project, from which the reader can draw his/her own conclusions as to its validity.

A case study approach

The case study approach allowed for an in-depth investigation of the development under review. The case was the six county maintained high schools of the London Borough of Amalgam, and their Science and History departments. Although therefore spread across six sites, they were bounded as a case by their common experience of the implementation of the National Curriculum, and their homogeneity as the complete group of county maintained high schools.

The central research question was clear. Would the practice that emerged resemble the rhetoric that accompanied the proposal? Or was the rhetoric part of a need to seek legitimation for the proposal?

It was clear that the answer to the central question lay in schools and what they did. Therefore school practice must be at the centre of the research. The question of the *sincerity* of the rhetoric might on a priori reflection be found in:

- * the larger political context
- * the relationship of the educational project to the whole political project
- * the various moments of implementation

These moments of implementation would all have their own specificity, but exhibit characteristics which pertained to the whole process. For example, at the point (moment) where central policy meshed with (or imposed itself upon) schools, what was the thrust of this? The heads of department lay between all such thrusts and the classrooms. Their evidence would be crucial to this.

Classroom observation would have revealed much about classroom practice, but that was not a viable, manageable option for the lone researcher, within the time-frame and resources available for the study. And heads of department, at that most critical inter-face between the proposals and the practice, were perfectly placed to reveal the impact upon teaching within their areas being made during this implementation.

The case study provided a discrete model through which to observe the impact of the National Curriculum. It was designed as a longitudinal study, over the

first three years in which the teaching of the National Curriculum became mandatory upon high schools, through the passing of subject group recommendations as statutory orders. The two major subject areas chosen, History and Science, each had their separate traditions and developments, as well as being part of the same overall curriculum implementation. In the first year the field study began with the six school, and twelve departments, sample. In the second year an element of triangulation was aimed for by focusing down the research to one school, Springfields, across the heads of all major departments. I then returned in the third and final year to the six school sample.

I decided not to extend triangulation by interviewing the senior management of the schools. I would employ the official school policy documents, referred to above, to establish school positions on various matters. This decision was taken partly because of the pre-emptive refusal of two of the schools to reveal to me their school development plans. It seemed unlikely that they would then settle down to a candid *conversation with a purpose* with me. That had been a possibility, but more compelling was the thought that only one group of people was at the cutting edge of change in the sense of doing it in the classroom, or preparing syllabuses and schemes of work directly for use in the classroom. They could reveal most about the impact of the proposals upon planned classroom practice, and the levels of assistance they had received in their preparation for, and understanding of, what was underway. That was their immediate and prime responsibility. That was why they were chosen as the target group for the field research. They would also be able to relate the extent to which they felt constrained or affected by school policy or ethos in their moves to implement the National Curriculum in their department areas.

Conclusion

The research falls clearly into the ethnographic mode. The data base for this research is comprised of interviews and documents. The data collection is therefore in the main both naturalistic and qualitative. It has been suggested (Giddens, 1979) that the value of theoretical paradigms is that each might help to mediate the others, not simply negate or exclude them.

However, this is not the place to engage in the meta-theoretical debate over what might be said to constitute knowledge, and whether different values might be ascribed to different forms or types of knowledge. This project falls clearly into a social science tradition which has been eloquently defended by many. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), in a discussion on ethnography and the doubts cast upon the respective polar paradigms of positivism and naturalism, make the simple point that we are all part of the social world. The striving for a *fly on the wall* 'objective' research method, or security in numerical expressions of observed phenomena, is unnecessary. Our being part of the social world inevitably brings a "reflexivity" to any research activity in that world. We acknowledge and exploit our membership of that world. There is nothing necessarily weak about data which falls into the naturalistic qualitative domain, nor any interpretations derived from such data. The certainty of numbers has a natural appeal, but behind all collections of numerical data lies a range of assumptions made by the researchers. Proof in research based on numerical data is as elusive as that based on qualitative data. Such proof is not sought here, nor can it be, for

Especially in a pluralistic society, evaluation cannot produce necessary propositions. But if it cannot produce the necessary, it can provide the credible, the plausible and the probable.

(House,1980, p. 72)

While case studies are necessarily limited to their own situation, and are often seen as *illuminative* (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972), rather than directly replicable and replete with generalisable conclusions, this case study has *some* claims to a wider significance, as it is a study of developments over a national context. Its sample schools comprise a homogeneous group within a local government unit, a Local Education Authority. Its sample teachers comprise whole groups within that. The processes and influences at work upon them are those emanating from national developments. At least within its own milieu, it chronicles and attempts to explain the effects of a major national curriculum innovation upon one section of its overall target: the county secondary schools of the London Borough of Amalgam.

The key concepts of *entitlement* and *differentiation* are considered next.

Chapter Five

THE CONCEPTS OF ENTITLEMENT AND DIFFERENTIATION

Introduction

In this chapter I look at the use that was made of these terms in the first formal proposal for a National Curriculum, and subsequent supporting literature. *Entitlement* and *differentiation* are terms which have been widely used in the field of contemporary educational discourse over the last two decades. Their use in relation to the National Curriculum is explored in the context of their development and use as part of the Great Debate from which the National Curriculum emerged. Some conclusions are drawn as to what we might infer about their meaning in this new context. This is relevant because the proposal for a National Curriculum carried with it the explicit suggestion that it emerged directly from a decade or more of professional debate led by HMI and others.

Entitlement: towards an understanding

Entitlement was used in The National Curriculum 5-16 : a consultation document (DES, 1987) partly as a justifying rationale and partly as an organising principle of educational provision:

The government now wishesto secure for all pupils in maintained schools a curriculum which equips them with the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need for adult life and employment.....Pupils should be entitled to the same opportunities wherever they go to school .

(A national curriculum) ensuring that all pupils, regardless of sex, ethnic origin and geographical location have access to broadly the same good and relevant curriculum and programmes of study which include the key content, skills and processes which they need to learn and which ensure that the content and teaching of the various elements of the national curriculum bring out their relevance to and links with pupils' own experiences and their practical applications and continuing value to adult and working life.

(DES, 1987, paras7,8, my emphasis)

The practical outcomes of such intentions were substantially the field research question and agenda: how teachers understood these aims and intentions, and organised the 'delivery' of children's learning experiences in the light of these conceptual bases of the proposals. The following DES document, From Policy To Practice, made explicit the intention that subsequent implementation of the proposals in schools would relate to these intentions:

In effect, it (the ERA) entitles every pupil in maintained schoolsto a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based.....Key points include the following.

- * The principle that each pupil should have a broad and balanced curriculum which is also relevant to his or her particular needs is now established in law.*
- * That principle must be reflected in the curriculum of every pupil. It is not enough for such a curriculum to be offered by the school ; it must be taken up by each individual child.*

- * *That curriculum must promote development in all the main areas of learning and experience which are widely accepted as important.*
- * *The curriculum must also serve to develop the pupil as an individual, as a member of society and as a future adult member of the community with a range of personal and social opportunities and responsibilities.*

A curriculum which meets these general criteria is an entitlement for all pupils..... What is described above establishes the general principles within which the curriculum must continue to develop.

(DES, 1989, paras 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, my emphasis)

This document was circulated to all teachers in schools and was intended as a practical accompaniment to implementation. Its function was :

- * *to show how the ERA requirements relate to thinking about the curriculum over the last two decades*
- * *to set the National Curriculum in the context of the whole school curriculum; and*
- * *to describe and explain the ways in which the National Curriculum and related requirements will affect practice in schools.*

(ibid, para. 1.1, my emphasis)

Here is a clear statement that pupils are *entitled* to a curriculum that is similar in whichever area or school a child may be; indeed a curriculum for every pupil. As is clear from the proposals stated above, the mechanism for ensuring that each child receives its *entitlement* is that the "key" elements of the National Curriculum are in every child's individual curriculum. (In this argument may be detected a hint of circularity. The curriculum specification ensures each child's *entitlement* ; and that *entitlement* can be observed in the application and take up of the curriculum).

These two documents have the imprimatur of the DES, and the proposals acquired the authority of statute law when passed by Parliament in 1988. Therefore the DES documents have prime place in any consideration of the concepts of *entitlement* and *differentiation* in the National Curriculum, as their association with the proposals stems from their conscious use in its first formal elaboration and subsequent supporting material. The proposals contain the "key" elements which comprise an *entitlement*. The search for understanding of the current use of the term *entitlement* naturally begins with a study of its use in these two documents.

Entitlement to a curriculum = entitlement curriculum?

It is clear from a reading of the documents that the elements which comprise an *entitlement* are said to be the curricular arrangements specified in the 1987 proposal, described substantially in subject terms, with rough suggestions of their respective share of curriculum time. The 1989 document develops these suggestions, and specifies more clearly what the National Curriculum will be:

The National Curriculum comprises :

- * foundation subjects - including three core subjects and seven other foundation subjects which must be in the curricula of all pupils ;*
- * attainment targets, to be specified at up to ten levels of attainment, covering the ages 5-16, setting objectives for learning;*
- * programmes of study specifying essential teaching within each subject area;*
- * assessment arrangements related to the ten levels of attainment.*

(ibid, para. 3.3, my emphasis)

It goes on to refer to a much more broadly conceived curriculum than was hitherto discernible in the proposals. Explicit reference is made to the "whole curriculum" for all pupils (ibid, para 3.8) and the "essential elements in terms of learning and experience as analysed by HMI" (ibid, para. 3.7). All pupils will need

- * careers education and guidance*
- * health education*
- * other aspects of personal and social education ; and*
- * coverage across the curriculum of gender and multi-cultural issues.*

(ibid, para. 3.8)

The document then refers to :

a range of themes which might be taught in a cross-curricular way such as economic awareness, political and international understanding, and environmental education.

(ibid, para. 3,8)

The National Curriculum, then, to which we are directed as explanation of a child's *entitlement*, is as outlined above. This is a child's *entitlement*. It is a curriculum which, it is suggested, will command a "substantial measure of agreement" (DES, 1987, para. 4).

'A Substantial Measure of Agreement'

The introduction to the 1987 consultation proposal implies a natural link between developments since 1976 (the year of Prime Minister James Callaghan's Ruskin College speech) and the 1987 proposal, via Better Schools (DES, 1985):

Since Sir James Callaghan's speech as Prime Minister at Ruskin College in 1976, successive secretaries of State have aimed to achieve agreement with their partners in the education service on policies for the school curriculum which will develop the potential of all pupils and equip them for the responsibilities of citizenship and for the challenges of employment in tomorrow's world. A substantial measure of agreement has already been achieved and there is now widespread support for the aims of education which were set out clearly in the White Paper Better Schools.

(DES, 1987, para. 4, my emphasis)

Agreement was said to extend also to curricula in practice :

Many LEAs and schools have made important advances towards achieving a good curriculum for pupils aged 5-16, which offers progression, continuity and coherence between its different stages. There is much agreement too about the subjects which should be

included in the secular curriculum for 5-16 year olds; and valuable progress has been made towards securing agreement about the objectives and content of particular subjects.

(para. 5)

What might the link between 1976 and subsequent debate and developments in 1987 be? In what manner might it enhance a child's development and performance? The 1989 document, From Policy To Practice, refers to the HMI contribution to the debate, explicitly to acknowledge the inadequacies of a curriculum based solely on subjects :

HMI have helpfully analysed essential elements in terms of areas of learning and experience.

(DES, 1989, para. 3,7)

At the same time the value of subject based planning is asserted, as the subjects encompass the :

range of knowledge, skills and understanding commonly accepted as necessary for a broad and balanced curriculum for the individual pupil, and provide a framework for a number of other aspects of the curriculum.

(ibid, para. 3.6)

The foundation subjects are :

certainly not a complete curriculum ; they are necessary but not sufficient to ensure a curriculum which meets the purposes and covers the elements identified by HMI and others. In particular they will cover fully the acquisition of certain key cross-curricular competences: literacy, numeracy and information technology skills.

(ibid, para. 3.8)

Having established that the subject specification is necessary but not sufficient for an *entitlement* curriculum, From Policy To Practice attempts to clarify

the issue by referring to the roles of the new agencies created by the government and given tasks related to the developing National Curriculum. The National Curriculum Council (NCC) had been said to have :

a key function looking across the curriculum as a whole and advising the Secretary of State on the maintenance and up-dating of the National Curriculum.

(DES, 1987, para. 46)

In the words of the 1989 document:

NCC will have a main responsibility for ensuring that elements of the statutory National Curriculum fit together in the whole curriculum so that the parts support each other and make a coherent whole. That will certainly mean that the parts of the National Curriculum which are introduced first, such as Mathematics and Science, will need revision to take account of later development and thinking.

(DES, 1989, para. 9.4)

It is clear that the revision envisaged here is in pursuit of a whole curriculum model. The numerous references to the previous work of HMI and their development of a curriculum model, and the guidance they are said to have given for the current changes, make it sensible now to look at their work during recent years. The contribution of the "others" will then be explored. But first I consider those government claims that the proposal for a National Curriculum lies in a tradition and consensus of recent curriculum development that was shaped and underpinned here by the contributions of HMI to the debate.

The HMI contribution (1): substantial agreement ?

The HMI contribution to the debate over the value of a common curriculum in our schools emerged during the ten year period 1975-1985. Prime Minister James Callaghan's 1976 speech at Ruskin College is commonly cited as marking a public consensus of concern about the purpose, direction and practice of education. The assumed consensus arising from the ensuing 'Great Debate', the alleged "substantial agreement" of the 1987 document, was asserted also by Secretary of State Kenneth Baker, describing the proposals as:

*The natural next stage in what has become a process
of evolution.*

(TES, 25/9/1987, quoted in Maw (1988) p.50)

This claim was repeated, as we have seen above, in the 1989 document From Policy To Practice. However, although the concern may have been a matter of consensus, the remedies could be markedly different. It is certainly the case that the Great Debate included many remedies for this perceived ailing system, and that they contained superficial similarities. Chitty (1988) cited curriculum proposals variously described as

*integrated curriculum, compulsory curriculum, a common
culture individualised curriculum, a common curriculum, a
core curriculum, a common-core curriculum and now, finally,
a national curriculum!*

(Chitty, 1988, p.34)

These remedies could be quite different. Indeed, it is disingenuous to claim a direct causal connection between this family of responses to the concerns of the debate, and the National Curriculum, as if it were

*the natural and rational result foreshadowed by
previous events.*

(Maw, 1988, p.51)

This is underlined by the wealth of distinguished commentators who emphasised how much, in their opinion, the proposals diverged from the type of curriculum model espoused by HMI, the very parentage claimed by the DES. Both Maw (1988) and Chitty (1985) had identified initiatives in government education policies in the 1980s (eg LAPP, TVEI) which tended to lead away from the idea of a common curriculum and led instead to *differentiation* of pupils by separation, selection and different examinations (although exemplifying the trend to strong central control). In particular the inheritance of an HMI tradition is an assertion which needs closer examination, especially when it has been commonly remarked that the resemblance is only superficial (eg Lawton, 1987; Chitty, 1988; Coulby and Bash, 1990).

The DES (1989, paras 3.7, 3.8, 3.9) view was that the full *entitlement* of any student would come from the statutory programmes of study through which eventually would flow the "key elements" identified by HMI (for example, political understanding, coverage of multi-cultural issues, environmental education). The curriculum would become complete when the "purpose" and "elements" of "HMI and others" were met and covered. These concerns of HMI and others would be taken on board by the NCC and emerge in the form of non-statutory guidance for schools to consider and adopt. The status of these essential elements is somewhat uncertain, as they are not included in the statutory orders of the National Curriculum. (It might be argued, as have HMI (DES, 1992), that such concerns are at the heart of the act's requirement to "prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life". This was not made explicit, however, and hence such matters may not be at the front of schools' planning or practice). The uncertainty of the place of such "elements" was underlined by the public utterances of Education Minister Kenneth Clarke :

If anybody argues that my role is to rubber-stamp whatever comes last out of the National Curriculum Council, then I totally repudiate that interpretation of my role. I would like to set out a broad range of curriculum, leaving teachers to teach it in their own particular way, in their own time. I am not very repentant about taking things out.

(quoted in Guardian Education, 19/2/91)

The NCC had become the major guiding hand seeking to shape the National Curriculum in the mould of the HMI-influenced *whole curriculum* model; and Kenneth Clarke declared himself ready to dispense with NCC advice as he saw fit. Yet the frequent references in the proposals to HMI in deference to their work is an indication of the esteem in which their thought was held. (Such frequent reference might also serve to add *legitimacy* to what was being proposed). The HMI conclusions as to the nature of what might be said to be a fit curriculum model for all pupils carry explicit weight in the debate, indeed are invoked, as we have seen, and a review of that body of work, and what came to be termed an *entitlement* curriculum, follows.

The HMI contribution (2): an HMI curriculum model

What, then, is this HMI view of the curriculum, and how does it extend our understanding of the concept of *entitlement*, said to figure large in the proposal's rationale and organisation?

HMI commentary on the merits of a curriculum fitting for all pupils pre-dates the launch of the Great Debate by James Callaghan, and was developed in a series of writings published between 1977 and 1985. These contain a curriculum proposal which suggested that the planning and organisation of learning should be in pursuit of student *entitlement* (DES,

1983). In Curriculum 11-16 (DES, 1977), HMI had argued the "case for a common curriculum in secondary education to 16 ". The planning of the curriculum should begin not with the traditional subjects, but with "areas of experience". In 1977 these were said to be as follows:

- * aesthetic and creative
- * ethical
- * linguistic
- * physical
- * mathematical
- * scientific
- * social and political
- * spiritual

A curriculum planned around subjects, it was said, can lose sight of the whole experience of pupils. The arguments of 1977 (the HMI 'Red Book') re-emerged in slightly amended form in 1985 in a discussion paper named Curriculum Matters. Here it was re-asserted that the "areas of experience" should be maintained in the curriculum provision of all children to the age of 16. There was too much variety between schools and their curricular provision, and this was an unwelcome feature as it meant that some children were not maintaining contact with the "areas of experience" throughout their school life. In 1985 the "areas of experience" expanded to nine from the eight in 1977, with the addition of "technological". "Social and political" was amended to "human and social". The "areas of experience" should be married up with the "elements of learning" (knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes) to produce a desirable curriculum for all. Guiding principles for the organisation of this marriage were: breadth, balance, relevance, coherence, progression and *differentiation*.

The development of these ideas and recommendations took place in the context of intense professional debate and research, and HMI discussion documents were regularly published as commentary upon the debate, as well as public assertions of its corporate view. Similar sentiments about unwelcome variety appeared in Aspects of Secondary Education (DES,1979) and A View of the Curriculum (DES,1980). The results of an 'enquiry' into curricular developments in the light of the Great Debate and the HMI recommendations were published in 1983. It laid out quite clearly the rationale for what had by now become known as the *entitlement* curriculum, based upon the HMI model of curriculum planning:

the conviction has grown that all pupils are entitled to a broad compulsory curriculum to the age of 16 which introduces them to a range of experiences, makes them aware of the kind of society in which they are going to live and gives them the skills necessary to live in it. Any curriculum which fails to provide this balance and is overweighted in any particular direction, whether vocational, technical, or academic is to be seriously questioned. Any measures which restrict the access of all pupils to a wide-ranging curriculum or which focus too narrowly on specific skills are in direct conflict with the entitlement curriculum envisaged here

(DES 1983, p.26, my emphasis)

HMI then proceed to state some of the conclusions reached by the 'enquiry' which led to the 1983 publication:

2. An outline specification

The work of the enquiry has led to the conclusion that any adequate specification of the curriculum to which all pupils are entitled up to 16 should include the following:

- i a statement of aims relating to the education of the individuals*

- and to the preparation of young people for life after school ;*
- ii a statement of objectives in terms of skills , attitudes , concepts and knowledge;*
- iii a balanced allocation of time for all the eight areas of experience which reflect the importance of each and a judgement of how the various component courses contribute to these areas;*
- iv provision for the entitlement curriculum in all five years for all pupils of 70-80 per cent of the time available with the remaining time for various other components to be taken by pupils according to their individual talents and interests ;*
- v methods of teaching and learning which ensure the progressive acquisition by pupils of the desired skills, attitudes, concepts, and knowledge;*
- vi a policy for staffing and resource allocation which is based on the curriculum;*
- vii acceptance of the need for assessment which monitors pupils' progress in learning, and for explicit procedures, accessible to the public, which reflect and reinforce i to v above.*

It can be seen that the rhetoric of the 1987 consultation paper, and the 1989 elaboration of that, borrowed heavily from the published writing of HMI. The references to breadth and balance in the curriculum are substantially the same, and there is concern that pupils are prepared in some way for the society in which they will soon play a part. The 1989 document appears to bow to HMI wisdom over the "main areas of learning and experience which are widely accepted as important". However, as noted above, there is a gap between the way in which the curriculum is envisaged by the DES (1987 and 1989), and the view consistently advocated by HMI in papers published since 1977 (ie DES, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1983 and 1985c). The HMI specification

rests specifically and initially on the "areas of experience" for its rationale, and its subsequent basic organisation of teaching and learning. The DES model rests quite emphatically on subjects, and its extension to absorbing the "key", or "main", elements referred to in the 1987 and 1989 documents often seems just that- an extension, or an after-thought. The chosen path of implementation appears to reflect this impression. Subject working parties first establish their recommendations (subject to public consultation, and then consideration from the Secretary of State). Schools had to follow a programme of timed introduction of the National Curriculum, based on subjects.

Moves towards whole curriculum planning would follow NCC advice to the Secretary of State, and amendment in schools would occur after receipt of the non-statutory advice;

NCC will have a main responsibility for ensuring that elements of the statutory National Curriculum fit together in the whole curriculum so that the parts support each other and make a coherent whole.

(DES, 1989, para. 9.4)

The force of statute law was to ensure implementation of the subject orders. The *whole curriculum* was to be assembled through subsequent advice.

Summary

The DES proposals for a National Curriculum which would be an *entitlement* for all pupils have been explored through a reading of the key documents of 1987 and 1989. The influence of HMI, invoked in these DES documents, has been made explicit. The DES papers expressed a debt to that influence, claiming to lie in a consensus tradition of curriculum design. DES curriculum

design was clearly based around traditional subjects. The 1989 document, From Policy To Practice, elaborated upon the initial proposal to assist teachers in implementation. I therefore propose to summarise the DES view of *entitlement* as derived from the DES writings with their explicitly stated debt to, and derivation from, HMI published conclusions on curriculum design:

A Working Definition of Entitlement

- * The curriculum must be broad and balanced
- * The curriculum must be for all pupils (though it may be adapted for students with special educational needs)
- * The curriculum must promote development in all the main areas of learning and experience which are widely accepted as important
- * The curriculum must be relevant to.....particular needs
- * The curriculum must also serve to develop the pupil as an individual, as a member of society and as a future adult member of society

(extracted from DES (1989) paras 2.1; 2.2; 2.3)

This *entitlement* (said the DES) would be enjoyed through the manner in which each school organised its delivery of the curriculum. Each subject in the curriculum prescription would carry within it some element of the *entitlement* (or it would not be included), and so itself would contribute to the totality of each pupil's *entitlement*. Each subject was further enjoined to contribute to the development of an acceptable *whole school* curriculum, one which :

*meets the purposes and covers the elements identified
by HMI and others.*

(ibid, my emphasis, 3.8)

The contribution of these "others" and their published ideas is not made clear. While there was widespread acknowledgement of the principles advocated

by HMI, for example by LEAs, most notably the ILEA (1984), there was also widespread discord within the debate, discussed above in Chapter 3. In the following section I endeavour to establish who these "others" might be: those who subscribed to the general principles of a common curriculum such as those enunciated and developed by HMI.

Substantial Agreement : the Contributions of "Others"

It has been seen that an appeal to assumed agreement on solutions to the ills of the education system accompanied key official documents, and this was reiterated in public statements by government ministers. A later NCC document which focused on The Whole Curriculum (1990) continued this trend. It referred to themes which :

seem to most people to be pre-eminent (p. 4, my emphasis)

and proceeded to outline their place in the curriculum without further discussion.

In the previous section I proposed a justifiable working definition of *entitlement* based on the DES proposals and their further elaboration. Some other notable contributions are now commented upon, and it should be remembered that not all contributors to the debate who advocated a common curriculum shared common conceptions of what this might mean. Chitty (1988) emphasised the plethora of claims or suggestions for curricular proposals for all pupils, and the very great differences sometimes concealed by terms only superficially similar; and Maw (1988) suggested there had been in fact a parallel discordant government-inspired trend in the 1980s which tended not to "substantial agreement" on the need and nature of a national curriculum for all, but to *differentiation* of curriculum provision, and selection.

In a book published just prior to the 1987 consultation proposal for a National Curriculum , The Core Curriculum (1986), Gordon Kirk drew together what he saw then as the various main strands (or the arguments of the "others"?) which had led to the case for a national curriculum framework becoming accepted by so many in the Great Debate. That book was published immediately prior to the government's proposal for a National Curriculum. It therefore provides a contemporary perspective upon who at the time appeared to be a significant "other". I therefore propose to describe each briefly in order to make clear their contribution to the developing position of HMI, and of course the DES, as we have seen claimed (eg DES, 1985a; DES, 1987; DES,1989).

Kirk noted the move towards increased central involvement and responsibility in the curriculum. On the one hand, through the previous decade from 1976, the government had appeared to be promoting a central core of learning through various pressures on LEAs, apparently accepting the force of HMI argument. Kirk suggested that the influence of HMI in their published papers from 1977 onwards could be detected in, for example, The School Curriculum (DES, 1981), and Better Schools (DES, 1985a). Latterly though, observed Kirk, the government had taken greater direct responsibility for the "shape" of education through, for example, the TVEI project, and the creation of the Assessment of Performance Unit (APU), set up to monitor standards in the classroom for the DES. Sir Keith Joseph, Education Minister in Mrs Thatcher's administration in 1985, had explained in Better Schools (1985) the government's determination to :

take the lead in promoting national agreement about the purposes and the content of the curriculum.

(DES, 1985b, p1)

Therein Joseph also advised of the government's future monitoring of schools' performances through the APU; and of the new GCSE examination

which would establish grade criteria to "define the main aspects of each subject". The government was assuming greater responsibility for defining and shaping the curriculum.

However, Kirk had identified three major contributors from within the education establishment who greatly affected the course of the professional debate, and particularly influenced the conclusions essayed and advocated by HMI : Paul Hirst, Denis Lawton and Malcolm Skilbeck

Paul Hirst

Hirst's contribution came from a theoretical philosophical perspective, exploring epistemological questions of the nature of knowledge, and hence learning. He had identified seven "forms" of knowledge, families of disciplines, each with its own distinct traditions and modes of learning. These were :

- * *logic and mathematics*
- * *physical sciences*
- * *awareness of our own and other people's minds*
- * *ethics*
- * *aesthetics*
- * *religion*
- * *philosophy*

(Hirst and Peters 1970, quoted in Kirk (1986), p.33)

This analysis suggested to curriculum designers a framework of knowledge which might be paralleled in curriculum planning. It could be argued that these irreducible fundamentals of human knowledge constituted a treasured inheritance into which all young people should be initiated through the school curriculum. School curriculum planning, whatever specific traditional subjects

might be incorporated, would derive its justification from the whole curriculum's demonstrable incorporation of these essential elements. All children had a right to partake of these fruits of our human pursuit of knowledge, the basic conceptual building blocks of our efforts to make sense of our existence and our world experience.

Denis Lawton

The starting point for Denis Lawton was the fact of our social, community, existence. His work lies in an educational tradition which asserts the need for an educational experience which encourages active participation in the community by its future adult members. The success of democracy is seen to lie in the ability of its members to play their part, and this depends to some extent on a common educational experience which promotes a sense of a common culture.

Lawton, for example in Curriculum Studies and Educational Planning (1983), wrote of the need for children's educational experiences to be "a selection from the culture". What that selection should be requires an analysis (cultural analysis) of society and its various workings. Lawton suggested that such analysis reveals eight (universal) cultural systems These are as follows:

- * *a socio-political system*
- * *an economic system*
- * *a communication system*
- * *a rationality system*
- * *a technology system*
- * *a morality system*
- * *a belief system*
- * *an aesthetic system* (Lawton, 1980, quoted in Kirk (1986), p.31)

The curriculum should be planned around "selections" from these systems, and appropriate judicious choices by teachers would equip children with the skills and knowledge and understanding to operate as adults within these systems, as necessary and appropriate for their and society's welfare. Rooted in a sociological perspective, this approach to curriculum planning derives especial value from its ability to adjust selections from the culture through constant reflection upon the value of what is being done in schools, being able to adapt as necessary to any perceived differences or changes in society which the curriculum has failed to reflect. The major underlying principle is one of encouraging children to be able to participate fully in their democratic society.

Malcolm Skilbeck

Skilbeck was instrumental in the development of the Australian Curriculum Development Centre's proposal for a core curriculum for Australian schools. This elaborated upon the possibility of developing pupils' individual needs for learning and personal development with preparation for effective participation in a democratic society. Their publication in 1980 aroused much interest. Of note is the elaboration of a theoretical framework which based planning a curriculum around nine core areas. These were :

- * *arts and crafts*
- * *communication*
- * *health education*
- * *environmental studies*
- * *work, leisure and lifestyle*
- * *mathematical skills and reasoning and their applications*
- * *scientific and technological ways of knowing and their social applications*

- * *social, cultural and civic studies*
- * *moral reasoning and action, value and belief systems.*

(Skilbeck, 1982, quoted in Kirk, 1986, p. 95)

This proposal's interest here derives from its advocacy by Skilbeck, a prominent member of the education establishment in the U.K. as well as internationally, its close resemblance to Lawton's schema in as far as it clearly is a "selection from the culture", and its adoption in Australia as a working proposition based on a clearly stated rationale and set of aims,

All three are closely related to the HMI model (in their own ways), and their authors' influence on educational matters regarding a common curriculum, embodying the ideas espoused by the HMI proposal, pre-dates those published conclusions. As a rational basis for planning and subsequently evaluating a curriculum which is the right or *entitlement* of all children, there are obvious similarities. Put simply, there are matters too precious to human experience to deny young people, and curriculum planning ought to reflect this. Omission of these from a curriculum is a denial of a child's right, and possibly a threat to its potential to participate fully in society.

Kirk's work is valuable to this research not only for the manner in which it draws together the various threads which led to what appeared, for diverse reasons, to be a national consensus for a national curriculum. It demonstrates also that immediately prior to the government's publication of its proposal for a National Curriculum, a prominent member of the academic education establishment could not anticipate what in fact the Conservative Party version of a national curriculum turned out to be. In a chapter exploring likely practical outcomes of arguments for a core curriculum, Kirk explains what he thinks is distinctive about curriculum development here:

Developments in(England and Wales) ..are chosen because, in contrast to practice in France, Scandinavia, and eastern bloc countries where the content of the curriculum is specified in detail by central authorities, they represent attempts to reconcile a national curriculum framework with diversity of educational provision, school-based curriculum development, and with demands for teacher autonomy.

(ibid, p. 91)

This expectation that the influence of professionals would continue to have sway, despite what Lawton (1980) had identified as increasingly tight control by the centre over education, can be seen as late as 1984 in Skilbeck's (ed.) Evaluating The Curriculum in the Eighties. The moves to a national provision with more central involvement were anticipated, but :

We cannot be satisfied with arrangements which in essence are unilateral, leading to a vastly greater concentration of politico-bureaucratic power in central government. Evaluation of the curriculum raises quite fundamental questions about learning and living, the distribution of resources, access, justice, fairness, indeed about the good life for all.

(Skilbeck, 1984, p. 99)

Changes were anticipated. The expectation that these 'professional' bases for curriculum planning were now part of the canons of the education world extended beyond academe. In School Curriculum Planning (1986), Lawton (ed) included contributions from two experts directly concerned with school practice. They would help elaborate upon the desirability of cultural analysis as both a rational starting point and an aid to sensible on-going developments in school practice. Richard Whitburn, then an ILEA Inspector, commented on:

the inadequacy of the subject-based curriculum, the historical palimpsest which in many ways stifles the capacity of schools to provide curriculum experiences which are appropriate and applicable to all pupils in the five years of compulsory secondary education.

(Whitburn, 1986, *ibid*, p.7)

In a discussion of prior needs in the planning of the curriculum, he goes on to conflate Lawton's cultural systems and the HMI areas of experience as if they were one and the same :

If we accept this analysis of curriculum (cultural analysis)

which involves areas of experience.....

(*ibid*, my emphasis)

This connection, this conflation, this debt to Lawton, the most significant contemporary advocate of cultural analysis as the most rational and sensible form of curriculum planning, is underlined by the contribution in the same volume of HMI Ronald Arnold. Writing on the subject of The Communication System, he demonstrates the value of Lawton's, and HMI's, strategy, of cultural analysis, adapting easily through reflection (evaluation) to changes in society, and consequently to changes in curriculum. The language and mode of analysis in Arnold's piece is completely consonant with Lawton, and the natural inclusion of an HMI contribution in the collection reinforces the suggestion of a close connection between Lawton's work, and HMI thinking and formal proposals.

It therefore seems reasonable to conclude that the approaches to curriculum planning of such educationists as Lawton and Kilbeck were very influential upon HMI, and demonstrably so. They were also an accepted basis of

development among a wide group of notable theorists and practitioners. Their main ideas bear close resemblance to the arguments and final model adduced by HMI, particularly in the case of Denis Lawton. These contributors to the debate and its development are certainly the most prominent of the "others" influential upon HMI, and referred to in the 1987 DES consultation proposal for a National Curriculum.

Some other "others" and the idea of entitlement : a footnote

The significance of the New Right contribution to political pressure for educational policy changes in the 1970s and 1980s was discussed in Chapter 3. And Chitty (1988) has alerted us to the great range of possibilities for curriculum change paraded under the banner of a *common curriculum*, while Maw (1988) warned of a discernible discordant trend to separation of provision, through vocational developments, among others.

The New Right contribution to the national curriculum debate is by no means clear cut, and carries its own factions within it (Quicke 1988). There had been clear separation of broad position in the New Right between those who embrace the 'new vocationalism' as, for example, in the TVEI programme, and those for whom the traditional values of a liberal curriculum ought to be restored. This latter view can be seen as a reaction to the new 'trendy' aspects of education which seem tinged with too much overt ideology, as, for example, Peace Studies and World Studies. This was made quite clear in the Hillgate Group's (1986) pamphlet Whose Schools? :

We believe that a national curriculum is essential.....We believe in the values of a traditional education.....The curriculum should have a core: reading, writing and arithmetic. It should also have a settled range of proven subjects.....foreign languages, mathematics,

science, history and literature.....

(ibid, p. 7, my emphasis)

Some commentators (eg Jones, 1989) suggested the curricular and other education policies of the Conservative government can be traced back to the Black Papers of the 1970s, particularly the last one in 1977. That included Stuart Sexton arguing, in Evolution by Choice, for the removal of government intervention in education apart from:

*laying down the framework within which variety and diversity
can abound in accordance with the aspirations and abilities of
the children.....as part of that curriculum we must have
standards and a minimum curriculum.*

(ibid, p. 86)

Consistency within the New Right came more from their sustained attacks upon the idea, curriculum and practice of comprehensive schools (as in these two pamphlets), rather than common proposals for an appropriate curriculum for our children. Knight (1989) explains the New Right's importance in policy determination as one major strand in a broad Right political thrust to sustain an attack on the political opposition which would establish a cultural hegemony for the Conservatives, thereby able to sustain their political dominance throughout the decade and beyond. This significant and influential (upon Conservative thinking) New Right contribution to the education debate cannot be seen in any of its forms to fit naturally into the broad concept of *entitlement* outlined above, though the language of its expression can include terms such as *national curriculum* and *core curriculum*. Nor can it easily be seen to be part of the consensus pieced together in detail above.

Conclusion

There was thus much controversy surrounding the emergence of the government's proposals for a National Curriculum. A working definition for the purpose of this research's analysis of curriculum development in the target schools has been derived solely from analysis of the DES proposals, while making explicit the debt owed to the contributions of HMI and "others" in the formation of these proposals.

Entitlement was to be found in the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum, mediated by schools as they saw fit:

It is the birthright of the teaching profession and must always remain so, to decide upon the best and most appropriate means of imparting education to pupils. (NCC, 1990, p.7)

Whatever the interpretation and delivery by schools :

The programmes of study will set out the essential matters skills and processes which need to be covered by pupils at each stage of their education. (DES, 1989, para. 3.12)

At first, despite the emphasis on subjects in its description, some commentators (eg Marland, 1992) were optimistic that the National Curriculum might come to resemble the model developed by HMI. There was explicit reference to a range of elements which ought, when implemented, to amount to a *whole curriculum*. This much can be inferred from a reading of Section One of the Education Reform Act, 1988. As the proposals underwent implementation in schools, some observers looked back to the early optimism they had sustained from a close reading of the text and rhetoric of the

proposal, and ruminated on lost opportunities. The unfolding National Curriculum was not what they had hoped it would be. An article in the TES, Throwing away a key to equality, contrasted the reality with the promise of the original :

The former 'national curriculum' had one feature which its originators seem not at first to have recognised - it was profoundly egalitarian. To suggest that all young people in our society, irrespective of their background, aspirations and present attainment might have similar curricular needs was an admirable notion, and a severe set-down for those who tolerated, even in comprehensive schools, markedly separate patterns of study for different groups of pupils.

(Cornall, in the TES 11/1/1991)

These writings, tinged with disappointment, underline one early important cautionary observation of this research. There is a distinction usefully to be made between *entitlement to a curriculum*, and an *entitlement curriculum*. They may amount to the same thing, but they need not do so. To be *entitled* to what is on offer, in this case the National Curriculum, could mean no more than the right to receive the legal minimum stipulation. Yet the term *entitlement curriculum* has a history of use, and a resonance for those who have been involved in recent curricular debate and developments. The use of the term *entitlement* in the context of a curriculum proposal in which was expressed the idea of a consensus, based upon the work of "HMI and others", might be assumed by the reader to have similar intentions, and indeed to resemble its direct ancestors when assembled. As we have seen, the promise for some observers had already not been matched in reality by the time the field research of this enquiry began.

I have indicated so far in this chapter what promise might have been inferred and expected, from a reading of the original proposal for the National Curriculum and subsequent supporting documents, from a national curriculum based on the criterion of *entitlement*. This new curriculum was also required to be appropriately *differentiated*, and I now consider what that could reasonably be thought to mean in practice. *Entitlement* and *differentiation* are concepts closely related, as well as employed together in justification of the proposal for a National Curriculum, and I later conclude this research, in Chapter 10, with a discussion of how they might have been jointly accommodated as organising concepts in the National Curriculum.

Differentiation: towards an understanding

Differentiation is one of the 'big' words of recent educational discussion, policy and practice. Like other 'big' words (quality, standards, *entitlement*) it is capable of a variety of interpretations and uses, and can therefore be found in the armoury of any of the opposing camps or arguments when, for example, a polemical or justifying point is sought. Lawton (1989), in a discussion of the National Curriculum proposals, observed that rhetoric is a natural accompaniment of educational debate and policy making. He quoted Skilbeck (1984) on what to expect from the language of educational policy statements:

They often make points of a rhetorical kind, use language which refers to a current political position, and have to try to reconcile or hold together in a single document diverse and perhaps conflicting views on matters of current concern. This does not condone confusion or incoherence.....

(quoted in Lawton, p. 40)

The intention in this section is to make explicit the variety of meanings, or nuances of meanings, that emerged and were employed for the term *differentiation* as the National Curriculum was being implemented. I seek to establish some clarity about the use of *differentiation* in The National Curriculum 5-16 a consultation document (DES, 1987), and subsequent supporting literature. This is followed by a discussion of the recent historical context in education from which this concept emerged, seeking some understanding of how it had come to be used and applied by the time of the publication of the National Curriculum proposal.

The immediate background to the National Curriculum

As part of the process of 'Great Debate' in the 1980s, the DES canvassed LEAs, in Circular 8/83, in search of some better understanding of their curriculum policies and practices. Better Schools (1985) reported that the LEAs' responses to this circular had largely omitted discussion of *differentiation*, described thus :

the need for differentiation in the curriculum, in order to meet more effectively the needs of each pupil according to his ability and aptitudes.

(DES, 1985a, para. 41 (3))

The subsequent curricular recommendations in Better Schools (1985) included *differentiation* as one of four principles it was suggested should underpin curriculum planning :

what is taught and how it is taught need to be matched to pupils' abilities and aptitudes. (p.15)

The implication of this statement was developed. The curriculum needed to be:

varied in pace and depth for differences in ability and maturity. (p.22)

Similar sentiments could be found elsewhere at the same time, as part of the broad educational debate that included consideration of curriculum provision.

The Fish Report, commissioned by the ILEA, to consider how to cater for pupils with problems that hindered learning, recommended that

....schools and colleges should continually strive to provide for more individual needs and to offer equal opportunities to all. Separate provision outside them, however good, should now be seen as an interim solution resulting from an inability to achieve these long term aims and not as a long term solution compatible with the comprehensive principle.

(Fish ,1985, para. 1.1.20)

The ILEA (1984) had launched a major research project, Improving Secondary Schools, which had this to say:

Most teachers will recognise that, however pupils are organised, each class, band or set will have a wide range of ability represented within it. The range will, of course, be much greater in a mixed ability than in a streamed class.

Most teachers also recognise that all pupils, of whatever ability and in whatever subject, need teaching which meets their individual learning needs. (para. 3.5.4)

The concept of *differentiation* as a right to which pupils are *entitled* was, then, very often employed in the mainstream of debate about curriculum provision in schools. The assertion of a need to provide for some form of *differentiation* in learning provision can, as seen above, be quite easily framed in non-controversial and non-controvertible form. The propositions quoted have all the value of moral imperatives: children are different, and their learning provision needs to reflect this fact.

HMI consideration of their *entitlement curriculum* in 1983 brought together this concern for the individual situation with the suggestion that curricula should be organised on some form of common basis, with some form of common experience:

.....curricula should be based on a common framework which provides coherence, and, while taking account of individual needs and abilities, still ensures the provision of a broadly based experience.

(DES, 1983, p. 25)

Again there is that single irrefutable proposition that individuals' differing needs ought to be taken into account in curriculum provision ; but the full

statement clearly indicates the tension that can exist when alongside the concern for the individual child is placed a firm statement of belief in education as a provider of a common inheritance and a common experience. It is the tension between these two imperatives that provides the key questions with regard to a provision that reconciles them in a just or fair manner. These questions are:

- * to what extent, and how, can a curriculum be classed as common, or an *entitlement* for all, while embracing the requirement to meet the 'needs', 'aptitudes', and 'abilities' of individuals?
- * can the concept of *differentiation* as a clearly defined right of children be effectively translated into practice? If so, in what form, or forms?
- * can *differentiation* assume a form which allows it to coincide and fit with the prescribed National Curriculum of the child? That is, to what extent can the 'broadly based experience' survive *differentiated* provision?

There are three possible practical forms of *differentiation*. These are :

- * separate provision, based on ability. The grammar school system, with selection at 11+, is an example of this;
- * separate grouping within the same school. This can be achieved through banding, streaming, or setting;
- * meeting children's different needs through differentiated teaching and materials for learning, in common (mixed ability) classes.

If the conviction of the desirability of a "broadly based experience" were as firmly held as the recognition of the need to cater for individual differences, then it could be that the form of *differentiation* most appropriate to that end would be one that was employed in teaching children within a common provision, and where possible together. This presupposes that the aim of the "broadly based experience" is not only one of initiation into the inheritance of our culture, but also the fostering of a sense of community, and a shared responsibility for its future.

Differentiation and the National Curriculum

The National Curriculum proposal, in even its earliest form, made quite clear that *all* pupils, and individuals within that, should be catered for. The concern is expressed in unproblematic terms. The National Curriculum would :

.....help schools to challenge each child to develop his or her potential.....the national curriculum is intended to help teachers to set their expectations at a realistic but challenging level for each child, according to his or her ability....(and)....pupils can be stretched further when they are doing well and given more help when they are not.

(DES, 1987, para. 8)

Differentiation was not just about the individual pupil and individual needs, but help in taking up the full National Curriculum, as was made clear in the follow up document, From Policy to Practice:

It is not enough for such a curriculum to be offered by the school; it must be fully taken up by each individual pupil.

(DES, 1989, para. 2.2)

Some of the practical difficulty possible in the process of catering for a National Curriculum for all, and pupils of differing ability, is indicated in this document:

Individual pupils will need to spend differing amounts of time on particular studies to reach a given level of attainment and their curriculum should reflect their speed of progress.

(para. 4.8, my emphasis)

The obvious possibility that these different speeds might be catered for in different classes, and possibly doing different things, was not discussed here, or in fact in either document.

Differentiation in theory : the common ground

It is possible to suggest some common ground about the use and intention of the term *differentiation*, by drawing upon the National Curriculum proposal itself (particularly as elaborated in the documents of 1987 and 1989), and the explicitly implied consensus embracing "prominent contributors" to the educational debate (substantially, as stated by HMI). This common ground could be said to be:

- a) teachers must be aware of the individual needs of their pupils, as well as broadly aware of what, ideally, all pupils should learn
- b) awareness of individual needs must be translated into a strategy for providing learning processes and materials that are appropriate for the individual child.

Differentiation in practice in the National Curriculum

The National Curriculum allows specifically for special circumstances to be applied to those children seen to have special educational needs. These are discussed in terms obviously seen as exceptional, and such pupils are enjoined anyway to partake of the National Curriculum as much as possible. This is fully discussed in section 8 of the 1989 document From Policy To Practice.

What is not discussed is the matter of the practical strategies that might be adopted by schools required to provide a child's *entitlement*, and also take appropriate account of individual abilities and aptitudes, when pupils are not identified as having "special educational needs". At all times the methods to be adopted in delivering the prescription are left to the schools :

Within the programmes of study teachers will be free to determine the detail of what should be taught in order to ensure that pupils achieve appropriate levels of attainment. How teaching is organised and the teaching approaches used will also be for schools to determine.

(DES, 1987, para. 27)

The organisation of teaching and learning is a professional matter for the headteacher and his or her staff.

(DES, 1989, para. 4.3)

While control of what was to be taught in state schools was drawn entirely to the centre through a prescribed curriculum, the documents, curiously, showed no overt interest in the mode of delivery to be adopted by schools. The 'secret garden' of the curriculum had been opened up to the outside world, but not that of methodology.

How *differentiation* as a principle was to be established in practice was, then,

a matter for pragmatic determination by schools; and a matter of empirical investigation for this research.

However, the question of how pupils should be grouped for learning had been the cause of much debate during the lifetime of the comprehensive school movement. It would help at this point to consider some of the observations which have been made.

Comprehensive schools and state education: the recent historical context

The majority of local authorities in England and Wales moved towards comprehensive reorganisation of schools after the publication of DES Circular 10/65, further encouraged to do so by the next Labour administration in 1976. Some authorities maintained their selective procedures, and were in turn encouraged by the Conservative administration following the 1979 general election to continue to do so. Within comprehensive schools a debate which initially had rested upon the ending of selection *between* schools soon centred on selection *within* schools. Roy Jenkins had argued, in what became known as the 'social alchemy' argument, that:

There is no comparison between the effects of failure to get into a particular form, and failure to get into a particular type of school.

(quoted in Unpopular Education, CCCS (1981), p. 75)

Yet the influential study Beachside Comprehensive (Ball, 1981) suggested strongly that selection *within* the comprehensive school could have a negative effect upon those placed in lower sets or streams or bands, an effect similar to that formerly observed in those children who were not selected for the

grammar schools. The same point emerged from Making The Difference (Connell, 1982), a major research study of comprehensive schools in Australia. The fact that introducing all-in schools did not necessarily reduce disadvantage was also noted in different ways in two significant publications which followed shortly afterwards.

David Hargreaves's The Challenge For The Comprehensive School (1982) tackled what seemed to him to be a contradiction in the practice of comprehensives since their inception. Comprehensives still had effects upon children as observed by Ball and Connell. Those effects came from the internal divisions of children, of whatever form, as the schools decided more able pupils needed separate grouping for learning. Indeed, Hargreaves acknowledged that schools have a responsibility to cater for more able students, with more intensive tuition as areas that demand a higher level of cognitive effort are tackled. This will inevitably divide children, particularly towards the end of compulsory schooling, when these demands and needs for separation are greater. Yet society needs a sense of community for all, as well as needing high achieving academics, and comprehensive schools often struggle to reconcile the two. Hargreaves's proposed solution to this contradiction need not detain us here. It is enough to note that his analysis of the issue made an impact on the continuing introspective debate over the value of the all ability school.

The point was underlined in Improving Secondary Schools (1984), a major research project launched by the ILEA into achievement in its schools. On the question of the organisation of pupils and learning it had this to say:

For many advocates of comprehensive education mixed ability teaching is its natural corollary. For them, streaming, banding or setting within a comprehensive school is merely to perpetuate

those features of selective education this type of school was developed to end. They regard mixed ability teaching as a unifying force within the curriculum, which ensures that all pupils are equally valued, and which gives pupils an enhanced expectation of their own potential so that their attitudes to work, to teachers and to other pupils are positive. Moreover, teachers' expectations of their pupils are raised by the absence of classification by stream, band or set, tension between teacher and class is reduced and relationships improved. Pupils taught within a non-competitive and non-divisive organisation, it is argued, will have a greater sense of belonging and being valued. This will help to counter under-achievement and to raise levels of performance among all pupils.

(para. 3.5.2, my emphasis)

The concept of schools as social unifiers of some sort was considered in this report as natural and non-controversial. It indicated a social aim of a sense of value and dignity to be acquired by all students. The need for increased achievement was also emphasised. The report's authors concluded that these joint aims might partly be met by the authority, and its schools, if they explicitly embraced social as well as academic goals. Further, within the academic sphere there should be a wider set of criteria to measure student achievement, beyond the narrow confines of propositional knowledge, for example that which is substantially the concern of the public examinations at 16. The report was hesitant about accepting the need for some differentiated classes in its schools, but openly acknowledged the :

possibility of variations in certain areas of the curriculum.

(para. 3.5.6.)

The ILEA document was a response to the central dilemma; it was a report backed by considerable research, and had a major impact when published. It

represented a commitment to comprehensive schools and state education. It rejected simplistic evaluation of comprehensive schools. In a discussion of the kind of evaluation that roots itself solely or substantially in public examination results, it explicitly stated a claim for evaluation across a wider range of aims, aims espoused by the ILEA schools. This range was marked by four "achievement aspects". Aspect one was that "strongly represented" in examinations at 16+, but the other three were claimed to be equally valuable in their different ways. The four (abridged) achievement aspects were :

one - retention, and appropriate displays, of propositional knowledge, most commonly expressed in written form; knowledge rather than skill;

two - applying knowledge, problem solving, investigating;

three - personal and social skills; communicating, cooperating, showing initiative;

four - motivation and commitment, a readiness to face up to difficult tasks, self-confidence.

(in ILEA, 1984, p. 2)

It was suggested that these aims are common, consistent with the aims of secondary education as set out by the DES (1981a) and The Schools Council (1981). If we are to have comprehensive schools, then these will be our aims, and all of these aspects of achievement should be used to measure and evaluate pupil and school performance.

Another major but contrary contribution to the debate which made an impact on educational thinking and development was the Hillgate Group's

Whose Schools? (1986). This group had the ear of the policy makers (as discussed in Chapter 3). It had clear views about comprehensive schools and differentiated curricula. This pamphlet's authors were suspicious of common schooling and anxious about common (mixed ability) classes within common schools. This echoed the views frequently expressed in the Black Papers (eg 1977), and in the Conservative Party manifesto of 1979. The Black Papers' authors were adamant about the negative effects of the comprehensive. One passage in the Black Paper (1977) writes of:

*....the bright pupil from the deprived home attending
a low achievement all-ability school in a poor neighbourhood.
By then habits of not working, low standards and an anti-
academic bias may have been irretrievably developed. He
may not..... even desire selection. (p. 61)*

This Black Paper rhetoric is pure polemic. Frequently, the language of polemical assertion is selected to coincide with the language of the professional debate. Thus the Hillgate Group's pamphlet urges a return to separate schools, and separate classes in common schools, for the sake of the different needs and abilities of children; a plea for *differentiation* based on the common sense observation that children are different :

*Children have different abilities, talents and interests, and it
is destructive of all children, and not just of the most
academically gifted, to impose a single form of education
and a single system of examinations on every child, whatever
his natural inclinations and ability. We therefore believe that
schools should be encouraged to return to a system of differentiated
education, with separate classes, and if necessary separate institutions,
to cater for the many and diverse gifts of the nation's children.*

(op cit, p.11, my emphasis))

The importance of the Hillgate Group's unequivocal call for a return to the past, for *differentiation* to be met through separation, is that this group influenced the policy makers of the day, and represented an important position in the debate. Their choice of language was not accidental. Jones, in a study of those influences which had contributed to the education policy of Mrs Thatcher's administration, suggested that the Hillgate Group's authors :

belong to a committed and active intelligentsia that has done much to develop a conservative education programme, and to find those points of intervention into everyday life that can give it a popular appeal.

(Jones, 1989, p.54)

A New Statesman article, on a research paper from The Centre For The Study Of Comprehensive Schools, added support to this view. It alleged widespread campaigning in the popular press to misrepresent the image of comprehensive schools. It offered one typical example, from the Daily Express, where the reported research finding (which might have added support to the argument that all-in schools *can* be successful) is presented in its contradictory form :

In a little box headlined 'The O-level failures' the Express reported : Conclusion : 18 years of all-in schooling has helped an extra five per cent of children achieve good exam results.

(Chesshyre, 1986)

Jones explained the purpose of such attacks :

The combined (right) attacks on the alleged effects of equal opportunity have been invaluable to a programme that seeks to transfer resources and opportunities away from disadvantaged groups.

(Jones, 1989, p38)

There was a hidden agenda, suggested Jones, behind the public rhetoric. This last consideration of *differentiation* in the curriculum provision of state schools also serves to remind us of how both sides in the debate about common schools and common curricula espouse the best interests of all children as a major element of the argument. Yet there is a clear polarity in terms of solution, and a range of options for existing schools.

Moving closer to a working definition of differentiation

I am looking for a judicious path between these polar theoretical camps; that is, one which tries to resolve their contradictory outcomes by exploring the common ground they both espouse, and the democratic context in which they are rooted.

There is much power to the suggestion that in some areas of learning, Modern Languages, and perhaps Mathematics, for example, more able children need an educational programme appropriate to their intellect, and this cannot be done in the same (mixed ability) groups as lesser able children. The ILEA research (1984) had reported that as children progressed through what is now KS3, a substantial number of the schools in the authority, which were committed to mixed ability grouping for teaching, still devised setting arrangements, and for these subjects in particular. If this is indeed the case, that some children in some subjects may require class groups of a more homogeneous ability, it does not seem to follow that separation of children need extend beyond such arrangements. I have discussed some of the very persuasive arguments for the *entitlement* of children to a common curriculum which reflects our common culture and knowledge. Equally persuasive is the suggestion that children need a curriculum that matches their individual needs. The search for a judicious resolution of what can appear two

concepts in competition, *entitlement* and *differentiation*, can begin initially with the way marked by what common ground has been shown to exist :

- * agreement on the variety of aptitudes and abilities of children
- * the need for individual pupils to be catered for within a compulsory curriculum diet deemed to provide essential sustenance for *all*.

There are other ingredients too. The National Curriculum is intended for all state schools, and the vast bulk of these have an open enrolment. Also, the National Curriculum is said to derive from an established consensus. It was suggested in the 1987 consultation document that Better Schools (DES,1985a) summed up the "substantial measure of agreement" said to exist then in curriculum matters. Better Schools acknowledged the central role played by HMI (the "organic intellectuals" of the DES (Salter and Tapper, 1981)) in developing the ideas upon which the consensus rests.

It can be said that the major HMI publications on these matters were substantially concerned with a common curriculum and a common curriculum experience (eg DES,1977,1981,1983, 1985c). Finally, *pace* Roy Jenkins, for many it is not enough to admit all pupils to the same school and trust to an undirected process of alchemy. The ILEA (1984) report made quite clear the research committee's sympathy for the view that:

*comprehensive education and mixed ability teaching for years
one to five (KS3 and KS4) should go hand in hand.*

(para. 3.5.6)

At the same time, this report agreed with the subsequent DES suggestions that:

the form of pupil organisation in a school is a matter for teachers to determine in the light of their professional judgement. (para. 3.5.7)

A balance between these competing imperatives is what is sought, and some form of guidance for teachers in schools, on how to tread this path when faced with the reality of a choice to be made in practice, follows in Chapter 10.

Thus, to sum up, *differentiation* is a concept commanding universal acceptance. It appears as a non-controvertible proposition in the arguments of political opposites. It can lead some to advocate a return to grammar schools. It is also a natural accompaniment of arguments for a state *entitlement* of all children to education. The National Curriculum itself is a commitment to an outcome of raised standards (DES, 1987, paras 6,8) through an *entitlement* curriculum which might be mediated only by individual circumstances of ability and aptitude; that is, by *differentiation*.

A working definition

Differentiation requires that the needs of children are met appropriately.

Disagreements begin, however, as soon as the debate turns to what might be 'appropriate'. The one principle upon which all parties appear to agree is clear from the official pronouncements from the DES on this matter, and other sources referred to: that provision for *differentiation* ought not to affect each child's right to the *entitlement* curriculum as envisaged and specified in the government's proposal for a National Curriculum, and as later specified in the ERA (1988), and subsequently elaborated upon in various advisory and supporting documents. It has been suggested in this chapter that if the principles behind comprehensive schooling stand for anything, they stand for

some concept of common schooling. This being the case it would seem also to follow that consideration of appropriate means and methods of meeting children's different needs would at least *begin* within common provision.

I have derived a specification for an *entitlement* curriculum from the discussion in this chapter of the recent use of such terms by the DES and other official bodies. *Differentiation* has been shown to be a term widely accepted by all contributors to the debate, although the practical implications of meeting this need while respecting all children's rights to the *entitlement* curriculum were not made explicit in public pronouncements on the matter of schools' implementation of the National Curriculum. The fate of these concepts as the implementation of the National Curriculum proceeded is therefore considered next.

Chapter Six

A CASE STUDY OF A BOROUGH'S SCHOOLS: 1991

Field research in the six schools

Introduction

This chapter begins with a description of the borough and its school provision. Next an indication of what sort of information was sought precedes an account of each of the six target schools, and how they saw themselves vis a vis the proposals at this time. The Science and History department heads' experiences are then explored, first within their own *subject* orbits, and then in relation to the *whole school* ambitions of the National Curriculum proposal, bearing in mind the major themes of *entitlement* and *differentiation*.

The London borough of Amalgam

The London Borough of Amalgam lies some eight miles from the centre of London. Its school population is drawn from three distinct local areas, which vary in terms of their demographic make-up. The most westerly town centre (West Town) is renowned for its natural setting and exclusivity, although at its fringe lies housing of a less expensive nature. The other two centres (Mid Town and East Town) include large areas of public housing, and significant under-privilege within that. The population's ethnic character is predominately white Anglo-Saxon, in marked contrast to its neighbours nearer to London, though there is significant Asian and Afro-Caribbean representation.

The school provision was described as follows in the borough's publicity material :

SCHOOLS

About 1300 teachers are employed in more than 60 County and Denominational Schools in Amalgam, catering for some 21,500 children, All pupils receive the same opportunity to learn in a three tier comprehensive system established in 1969 which consists of Primary (5 to 9 years) , Middle (9 to 13 years) and High (13 to 18) Schools..... The authority is reorganising from 1990 to a Sixth Form College , 12-16 High Schools and 8-12 Middle School basis.....

HIGH SCHOOLS

The Authority at present operates ten High Schools (13-18), of which two are voluntary aided R.C. schools. Of the eight maintained schools, three are boys' schools , three are girls' schools and two are mixed. In all ten schools there has been considerable curriculum development in recent years.....

In curriculum terms , the high schools develop the broad-based approach established in the Middle School sector, with emphasis placed on breadth and curricular balance as part of broad educational provision.

(London Borough of Amalgam, 1990, my emphasis)

The borough's high schools, the focus of this study, numbered eight in 1990, excluding the R.C. schools. The authority was about to embark upon a major reorganisation of provision in September 1990. The drop in school age population had for some years occupied the attention of the authority, and despite previous school closures there was still estimated to be over-provision at the top end of compulsory provision, the high schools. One symptom of this was the very small sixth form numbers in some of the

high schools. The response of the authority was to propose a sixth form college sited centrally in the borough, and the adjustment of the high schools' intakes to 12-16. The two R.C. schools were not to be included in the scheme, and nor was one of the remaining eight, an ex-grammar school whose governors decided to retain its original status and character. It would not relinquish its sixth form provision. Of the remaining seven schools, one girls' school was to be closed and the site adapted for the sixth form college. The remaining six schools were reorganised to accept an extra year, becoming 12-16 establishments. Of these, one boys' school was re-designated a mixed school, admitting boys and girls together for the first time in September 1990.

Thus in 1990 the borough high school provision became six 12-16 county maintained schools. Of these, three schools were mixed, two were girls', and one was boys'. In September 1990 these six schools took in a double year intake, pupils being admitted from the middle schools at 13 as usual, but also at 12. They were also, of course, either implementing the National Curriculum arrangements (as in Science) or being enjoined to work towards them (as in History). One school (Beechwood) was to admit two year groups, as were the others, but for the first time these intakes would also be mixed. Beechwood had to date been staffed and run as a boys' school.

The 12-16 structure of the high schools cut across the new key stage arrangement of the National Curriculum. Pupils would embark upon key stage three in the middle schools, and then complete the key stage in high school.

The six county high schools are the focus of the field work element of this research. A brief description of each school is given, and an account of how it

was adjusting to the curriculum demands of the ERA at the start of this study, 1991. These accounts were based on the school development plans and prospectuses of that time, although two schools declined to contribute their development plans, and hence the descriptions of their positions rest substantially upon their published prospectuses for 1991-1992. The school descriptions are followed by an account and analysis of the data produced by these initial interviews with the respective heads of department of History and Science, the focus group of the study. An agenda for discussion had been circulated to the respondents before our meeting (see Chapter 4). Prior to this some major aspects of National Curriculum implementation thought to reflect upon the focus of the research had been collected via a questionnaire (see appendix A) The questionnaire provided basic information about how each school organised its pupils for learning, and how well prepared the teachers felt they were to deliver the programmes of study and cope with the new assessment arrangements. This information helped to focus the interviews.

A review of the schools

Beechwood High School

Beechwood lies to the edge of the borough furthest from central London. It borders the final layer of outer London boroughs. As a boys' school Beechwood had maintained its popularity and had a reputation of high academic standards. Under re-organisation within the borough Beechwood would admit not only two years of intake in 1990-1991, but also its first mixed intake. Demand for places had been high for this new mixed school, and 425 pupils were admitted at once in 1990.

Beechwood's development plan made it clear that although preoccupied with National Curriculum implementation, the ethos and practice of the school

were to remain substantially unaffected. The most important need for the school was to adapt smoothly and positively to the large and mixed new intake for KS3 , years 8 and 9.

The school development plan indicated a range of moves undertaken to adapt to the double mixed intake and National Curriculum requirements. These included preparation in various curriculum areas such as Food and Textiles, Science, Expressive Arts, Games and P.E. The document referred to new teaching methods, and an emphasis on equal opportunities. This is restated in the school prospectus:

We are aware that some parents might ask themselves if girls would have equality of opportunity in a mixed school , particularly in the scientific and technical subjects. All our pupils, girls and boys, will have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. Access by itself, however, is not enough. We have therefore given a lot of thought to our curriculum, our teaching methods and our teaching materials.....We shall ensure that pupils are not denied any school experience, nor feel themselves to be disqualified from any further educational or career opportunities, on the grounds of their sex or race or for any other unjustified reason.

(Beechwood Prospectus, 1991-2, my emphasis)

The school curriculum is succinctly described :

The National Curriculum has begun to operate and will be phased in over the next few years. We support the move towards greater coherence and continuity throughout a child's school life. As we have always provided a broad and balanced curriculum , we shall not need to undertake any radical

changes. Our current developments in , for example , Modern Languages , Co-ordinated Science and Design Technology precede the requirements of the National Curriculum model.

The development plan referred to the planned stages of implementation to come, and teachers' preparation for that. It specifically bemoaned the continuing debate and changes, for example referring to the Science department "wasting valuable time" on introducing schemes no longer appropriate. Other departments had similarly suffered:

.....the indecision and confusion stemming from politicians and the National Curriculum Council have led to situations in which staff time has been wasted and annoyance caused.

(Beechwood School Development Plan, 1991-1992)

Moves had begun to address questions of cross-curricular themes, special educational needs, and personal and social education, with working parties established in 1990-1991 to anticipate National Curriculum needs in 1991-1992. The strain of continuing change was referred to in the conclusion:

In the midst of the developments which we are inevitably committed to it will be our intention to establish a period of continuity and stability for the sake of our staff and pupils.

(ibid)

Although new teaching methods were referred to in the development plan, there was no elaboration of what these might be, or why. In the school prospectus it was made clear that children could be expected to be set from the start in Mathematics, and in other subjects "as appropriate and helpful". The need for *differentiation* in learning for all classes taught in a mixed ability arrangement was made explicit but not elaborated upon.

The Departments

Science was organised as one large faculty encompassing all the sciences. History was timetabled and taught discretely by History specialists. The Science department had just acquired a new head of department, recruited from the closing girls' school. The head of History, a member of staff of some long-standing, would take early retirement at the end of the academic year.

Juniper High School

Juniper is a girls' school set in East Town, within walking distance of its neighbouring high schools, Springfields and Greenfields.

During a period of great uncertainty in the 1980s over the future of the LEA's high schools, its roll had fallen considerably. In 1991 it is recorded as entering a total of 45 girls for public examinations. With its future secure in the new re-organisation plan, its roll was rising again.

The school development plan for 1991-1992 was written as a continuation of the plan for 1990-1991. With the school's aims clearly stated, it was substantially a statement of intention with regard to the National Curriculum. It outlined progress towards its National Curriculum provision in all areas, with detailed information on Science, Mathematics, Technology and English, where much preparation of schemes of work based on the programmes of study had been undertaken. Other subjects were reported to be developing schemes in the light of outside information being received. The cross curricular aspects of health, careers, mini enterprise and environmental study were timetabled separately, labelled Cross Curriculum Studies. Health education appeared in KS3 as a separate lesson a week for one year.

While re-affirming the previous intentions of implementing the National Curriculum , it was noted that :

Planning for the implementation of KS4 is being hampered by changing and unclear information from central bodies. Juniper will implement the National Curriculum in KS4 so that the aims of the school will be furthered.

(Juniper High School Development Plan, 1991-1992, my emphasis)

This document reported concern over developing assessment, recording and reporting procedures, and suggested that INSET and additional funding would be necessary.

The development plan made no comment on the school's methods of organising the girls for learning. The school brochure revealed that in year 8 teaching groups would be mixed ability tutor groups, and that was to be the school policy. In year 9 setting was introduced for Mathematics, History, Geography, and Modern Languages :

based on frequent , careful assessment of ability and progress throughout year 8 .

(Juniper School Prospectus, 1991)

The prospectus contained a declaration that the school was committed to "stretching the most able students", at the same time as helping girls in need of special support through SEN provision.

While both documents paid much attention to the needs of the National Curriculum , there was also much emphasis on the school and its aims. The

school clearly felt abreast of all the changes, although dissatisfied with their inconsistency and the lack of planned INSET. There was a declared strong sense of a school identity into which the National Curriculum would have to fit; and a commitment to the *entitlement* of girls that was already part of the school's philosophy.

The Departments

The Science department was one large faculty encompassing all the sciences, with a head of department of long-standing in the school. The History department had a young head, but with considerable experience within the school. He was contemplating leaving the school before the full requirements of the National Curriculum arrived. History was taught and timetabled discretely.

Greenfields High School

Greenfields is a mixed high school set in East Town. In the midst of continued speculation about the fate of its two close neighbour schools, it had maintained a full roll.

The school declined to make the development plan available, and thus the school curriculum information described here is derived from the school prospectus. The school's aims were succinctly stated (see appendix B), the school's curriculum held to be already well established and mirrored in the National Curriculum :

The government's decision to introduce the National Curriculum is a major initiative which is designed to ensure that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Its aims are in line with those that Greenfields has always held , and

development work in the School to meet its requirements is already well advanced.

(Greenfields School Prospectus, 1991-1992, my emphasis)

There was a statement on equal opportunities which particularly emphasised equal access for boys and girls to the curriculum. National Curriculum cross-curricular themes were referred to, and Health Education and Careers were said to be already in place. The curriculum was described for parents in terms of the subjects children would follow. There was some mention of how the organisation of children for learning was undertaken, but no further discussion :

Teaching in the school takes place in mixed ability or setted groups depending on the demands of the subject. A wide variety of teaching methods is employed throughout the school.

The Departments

The Science department was large, comprising all the sciences. History was part of a large Humanities department, and was taught as part of an integrated provision in years 8 and 9. Both heads of department were of long standing in the school.

Mid Town High School

Mid Town is set centrally in the borough. Like its neighbours in East Town it draws predominantly from a working class area, with small but significant ethnic minority representation. It is a mixed high school.

National Curriculum requirements featured prominently in the school development plan. It was made clear that current work was a development of work already planned and begun in 1990 as an immediate response to the

recent legislation and subsequent directives. While Mathematics and Science were held to be in place as required by statute, all other subjects were :

operating in a context which allows and encourages National Curriculum learning.

(Midtown School Development plan, 1991-1992)

The school declared itself to be always ready to comply with the new things, though this had caused some problems :

We have experienced some organisational difficulties as a result of following the various directives from the DES promptly and to the letter.

A school survey referred to in the school development plan had revealed that teachers' concerns were substantially dominated by the impact upon their subject of the National Curriculum, although there was also mention of pupils' rights to their "*entitlements* and ...true progression". The area of personal and social education (PSE) required :

enhancement of expertise in associated dimensions (eg equal opportunities) and themes (eg health education).

(document relating to INSET needs, 1991)

The school wanted greater clarity about what was expected, and some assistance in preparing to introduce the National Curriculum.

There was no great discussion of how pupils were to be organised for learning. The decisions to be made were left to departments:

Faculties are given responsibility for developing courses (the curriculum) and selecting appropriate teaching methods.

Some subjects prefer setting , where pupils of a similar ability are together , others prefer teaching in mixed ability groups ,while still others make use of both methods.

(Mid Town School Prospectus, 1991-1992)

The Departments

Science was a large department comprising all the sciences, while History was smaller, timetabled and taught discretely. Both heads of department were young, but experienced in the school.

Parkside High School

Parkside is a popular girls' school in West Town whose roll had remained consistently high.

The school development plan was not made available. The school prospectus had much to say about the curriculum, focusing in particular on what was in place rather than on the National Curriculum. Parkside's curriculum was *one which offers a greater balance , breadth , depth and relevance than that demanded by the National curriculum alone.*

(Parkside School Prospectus, 1991-1992, my emphasis)

Pupils were

entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum , and also some choice within it. (my emphasis)

There was also a commitment to

address equal opportunities within our curriculum especially with regard to gender matters and racial and religious questions. We are committed to providing equal opportunity for all of our students throughout the curriculum.

Subject departments were permitted to reorganise their intake years into sets based on ability after one term in the school, and again at the start of year 9.

The Departments

The Science department was a large one comprising all the sciences . History was timetabled and taught discretely. Both heads of department were mature and of long standing in the school. The head of History would leave at the end of the year.

Springfields High School

Springfields is situated in East Town. Faced with closure in the uncertain days of the 1990s, the school intake roll had dropped to forty five boys at one point. With reorganisation settling its future as part of future LEA provision, its roll had improved with healthy intakes over the past years.

The school development plan included a wide range of school values and aims. These included :

awareness of the needs and aspirations of all pupils whatever their cultural background ; access and entitlement to the full range of educational opportunities.

(Springfields School Development Plan, 1991-1992)

The lengthy list of aims embraced a wide range of aspirations (see appendix B).

The school's curriculum aims were said to rest on these. The school was claimed to have been ahead of the National Curriculum:

Our curriculum is wide and varied and has in many ways been a model for the National Curriculum which all schools must now follow. For the past five years we have offered core and foundation subjects which are now a legal requirement.

(Springfields School Prospectus, 1991-1992, my emphasis)

However the development document acknowledged that current planning was substantially driven by National Curriculum requirements. The need to address the cross curricular themes was mentioned, but a response was said to await staff development. The area of equal opportunities was

a high priority. We are continually trying to develop our curriculum to reflect the richness of the society in which we live and ensure that in teaching methods and learning approaches , organisation and staffing , sexism and racism are explored and challenged.

The school prospectus made it clear that in year 8 all boys would be taught in tutor groups based on a mix of abilities. In year 9 this arrangement would continue , with the exceptions of Mathematics and Modern Languages. No explanation or argument was offered about these arrangements.

The Departments

Science was a large department comprising all the sciences, while History was taught in the large Humanities department as part of an integrated provision. Both heads of department had long experience in the school in their current roles.

Summary

The schools commonly claimed to be already abreast of the kinds of developments required by the National Curriculum. There were frequent claims to *broad and balanced* curricula, and to the fact that schools' own developments anticipated the new demands. The individual identity of schools was often asserted .

The schools also commonly expressed a variety of commitments: for example, to full access to the curriculum for everyone; curricula were *differentiated*; and children were *entitled* to what was on offer. Such remarks were redolent of the rhetorical language to be found in various expressions of the National Curriculum.

The organisation of children for learning was frequently described, but was not a subject of discussion, nor related in detail to these other rhetorical commitments. There was general dissatisfaction with the mode of implementation, the amount of information accessible to schools, and perceived confusion. A need for INSET support, felt to be lacking at this time, was often expressed.

Reporting on the interviews

It is worth pausing first to set the scene. The context of this initial phase of the research is the summer of 1991, when these two groups of subject teachers were coming to terms with what they were required to do to implement the National Curriculum. I was concerned with the extent to which classroom practice reflected the rhetorical intentions of the ERA proposals. The mechanisms employed to effect implementation would also be significant. At this stage I was looking for evidence about a range of issues surrounding the likely implementation of the aims and demands of the National Curriculum, as set out in the ERA and other related policy documents. These included:

- * the understanding held by heads of department of the demands made upon their subject

- * the understanding held by HODs about the structural demands such as testing and reporting
 - * the level of support given to HODs to help them understand the new demands made upon them
 - * the extent to which these HODs felt in command of the key concepts of *entitlement* and *differentiation*
 - * the level of control felt by HODs over what was happening
 - * the effects of new arrangements and requirements upon teaching, and the organisation of pupils for learning
 - * the extent to which departmental practice reflected a school view and development of the proposals; whether rhetorical or substantive.
- (as suggested in Chapter 4, and summarised here)

This stage of the research would reveal something of the effects of the government's proposals as they impacted upon schools, and also the extent to which teachers were playing a part in developments; whether they had *space* to influence what was happening, or whether government plans were being tightly directed into place under the influence of control mechanisms such as statute law and testing requirements. At this juncture it might be a reasonable expectation to find a positive impact made by the proposals in schools. This might include teachers being brought some way into a shared understanding of intentions; a feeling by teachers of being helped; and a feeling by teachers of the ideas of the meanings of *entitlement* and *differentiation*, and their relationship to the whole new curriculum.

The data from the six schools (documentary, questionnaire and interview) is now considered around a number of themes which relate to the central issues of the research. The results of this stage of the research are reported in the following manner:

- * the need for HODs to come to terms with the programmes of study
- * awareness of, and plans for, the forthcoming assessments
- * concern for, and understanding of, the concepts of *entitlement* and *differentiation*.

In considering these questions I first look at the data from Science, and then from History. I then look across the schools at two related issues which concern:

- * support for the teachers as they implement the proposals
- * the extent of developments towards a *whole school curriculum*, as opposed to an aggregate of scattered subject changes.

These areas of investigation stand as indicators of the extent to which the stated or implied intentions of the proposed National Curriculum were leading to a full and informed compliance with the requirements of the DES. As has been discussed in Chapter 3, doubts had been frequently voiced as to the sincerity of those intentions. This initial stage of the field research provides the opportunity to establish early responses and developments in one LEA.

Science

Considering the changes - introducing programmes of study

The programmes of study form the initial step in assembling the National Curriculum. The government's strategy was to set up working groups to define the content of each subject, then require schools and subject teachers to implement the final programmes. In the research group schools, the 1990-1991 year 8 cohorts were just completing the first year of National Curriculum Science required in the 12+ schools. The department heads' roles had been to take the programmes of study and turn them into schemes of work. At this point there was little grumbling from the Science HODs about the content of the programmes of study, although some teachers were anxious about teaching areas in which their own expertise was fragile, for example the earth sciences. More worry derived from the total load contained in the programmes of study, and the way in which these would combine with the new assessment requirements. Attitudes to the nature of the content could be summed up thus:

*It's here , and there's really little point in trying to force
issues another way. Put the kids first, do the best you
can from what you've got.*

(Science HOD, Juniper , 1991)

There was much to be done, despite such generous pragmatism, to prepare the relevant schemes of work. Overload of the pupils' curriculum, and work overload of the preparing teachers, was a common theme of these interviews :

*I feel I've been mucked about a lot , and I'm sure that
with a decent amount of preparation we could have got
to where we are sooner.*

(Science HOD, Greenfields, 1991)

Introducing the SATs

The teaching's not the problem

(Science HOD, Juniper, 1991)

Although engaged in 'delivery' of their statutory requirements for KS3, all the HODs were unsure of the nature of the SATs which would be imminently upon them, due in pilot form for their current year 8 cohort in the following June (1992). The LEA position was simply that the teachers should implement the programmes of study, and this of course was being done. Yet all of these teachers were concerned about the effects the SATs might have upon teaching:

*I'm also worried about the SATs. We've never seen them,
we don't know if they're skill based or just regurgitation of
facts..... and it does make an awful difference to the way
you teach kids.*

(Science HOD, Beechwood, 1991)

Two HODs who had attempted to keep up with the rapid changes in their subject were quite weary of it all. They had devised systems to monitor the progress of children across the original seventeen attainment targets, the ten levels of achievement, and the four hundred or so statements of attainment. With the recent revision, this work was now redundant. The HOD in Springfields was one whose work had suffered. He felt that not only had the enormous workload gone unrecognised by the government, but that the premise that underlay the new things was suspect:

You do not fatten a pig by weighing it.

(Science HOD, Springfield, 1991)

He observed that in his opinion a decade of research by the Assessment and Performance Unit had gone unused in the new proposals. The Juniper HOD offered his suspected reason for this:

It's a political thing , it's just so that educationists and politicians can say we've introduced these particular standards that teachers have to teach to.

(Science HOD, Juniper)

The SATs were commonly seen as potentially undermining their educational aims and practice. Teaching might become SAT- directed, and if the emphasis of the SATs was on propositional knowledge, the emphasis in teaching might follow this. The SATs might not be so concerned with skills and processes, and so teachers could be :

*worried that they're taking things out of teaching,
they're just assessing. (ibid)*

These HODs were very clear about the nature of assessment as they understood it . Assessment was

*basically to help the pupil with understanding
and learning.*

(Science HOD, Parkside, 1991)

The Parkside HOD echoed what others had suggested: that there were motives beyond these aims in the National Curriculum developments. The simple injunction to work to the programmes of study had done nothing to allay the anxieties of these teachers. They recognised the effect that

assessment arrangements could have on the teaching of their subject, and they recognised a purpose beyond helping children learn in the unfolding arrangements for assessment and public reporting.

Entitlement and Differentiation

A common understanding of what a child's *entitlement* might be in the context solely of the subject and its traditions had emerged from these interviews. There was a widely expressed belief that children deserved more than the mere fact of Science being on the timetable. How a child's understanding of Science was developed was also important. Children should acquire scientific skills, and understand processes (AT1). In all departments it seemed that what was being taught was broadly what had been taught before. All the departments had schemes of work prepared for the children in some form. The main reservation expressed by teachers in Science was their concern over the eventual balance between AT1 (Understanding Processes) and the other (more *content* rather than *skill* oriented) attainment targets. Processes, it was often asserted, should not take a back seat to propositional knowledge. Children were entitled to be introduced to the importance of understanding the ways in which Science worked, and not just by being *told* about these.

One issue as yet unresolved concerned the nature of a Science *entitlement* at KS4. The government proposal to offer two models of a Science curriculum at this level, one of 20% and one of 12.5% of curriculum time, suggested that in schools where the 20% was optional there would be *differentiated* curricula by pupil choice. The potential effect of this was illustrated by the Parkside experience. Whereas all girls in year 10 were following a double Science course as a matter of school policy, things were planned to change. As the HOD understood it, the senior management

had decided that the demands of overall *breadth and balance* had led them away from 20% Science for everyone. For her this option :

*leads nowhere, that is a dead endwhat can
you do with a single certificate Science? Nothing!*

(Science HOD, Parkside)

In sum, if the major issue of the programmes of study was their overload, then the assessment structures provided a major source of teacher dissent, both because of the possible political motives underlying these proposals, and because of their effects upon pupil *entitlement* to understanding and using scientific processes. There were also possible effects upon how children were to experience the programmes of study.

There was widely expressed awareness of the need to develop teaching programmes in forms suitable for *all* abilities of pupil. It was often pointed out that every teaching situation, whether set or mixed ability, would span several levels of attainment, though concern to do so was not driven solely by the National Curriculum, so much as a professional responsibility.

Responses to the *differentiated* needs of children varied within the Science group. At Beechwood concern within the department for both the weaker and the more able had led to a decision to set on entry in future. The 1990-1991 cohorts (the double year and mixed entry) had been felt to present enough problems in assimilation, without the additional burden that preparation for mixed ability groups was thought to incur. Catering for the pupils' varying needs and abilities would more easily be achieved by setting them by ability. In Greenfields similar worries over the most and least able led the HOD to set in year 9, although it was school policy to retain mixed ability groups in year 8 across the school.

Changes were due also in Mid Town where, apart from a SEN group, the 1990-1991 year 8 cohort had been taught in mixed ability groups. From 1991 the intake year would be set . The HOD stressed the pragmatic nature of this decision :

It would be nice to try a kind of loose streaming to meet the various levels of the National Curriculum.

(Science HOD, Mid Town, 1991)

In Greenfields too, plans were afoot to create teaching groups in Science for the more able and less able in year 9. This was expressly to meet the needs of *differentiated* tests anticipated in the assessment plans for Science. The situation in 1990-1991 for the first year 8 cohort, and the plans for future years, were as follows :

Table: organisation of classes for learning in Science 1990-1991; 1991-1992

B	Yr 8 1990-1991		Yr 8 1991-1992		Yr 9 1991-1992	
	mix	set	mix	set	mix	set
Parkside	/		/		/	
Juniper	/		/		/	
Springfields	/		/			/
Greenfields	/		/			/
Beechwood	/			/		/
Mid Town	/			/		/

The experience of this first cohort of children who were following the National Curriculum had led two schools, then, to change their practice by setting year 8 pupils instead of teaching in mixed ability groups. In two more schools pupils were to be set as they moved from year 8 into year 9. Thus only two schools intended to retain mixed groups into year 9, the SATs year.

There was a universally expressed reluctance to set children this early, a concession to the arguments of those who propounded the merits of keeping children together as long as possible. Those about to embark upon it freely acknowledged the potential pitfalls; but there was much reference to the ten levels of ability and the need to meet these levels when *differentiated* test papers became the norm. This confusion of aims was underlined by the Springfields response. There would be a SEN group in year 9, and a "fast set", as the National Curriculum was "difficult to deliver". The remaining pupils would be grouped in mixed ability arrangements "to avoid stigma".

There is a simple, necessary, sense in which these setting responses might be seen as *writerly*. The teachers had chosen to meet the demands of the National Curriculum in this way. Yet it could also be inferred from their comments that they had been led there by the National Curriculum and its requirements. In the two schools that did not envisage setting, Parkside and Juniper, the decisions not to set were contrary to a school culture which had encouraged it. These HODs could be suggested to have taken a *writerly* view of the National Curriculum at this time, writing the programmes of study to their perception of pupil needs in the school, which at that time included a desire to see all children working together. The Juniper HOD explained his preference as not only meeting the needs of his pupils in acquiring a good understanding of the processes of Science, but also in learning to work together. The Parkside HOD shared this aim, and also wanted girls to

feel they're part of the whole curriculum rather than a very narrow curriculum.....every child in a group gets the appropriate curriculum through differentiated work. (Science HOD, Parkside)

Both of these teachers had applied the same beliefs to years 10 and 11, where all girls had followed the early model of a double Science, and in mixed ability groups. In Parkside the introduction of the 12.5% option would compromise that intention, while the Juniper HOD sadly accepted that he had needed to set girls for the Nuffield Science course he had adopted for GCSE. He had found it simply too difficult for less able girls, though he looked forward to a change to the Suffolk Science syllabus which he hoped might allow more flexibility for *all* girls to follow. At this stage he reported that the school was still committed to double Science for all in years 10 and 11.

Summary

The programmes of study were underway, and in terms of the *differentiated* curricula that schools were obliged to 'deliver', two things were clear :

- * these departments were completely aware of the need to create schemes of work which drew in all children. That was part of their *entitlement*;
- * in four cases out of the six it had been decided that could best be achieved through some form of grouping by ability. In these four cases the National Curriculum was not seen as the sole reason for doing this, but it was in the context of the NC requirement to provide a *differentiated* provision that the decisions were made.

These heads of department were certainly concerned to meet their responsibilities to provide *differentiated* provision. Two schools would attempt this through *differentiated* materials, and four through *differentiated* teaching groups. Despite the caution among the latter about possible unwanted consequences, they felt driven by the need to address the full range of newly spelled out levels. Setting could clearly be justified as a means of securing an *entitlement* to an appropriately *differentiated* curriculum, though the consequences of this for those pupils not in the more able sets were less discussed than alluded to by the HODs.

It may be, then, that at its strongest the claim of a common curriculum in Science would rest at this point on the common provision of *differentiated* tests at the end of key stage three. Although the programmes of study were common to all, and HODs had developed schemes of work from these, it was clear that in the set groups common work would often be done differently, and the top groups would tackle different work too, despite all pupils studying all the PoS in some form.

Within their own interpretation of *entitlement* and *differentiation*, pupils in these schools were catered for. However, it might be argued that in Parkside and Juniper, at this point, a stronger version of *entitlement* accompanied the *differentiated* curriculum, a version which embraced the idea of a common curriculum commonly delivered where possible. In the other schools, as provision was being planned, *differentiation* had become the dominant concept when these principles conflicted.

History

Considering the changes - introducing programmes of study

In 1991 the History departments were one academic year away from the need to follow statutory orders in their subjects. They were enjoined, however, to move towards these in the meantime.

The provision of History in the borough varied. Four schools (Juniper, Parkside, Mid Town, Beechwood) taught History at KS3 separately from other subjects. The content of the four schools' curricula was completely different and depended upon the interests of the teaching staff. At Parkside, for example, all girls followed a common curriculum, though with set groups in year 9. In Juniper, the HOD felt that certain topics were more appropriate for more able girls and so these were only taught to the top sets in year 9. In Springfields there was a World Studies course which embraced History, Geography and Religious Education. In Greenfields a similarly integrated course prevailed, and in both these schools there was a progression to a common mixed ability course for all in years 10 and 11. Mid Town also progressed to a common mixed ability Humanities course in years 10 and 11, while the other schools offered options in separate subjects at this level.

The HODs' concerns over what they might now have to teach were widespread. They questioned what notion of *entitlement* was intended by the programmes of study. Concern was often expressed at the emphasis on *heritage*, and what was frequently referred to as a eurocentric emphasis:

*It's obviously politically motivated , you've only got to
look at the themes, for example the British Empire.*

(History HOD, Mid Town)

All teachers expressed worry that the particular courses which they had developed for particular reasons might now be threatened. The content of these courses varied, but predominantly they were either responses to a perceived need to tackle issues of living in a plural society (for example, a World Studies course at Springfields or work on women in History in Juniper), or the importance of developing pupils' historical skills. At Greenfields, it was thought the National Curriculum could be lacking important elements, and so

we must be careful to write in multi-cultural elements , must do that ourselves.....not exclusively white male Anglo-Saxon history.

(History HOD, Greenfields)

As the sheer weight of the recommended History curriculum was mentioned, fears were expressed that little room would remain for the pursuit of processes and skills in History, although it could be hoped that:

There will be a lot more reading between the lines, and we'll be able to manipulate.

(History HOD, Parkside, 1991)

Others shared this view:

There are ways round it I'm sure actually. As time goes by we'll get terribly devious at getting round the domination of content.

(History HOD, Juniper,1991)

As has been discussed previously, the development of an emphasis on historical skills was one of the advances of the previous decade in history teaching, and if not all teachers had been reared on the Schools' Council History project, its stress on skills and research processes were echoed by all HODs here. Now there was a fear that "fact bashing" would be rife, and without

any adequately explained rationale for the changes. The lack of a rationale for the inclusion of particular topics at particular ages was noted, underlined by the recent transfer of World War Two from KS4 to KS3. While concessions might be made to the idea of continuity in the study of History, the manner of introducing the National Curriculum was confusing for some:

One doesn't hear anything about pupils as far as I can see...

We're all taken up with these administrative complexities....I don't think that's really what our primary concern should be.

(History HOD, Beechwood)

This HOD was clearly not won over by the practical proposal and he emphasised the scale of the workload facing teachers. As he got down to the new (NC) History he therefore became impatient with cross-curricular audits and ten level scales of attainments. This was a typical response. And although he grudgingly acknowledged there might be an argument for arming pupils with some knowledge of their heritage, he was not sure what it would be, and how it would link with the need to develop skills in History.

Although these teachers conceded the value of a common curriculum, and were pleased to have History raised to the status of a required part of the 5-16 curriculum, as an *entitlement*, there was some bad feeling:

I'm willing to be convinced, though I think there's a lot more work to be done by us and everyone concerned. I mean I can't say I'm thrilled with the idea at the moment.

In conclusion, I think there's great potential, I think we need a change. I've got no sort of philosophical objections to a National Curriculum, and anything that restores the position of Historyis a good thing. However, from what I've seen so far,

good try, must do better.

Everything's been so late in coming, it's all so vague. The really important thing, assessment, is just a joke. The programmes of study need to be looked at again. I mean, who are these people? I just feel as a teacher I wasn't consulted. There was a lot of consultation, but I don't feel anyone took any notice. They haven't grasped the nettle that we don't want to be fact bashing.

(History HOD, Juniper)

Introducing assessment

At this time of revision of the attainment targets for History there was understandable confusion about what was to come. There would be SATs for History, and undoubtedly the nature of these would have an impact. The Greenfields HOD saw the beginning of the end for integrated courses, as the History statements of attainment were so different and specific compared with Geography. At Springfields, the HOD agreed with the force of this suggestion but was determined to retain the all-embracing World Studies if possible. At Beechwood the HOD reckoned the assessment aspect of the National Curriculum to be:

a monumental task.....an impenetrable miasma

and observed:

I don't think in the end that people are effectively going to be able to use the attainment targets...I think that out of that will come a formal sort of escape somehow , a lot of very conventional automatic grading, there's not going to be a rigorous conscientious implementation of these statements of attainment.

(History HOD, Beechwood)

Assessment and testing were part of the weight of things pressing on the HODs, and the uncertainty of how it would all eventually work out:

I know very little about what I'm expected to do...I've read the document. It's confusing; until we get a chance to sit down and think about it in more detail I think we're just going to have to muddle along.

(History HOD, Mid Town)

The impact in terms of workload seemed daunting. The possible effect upon what was taught had been noted.

Entitlement and Differentiation

The National Curriculum requirements had been digested by all HODs, and they had already been active in preparing new materials for across the ability range. At this early stage of implementation, concerns expressed about *entitlement* revolved around the weight of the new curriculum. This could have the effect of reducing the time available to concentrate on the processes and skills considered essential to development in the subject. The time involved might also restrict teachers' space to pursue content they had previously taught and held to be valuable.

At this point all the year 8 History groups were taught in mixed ability tutor groups. Two departments had classes set in year 9, both imposed by timetable links with other subjects. Those who did not set at this point, pre-National Curriculum History, expressed concern over the possible unwanted consequences of an excess of testing, recognising their current arrangements might be under threat in the near future. There was a mix of ideas regarding the grouping of children for learning. In Beechwood, the HOD chose to keep mixed groups for two major reasons :

- * idealistic - children perform to expectations, and setting consigns many to the dustbin;
- * pragmatic - there were serious problems attendant upon teaching lower sets.

These conclusions were broadly shared by the HODs in Springfields and Greenfields. And in Parkside the experience of teaching the mixed ability year 8 tutor groups, rather than sets, had been welcomed, because:

If they were streamed there would be a lot more separating off and they wouldn't be such a whole.

(History HOD, Parkside)

In Juniper it was by school policy that the intake year was mixed ability. In Mid Town year 8 was also mixed for History, though the HOD was unsure quite why, thinking it might be school policy. These two HODs both acknowledged the strengths of an all-in teaching arrangement, though both also felt that as the pupils got older, some things were more easily and better done in set classes. In Juniper and Parkside the mixed ability arrangements of year 8 gave way to setting, as the schools' timetable policies linked them with other subjects which set pupils. In Juniper this was common practice (and welcome) in what was now called year 9, and was formerly the intake year. In Parkside it was also common practice to set in year 9, though reservations were now expressed, having experienced what were seen as positive aspects of having retained the whole tutor groups for year 8 History. In Springfields, Beechwood and Greenfields the mixed ability arrangements in year 9 were consistent with the HODs' wishes. In Mid Town the HOD would have preferred teaching groups set by ability in year 9. These arrangements, and the thoughts of the HODs as to their preferred methods of organisation, were not yet affected by the demands of the National Curriculum, but the possible impact of the SATs when they emerged in the future had been widely remarked upon.

Summary

There were positive aspects to the National Curriculum for the History teachers. These included a welcome raising of the subject's status through its compulsory place in the curriculum; and an acknowledgement of the argument for a common curriculum.

Worries were expressed about the potential burden of the recommended content, and the nature of what were now required syllabuses. Teachers' initial acceptance of the working group's broad chronological approach to syllabus construction had given way to cynicism. The content was seen to be either ideologically driven, or devoid of any rational basis for inclusion. This might affect what had become the teachers' view of a child's *entitlement* within the History curriculum: the various areas of study chosen by the school, and a widespread commitment to what were described as the processes and skills of History. A curriculum dominated by facts (the arrival of compulsory 'fact bashing') might restrict these departments' *space* to continue this emphasis in their teaching of History. Several schools expressed an intention to seek *writerly* approaches to the new curriculum to maintain what they held to be important.

All HODs acknowledged the need for *differentiation*, but this was sought by setting classes in only two schools, and that because of timetable links in year 9 with other subjects. There was some caution as to the effects of SATs in History. Their introduction might remove some of the *space* teachers hoped to retain; and there was a possibility that pressure on teachers to compete in the publicly accessible test results at the end of KS3 might lead to setted groups in pursuit of high grades.

The levels of support that the HODs felt they had received as they had set about the implementation of the National Curriculum is next considered.

Support for the teachers in implementation

I turn now to the two issues which cut across the departmental perspectives. The first of these was the matter of support for teachers as they were required to cope with the new things. Heads of department had the responsibility of preparing their departments for the new situation. I suggested in Chapter 3 that implementation of the National Curriculum would need to reach teachers on the following three levels if they were to be willing partners in the process:

- * sharing and developing the vision of the aims of *entitlement* and *differentiation*, which were written large in justification of the proposal for a National Curriculum;
- * at subject level, to share and develop any intention of how these concepts might operate, and how the subject might be organised with these in mind;
- * how the subject areas, the first layers of implementation, would fit into a whole curriculum aim, and subsequent practical patterns.

An account of what the teachers felt about the support they had enjoyed for this implementation now follows.

The Teachers' Views

The heads of department in this study indicated very clearly and firmly that they looked to the government to encourage understanding of the

proposals, and help them. INSET was not seen by them as a 'universal fixer' which would put all ills to right, but seen more in the Huberman and Miles (1984) sense of meeting perceived needs as implementation proceeded. This need was expressed in both the school documents and in the HOD interviews. Beechwood castigated the government and NCC for indecision and confusion. Juniper asked for more support for introducing National Curriculum subjects, and explained its purpose;

*The ultimate aim of INSET must be to improve the quality
of the pupils' education by improved teaching in the classroom.*

(Juniper Development Plan, 1991-1992)

Teachers wanted and expected some insights into the purpose of the changes, and more importantly some clear guidance as to what practical steps to take in the classroom and laboratory.

What support they received came in the following ways:

- * LEA twilight sessions where teachers explored, in subject groups, various issues relating to the subject documents
- * LEA meetings where members of the local inspectorate took teachers through the various documentation and requirements
- * non-local meetings, eg as occasionally organised by the Institute of Education, or those planned by the SAT developers in Science
- * DES, SEAC and NCC materials disseminated to schools.

The Science HOD at Greenfields succinctly dismissed the level of INSET ("inadequate") and the support documents ("of little use"). They were simply not sufficient to the task involved. He would have appreciated a "decent amount of preparation". This was a common response. As for reaching the loftier area of the concepts of *entitlement* and *differentiation*, another HOD felt:

*If anything , they managed to confuse me. I usually have
a clear brain.*

(Science HOD, Parkside)

These responses in interview merely confirmed the returns made by the HODs to the questionnaire distributed before our initial meetings. They gave a dismal view of their experiences of support for implementation to that point. The results of those questions are reported below in tabular form (Tables C and D). They suggest that teachers had had an expectation of constructive support for planned change, and Table C demonstrates starkly that they felt the provision had been inadequate. There had, of course, been LEA meetings of various types to do with the implementation of the National Curriculum, but not at a level felt to be adequate by this group. At best, it was conceded that *some* had been provided. Seven out of twelve people felt unable to concede even that much.

It is not, of course, sufficient merely to have meetings planned. Table D shows what teachers felt about the content of their meetings and INSET, when provided. They felt that when meetings *had* been held, not much had been gained. Only two of the twelve felt that some of the INSET provided had been useful to them. These two teachers belonged to the Science group, and it may be that the earlier implementation of the Science proposals had resulted in more planned INSET for them up to this time. However, the overwhelming response was that INSET had not been right as a support for teachers during implementation.

It was clear from the interviews that the disappointment indicated in the returns to these questions was symptomatic of deep feelings. Although the Juniper HOD had judged that "some" of his INSET had an appropriate content, in conversation he conceded he felt he had had very little outside guidance, either in terms of practical day to day matters, or concerning the intentions underlying the whole curriculum. This response was a common one, and one shared by schools as a whole; that there should be external support was the universal message, and to date this had been unforthcoming. The Juniper HOD underlined the point by contrasting this experience with that concerned with the introduction of GCSE. Any knowledge he felt he had of preparing *differentiated* materials had come from the GCSE implementation. The present injunction to prepare the PoS with regard to *differentiation* came with little guidance as to *how*.

Table: amount of INSET. Question: *Has INSET support been available to you
C and when you needed it?*

Plenti- Quite As Some- Quite in-
fully a bit needed not enough adequate

PARKSIDE:	Science	/			
	History			/	
SPRINGFIELDS:	Science			/	
	History			/	
MIDTOWN:	Science	/			
	History	/			
JUNIPER:	Science	/			
	History	/			
GREENFIELDS:	Science			/	
	History			/	
BEECHWOOD:	Science			/	
	History			/	

Table: teachers' evaluation of INSET. Question: *Has the content of INSET*
D *been right for you in your preparation for the NC?*

		Very much so	Some	Not much
PARKSIDE	Science		/	
	History			/
SPRINGFIELDS	Science			/
	History			/
MIDTOWN	Science			/
	History			/
JUNIPER	Science		/	
	History			/
GREENFIELDS	Science			/
	History			/
BEECHWOOD	Science			/
	History			/

This is not to say that there were *no* guidelines or advice. The NCC offered early non-statutory guidance on the proposals, and clearly argued the primacy of a whole curriculum design over a curriculum model of an assemblage of individual subject parts. Indeed, in The Whole Curriculum (NCC, 1990), it was suggested that the subject described curriculum should give way to a situation where all the subject attainment targets were wrested from the departments, and the schools should

*throw all the attainment targets in a heap on the floor and
reassemble them in a way which provides for them the very
basis of a whole curriculum. (p. 1)*

The point made by these HODs was that they wanted help with *how* to do this. Teachers had expected more than just these disseminated papers in the post, but had already recognised the reality :

*People have become resigned to it...(and) just wait for the
next set of instructions*

(History HOD, Mid Town)

The need for an INSET programme had been acknowledged in the original consultation document (DES, 1987, para. 76). This document also acknowledged the necessary role of teachers in successful change, described as the:

*initiatives, efforts and commitment of the
teachers in the classroom. (para. 95)*

Recent advice from the NCC (1991) , The National Curriculum and the Initial Training of Student. Articled and Llicensed Teachers , confirmed the necessity of new teachers having appropriate skills, described as ranging from knowledge of a particular subject to understanding and a 'view' of the whole curriculum. It is only reasonable to think that existing practitioners would need the same minimum requirements. That would be the purpose of INSET, and we

have seen that was indeed the expectation of those interviewed for this study. The History HOD at Beechwood expressed this disappointment in particularly strong terms. He felt he had received no help either with the major concepts of the National Curriculum or the practicalities of implementation. He judged that :

*The degree to which my colleagues will have been
influenced by INSET in the borough will be close to zero.*

Thus teachers and schools expected support for the changes brought by the National Curriculum beyond the disseminated postal edicts and advice. In the event, the research group felt let down in this matter. There had simply not been enough help available , and when there had been INSET it had not addressed the perceptions of these teachers about what was required to implement the changes. That teachers had both a need and a right to expect such help is supported by reference to research literature on educational change and innovation. It is suggested also from a reading of various documents relating to the National Curriculum proposal and its implementation that the proposers of the changes were aware of the prime role played by teachers in implementation, and what skills and qualities they would need.

Implementation and developing a whole school curriculum

The second issue that cuts across departments is that of the development of the whole curriculum. We have seen that the schools were taking their statutory obligations seriously. The staff interviews and school documentation provide ample evidence of that. From 1990-1991 the high schools were to follow the statutory orders in Mathematics and Science, and the schools were confident that when things had to be done, they were being done to the best of their ability. When developments were needed in anticipation (as in History),

they were. The schools often acquiesced in the DES assertion that the National Curriculum was a logical progression within a tradition of curriculum development and provision. Thus:

The curriculum in years 8 and 9 is in line with National Curriculum requirements.

(Juniper School Prospectus, 1991, my emphasis)

The government's decision to introduce the National Curriculum is a major initiative which is designed to ensure that all students have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Its aims are in line with those that Greenfields has always held and development work in the school to meet its requirements is already well advanced.

(Greenfields School Prospectus, 1991, my emphasis)

Our curriculum is wide and varied and has in many ways been a model for the National Curriculum which all schools must now follow.

(Springfields School Prospectus, 1991, my emphasis)

It has frequently been claimed in official government documents that the National Curriculum rests on a consensus view shared by the profession. The broad view alluded to is said to be that predominantly given authoritative voice by HMI. That HMI view of the curriculum was discussed in Chapter 5, and if indeed it were true that the National Curriculum lies in that evolving recent tradition of curriculum development, (referred to in the original consultation document and subsequent literature) then I have argued there that it would embody the following criteria :

- * The curriculum must be broad and balanced
- * The curriculum must be for all pupils (though it may be adapted for pupils with special educational needs)
- * The curriculum must promote development in all the main areas of learning and experience which are widely accepted as important
- * The curriculum must be relevant to particular needs
- * The curriculum must also serve to develop the pupil as an individual, as a member of society and as a future member of the community

The curriculum would, of course, be composed of the programmes of study which, together with the "themes and dimensions" (not necessarily described in each *subject's* programme of study), would comprise the intended *entitlement* curriculum. Both the Science and History HOD groups revealed a high degree of awareness of the National Curriculum's broader aspects and intentions: the cross curricular possibilities and the need to consider and incorporate the *themes and dimensions*.

There was much positive feeling, for example the Science HOD at Juniper:

That's what life's about, life is cross-curricular, so preparing kids for life, that's what we should be doing.

In Parkside, Juniper, Greenfields, Mid Town and Parkside the HODs in both subjects recognised this broad aspect of the proposals and reported

on school discussions, and even audits, of whole school possibilities. Both HODs in Springfields were aware of these requirements of the whole curriculum, but felt that no one in school at a senior management level had yet made any moves on this front. In Juniper there was a discrete timetabled slot to 'deliver' on some of these areas, and in Greenfields some departments had been asked to take responsibility for them, for example the Humanities department to 'deliver' Economic Awareness. In all cases though, there were problems in providing for these cross-curricular matters, and in general these consisted of the weight of work anticipated in the specific subject areas, never mind negotiations with other departments. In Beechwood, the History HOD detected a darker side to these soberly expressed reservations about the future of cross-curricular links and school audits of various departments' activities. He observed of his own colleagues already embarked upon or preparing for the National Curriculum:

I think one of the big problems is the way in which it is done. At the chalk face there's a lot of very profound depression and disillusionment. Yet it's covered up because HODs will go to meetings with the head and they don't actually say that. And (yet) some heads of department do feel they want to push things in a certain direction. There's a concealment of what peoples' attitudes and feelings really are. It's partly the weight of work but it's also partly a certain confusion about the whole business, and a lack of confidence about directions we're going.

(History HOD, Beechwood)

He felt that people were not expressing their real feelings about what they were experiencing, as they were anxious to be seen to be coping with change. He explained how he coped:

I'll tell you one of the reasons why all this discussion irritates me, and I switch off and only do what I have to do, and this is, you know, this sort of administrative preoccupation is not, I think, what teaching should be primarily concerned with.

To sum up, HODs were aware of the broader curriculum canvas, and in five of the schools reported initiatives to discuss the whole school implications of the proposals. Some schools were undertaking audits to see where 'delivery' of cross-curricular matters might lie. The HODs generally recognised the potential value of collaboration with other departments, and a whole school approach to the various "themes and dimensions". Full implementation awaited further events. The schools claimed (with some justification) that they were doing what they had to do, and this constituted, *de jure*, *breadth and balance*, for so the legislation said.

Conclusion to the first part of the research

The target schools' descriptions of their curricula were dominated by the impending changes. They often shared the language of the proposal. This language was very much the language of educational discourse developed over the recent past in the 'Great Debate'. Curricula were uniformly described as *broad and balanced*, and schools and departments expressed concern for the needs of the individual child within broad provision.

Much had been made in government documents of the consensus upon which this most recent education initiative rested. In Chapter 2 I briefly outlined recent developments in both subjects which I suggested could be said broadly to command professional agreement. Some of the History teachers spoke of the possibility of *space* in which to continue to practise those things they had

hitherto considered valuable, but which were not now evident in the programmes of study, But the Science teachers were less convinced of the existence of any *space*. They faced imminent SAT testing, and were aware of the effect that the weighting of the different attainment targets in any final published grades might have on the emphasis they placed upon preparation of their pupils. The priority for the Science teachers was to make some practical sense of the changes in order to work with them for the sake of the children in their care.

Behind the general approval accorded the idea of a National Curriculum, and the consuming need to make enough sense of the proposals to translate them into effective classroom practice, some disenchantment could be detected. The motives of the government were often questioned. The proposals were said to be dictated less by the needs of pupils than by the needs of government: they were *policy* rather than *pupil* driven, and consequently the government was held to account for this.

As they all grappled with reality, rhetoric seemed just that: rhetoric; *entitlement* might be a right only to what was on offer, and *separation* an easy route to *differentiation* of provision.

Chapter Seven

A CASE STUDY OF A BOROUGH'S SCHOOLS: 1992

Field research in Springfields

Introduction

The first stage of this research revealed contradictory messages about how the schools were experiencing implementation. In their public documents the schools had expressed their agreement with the curricular aims of the National Curriculum. Teachers were found to be variously encouraged by the proposals (eg because it gave status to their subject; because it promised coherence for their subject; because they sympathised with the idea of a common curriculum), yet often simultaneously dismayed by confusion in the early days of implementation. Negative opinions about the National Curriculum, where they appeared, were not predominantly the result of any perceived bad intentions of the curriculum reforms (though there was evidence that teachers were aware of the possibility of a hidden agenda), but rather were formed through the experience of a haphazard process of implementation. And behind much of the discourse in the first round of field work lay the lurking threat of new assessment procedures backed up by legislation:

*The means whereby the state has the capacity to control
and discipline the workforce specifically and directly.*

(Bowe et al, 1992, p. 17)

In the summer of 1992 the focus of this research moved to one of the six schools, namely Springfields. The purpose of this narrower focus was to provide a degree of triangulation for the six school study. This look at one school would be across the full range of subjects undergoing change. Before

turning to a detailed report of the agenda and outcomes of the interviews conducted there, I first discuss the idea of *space* for manoeuvre for teachers, and what might be termed a *professional* response in the context of implementation of an imposed innovation.

Space for manoeuvre?

The work of Bowe et al (1992) is again useful in the analysis of the data derived from this phase of the research. The distinction made there between texts that are *readerly* and those that are *writerly* suggests that research into the National Curriculum and its implementation could fruitfully look beyond the written policy texts (ie National Curriculum orders, programmes of study etc) to see whether heads of department and teachers in the classroom were able to manoeuvre some *space* within which to write their own view of what a curriculum should be. We might have to look to this *space* to see whether it was possible to maintain the curricular traditions referred to in the original proposal (DES, 1987, para. 5) in the current situation. Certain elements of *entitlement* or *differentiation* (however defined) might thus seem to be undermined or hidden by the formal process of implementation, but might still be found in the *space* created by teachers. The interviews in this second round were pursued with this possibility in mind, as well as exploring the explicit suggestions found in the formal curricular proposals of the ERA. However, there was little evidence that much space remained, whatever the best intentions of those involved. As we have seen in the first round of this research, there was considerable potential goodwill among teachers, prepared to work with the new things :

It's here, we've got to work with it.

(Interview with Science HOD, Juniper, 1991)

This was despite what had been seen as an inefficient and badly conceived process of implementation, and with some public debate and foreboding as to the nature and purpose of the next, imminent, stage, the introduction of the SATs.

A "professional" approach to implementation?

The force of central government seemed all-pervasive; but the evidence from my interview data here suggests that the *professionalism responsibility* of teachers, when *encountered*, was focused not in the subversion of the policy but *in support of it*. There were certain lines beyond which teachers would not go, even if unhappy about some aspects of the policy they were implementing. Their *professional responsibility* manifested itself in this context in a different way. They might wish for Z, but X and Y came first. In this case X and Y were clearly (1) concern for their pupils to do well, whatever the political context, and (2) concern that they, the teachers, were seen to be doing the best for their pupils in the new situation. Public accountability and competition were now the main motivation of educational concern.

(Professional responsibility is used here to describe a quality, often ascribed to teachers, which suggests that beyond the ability to function in a particular way, as for example in this case following the requirements of a prescribed curriculum, there lies an evaluative realm. This realm, based on experience and the shared values of the profession, as well as training, encourages the making of value judgements about the processes in which teachers participate. These judgements can inform and possibly affect the way in which teachers' duties are carried out. A possible dilemma for the *professional responsibility* of teachers in a time of externally imposed change derives from the tension between their judgement of what comprises the best of all possible worlds for

their children, and something (NC) they are required to implement with which they may disagree to any extent. This idea of a teacher's judgement, as well as practical expertise, being a valued part of a teacher's *professional* life is commonly referred to as the exercise of *teacher ownership* of the curriculum. Its virtue can be found extolled in much of the literature of the TVEI experience, and the opportunity to control *what* is taught in schools, and *how*, is what Bowe et al (1992) refer to as *space*. Indeed, control over *how* things are to be done ought still to be the prerogative of schools and teachers (DES 1987; 1989). However, it was apparent that this also might be influenced or controlled, for example by statute following the recommendations of the subject group working parties, and later assessment requirements).

If teachers have *space* to manoeuvre then they might avoid a confrontation between these competing priorities: following what they are required to do by law, and doing what they judge to be the right thing. If *space* does not exist, or is limited, then teachers face a choice. To follow what they feel to be right in this case (for example different content or methods or organisation of pupils) might be thought adversely to affect pupils' performance. Their *professional* aversion to some of the requirements might be overcome by a competing *professional priority* to ensure their students' success, success that might otherwise be compromised by retaining methods or practices which somehow could be seen to restrict pupils' full opportunity to do as well as they might in the new SATs

Not space, but "serendipity, ad hocery and chaos" - the context of 1992

Their most recent encounters with *actual policy* (the policy texts and legislation documents) were biting on teachers. The gap that emerged now was not the *space* referred to by Bowe et al, but that between early

optimism and the relentless march of the power of legislation, for example the imminent SATs and the re-drawn English requirements. Not all areas of the curriculum were subject to as much political interference as in History and English. For other teachers the common feature of their experience was the method of implementation and the new structure that would enfold the subject: the programmes of study, the attainment targets and the SATs. There was a powerful momentum underway. There were now more subjects 'on stream'. Piecemeal changes, for example in English and Technology, did nothing to relieve that momentum. Changes were the result of political lobbying in these cases, not a response to any representation from the educational establishment (Sweetman, 1992; Hofkins, 1992). Through these interviews with HODs it was becoming more clear that there was little feeling of playing an active part in developments. The thrust was a *readerly* thrust. The policy texts were handed down to school and the senior managers or the HODs read and adjusted. Any suggestion that *writerly* implementation was underway would need close scrutiny.

There had been pilot SATs in Mathematics and Science, as planned. Both examinations had been designed with different ability levels of children in mind. Subject teachers had to decide upon the range of ability into which each child fell, and then enter them for the tier paper intended for that range. The tiers were defined by reference to the TGAT levels of attainment. It was intended that in the following year, 1993, English and Technology would join Mathematics and Science in the first formal SATs; this would include the requirement to publish the results of such SATs. It had also been decided to run a pilot History SAT in 1993, and that History would then join the other subjects in 1994 with a formal and reported SAT to mark the end of KS3.

Major developments were underway in English and Technology. In English there was a public debate over the issue of failing standards in written and spoken English; and the need for a set list of texts for teachers in schools upon which their students might be assessed in the KS3 SAT. Concerns included what might be chosen for children to read at KS3, and what revisions might be made to the design of the SATs and the programmes of study. In Technology an 'industry' lobby had won a hearing from the Secretary of State, describing the new Technology in schools as a "Blue Peter" subject and lamenting the lack of emphasis on traditional workshop skills.

The situation in Amalgam

In Amalgam's high schools History and Geography were about to come formally 'on stream' in KS3 with the first classes entering school in year 8, having completed the first year of KS3 in the feeder middle schools. Other subjects were further back in the staged implementation process. An *OFSTED-style* inspection was planned for Springfields in the Spring term of 1993, run by the local authority inspectors. This would be the last done by an LEA team on its own 'patch' before the new regulations ensured there was no 'connection' between inspected schools and the inspection team. But that seemed a far off event in the summer of 1992. The National Curriculum was dominating feelings and events at the present.

Springfields

Senior management had apparently welcomed the changes brought by the National Curriculum:

Our curriculum is wide and varied and has in many ways been a model for the National Curriculum which all schools must now follow.

(Springfields School Prospectus, 1991-2)

And the school development plan was clearly driven by the needs of the National Curriculum.

The interviews at Springfields during this summer term involved the heads of major departments, and the interview data was supplemented by the school's end of year department reviews and reports to school governors.

The interview agenda

The interviews were designed to elicit from heads of department, through recounting their experiences and giving their opinions, additional insights into those factors in the nature and implementation of the National Curriculum that I had explored the previous year in the study of the six borough county high schools. As set out on pages 65-66, these would include the degree of understanding of the intentions of the National Curriculum, the degree of implementation of the National Curriculum at department and school level, the nature of the implemented curriculum, its resemblance to one that might be claimed to be both an *entitlement* and yet appropriately *differentiated*, and the levels of support received in coping with the changes. Thus these were the focus areas. Matters of department and school concern might be detected in the available documentation. The reactions of the HODs in their departments is first discussed here, followed by consideration of the whole school situation, the implementation of the *themes* and *dimensions* of the National Curriculum, and the manner of the school's organisation of children and teachers in the school.

Departments and the National Curriculum

There is no space whatsoever. (Interview with Science HOD July 1992)

The breadth and complexity of the demands of the National Curriculum upon schools (never mind the impact of the ERA as a whole) were soon apparent. Subjects had their own diverse and particular traditions and interests. These significantly affected reactions to the proposals. So the head of Information Technology could welcome the development of a common focus for his subject, a subject too new to have a 'tradition':

We haven't really had a focus for I.T. before.....

this is going to help pull all that together.

(I.T. HOD, summer 1992)

Working practices were not always to be changed, just framed and organised in a new way. Thus the changes could be unproblematic, with a sharper focus, as with the programmes of study for technology:

I don't know what all the fuss is about. It's no different to what we're doing anyway. We're doing all this , we're doing...evaluation, design and planning, all that was in our schemes of work anyway, it's just that they haven't been identified in posh terms or jargon.

(D.T. HOD, summer 1992)

These were *readerly* responses. Both HODs could welcome such moves. There was no need for them to do otherwise (though they were among the few to be so sanguine on aspects of new curriculum content). The National Curriculum clarified existing practice. Sometimes it might be seen to have dressed it up somewhat. In the case of D.T. it re-affirmed what was

already understood. For these teachers the main change was the framework in which their subject was conceptualised and made to work in practice. What was perhaps not so clear for these teachers was the framework which embraced, or was intended to embrace, all subjects which comprised the National Curriculum. There was a world outside the strict parameters of their own subjects into which their subjects were to fit. While the responses of other HODs were less accepting, it was not the case that there was a natural antipathy to the idea of a national curriculum. It could be seen to bring advantages in the form of curriculum development. The co-ordinator in charge of year 8 Technology, felt:

I think the technology overall has been a very good initiative.....If it wasn't for National Curriculum you wouldn't have cooking here, information technology aspects, you certainly wouldn't have had business studies. I think it's valuable.

(Year 8 Technology co-ordinator, 1992)

This role was a direct product of the National Curriculum. He co-ordinated the work of Business Studies, Food Technology, Information Technology and Design Technology, linking separately-staffed and timetabled periods through the demands of the programmes of study and school devised themes which applied to all the subjects.

Other HODs conceded the possible advantages of a national curriculum. The Mathematics HOD, thought:

I'm not really against a national curriculum as such

(interview, summer 1992)

In his department report to the governors he outlined some of the advantages:

There have been several positive aspects to the national curriculum initiatives. The department has been forced into looking at its assessment and recording procedures and although we are not quite there yet we are a long way down the road to a departmental approach to record keeping. The syllabus, via schemes of work, is far more standardised, which has led to a feeling of being constrained at times as to what one teaches but, I feel, is generally a better approach to structured learning. It must be noted that the scheme of work is only a framework for content over a given period of time and not a suggested method. This still is and should remain the prerogative of the individual member of staff.

(Report to governors, Sept. 1992)

Advantages were readily conceded. Concern over lack of *space* came second. The Modern Languages HOD conceded that the formal structures of the National Curriculum, with built in checks, would probably lead to greater conscientiousness on the part of teachers. There were parts of a national curriculum to which teachers could relate. Lawton(1987) has pointed out how the proposals had subsumed "professional" developments towards a common curriculum, but produced a "bureaucratic" rather than a "professional" model. This did not mean that there were no aspects of this government model to which teachers could respond favourably. However, this may also be due to the many contradictions inherent in a proposal which had "poached" many of the "good words" and "big ideas" of the political climate from which it had emerged. (Chapter 3 above; Knight 1989; and Coulby and Bash 1990). There were things both conceptual and practical to attract teachers' positive interest. Opposition was neither knee-jerk nor ill-considered. The benefits of a common provision were conceded by

teachers as they encountered them. There were also, of course, what were seen as drawbacks, unwanted effects.

Unwanted effects

The Humanities HOD had earlier (summer 1991) criticised the narrowing of the curriculum content in History. He was now also concerned that the SATs might dominate the curriculum for History, with unwanted effects. He felt the SATs were part of the government's powerful armoury of control. *Space* for school manoeuvre was contracting. Recent news of the development of SATs in History had brought bad news. The SATs would be used to define tiers of children, as with Mathematics and Science, with *differentiated* papers for different levels of ability. He was concerned that this might mean the beginning of the end of the mixed ability teaching he felt more appropriate to a school such as Springfields. He was unhappy setting children by ability, and felt that in Humanities in particular there was a proven record of successful practice of teaching that was common to all children, providing a shared experience, accessible in some form to all children, and differentiated only by outcome. This had been the chosen method, for example, of the GCSE boards. To begin to set would be to begin to erode a child's entitlement. Another unwanted development was the suggestion that the SATs would test the *whole* of the KS3 curriculum in History. This would mean testing knowledge acquired by children in year 7 when they reached the end of year 9. At its worst this could produce not only a setted arrangement, but a cramming one too, with children being drilled in year 9 on the whole knowledge base of KS3, the school being aware of the need to do this to compete with other schools over the published results. Any space that might have been seen would go, if the need to cram for the test was paramount:

We are concerned about the nature of the SATs yet to emerge for these subjects (History , Geography), and hope they do not drive us either into separating World Studies back into subjects, or moving towards setting boys to match the separate differentiated papers being planned by the DFE.

(Report to governors, Humanities Dept, Sept. 1992)

This concern was common. Mathematics and Science had experienced pilot SATs in June. English and History had "wind" of what was in store. The English HOD saw developments afoot in English GCSE as part of the same trend. School assessed course work was to lose its examination weighting, and he was concerned that the result of this would be pressure to get through the prescribed examinable work, the POS, when KS4 was underway. *Space* would be restricted. The previous department practice of entering all boys for a GCSE based on 100% course work, a course which this HOD felt exposed all boys to a wide range of literature, (and sufficient to enable them to be entered for a language and literature award), would not be possible. He foresaw a more narrow diet in prospect, especially for the less able. Although he acknowledged that his department's provision for the boys might be adversely affected, that was because :

It's pragmatic, it's an eye on the results, it's an eye on keeping people happy. (English HOD, summer 1992)

The traditional offer of the department lower down the school (now known as KS3) was threatened by a contraction of space and time brought on by the control mechanism of the SATs. He saw the new SATs at KS3, and the SAT/GCSEs at KS4 with their differentiated papers and public reporting, as having a marked effect on his professional life. The department had decided

that apart from complying with the school requirement for year 8 to be taught in mixed ability tutor groups, they would cease such arrangements elsewhere. This response was common. The Science HOD had similarly resorted to setting in year 9 :

while we are under pressure to get results.

(interview, 1992)

The purpose of the SATs eluded him. He thought they seemed like a 1950s model examination, designed predominantly to test knowledge . He thought the LEA split at KS3 did not help preparation for a test of knowledge over three years' work. The structure of the assessment and testing would affect the Suffolk Science course which he had found to be of value in developing the scientific skills and knowledge supposedly in demand:

What has happened is that very well planned pupil centred developmental schemes of work and assessment of pupils' progress have been butchered in a very philistine way by SEAC, for example in Suffolk Science. (ibid)

Other elements of the proposals would suffer while there was:

no time to do cross-curricular links...no moves in school on things like health education, AIDS etc.

(ibid)

For the Maths HOD, the Mathematics curriculum was :

a step back in time a move back to what we perceive education to have been in the 1950s

(Maths HOD, summer 1992)

While he expressed a desire to maintain what he described as some of the good things in the recent Mathematics tradition, he recognised the control element of the SATs and the needs of the boys in the current context. He would:

not allow it to stop what I think is good practice

but acknowledged that not to move into line would

be doing some of our kids a disservice

He had a *professional* obligation to the boys :

I think we've got to look closely at the type of question the SATs are asking. And I do think we've got to prepare our kids for it , because I don't think you can teach in a more relaxed, open ended, fashion, which is what we've been doing to an extent over the past two to three years, and then expect the kids to walk into three one hour papers on closed questions...I don't think that's possible. (ibid)

Summary

At best the National Curriculum was sensible and uncontroversial, for example in Information Technology, Technology and Modern Languages. For teachers in other subjects there were backward looking aspects , and little scope for them to practise things they claimed to value and to hold important. The requirements of the programmes of study were partly the cause of this situation. Teachers' *professional responsibility* not to 'fail' their children when faced with testing through the SATs (and, as we have seen, preparation for revised GCSEs) appeared to be the final decisive factor. There was little thought of *space* to manoeuvre.

The whole school effect-setting

If the prospect for *space* in their own departments was small, if any at all, the developments in terms of the whole school curriculum fared little better. The single most noticeable effect of all the changes appeared to be in the matter of setting children into different classes. *Differentiation* was generously employed as a concept in the 1987 Consultation Document. References there to *differentiation* were invariably pupil centred. The proposals asserted the need for, and desirability of, a curriculum for all appropriate to the needs of the individual child (DES, 1987, para, 8 iv; DES 1989, para. 4.15). The practical tension involved in such provision lies in the manner of addressing such needs : a curriculum for *all* which also serves the needs of the individual child. It is argued below (Chapter 10) that a school organisation that slips too easily into the regular separation of children through setting or streaming or banding arrangements, on the basis of meeting the appropriate needs of individual children, may do a disservice to children whose social development might be improved by learning and mixing with children of various abilities and inclinations. The meeting of individual needs through separate provision requires, in a democratic society, a clear argument as to the nature of such needs, and a clear set of criteria for establishing any special arrangements. Any arrangement necessary to one situation need not affect any other. For example, arrangements for setting for one subject area need not determine how the whole curriculum provision is experienced by an individual or groups of individuals. A major difficulty in this area is the absence of any easily identifiable criteria for such decisions. As with the first stage of this research, the Springfields data revealed a wide range of responses, but in practice inclined towards setting children for learning. In Design Technology the HOD explained :

Top boys are under-achieving, and the lower boys are under-achieving. Nobody's achieving to the level they should be doing. So the boys at the top have been brought down because they're not mature enough to set themselves out. The boys at the bottom aren't being pressed hard enough, and some of the styles of work they've been given have not been right. So consequently they've not been successful. So what I'd like to happen is to have a try at putting these boys in groups in which they'd work.

(D.T. HOD, summer 1992)

He suggested that the setting ought be decided by a demonstrated capacity for workshop work, not necessarily the same criteria that other subject departments might employ.

The tension inherent in the decision to separate children is often irresolvable, difficult precisely to define, to pin down, as to where and when a wise decision might be made. It is certainly the case that the National Curriculum has promoted much additional interest in the provision of *differentiated* materials; and it was acknowledged by all that whatever separation of children took place there would still be a spread of ability in each class which needed to be met. Setting merely restricts the width of the spread and makes the provision of appropriate materials more easy. The TGAT model (see appendix D) attempts to give some uniformity and coherence to the ideas of different levels and progression through them. As has been demonstrated from the data collected across the LEA's schools, the practice of school departments varied considerably but inconsistently. There were contradictory practices between schools, between departments and within subjects. There were no irrefutable cases put for where or when to

separate children by setting, ie based on a clear expression of identified and agreed criteria for doing so. This leaves the research problem of how to evaluate practice so diverse but located in the same context; yet trends and patterns can be identified.

Setting in Springfields

*While we are under pressure to get better results
we will go for setting in order to do that.*

(Science HOD, summer 1992)

School practice was to teach all boys in year 8 in the mixed ability tutor groups into which they were organised on entry. After year 8, departments were allowed to set the boys as they saw fit. Arrangements which required departments to link their setting with other departments would normally require some form of collaboration between those departments. The pressure felt in the Science department was clearly derived from the National Curriculum arrangements; not the programmes of study, but the SATs, and the feeling that better results might be gained in this way. The English department was about to end its traditional mixed ability arrangements in year 9 because of:

*a perception that a significant number of able boys
are underachieving and might come closer to
fulfilling their full potential if they are put under
rather more pressure.*

(English dept. faculty review, Sept. 1992)

This was not an easy decision, and had been brought on by the nature of the new arrangements for English under the National Curriculum :

I don't think I'm running scared. I thought about this long and hard, and we had quite a lot of discussion within the department, and we looked at various situations in various years in the department because the people we had the toughest job of convincing this was actually necessary was ourselves. There was no opposition to it elsewhere and , you know, our predilection for teaching and organising, I mean the syllabuses we've chosen when we've had free choice, have been those which have admitted mixed ability teaching and have admitted all pupils receiving the broadest possible range of literary experiences and finding ways in which they could respond to those. But of course when you are preparing for a very specific kind of question, in which the children that you are teaching are going to score the grades that they are potentially capable of scoring, there is a certain amount of drilling involved. I mean I think one has to come down to words like that.

(English HOD interview, summer 1992)

Although the decision may have been a hard one, this move was common. The Modern Languages HOD agreed he knew of no empirical evidence for setting, but felt that the boys capable of higher levels of achievement required different groups. He was sure this belief was common among language teachers. In Design Technology "under-achieving" had produced the "flexible" response of setting in year 9. Mathematics had traditionally been set in year 9, as well as in 10 and 11, and so felt comfortable in this new world of *differentiated* papers. In fact, it was thought that not to set would be a "disservice". The Information Technology HOD suggested that I.T. could be taught in year 9 by a common programme for all boys, but

in fact the groups which arrived for their one period a week of I.T. were groups which had already been set by other subjects and linked with them through timetabling arrangements. Setting now seemed to be a dominant part of the school culture. In Humanities, a decision had been made to stand against the trend, for a number of reasons, including :

*Setting by ability can often be confused with setting
by behaviour;*

Boys not in top sets can become demoralised;

Lower ability sets can be difficult to manage;

*The idea of following common aims through common
practice and processes can become lost;*

*Part of the school's aims includes ideas of fairness,
cooperating, working together, supporting each other;*

*It is good for boys sometimes to be together across
a range of ability*

(Humanities dept. review, 1992)

A mix of reasons were adduced for this rash of setting which had spread across Springfields. Some explained that it was commonplace , common practice, natural and necessary (eg Modern Languages, Mathematics); or worth a try (Design Technology). It was clear that the structure of the National Curriculum, with its statements of attainment clearly spelled out in each subject, and in some cases the prescribed content, tilted the balance towards the grouping of children by ability (eg Science and English in Springfields). If not exclusively dictated by the National Curriculum, this trend across the school certainly accompanied its introduction and development. The school had been drawn collectively, through individual decisions taken by departments, and sometimes through timetable links, to this dominant form of

organisation. The school brochure for 1991-2 had said this about the grouping of children in the school for learning:

In their first two years in Springfields all our pupils will study the same subjects. In Year 8 boys will stay together in their tutor groups for all their lessons. This will continue into Year 9 except in Mathematics and Modern Languages where boys will be set by ability.

(Springfields school brochure 1991-2)

By the summer of 1992 there had been talk in the school by some heads of subject about the desirability of setting boys in year 8. The momentum seemed set.

The whole school effect - the whole school curriculum

School developments outside departments were felt to be rare. The Maths HOD suggested :

Worst fears of a National Curriculum have become a reality...we're all hiding behind our National Curriculum in subject areas and we're not having the cross-curricular themes and testing and assessment we wanted out of this.

(Maths HOD interview, 1992)

He stressed that department heads were too over-loaded to move out into whole school issues. He had had no training in areas such as equal opportunities or education for economic understanding. He did not know what this meant, although he was aware of what the proposals actually said. He had expected a whole school analysis of the curriculum but it had not come. The Science HOD had also seen little school time put aside to develop these ideas:

*no time to do cross curricular links, no effort in this school
...no moves in school on things like health education, AIDS etc.*
(Science HOD interview, 1992)

In Modern Languages the HOD saw many opportunities in his subject's programmes of study for the promotion of cross-curricular themes, but:

*I think we're all doing our own thing at the moment, and
it's a shame really because I mean...I think a lot of it is
having the time to sit down and coordinate the stuff, or
having someone to sit down and say right, let's coordinate
this stuff.* (HOD interview, 1992)

In English the HOD, thought that he had seen his subject's natural opportunities to deal with cross curricular themes and dimensions gradually squeezed out of its remit :

*Each successive layer of paper has made fewer references
to, and almost got to the point where it's explicitly excluded
consideration of these issues.....I think I saw it coming for too
long before it arrived to be upset by it, I mean it was expected
and I think right from the start when one saw the way these things
were acknowledged in the original documentation one didn't expect
a great deal of it at the time...it leaves me dispirited rather than
anything else.*

(HOD interview, 1992)

The Humanities department had once run a course for the 14-16 age group, pre-NC, which had encompassed all of the themes referred to in The Whole Curriculum (NCC 1990). This course had been part of the core provision in KS4, named General Studies, but the crush of National Curriculum

subjects had removed it from the timetable. There was no coordination between subjects to restore those themes and dimensions to the curriculum. These teachers had heard and read of the intention of the government that these cross curricular themes and dimensions should be part of the curriculum, but they had seen little action in school to bring such things into the school curriculum.

Continued support for an innovation

The research into the borough's schools in 1991 had revealed a marked subject emphasis in the implementation process, and little support forthcoming to help develop HODs' awareness and skills of delivery in the area of cross-curricular aspects of the National Curriculum. One year on and the situation in Springfields revealed no further progress. Neither through in-school activity, nor through the systematic provision and take up of appropriate INSET, was this stated need and intention being addressed. The main curriculum activity consisted of responding to the subject orders as they emerged, and tailoring teaching to match the requirements of the SATs as they became known to the subject heads. The process of implementation still left a lot to be desired in its manner. Even at the most simple level of clarifying what should be taught by subject departments there was considerable confusion :

Much of the year was spent anticipating how the government, through SEAC, would test KS3 and KS4..... In 1993 Year 9 will sit examinations for assessment at KS3. At the time of writing there is still no definite word as to the form that assessment will take. Announcements (are) gleaned from the Daily Mail et al In passing we would draw governors' attention to the fact that in spite of these innovations there has been very little English INSET

planned by the borough.

(English dept. report to governors, Autumn 1992)

In conclusion

The "tightening grip" (Lawton, 1984) of central government was continuing to squeeze. Trends could be discerned. Setting was more widespread.

Whatever opportunities for *space* may have existed in theory, and appeared to be possible in the early days of implementation, were being overtaken by developments. Those involved had no sense of 'ownership' of the innovation. The professionals, the teachers, had not found *space* to make it theirs. In the three core areas we have seen the HODs striving to come to terms with the National Curriculum, despite professional misgivings about the thrust of the changes and their effects on classroom practice. *Professional responsibility* for their children's success in the SATs prevailed over their judgements of what they ought to provide as an *entitlement* in their subjects.

Again, as in the first round of research, teachers expressed their concern over government intentions, and wondered whether what was happening was in response to the needs of children, or the needs of the authors of this proposal. One major indication of this was that support for teachers undertaking implementation was still minimal; and also the wider aspects of the proposal had scarcely begun to be developed.

On the evidence gained here to date by 1992, the National Curriculum was an example of close central control of *what* was taught and, through a variety of new mechanisms, *how* it was to be taught. The centre had taken a tighter hold.

Chapter Eight

A CASE STUDY OF A BOROUGH'S SCHOOLS: 1993

Field research in the six schools

Introduction

These interviews form a follow up to those carried out two years earlier with this group, in the summer of 1991. Some of the personnel had changed for various reasons, but continuity derives from their positions as key post holders in the respective areas of Science and History. The interviews were held over the Spring and Summer of 1993, and data gathering at this stage was confined to these HODs. The first stage of these interviews in 1991 had reflected both the government's determination to have its way, and a wide range of strongly held reservations about the changes among those teachers interviewed.

These reservations could be seen to fall into different categories. There had been doubts frequently expressed about the intentions of the government, essentially a suggestion that a credibility gap existed between what was formally proposed and supported in various documents and public utterings, and what was actually meant. What was intended was often said to be a political harvest of some kind. These feelings were confirmed in the research as teachers recounted their experiences of the moves to implementation, as we have seen. Change had often been seen to be driven by policy rather than by the needs of pupils. Teachers felt it was not a process that was friendly to pupils, or to them. The government's determination was seen in the coming of the SATs. Those HODs who had expressed concerns over the changes to be wrought in their subjects were yet resigned to having to deal with them, for the

SATs would test their abilities as providers of education at the same time as the pupils were tested; and they had a professional obligation to prepare their children as best they could.

However, approval was generally conceded to the value of a curriculum that was common to all schools and pupils; and the research schools had at that time (1991) expressed an awareness of the need to meet the demands of the wider curriculum. The schools commonly had some words of intention in their development plans to this effect; and some interviewed staff reported on audits in their schools of what precisely was underway, while others knew of committees or working parties set up to explore such matters. In all schools concern of some kind had been expressed.

At that point, before the SATs had yet been introduced, there was apprehension about their inexorable onset; and a widely reported unease with the changes, often attributed not only to these themselves, but to the lack of support for HODs grappling with the new requirements for their subject yet inadequately briefed as to what might be expected or done. There had been, for example, concern over whether the nature of the SATs was such that in future all pupils would need to be split into more manageable sets with a narrower ability range. It was felt that those who, for whatever reasons, practised mixed ability approaches would have had their day.

The 1992 study in Springfield, over a broader canvas than the target areas of Science and History, had returned to the issues that had been raised in the first round of research. Experience in Springfield, across the major subjects, had revealed that the tendencies and concerns discernible among the 1991 research group were very prominent one year later. The SATs (and revised syllabuses in some cases) had removed any *space* valued by teachers, or

space looked to to indulge some of the practices of recent years which they wished to preserve. Teaching was now often more didactic, by necessity; and the organisation of children for learning had moved to more settled arrangements, moved on by National Curriculum requirements for differentiated learning, and the need to enter children for SATs in tiers which related to ability. Implementation of wider aspects of the National Curriculum, those which had no 'natural' subject family home, the *themes and dimensions*, had not been evident, and even where subject departments had a tradition themselves of attending to such matters, it was felt that that there was no *space* for such things, and reference to them in their subject orders or subsequent advice was more scanty than before. The priorities were preparation for assessment that would be publicly reported, and "justice for the kids". And there was continued dissatisfaction with the support given to HODs grappling with rapid and imperative change.

The context of the summer of 1993

In the summer term a high court hearing upheld a teachers' union's (NAS/UWT) claim that the SATs due to be held in June were an unfair imposition upon teachers because of the time estimated to be required in marking them. The tests would therefore not take place as planned. Another major development of the summer was the announcement by the beleaguered Secretary of State for Education of a major review of the National Curriculum by his personal appointee, Sir Ron Dearing. Dearing canvassed a wide range of opinions from those involved in education in order to publish an interim report during the late summer of the school holidays; that report signalled a more tightly focused agenda for his review, highlighting in particular for KS3:

* slimmed down SATs in the core subjects; more teacher choice of content; more statutory content in the core than in the rest; less record keeping; more appropriate classroom assessment; higher status for teacher assessment; and no statutory assessment in History, Geography and Technology.

(source: TES 3/9/1993)

I consider the possible implications of these proposed changes in an Epilogue, Chapter 11. These events occurred after the interviews had taken place. At the time of interview with each HOD (apart from the final one with the Science HOD of Parkside on the day of the high court announcement), these were events of the future, and not anticipated by those taking part in the research. The debate was continuing, and the public airing of these issues confirmed that the experiences and concerns of the teachers in my research extended beyond Amalgam.

The interviews

The agenda

The developments observed in the first two rounds of field research had revealed a paucity of space within which teachers could exercise professional discretion about what they taught, and how they taught it. Content was heavily prescribed, and remained substantially within subject parameters. The prospect of SATs bore heavily upon those involved in preparing children for them. In consequence of the demands of the SATs there had been a marked trend towards setting more children by ability. As I have argued previously, these developments could have an impact upon the key notion of *entitlement*, said to underpin all the changes, and the form of *differentiation* employed by schools to

deliver the National Curriculum could also affect the way this *entitlement* was received by pupils.

Therefore my agenda remained substantially as before, and it would be important to discover if time had allowed teachers' earlier concerns to be resolved or allayed. Thus I report on this final round of interviews first by considering how much teachers now felt in control of events, having *space* in which to manoeuvre. This is followed by an account of developments in the organisation of children for learning, essentially a look at how in practice they were facing up to their requirement to *differentiate* the curriculum for children of varying abilities. The fate of *entitlement* is then pursued, first through the two subjects, and then across the whole curriculum.

The final section deals with the vexing question of the extent of support for teachers who were required to implement these externally-decided curricular changes.

1993: space for manoeuvre?

The *writerly* response appeared to have had its day by 1993. *Space* simply did not exist, being lost in the time demands of the subject requirements. There were no explicit structural demands or accommodation for aspects of a previous curriculum valued and previously practised by these HODs. With the SATs as a very efficient (at this point) control mechanism of what teachers did in the classroom, the programmes of study dominated the curriculum through sheer force of weight and statute. This was common to both subject groups, and the teachers felt there was clear evidence that the National Curriculum represented a view of education that was in conflict with what experienced teachers had come to expect and value. In History the

content often inhibited the better instincts of the teacher:

The thing I object to is the sort of gallop through the ages that I think it's producing. I think in the end it's going to come down to learning dates.....names and timelines.... and a lot of good investigative work will be lost.

(History HOD, Parkside)

Examples of the varied work commonly employed to add interest and motivation to the subject included one school's exercise on writing and performing a radio broadcast at the trial of Charles, but:

Things like that which are enjoyable in the classroom and will perhaps encourage them to take it as a GCSE , they're not what the focus is any more. To my horror I'm doing things which will satisfy administrative requirements and I'm not sure I entirely like that.

(History HOD, Beechwood)

It was made quite explicit that this trend was considered not accidental:

The approach this department's (Humanities) been very successful at, research work, individual projects, active learning, group work, all that sort of thing, it has always been our strength, and it's always tempting to have that kind of approach. National Curriculum is structured for your 'success' kids, the attainment targets, the massive amount of content, to get that across to achieve success there isn't the time for that kind of personal and interactive approach, much as you'd like to make the time. I'm making the time and I'm making a rod for my own back in a sense really as I'm having to work very hard to keep my own teaching the way I want it to be and deliver the National Curriculum. Your

*'social' students are losing out.....Chalk and talk is what I find
sadly the most effective way of delivering the National Curriculum
and reaching the high attainment targets.*

(History HOD, Greenfields)

This statement marks the gradual elimination of a 'certain type' of teaching from the History curriculum, though not explicitly aimed for in the words of the subject orders and advice. This was the practical effect of what had been specified, and reinforced through a tightly controlled assessment system, the SATs. Here the *writerly* ambitions of teachers meet requirements which restrict the scope of their activities, however much desired by them.

In Science a comparable trend was also evident. Juniper's HOD was scathing about what he felt to be the contemporary emphasis on "remembering things", and suggested that whatever had driven the new curriculum, it was not any great understanding of the sort of children and problems which he encountered in his daily work:

*I still think it's a complete waste of time. I don't really think
that the people who introduced it understand the problem
...of teaching kids of any type. I don't think they understand
what education is about, what we're trying to do for them. They
have their own fixed ideas on what education should be.*

(Science HOD, Juniper)

There was concern about the relative weight now given to investigative work in Science; HODs thought that to include this in AT1, the Nature of Science, did not show sufficient regard for its importance. In the assessment and reporting mechanisms for Science, AT1 was only one of four items to be accounted for. The trial SAT was thought to make demands for content

knowledge which were "too weighty and too rigid" in the curriculum to be compensated for by AT1:

You do worry about it, and I find that my teaching was becoming incredibly boring because I was preparing kids for the SATs. The fun had gone out of Science.

(Science HOD, Parkside)

The practical impact of the SATs was made clear:

We have been training kids to think for themselves and apply their knowledge to unknown situations, not to rely on memory work. There is now an incredible amount of memory work. They were expected for instance at the end of year 9 to produce all the named parts of the flower, which is pure memory work. There's about seven different parts you have to remember, many of the names are actually from Latin , you know, so they don't come easily to mind, so I felt that sort of thing was unnecessary in a SAT exam...bearing in mind that the exam is the culmination of three years' work, and it could be that they hadn't actually visited that topic for eighteen months. And then they were expected to regurgitate a list of names with no application of knowledge.

(Science HOD, Beechwood)

In 1991, these Science HODs had made it clear that although the basic content of Science would not change greatly, the way in which it was now structured into a curriculum with particular requirements controlled by tight assessment, and a particularly rigid testing system, would exert an important pressure on their teaching. One HOD remarked ironically that although the emphasis in practical work was now (a positive step forward) on investigations rather than just experiments, the net result of the *whole*

curriculum package in Science was to *reduce* the amount of practical work undertaken. These views thus mirrored those of the History HODs. One Science HOD succinctly underlined the desirability and difficulty of the *writerly* approach in the present situation. While committed to his own view of what was right for children, and a determination to pursue that view, in practice the outcome depended less on the HOD's wishes than on the structure within which he now worked:

We did not go the whole hog into presenting the National Curriculum as they would like us to do it. We decided ourselves about what was good practice, we interpreted the statements of attainment ourselves, and the programmes of study ourselves. We linked them to what we were already doing, we decided what would be an improvement in our practice, and tried to include this in our presentation. And we really didn't have the point of view that, if that complied with the requirements of the National Curriculum, all well and good; but if it did not, then it would be their weakness, not ours.

(Science HOD, Midtown)

This might have been what was wished for, but other forces were also at work, and he went on to describe the dilemma faced by all when in a situation where the demands of the syllabus (PoS) conflicted with department inclinations:

We had to overcome those areas...it's fine standing up and suggesting you're somewhat of a rebel, that you will resist this that and the other, but at the end of the day it's the kids that are going to come away with levels that do not reflect their ability because they haven't been taught, so you have to make sure that they are given the tools for the job.

However convinced about what *should* be the case, *professional responsibility* demands that *in that situation* the requirements of the National Curriculum must be followed. Not to do so would offend against a *professional* conscience which places the children at the heart of the process, and recognises that at the end of it all their students will be judged by the formal assessment procedures; and that takes priority. A similar tension had been observed in Springfields in the core subjects in 1992, and there a lack of *space* to accommodate all the demands teachers had felt pulling upon them had led to a similar rationalising of priorities. In each of these three subjects the transmission of the testable content of the programmes of study now came first before any consideration of the merits of various methods of delivery; and in pursuit of this aim children were now more likely to be set by ability in the core subjects, and beyond.

Now in 1993 the *space* for *writerly* approaches was still seen to be diminishing; and the over-riding need to see to the best interests of the children ("justice for the kids") was again reflected also in the attitudes held by these HODs about how they ought to group their children if they were to be "given the tools for the job". This is discussed next.

Attitudes to the organisation of children for learning

It was plain that, despite the often repeated shibboleth that it was the responsibility of schools as to how they organised their children for learning, the new arrangements encouraged teachers to create narrower ability bands in teaching groups. This was naturally reinforced by the injunction that *differentiation* for all children should accompany delivery of the National Curriculum. The summer's arrangements for tiered SATs in June led some to feel that the demise of mixed ability teaching in the comprehensive school was

inevitable. One HOD at Beechwood lamented this possibility but felt it might come as the culture of his school, outside the History department, very much favoured setting. Others were more swayed:

Our experience of the last five months has shown us in the History and Geography departments that if we are really going to do justice to the levels and justice to the kids then the only way that we feel now that we can do it is to have some raw form of setting.

(History HOD, Parkside)

The strong feelings she had expressed in 1991 about the attractions of teaching young children in a mixed ability setting had been weakened by the reality of the situation and the perceived needs of the children. At Midtown the HOD also felt that the day was coming when he would *have* to give up the mixed ability tutor group situation that they were used to because of the nature of what they were required to do. The nature of the assessment procedures of the National Curriculum was perhaps to blame:

I think it's a way of getting rid of mixed ability teaching .

(History HOD, Greenfields)

It did not really matter now what sort of teaching was preferred. The situation demanded a re-think and re-drawing of what was done: for the sake of "justice to the kids". These structural impositions applied in Science too. The effect that the SATs could have was emphasised in Juniper:

Why on earth we couldn't have had one paper for everyone I just don't know; they could all do as well or as bad or whatever and that would be the end of it, a differentiated paper all the way through rather than these tiers we've got at the moment.

(Science HOD, Juniper)

Juniper retained mixed ability teaching in Science in year 8 (school policy) and year 9 (department policy), but the difficulty of doing this was underlined by this comment. Elsewhere there was pressure for change. In Parkside, previously committed to a shared experience for all girls at KS3, the reality of the new situation meant that although mixed ability arrangements would be retained in year 8 (not a school policy requirement), in year 9 plans were afoot for change, as :

We as a department felt we'd get better SAT results.

(Science HOD, Parkside)

In Greenfields school policy was mixed ability in year 8, but in year 9 in Science it was felt that setting was inevitable:

There is a pressure on exam results that's more up front than it used to be. I think we'd have to (set) now. We are under constant pressure to get through the work.

(Science HOD, Greenfields)

In Midtown the Science department would retain the "loose setting" envisaged in 1991; and in Beechwood the pressures of levels of attainment and the need for differentiation had led to setting in the year 8 intake year. Setting, though sometimes in different forms, was now the norm in these schools, and those who would rather not, for whatever reasons, faced the prospect of following suit. There was little *space* here to buck the trend, it seemed.

Space and entitlement

Previously, a common theme among History HODs had been the point that now their subject had its place enshrined in statute law, and its status was

that of one of the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum. This could be a source of strength to those who had regretted being lost somewhere in an integrated humanities scheme, or who had felt their subject to be a poor relation of what became known as the 'core' subjects.

The inclusion of British History as a mandatory element within a child's *entitlement* was also welcomed; in other words the HODs acknowledged that national History had often been neglected in the recent past. Skills in the use of evidence were properly included as a main strand in the study of History. Yet the curriculum as now specified in the PoS was still felt to be politically biased; and so teachers needed to "make sure you give a balanced viewpoint". There were elements of "drilling" involved due to the large number of areas to be covered, predominantly The Making of the United Kingdom; in year 8 at Parkside that topic alone had, in the year just gone, consumed more than twice the time allocated to it by the department. The structure of the History curriculum dictated that some topics must be done, and tested by SATs. There was also a selection of supplementary units from which teachers could choose. At the point of research these were apparently not to be tested by the SATs. The supplementary units provided any *space* looked for by History teachers. Yet there was a danger that the great demands of the core unit, The Making of the United Kingdom, might squeeze out the time allocated to these supplementary units:

I'm quite laid back now because they're not going to be tested on the supplementaries, and well really it has affected the way I teach.

(History HOD, Parkside)

This was the candid admission of a HOD who had also stressed the need to keep a high profile for wider issues such as race and exploitation, but

acknowledged the reality of the situation. At Juniper one of the casualties of "the gallop through the ages " was the well resourced, and tried and tested topic of the West Indian woman Mary Secole, a topic which had brought in many of the valued wider issues of History, but now must be cut down. There was too little space to allow it to run its normal course. The suggestion of various public documents that teachers still had scope to influence what was taught could be dismissed:

Direction is almost entirely there now....any freedom we have is over the SBUs. If they remove that , then we're being dictated to basically. We'll have no freedom at all. And there's all these big grand statements about how there's still scope for the individual teacher in his classroom to develop. I'd like to know where with all these constraints of money and timeI'd like to call their bluff on that and say, where is this freedom?

(History HOD, Greenfields)

Ironically, as all these teachers acknowledged, relaxing the SAT restrictions by not testing the supplementary units was not so much a concession as a further turn of the curriculum screw. Teachers would not feel the pressure to broaden the curriculum if they were concerned to prepare their children for the SATs, and the supplementary units were not to be tested. Quite simply, it was said, if they were not to be tested, then they might not be taught. If *entitlement* was more than just receiving what was prescribed, there was a feeling that the curriculum was being narrowed. Important aspects of History were being lost in the pressure on time in the (party politically) important core units which focused on Britain and embraced a wide range of testable content.

The position in Science was not greatly different. There was an emphasis on content and a new necessity to employ didactic methods to deliver a

crowded curriculum. The HOD in Midtown had emphasised his desire to retain what he thought to be good practice, but acknowledged that the SATs effectively had the last say. Teachers could talk of a current emphasis on investigations in Science while bemoaning the amount of didactic teaching they employed to cover the prescribed content included in the SATs. One HOD's experience summed up the urgency, as well as the necessity of being prepared for the SATs; and how narrow he felt the National Curriculum had perhaps become:

What I did last summer was I took the National Curriculum, pulled it to pieces, put it back together again into units that we could deal with and made that the two year course..... We've actually built the syllabus this year to suit the SATs. Now we're actually teaching to ATs 2, 3 and 4, the main strand of content we're teaching to that as topics...It seems to be working very well if you just want people to know (content knowledge) at the end of it.

(Science HOD, Greenfields)

This superficially *writerly* activity, pulling the orders to bits and re-writing them for the department, was driven by the need to comply with the demands of the SATs, and the HOD admitted that it resulted in a course that was heavy in content, with less practical work than before. It was an active *readerly* response, and seen as such by the HOD himself. There was no alternative. Nor did his colleagues expect much different. The concept of entitlement in both subjects was now substantially derived from a desire to see "justice for the kids".

A whole curriculum?

At the start of this research in 1991 schools and HODs had shown a high level of awareness of the wider implications of the National Curriculum. Many schools had plans underway to *audit* the curriculum and, although pressed by time demands in the discrete subject areas, there was a recognition and acceptance of the need to think in terms of a whole school curriculum. The Springfields study had suggested that this expectation was not being followed up as:

- * teachers were hard pressed to implement the new things in their own areas;
- * the school was not pressing sufficiently for a whole curriculum approach;
- * changes of this broader nature seemed to occupy a low priority in government policy.

This return to the wider research group of schools in 1993 suggested a similar pattern. Without a push from outside, and overwhelmed by demands of new content, new assessment methods, imminent SATs, and no effective guidance, good intentions had given way to avoidance or deferment. In Greenfields the History HOD thought that the early (1991) school response of a complete school audit to discover where the *themes and dimensions* were or might be included, had given way to a period of inactivity. The Science HOD agreed they had "taken a back seat at the moment". In Parkside the History HOD felt that early school intentions in this respect had given way to a situation where there was "nothing going on", though the Science HOD preferred to talk about deferring such considerations. There was a suggestion which had also been made in the Springfields survey of 1992, that where things

were happening

People are covering themselves, they're papering around the cracks because...their great concern is the vast amount of work directly concerned with the National Curriculum.

Most people are so concerned with their own little bit so the only overview's going to come from senior management. Senior management until recently probably didn't have a clue what we were doing. They left (us) alone.

(History HOD, Beechwood)

The situation in Juniper was different. They had originally introduced a timetabled lesson in KS3 to cover the cross curricular themes, but with a crowded curriculum the latest thought had been to appoint a coordinator to bring the contributions of departments together. Yet even here the History HOD felt no pressure to include any of these *themes and dimensions* explicitly in *her* planning. The Science department was sympathetic to ideas of cooperating with other subject areas and contributing to many of these ideas, but simply felt too busy, and there was no whole school push. The early recognition of the full requirements of the National Curriculum had often not been developed. One History HOD summed up his experience thus:

Cross-curricular meetings died a death. We all had them once a month on the (meeting) cycle, regular meeting, one or two people spoke, it was terminally boring, and we all filled up a little form saying where our subject was cross-curricurally linked, and we handed them in and that was the end of it really. I think it died a death.

(History HOD, Midtown) .

The Juniper Science HOD had talked of "informal" moves in cross-curricular matters, but felt there were "only so many hours in the day". The common experience by now was that whatever moves had been begun, and however people (including the HODs) had been aware of these needs through the literature associated with the National Curriculum, any structured approach lay in the future, and without external stimuli to nudge them along, they were far too busy anyway.

Support for change?

It was suggested above (Chapter 2) that well founded research on successful change indicated that support for teachers was essential. The objectives of the programme were more likely to be achieved if support was clearly targeted at those places or players in the change processes that play a significant part. It was also suggested that teachers expected support. The absence of such support in key areas could be seen as significant, and an indication of the intentions of those who seek change. Thus, for example, teachers might feel entitled to be helped sufficiently with the development of skills and knowledge to enable them successfully to implement the new things. They might expect those things deemed important to attract an investment of support for teachers. They might deduce from a paucity of practical support (or support with the theory of what was to be done, for example the introduction of the ten levels) that not much importance was placed on such things. The important aspects of the changes lay elsewhere.

In the event, it was common for the HODs in this stage of my study to bemoan the lack of support, despite a mass of supporting literature emanating from the DES and the NCC. Local meetings with LEA advisory staff and other teachers were often cited as positive events, but also at the mercy

of central government and government agencies as to what they actually knew or could do. Thus the History HODs were unsure about whether these these local sessions had helped them digest the new things. Even at their best they were a marginal element in coming to terms with new demands and practices. Some reported them as being like a support group, the kind that consoles those in an unwanted predicament. The feeling that locally provided INSET was thin on the ground as no-one knew what was going on, was expressed within the Science group of teachers. Advisers were described as "the blind leading the blind". At best advisers were trying to pick up the pieces. The perceived lack of support was keenly felt:

We are immersed in it and literally have had to deal with it first hand. We should have been given guidance, we should have been given leadership, we should have been given the opportunity to solve the problem, the nuts and bolts of the topic, of the course, and in particular specific problems, relating to the set up, for instance, within Amalgam.

(Science HOD, Midtown)

The copious packs of guidance, specifications and instructions emanating from the DES and NCC were universally dismissed as inadequate for the task that needed doing; in the case of Science it was felt that far too much had arrived too late.

This unease was widespread. Teachers were being asked to work within a structure of ten levels of assessment which applied across the board to all subjects and all attainment targets within subjects. It was not always apparent to teachers why this was so:

Apparently the story is they got eight levels or seven levels and they couldn't think what else to put in, they wanted ten

so they stuck these other things in. Well, I mean, some teachers couldn't achieve levels nine and ten I don't think.

(Science HOD, Greenfields)

If the theory was unclear, so also could the practice be. Preparing children for the SATs was not easy :

When they don't even tell you what direction you're aiming in it makes it a bit tricky. (ibid)

He felt that information about these tests, to which great importance was attached, had been very late in arriving.

If the level of support provided for teachers to overcome the difficulties involved in implementation can be taken as an indication of the good faith of the policy makers, then there was much that was lacking. On occasion teachers said that they were more comfortable with what was happening in their subject areas by 1993. Two teachers even attributed what they considered to be a high level of expertise they had acquired to their own level of personal interest and diligent research. Yet there was also universal disappointment with the level of support that had been planned and provided (or not) to assist them in this process.

Summary

By the summer of 1993, the basic elements of the curriculum, the programmes of study and the standard assessment tasks, were nearly fully into place in both History and Science. In neither subject was there felt to be much *space* for teachers. The control elements of testing and public accountability had by this time restricted *entitlement* as conceived by these HODs. They

had high priorities to do with children (and teachers) performing well and being seen to perform well. These priorities restricted the *writerly* potential of teachers. as they exercised what I have referred to as *professional responsibility*. Teachers also perceived a gap between *rhetoric* and *reality* in the matter of the *whole curriculum*, and the oft stated intentions concerning cross-curricular cooperation, and implementation of the *themes and dimensions* specified in the proposals and subsequent documentation. Underlining this gap was what the HODs saw as a paucity and inadequacy of support from central government for their efforts in implementing the changes.

Conclusion to the final round of field research

Previous trends were confirmed. The "tightening grip" of 1992 squeezed more firmly. Access to the full curriculum (DES 1989 para2.2) was now more often through separate classes, as setting by ability was more extensively employed, threatening to become the norm. What opportunities for *space* may have theoretically existed, and appeared to be possible in the early days of implementation (1991), had been overtaken by developments. By the time of the completion of the planned field research in 1993, many of the anticipated concerns of the HODs who comprised the research group had become reality.

In the following chapter I propose to review the whole three year span of this study in order to see what further light can be shed on the questions with which I began.

Chapter Nine

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE FROM THE SCHOOLS

Introduction

In this chapter I draw together the findings of the three rounds of field research. In 1991 I began with six schools in the early days of preparation for implementing the National Curriculum. I therefore return first to that stage, through the school development plans and prospectuses for parents, when the schools had begun to articulate their curricular positions and ambitions with regard to the new requirements. I then trace the responses to the main agenda from my two groups of teachers: the longitudinal study over 1991-3, and the broader study of Springfields in 1992. The 1992 research offers a measure of triangulation to the six school study, with an opportunity to discover whether the experiences of the Science and History HODs would be reflected across a broader canvas.

The evidence is therefore summarised around: teachers' responses to the programmes of study, and the effect of the new assessment requirements on what they were doing and planning; setting decisions; moves towards the whole curriculum; and finally the INSET support experienced by these teachers.

Before the final section on support for the teachers, I consider the development of *entitlement* and *differentiation* through this three year study. I include here discussion of the *whole curriculum*, referred to prominently in the proposal and its subsequent supporting materials, as well as the experience to be found within each of my chosen subject areas. I then discuss

differentiation and how, through the evidence collected over three years in Amalgam, school practice in the grouping of children could be seen to have been affected. (I return to this issue in the next chapter, where I discuss the bases upon which we might rest decisions about the separation of children, especially in the light of the injunction that this National Curriculum should not just be appropriately *differentiated*, but be an *entitlement* for all children in state education provision from ages 5-16).

The evidence from the schools, 1991-1993

What the schools said

The target schools' descriptions of their curricula, revealed in their school development plans and prospectuses, had been dominated by the impending changes. They often shared the language of the proposal. This language was recognisably very much the language of educational discourse developed over the recent past in the 'Great Debate'. Curricula were uniformly described as "broad and balanced", and schools and departments had expressed concern for the needs of the individual child within broad provision.

The schools commonly made it clear that they were aware of the curriculum requirements outside of the core and foundation subjects, that is of the cross curricular matters that were specified in the National Curriculum. All of them claimed to have some developments already underway, while recognising there was still work to be done.

Introducing the programmes of study, and the effects of assessment

The Science teachers had been vexed initially by the sheer weight of study required. In 1991, the content of Science was substantially as before the National Curriculum, but now had to be rewritten in a form that accommodated the four hundred statements of attainment against which teaching and learning and assessment were to proceed. The common theme among the HODs was of overload, combined with what I have referred to above as a *professional* recognition that their priority was to meet these demands. They had expressed concern that the processes of Science might not receive the curriculum space they deserved. This was because there was too much to be done in terms of transmission of the content knowledge. This *had* to be their priority, for it might be tested by the SATs, and they wanted to give their children the best of chances to do well.

The pilot Science SAT in the summer of 1992 had confirmed these fears. The Springfields HOD described it as like something out of the 1950s, predominantly concerned to test memory knowledge of the course content. Thus "remembering things" was the dominant characteristic of Science teaching by the summer of 1993, and that was because that was where the emphasis lay in assessment. The Science HODs had been through continuing massive revisions of their subject orders, and by 1993 sang a common refrain lamenting the effect that all these changes had brought, especially what appeared to them to be an over-emphasis on the transmission and recall of propositional knowledge.

In 1991 the History teaching in Amalgam had exemplified, in content and organisation, the kind of disparity the National Curriculum was intended to dispell. Two of the schools taught History in KS3 and KS4 as part of a core

Humanities course. The other four taught History as a separate subject in KS3, and as options in KS4. There were marked differences between schools in what they taught. Yet despite this variety, all of the History HODs were eloquent in the defence of their courses, of which the common themes were preparation for a pluralistic world, and the development of the skills of History. Concerns over the programmes of study emanated from two sources: as with Science, the sheer weight of content seemed daunting; and again as with Science, the need to struggle through the content, combined with the nature of assessment, seemed to take any *space* from under them. Those who ran integrated courses feared that, as the attainment targets were so specific and unwieldy, they might have to return to single subjects. There were suggestions that the SATs, when they were unveiled, would test facts rather than the skills of History, which were commonly claimed here to be of paramount importance; and it was felt that the new curriculum carried too much of an emphasis on 'heritage', at the expense of world History. At this early stage, then, there were grave reservations about the impact of these changes upon their teaching.

However, the common-sense value of a common curriculum was conceded, and the History HODs were pleased to have their subjects elevated to the status of an *entitlement* for all pupils until 16. They were just unsure that the form of *entitlement* that would emerge would be what they might have prescribed.

By 1993, the experience of implementation had confirmed their worries. HODs felt inhibited by the weight and nature of the curriculum. While the stipulation of British History for all was conceded as right and proper, there was too much of it. It dominated the curriculum. The news that the SATs (with a sample trial in summer 1993) would test only the very weighty compulsory units, on the Making of the United Kingdom, led most to acknowledge that that might

therefore end up as all that they would teach, for their pupils needed to be well prepared for the SATs. And even so, to get through the work their teaching methods would become more restricted, due to the demands upon time such as they had experienced in their first year of teaching the programmes of study.

Both sets of HODs, then, had similar concerns: too many facts, and too little space to attend to what also mattered in their subjects. In 1991 many had attributed this to the political motives of the policy makers. By 1993, their experiences made this suggestion even more plausible.

In 1992, these findings were confirmed in Springfields although, again, there were potential benefits. In I.T. and Technology, for example, the positive effects of a new or sharper focus were conceded; and the year 8 Technology co-ordinator had welcomed the impact of the National Curriculum in broadening school provision. But the pilot SATs in Science and Mathematics had been poorly received by the HODs, who felt that the type of assessment therein embraced would, inevitably, adversely constrain their teaching. In the core subjects of Science, English and Mathematics there was a feeling that the SATs were leading them backwards in their subjects. The Humanities HOD expressed a similar concern about the effect the SATs might have on how his department organised their programmes of study.

In my two main subjects of Science and History, then, the HODs felt that both the weight of the programmes of study, and the emphases of the tests, were drawing their subjects away from the developments that they believed recent changes had established. This trend was noted also by the English and Mathematics HODs in Springfields. And in most areas over this period there were changes afoot in the ways children were organised for learning.

Organising children for learning - more moves to setting

In 1991, the coming of the SATs was dominant among the factors being taken into account by the Science HODs as they contemplated the need to differentiate their schemes of work; and SATs were not far from the thoughts of the History HODs either. The dominance of the SATs would prevail, and strengthen, throughout this study.

We have seen that in 1991 two Science HODs had decided to set their next year 8 cohorts by ability, driven by the perceived assessment requirements of the National Curriculum. For similar reasons they were joined in year 9 by the HODs of two of the other schools. At that time in History all year 8 groups were taught as mixed ability, with only two of the six setting by ability in year 9 (those decisions being taken by others, History being linked with other subjects for timetabling purposes). Although the History SATs were at that stage several years in the future, the nature of assessment, combined with eventual SAT testing, had led to concerns being expressed about the future of mixed ability teaching.

The Springfields evidence of 1992 confirmed this. Although the school brochure of 1991-2 spoke of mixed ability tutor-group based teaching in years 8 and 9 for all subjects except Mathematics and Modern Languages, the plans for 1992-3 included setting by ability in all subjects except Humanities.

In 1993, the girls of Parkside would be set by ability for Science in year 9 "to get better SAT results" ; this was supported in History where it was said that this was the only way to get "justice for the kids". In Juniper, the Science HOD felt that the SAT tiered papers made mixed ability teaching increasingly

difficult. The Science HOD at Greenfields thought likewise, where setting was inevitable due to "pressure on exam results".

By 1993, then, the programmes of study and their accompanying assessment and testing arrangements were having a marked effect on what was now happening in schools, and how schools now organised their children for learning. The wider aspects of the curriculum, the cross curricular matters, were not as yet making as great a mark on what was being taught.

Not yet a whole curriculum

We have seen that in 1991, in the early days of implementation, the six schools expressed an awareness of, and a commitment to, these themes and dimensions. Staff variously reported upon audits of their contributions to these in their subject areas, and some reported working parties being set up to promote activity in these cross curricular matters.

In Springfields in 1992, such matters were reported as scarcely attended to. This might have been due to the workload of those involved in the frequent revision of subject orders, or the tendency, observed by the English HOD, of the orders increasingly to be less sympathetic to such matters. Whatever the case, no HODs had observed any significant action in the school to promote and coordinate such matters across the curriculum.

In 1993 all such moves were describes as having "taken a back seat", "nothing going on", or "died a death". Even in Juniper, where early awareness had initially led to a timetabled lesson to cater for these matters, both HODs reported that these now had no impact on what and how they actually taught in their subjects in the classroom or laboratory.

The effects of continuing revision

Everyone had been affected by this. As Science was one of the first subjects to come on stream, the Science HODs were first in this study to experience the effect of continuing revision. It could weary those already fatigued, and demoralise further those unsure of the basis of all the changes. The demands of revised practices in teaching and assessment meant that by 1993 the Science HODs were still running to stand still; just meeting their basic responsibilities with regard to the programmes of study, and preparing their pupils for the SATs. The dominant mode of teaching was didactic, as the need to plough on with content diminished the time available to be spent on investigations, and other matters.

By 1993 the History group were also facing revision, and reacting in a similar way to the Science teachers. They had experienced the overloaded curriculum they had anticipated in 1991. Their latest news, that the supplementary units were not to be tested by SATs, led to suggestions that they might not then be taught. Paramount here was the thought of children being well prepared for formal tests.

A major blow for History teachers had come with the decision to make History and Geography optional at KS4. History was no longer an *entitlement*, and therefore equal in status in that respect with the core subjects, removing one major element of the new curriculum to which History teachers had warmed. The switching of the ERA of the Second World War to KS3 had caused some scratching of heads, for the rationale of the History curriculum from 5-16, such as it was, seemed to have taken a dent.

The constant revisions, and their demands in terms of time spent by HODs in preparation for their subjects' delivery in the classroom, were also an additional factor postponing consideration of cross curricular matters.

The effect upon entitlement

This could come in two distinct ways. Within each subject there are elements of content or methodology which can be seen to form an *entitlement* in themselves, within the discrete context of the subject. There are also opportunities for subjects to contribute more widely, to the whole curriculum entitlement. This would be through the cross curricular themes and dimensions.

I earlier suggested (in Chapter 5) that the National Curriculum only vaguely resembles the *entitlement* curriculum first set out by HMI (1981). Its principal organising and implementing basis rests on a traditional package of subjects, in contrast to the areas of experience advocated by HMI. However, in practice it might have moved closer had the "themes and dimensions" and "cross curricular elements" been implemented at the same pace as the subjects. In their Survey of Guidance 13-19 in Schools and Sixth-Form Colleges, based on data gathered at the same time as this first stage of the research, HMI (1992) observed how neglected this major aspect (pastoral guidance) of the National Curriculum had been (spelled out in section 1 of the Education Reform Act (1988)). Schools, they noted, had concentrated on implementing the subjects, rather than such "themes". Yet it is made explicit in From Policy To Practice (DES, 1989, para 3.8). that such "themes" were what the government had in mind when they drafted section 1 of the ERA.

Some commentators at this time, (eg Marland (1991), and Bowe et al (1992) in a study based on data substantially gathered from schools through 1989-1990), had written of scope for schools to take the National Curriculum on their own terms, suggesting the focus of implementation had shifted to the schools, or might be capable of being so shifted. HMI (1991) had observed some promising developments in high schools, with some schools planning across the whole curriculum. In the group of schools in my study we saw an espousal of the stated aims of the National Curriculum, much concern about means and methods of implementation, and an acknowledgement through discussion, and audits in some cases, of the need to move towards planning across the whole curriculum. HODs had been responding to the programmes of study, and were aware of the "themes and dimensions" that had to be explored in the future. The stated intentions of the 1988 Act were many, and among them was the commitment to the education of the whole child, and his/her preparation for adult life; a *differentiated* curriculum for the needs of the individual child; and the full take up by all children of the National Curriculum, the *entitlement* of all.

The evidence from the six schools, however, was that the cross curricular themes and dimensions were being neglected. *Entitlement* therefore now rested upon the take up of the programmes of study. Yet these were not designed to provide in themselves the whole school curriculum. Some of the "main areas of learning and experience" were missing. Marland (1992) suggested that if a similar state of affairs had pertained in the planned implementation of subjects, an outcry would have ensued. There was no outcry, providing significant comment upon the priorities that could be perceived in the programme of the government. As my research confirmed, these matters were, simply, less important.

Entitlement now was to the programmes of study and, as Marland (1992) reflected, the priority was to continue an ideological assault on the subject specifications and see them revised. The HODs in my research saw this assault on their subjects as wounding to what they might consider their subject *entitlement*; and there was little pressure within this to incorporate the "themes and dimensions" in their planning and delivery. They had feared the imminence of SAT testing, anticipating that the expected emphasis upon propositional knowledge would compromise their teaching, affecting their own emphasis on the skills and processes of their subjects; which *they* believed had been the *entitlement* hitherto contained *within their subjects*.

Some of the History HODs had talked in 1991 of making *space* in which to continue with various topics and processes that they held to be of prime importance (an *entitlement*) in their subject. They feared these could be lost as they followed their programmes of study. They spoke in the context of a discussion of the overcrowded curriculum, the sheer weight of prescribed and testable study, but were optimistic they could find *space*. In 1991 the Science HODs, *pace* Bowe et al, had seemed less convinced that *space* might exist. They faced imminent SAT testing and were concerned about how *this* might affect what was taught. They had observed that should AT1 (the target school-assessed and dealing with skills and processes) attract a disproportionately low weighting in any final publication of Science SAT results, then teaching would naturally be drawn to those areas which attracted higher rewards in terms of public testing: ie, recall of knowledge.

All the HODs had acknowledged the potential value of some form of common curriculum (the professional face of the National Curriculum, Lawton's (1987) 'stolen clothes?'), but, among subject teachers, grappling with the practical reality of the programmes of study, there had been general concern that the

new curriculum had abandoned some of the important gains of the recent past. The common curriculum might become no more than a step back into a past world of factual certainties and over-testing. O'Hear and White (1991) thought the 1987 consultation document had neither a sufficient list of aims, nor a rational justification for those it did include. Without these, they suggested, *entitlement* might mean no more than a legal requirement. In 1991 it had seemed that the *rhetorical* professional face of the National Curriculum was only that, *rhetorical*, while the nuts and bolts of the statutory subject orders and tests were surely being tightened. Power and control had seemed the dominant characteristics of implementation rather than shared professional development.

In 1992 the Springfields study had suggested a "tightening grip" on the curriculum. Those opportunities for *space* which had been thought to exist in 1991 had been overtaken by developments. The experience of the TVEI scheme is often cited as evidence of how an innovation might be sponsored by government, might have heavy ideological motives, might be guided and controlled by centrally directed funding to determine outcomes, and yet instil in those involved a sense of 'ownership' of the innovation. The professionals, the teachers, had found the *space* to make it their own. Yet by 1992 the evidence of my research suggested that this was not the case with the National Curriculum. Rather it seemed to be an example of close central control of *what* was taught, and, through a variety of new controlling mechanisms, *how* it was to be taught.

The final round of evidence confirmed the idea of the "tightened grip" of central control. The TVEI model (Bowe et al, 1992; Dale, 1989) of 'ownership' now seemed only a transitional stage on the road to central stranglehold of educational provision; not a replicable model of professional

"subversion" of a centrally imposed policy.

However articulate teachers were in their observations and analysis of the situation, and however much they regretted developments, it was clear where control lay. Teachers had to provide children with the "tools for the job", had to see "justice for the kids". They were not, both Science and History teachers, doing in their classrooms all that they felt they should. The full subject *entitlement* was inhibited by competing priorities, most important of which was to prepare the children well for examinations.

There were, for example, still matters in each subject's orders which were referred to by the teachers as 'good practice'. But there was too much "fact bashing" to be done, too much compulsory testable syllabus to cover.

Thus by 1993, all the teachers in my sample felt that the 'whole curriculum' impetus of the early days of implementation was in limbo, the subject areas still the centre of activity, and some elements of subject *entitlement* under threat. Tests and standards were the public cries, not preparation for adult life, or education for world citizenship; and areas of subject good practice were not now always possible to pursue. The breadth and balance *within* subjects was affected.

At this time, through the turbulent Spring and Summer terms of 1993, ensuing plans for further revision were still a matter of public debate. This ended with the appointment of Sir Ron Dearing to review the matter of the whole National Curriculum. And in 1993 the absence of certain priorities could still be publicly asserted thus:

While anti-racismand multi-culturalism...are referred to in national curriculum documents, little practical guidance on how to handle these complex issues is given.

(Klein, in the TES, 29/10/1993)

In the same edition it was reported that David Pascall, ex-head of the NCC, was upset because the result of the (pre-Dearing) review of English might relax some of his earlier recommendations about the necessity to pursue standard English in our schools as far as the playground. These two comments in the TES exemplify to an extent the experience of HODs interviewed in the research group of schools. They perceived a narrow emphasis in the imposed changes . This highlighted the political thrust. It predominated over the concerns that subject HODs had become accustomed to consider a basic element of their planning and delivery. While Pascall, and others of like mind, caught the public eye with such comments, the Springfields HOD for English had observed the opportunities within his subject for implementing the sort of matters referred to by Klein as having been progressively slipping away. The wider aims of the *entitlement* curriculum of 1987, reinforced and spelled out in *The Whole Curriculum* (NCC 1990), were second level priorities.

The National Curriculum was thus very much an assemblage of subjects, (whatever claims had been publicly made by their schools for the implementation of the wider aspects of the 'whole curriculum') as seen through the eyes of these HODs responsible for putting it into place in the classroom. The original intention of the proposal was stated to be that such issues should be "taught through other subjects" (DES, 1987, para. 18), though by 1990 the NCC view was that:

there is more than one way of tackling the themes. At one extreme they can be separately timetabled, at the other they can be completely subsumed within the subjects of the curriculum.what is important is that they appear in a coherent and planned manner throughout the secondary curriculum.

(NCC, 1990, p. 6)

Thus the importance of the "themes" was still stressed in curriculum planning and delivery by the NCC, as was the need to incorporate "dimensions", such as a "multi- cultural perspective into the curriculum" (ibid, p. 3). Yet through the process of implementation between 1991 and 1993 in these schools in Amalgam, if anything this aspect of the *entitlement* curriculum, envisaged in the original proposal, was waning in importance or priority rather than being gradually, systematically, planned, threaded and plotted through the new curriculum.

Finally, as I discussed in chapter 5, the idea of an *entitlement* curriculum could be said to embrace those ideas developed by "HMI and others" through the great debate of the 1970s and 1980s. With the advent of the National Curriculum, those ideas had become somewhat amended. Kenneth Baker, the architect of the 1987 proposal as Secretary of State for Education at the time, has suggested (1992) that the published subject-by-subject form of the 1987 proposal was adopted to avoid what his colleagues might consider to be an arcane debate over the differences between a curriculum and a syllabus. However, his conception of a national curriculum derived from his desire:

to ensure that every child had an entitlement to a high-grade education irrespective of where they lived, of what social background they came from or of what school they attended.

He went on to assert that:

Education was much more than proficiency in those three subjects.., (Maths, Science and English)...(and)... besides, I did not want the government to stand accused of introducing a narrow, utilitarian, Gradgrind curriculum. I wanted a broad and balanced curriculum that would stretch children and expose them to the excitement of Technology, to an understanding of the past, to a real knowledge of the rest of the world and to another language as well as to Art, Sport and Music.

(Guardian Education, 24/11/1992)

Baker's *entitlement* can be seen to be consistent to some extent with the HMI "areas of experience" model of curriculum planning, at least to the extent of the disparagement of "Gradgrind" ideas, the dismissal of proposals which would have reduced the *entitlement* of pupils to a narrow core, and the maintenance of a breadth of curricular experience. Yet, as O'Hear and White (1991) have pointed out, despite Baker's later defence of his curriculum, *entitlement* was in practice reduced to a legal requirement due to the paucity of aims from which the new curriculum was derived, and the failure to discuss curricular objectives in detail, in the 1987 proposal.

Consequently, by 1993 Baker's successors had easily effected reductions in *entitlement*. History had been reduced to an alternative to Geography in KS4. What Baker described as the "excitement of Technology" was under pressure from an industry lobby to reflect more the needs of work. Aesthetic subjects were no longer part of KS4. At KS4, utilitarianism might be seen as the increasingly predominant metaphor, rather than the breadth and balance argued for by Baker.

Therefore *entitlement* could be seen by 1993 to be even more distant from its origins, and in itself utilitarian. It seemed to mean that schools should provide whatever it was that current legislation said it ought to. Should this deviate from any earlier prescription, then the critical criterion would be the revised prescription, rather than any previously described rationale within which to plan; and the revised prescription would be dictated by those in political office.

Baker also wrote in 1992 of the legitimate aspirations of *every* child to this broad *entitlement*. By 1993 it was becoming clear that in practice there were pressures within the new system that were pulling against any notion that children might enjoy this *entitlement* together, irrespective of ability. This notion was not, of course, an explicit part of the stated intention of the proposal, but we have seen (in Chapter 5) that for many educationists the notion of common schooling implied children being schooled together. This idea might indeed be eroded by the various needs of children, but for many it was still a legitimate and desirable aim.

Differentiation

From the start of this research, in 1991, it could be seen that organisation of children for learning was tilting towards *separation* as a means of providing a *differentiated* curriculum, narrowing the ability ranges in teaching groups. There was a lack of debate within schools on this matter. Schools devolved such responsibility to departments in schools where setting was allowed. Four schools in the sample group had decided that setting was inappropriate in year 8. The government had, similarly, devolved such decisions to schools. Several decades of debate about the all-in school and the role therein of mixed ability teaching were, therefore, avoided at a public level. Such decisions

appeared to be matters of expediency rather than principle.

By 1991, *differentiation* of learning was often achieved through separation of children, and there was an advance in the number of groups planned to be set for Science in the autumn of 1991. Although in History there was no change yet in the pre-National Curriculum position, some HODs had sensed that current arrangements might not be able to survive the introduction of the SATs. The pressure to get results might override departments' basic instincts. Or it might simply become school policy to set in order to achieve the best results.

By 1992 the Springfields study showed that the steady progress of the National Curriculum had been accompanied by a "rash of setting" across the school. These moves were planned in the face of the demands of the National Curriculum. Where regret was expressed for this development, as in Science and English, the respective HODs asserted that the prime cause was the National Curriculum. Elsewhere, setting was either past practice (Mathematics and Modern Languages), or simply "worth a try" (DT).

One unwanted consequence of this was that because linkage between subjects had to be created to manage the timetable, some areas were therefore infected willy nilly with the Springfields' rash. The headteacher's notes in the Springfields school prospectus of 1991-2 had suggested that in year 9 parents might encounter setting only in Mathematics and Modern Language. Therein was also a reassurance that in year 8 all boys would be taught in tutor groups. But there was no discussion of this decision, nor any explanation of why this was presented in the form of reassurance. Springfields, as we noted of the full group of schools in 1991, had the power of such decisions devolved to it, but there was still no elaboration of the virtues of any of the adopted

situations.

By 1993 setting had spread further across the whole group. In Juniper year 9 setting for History had been common practice, and anyway had for long served the purpose of fitting other departments' arrangements. In Parkside, setting for History was felt to be necessary to match the demands of the National Curriculum levels of attainment.

At Midtown and Greenfields, the History HODs thought it very likely they would soon have to succumb to setting by ability. This was precisely because of the nature of the assessment requirements, and the expected SATs were also seen to be leading them there. At Beechwood and Springfields both History HODs acknowledged the force of these pressures upon them, but as yet, as a matter of principle, held out against what might become inevitable; that is setting their pupils by ability.

In Science, all departments bar Juniper now set pupils in year 9, and Beechwood had joined Midtown in introducing setting in year 8.

Looking back across three years, the momentum that was discernible in 1991, prompted and nurtured by the inexorable march of the planned assessment procedures and SATs, had been sustained. Setting was now the dominant culture in all of the schools (though several maintained the belief that the entry year ought to remain in tutor groups until year 9), and it had clearly grown across the three year period as the National Curriculum had undergone its planned implementation.

It is clear that *entitlement* had changed over this period. It is also clear that the

need to *differentiate* the curriculum was more often now being met through separation.

I suggested earlier that one measure, among others, that might indicate the strength of the government's commitment to these ideas would be the levels of support the teachers received through implementation. I next consider, therefore, the help or support that teachers received throughout this three year period as implementation got underway.

Support for the teachers in implementation

I suggested in Chapter 2 that it was reasonable for teachers to expect support for the process of implementation. I offered a brief selection of readings from the research literature on the mechanics of implementation as the basis for this statement. I also presented evidence from the teachers at each stage of the field research in support of this contention. Therefore we have at both the theoretical and practical levels of implementation a clear and unambiguous understanding that this is necessary. I also referred to selections from various official documents to demonstrate that such requirements for support of various kinds were understood also by the government's advisors on policy, and on implementation of that policy.

With particular regard to the focus of this research project I suggested that support should include:

- * help for the teachers in understanding the vision behind the aims of entitlement and differentiation;

- * help for teachers in understanding how these concepts might operate at their subject level, and what implications this might have for organisation of that subject;
- * how the subject areas would fit into the whole curriculum aim.

There *had* been INSET provision. In the early days of this research it had come from the LEA in the form of small twilight subject meetings, together with some large-scale affairs in which the local inspectors led large groups of teachers, for example all the Humanities teachers in the authority, through the various documents and requirements available at that time. There were ad hoc meetings, for example run by the Institute of Education, or by the SAT developers in Science. And there was also the wealth of papers disseminated to schools by the DES, NCC, and SEAC.

We have seen from the full group of twelve HODs (Table C) that over half of them felt the amount of provision to be "quite inadequate", and the others thought that what they had received was "not enough". Within that provision, they felt that there was too little support, and what there was was inappropriate for their needs (Table D).

They had expected constructive support, but did not feel it had been forthcoming. They had not yet been initiated either into the vision of the whole curriculum, or the practicalities of the new curriculum for what they saw as their subject needs. Yet Science HODs had to prepare their current cohort for the first pilot SATs, as well as attend to all the other matters before them, as for example preparing schemes of work from the programmes of study, and devising domestic assessment schemes. And the History group understood that they followed next.

One year on in 1992 the Springfields sample described similar experiences. The idea that the subjects might contribute to a whole curriculum design was commonly understood by this school group of HODs; but just as commonly they had observed a lack of any school activity to bring this into effect, and little pressure from within their subjects (for example from the revised orders) to contribute to this.

The focus of implementation was still the subjects of the National Curriculum; and by now the dominant mode of support for teachers with implementation was by the dissemination of amendments to subjects, and projected SATs, through the latest missives from the DES, or NCC or SEAC. There were now very practical imperatives for teachers, such as the revision of Technology, revised SATs for Science and Mathematics, and the outcome of the debate surrounding English, which would affect the nature of the SATs for 1993. But at this stage support was seen to be mostly limited to the hasty despatch of new guidelines as they were revised. Constructive support for these teachers by now would have been some clear idea of what to prepare their pupils for in terms of tests. As for a rationale for the nature of the new testing, all three of the core NC HODs (Mathematics, Science and English) were bemused by events which seemed to them to be leading them backwards. Any recent INSET experiences had not been initiation into the vision of the whole curriculum, or a vision of where *entitlement* lay in their subject areas in the new programmes of study. Where there had been help of a practical nature, as with a meeting organised by SEAC to explain the proposed technology SATs to Technology HODs, the Springfields HOD's satisfaction derived from the practical advice on how to manage classroom preparation for the SATs. For this HOD, it may be recalled, the National Curriculum was only current practice dressed up in a new coat, but with tests. However, he went on to underline the major point that whole school

matters were not addressed at all. Technology was proceeding in its own discrete way.

By this time support, when forthcoming, was seen to be for subject developments only; and often seen as inadequate in those cases for coping with late revision when there were plans to be made for imminent tests. Plans for the whole curriculum were stalled. In the three core areas, those most advanced in implementation, those closest to SATs, and those most revised to date, the teachers regretted many changes and felt excluded from developments, beyond being asked to implement them.

Returning to the large sample in 1993 had revealed little tangible progress in help with either subject or whole curriculum matters. The concerns of the policy makers were by now clear. A fair summing up of the moves to a whole curriculum over this period might be that they "died a death", and where HODs recalled that they had begun conversations with other HODs, there were only "so many hours in the day". If teachers in this group had been aware of the broader needs of the curriculum, what school initiatives they had seen begun had waned, and there was little outside support of sufficient substance to move them along.

Some concessions were made to local INSET efforts, but more because of the opportunity they afforded for teachers to console themselves in their helplessness, a helplessness they conceded extended also to the local providers of INSET. All were at the mercy of national developments. Some teachers acknowledged a greater personal expertise within their subject, but ascribed this to personal involvement with their subject's orders and requirements, not to any outside support.

The comments of the Science HOD at Midtown serve as summary of the group's feelings. He had asked for "guidance, leadership", as well as help with the "nuts and bolts". This echoes the needs to which I suggested the literature pointed. Appropriate INSET is a necessary accompaniment of successful implementation; that is, in a form which resembles the stated spirit and intention of the original proposal.

Thus over the three year period teachers' expertise in implementing the National Curriculum had grown, but they held this to be very much of their own making. They had not felt any great push from central government to enable them, or to initiate them into a vision of this whole curriculum, or any demonstrable sensitivity towards the developed traditions and practices of their subjects. Rather they had felt deserted, and short of space. The levels of support envisaged as necessary for the changes had been absent in intention as well as reality, indicated by the continued clear emphasis from the government on getting the SATs into place, and adjusting aspects of certain politically sensitive areas. The slipping of concern in the area of the whole curriculum, and the clear focus on subjects and SATs, might be said to indicate again where the policy makers' real interests lay.

To sum up

To sum up this chapter, we have seen that there had been little evidence to demonstrate any clear meanings attached to the ideas of *entitlement* and *differentiation* in the National Curriculum. By 1993 support mechanisms were predominantly concerned with getting the programmes of study and their amendments into place in order that the planned testing might go ahead. Other matters to do with the curriculum were seen to take a back seat.

In Chapter 5 I offered a working definition of *entitlement* based on a close reading of the 1987 proposal. I also embarked on a lengthy discussion of the history and use of the term *differentiation*. I made clear where and how it was deployed within the proposal, and in subsequent official literature. I pointed out the various options available to meet the requirement to *differentiate*, and located them within recent developments. The National Curriculum documents have repeatedly carried assertions of the requirement upon schools to *differentiate* the curriculum for the various needs of children. These documents have also consistently asserted that the responsibility for *how* the curriculum is delivered belongs to the school. The National Curriculum was repeatedly lauded as a curriculum for all pupils; and delivery of that curriculum was more frequently tending to come through separation of pupils.

In the following chapter, my conclusion to the research, I search for a possible resolution of the potential conflict between these two terms, as well as consider the extent to which my research has answered the original question.

Chapter Ten

IN CONCLUSION

Introduction

The main concern of this research was set out in Chapter 1. I intended to pursue the question of whether the rhetorical ambitions and intentions of the National Curriculum proposal (described as an *entitlement* for all children, and required to be appropriately *differentiated* to meet the differing needs of children) would subsequently pass into practice as the policy was implemented. My initial interest in this question derived from the apparent contradiction between the rhetoric of this proposal, borrowing from terms and ideas long current among the 'professionals', and Mrs Thatcher's government's public record. In the arena of education it had made clear its opposition to certain elements involved in the provision of compulsory education in England and Wales. There was also a wealth of academic comment in the literature on this government's steady, convinced, radical progress through Britain's institutions, which suggested education could expect the same root and branch assault. Intriguingly, and the starting point for this research project, in literature on the National Curriculum emanating from the government and its advisers there was continued support for certain ideas that might be thought to belong more appropriately to the establishment under attack; and this sat side by side with the suggestion in some academic areas that the proposal held out the possibility of becoming the 'professional' national curriculum that had been variously argued for during the long 'Great Debate'.

I made clear in my chapter on methodology that I would first be pursuing the progress or otherwise of the concepts of *entitlement* and *differentiation* through

a study of the relevant documents in which these terms were employed. What clarity might be found through this search would then be used to cast some light on the field findings just discussed in Chapter 9. An agenda had been developed around which to organise the HOD interviews, which was intended to reveal how these concepts fared through the process of implementation. It had been suggested that some of the government's stated intentions might be better understood as legitimising rhetoric rather than firm belief.

The evidence I subsequently gathered tended to confirm the suggestion that, for all its use of the rhetoric of a 'professional' debate, there was little clear impression among those required to implement the proposal that it would succeed in amounting to an *entitlement*; that is, if we apply the criteria of the *entitlement curriculum* I described in Chapter 5 (in which I made explicit the recent historical bases upon which the rhetorical references to *entitlement* rested, particularly HMI (1983), and/or the *entitlement* which was spelled out in the 1987 proposal (in the form of a curriculum structured and developed through traditional subjects, formed and shaped into a "whole curriculum" through the planning of various "themes and dimensions").

However much the reality of 1993 differed from either form of *entitlement curriculum*, (eg HMI (1983), or the *full* DES (1987) specification) the National Curriculum, through all its amendments and revisions, continued to be described in official literature as an *entitlement curriculum*. With this came the repeated injunctions that it was a curriculum for *all*, although it would need to be *differentiated* as appropriate to meet the needs of individual pupils. Yet we have seen (Chapters 6,7,8 and 9) that, whatever other forms of *differentiation* were taking place, there was a significant trend to more separation of pupils in Amalgam as the implementation proceeded; and I suggested (Chapter 9) that

the evidence was that this trend was being determined by the needs, as perceived by teachers, of the National Curriculum. It seemed that whatever the form of *entitlement* now on offer, it was thus being enjoyed in different ways by different groups of pupils. It seemed that in the rush to meet the assessment and testing priorities of the National Curriculum there had been little thought expressly or explicitly given to how to organise pupils for learning while keeping their experience of the *entitlement curriculum* more within the spirit of a curriculum for all. I have described this aspect of the National Curriculum in Chapters 2 and 5. Unlike the direct references back to the work of HMI in respect of the *entitlement curriculum*, the rhetoric of a *curriculum for all* carries with it no precise model from which it was derived, and nor was there any discussion in official publications and advice of how pupils might be organised to receive their *entitlement curriculum*. However, I now offer a suggestion of how the requirement to *differentiate* this curriculum could have proceeded if space had been found to discuss the possible ways in which *entitlement* and *differentiation* might co-exist. The tension between them perhaps need not have led quite so readily to separation of provision.

Towards a possible resolution

My concern here is whether or not there could be thought to be some inherent contradiction in the notion of an *entitlement* curriculum which leads so readily to separation of children as its main mechanism of *differentiation*.

The sample schools and their HODs sometimes seemed only too ready to respond to the National Curriculum requirements by adopting settled arrangements, or extending those already in operation. For schools and teachers who had previously either adopted or expressed a belief in mixed ability groupings, it might be suggested that they owed it to themselves, as

much as to their pupils and parents, to have some more clearly articulated idea about the basis and desirability of moving to, or extending, setting by ability. Such decisions may be perfectly tenable, but to ascribe the need to the necessity of coping with the requirements of the National Curriculum smacks of circularity, and could be seen to be an abdication of the 'professional' use of the space of which Bowe et al wrote (1992).

There may not, of course, be any contradiction; it may be that in the laudable pursuit of both imperatives, *entitlement* and *differentiation*, for all children, the tension between them is in practice irreconcilable. However, the public debate on this has been deafening in its silence, and that silence was substantially matched by the public pronouncements (or lack of them) of the research schools on this matter. It is perhaps in the present context the only part of the once 'secret garden' still officially the sole prerogative of schools and teachers. How children were to be organised for the most effective delivery of their *entitlement* was, oddly, one of the least discussed aspects of implementation. Yet still the supporting documentation of the National Curriculum exhorted:

It is necessary to stress again the importance of equal opportunities for individual pupils.....no pupil should be denied access to the full range of the curriculum in so far as he or she was able to benefit from it....this places a great responsibility upon schools....and on teachers to select the most appropriate teaching methods.

(NCC, 1990, p. 7)

Here is an association of *differentiation* through the choice of appropriate *teaching* methods, not different organisation of groups of children based on

ability. Yet the latter form of *differentiation* was, as we have seen, becoming the trend in Amalgam by 1993, with talk in some of the schools reportedly of extending this practice, for example to year 8.

I therefore now discuss the tension that lies between *differentiation* and the idea of an *entitlement for all*. I discuss whether or not there are any principles and practical guidelines which schools might adopt as they are faced by what can be, as we have seen, uncomfortable decisions for some teachers, namely that separation is the most appropriate, and was becoming the dominant, mode of *differentiation*.

Entitlement and differentiation in a democracy

The basic concepts of *differentiation* and *entitlement* can be vaguely employed by curriculum planners, or would-be planners, in forms that pay lip service, but not justice, to each. Knowing that separation of children has several well documented negative effects, but that separation will command compelling reasons on occasions, I suggest that a priority for schools should be to avoid separation *unless judged to be inescapably necessary*.

The rational (and moral) basis of this statement is those arguments adduced both by the DES and HMI that a common experience (and introduction to our 'culture') is the inalienable *entitlement* of *all* children; and that the context of such statements is that of a democratic society that seeks to balance its responsibility for the individual with that for the whole community.

As in the past when the 11+ was the norm, provision of education might become segregated on the basis of a principle such as *differentiation*. Yet

there are difficulties associated with this suggestion, such as, for example, the potential disadvantage that might accrue to those *too easily* allocated to separate classes, and hence to a separate curriculum. The different starting points of children make it less easy for some to assert their right of access to the full curriculum, and less easy to partake of it. This does not seem sufficient reason for not trying to include such children; or for not seeking alternatives to the old grammar system of totally separate provision based on narrow measures of children's abilities, whether in separate institutions or under one roof.

Preparation of all children for living in a democracy was one of the principal, explicitly stated, aims of the government which proposed, and subsequently passed into statute law, the National Curriculum. In Better Schools (1985) it was argued that:

The government believes that all pupils.....should consolidate their understanding of the values and foundations of British society

(DES, 1985b, p.5)

In the 1987 proposal, raising standards was coupled with the need to prepare for life in society after school. The National Curriculum would:

develop the potential of all pupils and equip them for the responsibilities of citizenship.....in tomorrow's world.

(DES, 1987, para 4, my emphasis)

From Policy to Practice (1989) continued this theme:

The curriculum must also serve to develop the pupil as an individual, as a member of society, and as a future adult member of the community...

(DES, 1989, para 2.2, my emphasis)

The Whole Curriculum (NCC 1990), one of the early pamphlets of non-statutory guidance for implementation of the National Curriculum, developed the idea of education for citizenship, including the following components:

*democracy in action...the benefits and conflicts of living
in a plural society.....being a citizen (including) rights and
privileges; duties; values and beliefs; importance of participating.
how to be involved.*

(NCC, 1990, p.5, my emphasis)

There can be little doubt, then, that a major aim of education in modern Britain was to be preparation for adult life in society; and of course that society is what we readily term a democracy.

One major difficulty in pursuing this aim is that children deserve acknowledgement not just of their of their different abilities, but of their differing starting points. And another difficulty, assuming this assertion is conceded, is to establish some general criteria which might assist particular schools in devising a mechanism or mechanisms for making decisions clear *why, when and where* to separate children in their education provision.

The issue of the distribution of educational provision *in* a democracy as well as *for* a democracy naturally retains a sharp political dimension. Distribution of scarce resources is a central issue for all societies. In a democracy, the *fairness* of that distribution is a central question. Politicians and policy makers derive principles from our democratic tradition which become justifying and guiding signs for policy. Thus the National Curriculum was said to be aimed at

ensuring that all pupils, regardless of sex, ethnic origin and geographical location, have access to broadly the same.... curriculum. (DES, 1987, para. 8.3, my emphasis)

This proposal invoked other democratic principles, for example :

a national curriculum will enable schools to be more accountable for the education they offer to their pupils, individually and collectively.

(ibid, para 9.2, my emphasis)

Thus education is for all, and schools are to be publicly accountable for their provision. They must be seen to be fulfilling their intentions, and particularly in this case their obligation to deliver the National Curriculum. Accountability, and the law, are to be among the individual's guarantees of securing this provision, intended for *all* ; all in state schools, that is. These are aims, or principles, which clearly derive from the premise of our living in a democratic society.

If these principles are not merely to be empty shibboleths, educational provision ought to reflect them as fully as possible. This would include the democratic resolution of such conflicts as might emerge as any policy is implemented. The work of R.S. Peters helps shed some light on the matter. In the essay Democracy and Education (Peters, 1963), he argues that it is not sufficient for individuals to be placed helplessly under any grand notions of democracy. Principles, such as equality and fairness (and *entitlement?*), should not be considered *substantive* but *procedural* notions. *From* them we must interpret, and agree upon, some practical substance against which people can measure their own situation. It is that substance that is now sought, because the commonly agreed need for *differentiation* has often, for the very

best of common sense reasons, seemed to have had an effect upon education provision which results in separation at times. I therefore now wish to establish when separate provision might be thought of as desirable or acceptable, in the sense of being *fair* or *just* in a democracy, and look to the work of three prominent philosophers for guidance as to how to go about distributing educational resources fairly: R.S. Peters, John Rawls and Amy Gutmann.

Distributing education fairly

In Ethics and Education (1963, ch.4) Peters discusses the concept of distributive justice in a democracy. He considers the problems involved in deriving a sound theory of distributive justice which might apply in the provision of education, an area, as we have seen, often shrouded in a confusion of contradictory common sense moral imperatives.

Peters takes as his starting point the commonly asserted proposition that "all men are equal". He suggests that this is not a statement of fact, but an assertion that equal treatment is the right of everyone. How, asks Peters, can this be true of a world in which men (*sic*) are manifestly different :

*Injustice results just as muchfrom treating unequals
equally as it does from treating equals unequally. (p.118)*

Peters proceeds from this to the logically derived principle of distributive justice, thus:

Equals should be treated equally and unequals unequally.

However, problems ensue when we try to move from this *principle* for practical action to *actual* implementation. First among these is the question of

deciding upon the construction of categories that might attract unequal treatment. How, for example, might we describe children as belonging to a particular category: that is, what criteria might we use? And how might belonging to a particular category be relevant to the principle of distributive justice? This principle, says Peters, does not allow us the authority to assert that inclusion in an agreed category is authority to distribute provision by the same criteria. For there are many ways and means to create different categories of children. (In the current situation of the implementation of the National Curriculum there are, for example, categories such as: those children stated as in need of special treatment; children categorised as within certain 'tiers' for the purpose of deciding which SATs to sit for; and the category of children in private schools, to whom the proposals do not apply).

Peters offers some clarity in this situation. He asserts that in the field of rational discourse (of which educational debate in a democracy forms a part), a more appropriate formulation of the problem of dealing fairly with unequalness would be:

No one shall be presumed, in advance of particular cases being considered, to have a claim to better treatment than another. (p.121)

This proposition thus asserts that in choosing to distribute resources fairly, but unequally, there must be clearly discernible differences in categories; and to warrant different treatment the categories must be relevant to any different treatment under consideration. Belonging to an agreed category is one thing. It is quite another to decide upon providing different treatment for agreed categories. The case for better or different treatment has to be made, not won by default, that is by the fact of inclusion in a certain group. In the case of state provision of education we are dealing with a prized service, and the

value of that service has been spelled out in the National Curriculum, providing an *entitlement* for all (described in detail as the programmes of study, and "themes" and "elements" additionally identified (DES, 1989, paras 3.7,3.8)). To receive a different or less valued form of this *entitlement* might be seen as an injustice by those so affected, and any injustice thus visited upon any group or category in a democracy requires rational justification of such possibly unjust distribution.

The American philosopher John Rawls has written authoritatively on this matter of distributive justice in a democracy. In A Theory of Justice (1971), Rawls considers notions of fairness and justice in a pluralist democratic society, one in which there is an acknowledged differentiation of starting points in life, none of which for the individual has any advantage of moral virtue, but is merely the accidental attachment of different positions in society. In this context, in pursuit of a rationale for the distribution of society's assets in a fair or just way, Rawls suggests the following:

An injustice is tolerable only when it is necessary to avoid an even greater injustice. (p. 4)

He further suggests that

Inequalitiesare just only if they result in compensating benefits for everyone, and in particular for the least advantaged members of society. (p. 14 ff)

Rawls is recognising that when competing claims are made for society's provisions, there may be unequal resolution of who gets what. This apparent injustice can only be tolerable if it prevents someone or some group suffering even greater injustice. If such inequalities are inevitable, their acceptance should be reconciled (in a democracy) by explicit compensation for those

least able to assert themselves (the least advantaged members of society).

Rawls's position would appear to support Peters, at least in as far as it explicitly recognises the complexity of distributing educational resources in a plural democratic society. There *will* be inequality in distribution, but care should be taken in deciding when and where. When such decisions *are* made, it should be *clear* that that action is taken to avoid greater injustice elsewhere.

There is also contemporary support to be found in a recent major work, Democratic Education (1990), by the American philosopher Amy Gutmann. Gutmann (ch.1) agrees with Peters and Rawls (in pursuit of a theory and practice of education in a democracy) upon the need for a clearly agreed set of principles to guide the provision of education, and also the means to evaluate that provision in practice. A democratic society

must be constrained not to legislate policies that render democracy repressive or discriminatory. (p.14)

Gutmann (ch.5) argues for the importance of not excluding children from provision. She calls for what she terms a non-exclusion principle (that children should not be excluded from any worthwhile educational provision), as

a necessary but not sufficient standard of democratic distribution with regard to primary (compulsory) schooling.

We need, she says, an additional standard derived from a theory of education to decide how

children are to be distributed among and within schools.

(ibid, my emphasis p.127-8)

A theme common to all three, then, is that fairness (or justice) in a democracy

is concerned with including *all* people when it comes to distributing resources. In education this would stand as a first principle. When exclusion from these resources is contemplated, there must be acceptable criteria for such treatment.

Turning back to the National Curriculum, we have seen that the government's proposals were accompanied by the expressed democratic commitment to education for all. There are similar assertions in the writings of the Black Papers and the Hillgate Group. Whatever the prescription, there is agreement that the patient is the body democratic. Yet some critics of the present proposals employ similar claims to democratic ideas and principles in stating their objections to the National Curriculum. Three prominent contributors to the British Journal of Education in the early days of the National Curriculum demonstrate this point:

An alternative tradition has to be remembered and celebrated- a tradition which values equality and universal education as well as the joy of learning, and the pursuit of human excellence.

(Quicke 1988, p.19)

The only defensible form of national curriculum is one that is genuinely committed to democratic principles.

(White 1988, p.220)

An opportunity for developing a genuine secondary education for all is in danger of being lost.

(Pring 1989, p.26)

What I am trying to establish here is some way through the *current* situation as implementation proceeds. The claims to democratic principles are

universal, and found even among those who advocate separate provision in its most extreme form, separate schools based on selection criteria of ability. Within the present proposals there may be grounds upon which to resolve the conflict between *entitlement* and *differentiation*, based on an argument derived from democratic principles as employed in the rationale for our National Curriculum

Peters', Rawls' and Gutmann's contributions suggest a logical link in the arguments, between rhetorical shibboleth and a way of deciding upon practical matters. They suggest a means of deriving a democratic principle to reconcile competing claims.

Peters states very clearly what ought to be the case:

Concern for public interest also requires that the interests of individuals and minorities, who cannot exert strong pressure, should not be disregarded. (op cit, p.305)

And:

From the point of view, therefore, both of the community and the individual, a democrat would insist that education should be made available for all, and that it should be fairly distributed.
(p. 307)

Peters has re-stated the principles of *fairness* and *all*. Gutmann discusses the likelihood that unequal shares of resources will inevitably occur. What she terms a *democratic authorisation principle* would demand that nonetheless in a democracy there is a "moral requirement" to

provide all children with an ability adequate to take part in the democratic process.

(op cit, p. 136)

Essentially, this boils down to equal access to the same education as others, to reduce discrepancies in starting points. The issue is clearly to preserve some sort of fairness at the point of provision. There should not be a lesser form of provision for those unable to make their own claims strongly enough. In a democracy, equality of access and opportunity returns us to the non-exclusion principle. Any different provision must be argued for in accordance with those principles enunciated by Peters, Rawls and Gutmann. In the context of the National Curriculum, remembering all that was written about the educational legacy that determined the government upon this course, such principles might lead to the proposition that: *rights, for example to the same curriculum, should be equal in weight.*

For example, children can be catered for within a common provision and still have their individual needs met. This could be achieved in education through the provision of *differentiated* materials and processes in a common context, that is through teaching methods. Where it could clearly be established that a common provision, for example in a mixed ability classroom for GCSE Mathematics, is deleterious to an individual or group of individuals, then separate provision might be appropriate *for that context*, ie that subject. Any extrapolation of that treatment to *another* context would need to be argued for.

This would mean that should, as happens, a situation be clearly agreed and established in a particular school that *only* by withdrawing pupils of a particular range of ability or aptitude in that subject could they be dealt with appropriately to their needs, then that might be considered fair, or just, in the sense made explicit by Rawls. An injustice would otherwise be done to these higher or lower ability children which would not be balanced by any advantages accruing to those in a mixed ability setting. The implication of the democratic principle is that the needs of one situation need not and should

not be extended into a general rule (eg banding, or streaming across the board), unless different criteria pertain to suggest that should be the case in all the situations that that arrangement might embrace. The application of this principle sits well with the concerns variously expressed about the need to balance community and common provision with a concern for the individual. Accommodation is sought, and mutual exclusion admitted only as exceptional, necessary, and just (or fair) *only for that situation*. Not to do so would bring injustice to the excluded group. This principle would put the responsibility upon those who sought separation to justify it, in the Peters sense. It would be *treating people differently* that requires justification. This would prevent too hasty a rush to separate provision as a response to the need for *differentiation* of curriculum provision for some pupils.

A Working Definition of Differentiation

In Chapter 5 I developed a working definition of differentiation which was exceedingly brief: essentially, that *the needs of children should be met appropriately*. That brevity was the result of a paucity of discussion of different ways in which to meet these needs in any of the official documents accompanying the National Curriculum. I pointed out that disagreements immediately arise as soon as discussions begin about what might in practice be appropriate. Unlike the case of *entitlement*, whose antecedents were acknowledged, there were no references or pointers as to where these aspects of the rhetoric had been derived from. They were merely stated as being so, and consequently I determined to return to a discussion of the question of *differentiation* in practice, after the field research had revealed something of what was actually happening as a result of the implementation of the National Curriculum.

Following that discussion I now conclude that a a working definition of *differentiation* would need to embrace the aim of catering for the different needs of individuals and/or groups, while doing least possible damage to the equally valued aim of as full as possible access for all to the common *entitlement* National Curriculum. This suggestion derives from the literature of the National Curriculum proposal, the explicitly acknowledged progenitors (Better Schools, HMI and 'others'), and those practical principles for the distribution of educational resources derived by Peters, Rawls and Gutmann, discussed in this section. The resulting definition could be as follows:

- * learning situations and materials should be provided at a level appropriate to all children in any group according to individual needs and aptitudes;
- *any arrangements to exclude children from the common curriculum and common experiences should be decided as fair or not by the application of the following principle, derived from consideration of these theories of distributive justice in a democracy:

Wherever possible, a common provision and common experience should be sought. Exclusion from provision, or separate provision, should only occur where the needs of an individual or group are clearly identified: where the relevance of separate treatment is made clear; and where no greater unbalancing disadvantage consequently accrues to others.

To sum up

To sum up this section, then, various critics of the National Curriculum proposals have, as we have seen, suggested that the National Curriculum has little to do with the fundamental principles of democracy employed in

this discussion and argument. Weight is lent to this assertion by the manner in which moves to *differentiation* by segregation were proceeding in the research schools. At the heart of my argument is the assertion that too easy a move to segregation might prematurely, or unnecessarily, affect a pupil's enjoyment or access to a curriculum which it is commonly asserted to be the right of

....all pupils, regardless of sex, ethnic origin and geographical location.

(DES, 1987, para (111))

As the curriculum continued to be implemented, perhaps the sometimes uneasy tension between these concepts derived from a lack of comprehension by these HODs (and their schools) of what might be meant by them, and how they might fruitfully be jointly employed in curriculum design and practice.

The National Curriculum: the natural outcome of two decades of debate?

I therefore suggest that by 1993 there was much empirical support in this research for the idea that the National Curriculum, in its wider ambitions, provided ample evidence of the needs felt by policy makers in a democracy to secure legitimation for their proposals. It is easier to attempt to carry those people needed to secure the implementation legislation rather than rely solely upon the blunt instrument of party political support (Salter and Tapper, 1981). However, the initial proposal, and the early developments in implementation as chronicled here, lent considerable weight to the suggestion that the National Curriculum was part of an extended political project rather than the next logical step in two decades of educational development and debate. The rhetoric of the proposal had failed to materialise. The curriculum was more 'political' than 'professional'. In its focus and emphasis the government increasingly seemed intent first and foremost on imposing a curriculum content and testing structure that mirrored its own political aims and views, rather than working towards the talked of consensus about democratic education. This has been shown in a number of ways, despite the use of a legitimising rhetoric redolent of a professional perspective on the curriculum; and despite the tentative support at times of various members of the educational establishment (eg MacLure (1989), Lawton (1989), Marland (1991)), who optimistically envisaged that the 'professional' aspects referred to in the 1987 proposal, in section 1 of the ERA, in subsequent supporting literature (eg NCC 1990), and in the TGAT (1987) report, might be accommodated alongside what was also seen as a "bureaucratic" structure (Lawton 1987), designed to control curriculum content, make testing a central and dominant part of learning, and bring teachers and schools to more easy public account.

One obvious indication of this political self-serving aspect of the National Curriculum was the perceptions held by teachers of the levels of support they had enjoyed during the process. The 1987 proposal acknowledged the training needs required for successful implementation, but the reality for teachers was different.

They had expressed regrets over the inadequacy of preparation to grapple with the subject demands they were facing, and a complete lack of urgency over how the wider, cross curricular, themes might be developed. The need for teacher support through the process of change is well supported in prominent research:

Innovations that have been succeeding have been doing so because they combine good ideas with good implementation decisions and support systems.

(Fullan, 1992, p.112)

The English HOD at Springfields had complained, for example, of the inadequacy of basing his planning on what could be gleaned from the daily press. The lack of a proper research basis to support these changes was commented upon earlier by contributors to this study. A failure to consult or employ educational researchers was still a matter of public regret in the summer of 1992, as reflected upon at the BERA conference by its president :

The status of educational research is, perhaps, inevitably, a mirror of the status of education.

(Gipps, 1992, in the TES 18/9/92b)

Educational research was simply not an issue for the central reformers:

What has been happening has not been subject to public debate. The Right have not backed up their claims with any body of educational research.

(Jones, 1992, in the TES, 18/9/92a)

If the concerns of the implementers had been less rigidly ideological and more consensual, then the fruits of academic research might have been employed to give support for developments, rather than be ignored or discarded. It may be that the researchers were seen by the government to be part of the demonology of the establishment, and in any case as peripheral to the actual mechanics of implementation. Their support was less crucial than that of teachers, for teachers were the practical facilitators of the new things. Attacks on the higher education establishment had been carrying on apace, for example with new plans for teacher training that aimed to cut off what was often seen as the malign influence of the theoretical trainers (Sweetman, 1993; Wragg, 1992a). Those who trained teachers were also those who researched, and published reports not always in harmony with government thinking.

The issue of support is significant, for I have suggested that while teachers naturally first looked for ways of simply managing what they were required to do, and invariably found this sort of support lacking for them in any useful form, they were also aware of the wider rhetorical aims and intentions of the National Curriculum. Yet schools' initial steps to embrace, for example, the aims of a co-ordinated National Curriculum, with its full complement of "themes and dimensions", had faltered by the time of crisis in 1993 which resulted in the Dearing Review. Some teachers expressed themselves in sympathy with these wider aims, but reportedly found no help or initiative to stimulate movement towards those ends.

A Working Definition of Entitlement?

The idea of *entitlement* to the full curriculum can be understood in two distinct ways, though these might also become closely related in practice. First, there is the 'whole curriculum', said here in the National Curriculum (eg DES, 1989, paras 3.7, 3.8) to contain the "essential elements in terms of learning and experience" analysed by HMI. This extends *across* all subjects, but can only be achieved *through* the "context of the foundation subjects". That is, the foundation subjects have to contribute in some way to the realisation of this, but not to the extent of having their contribution prescribed within the programmes of study for each subject. Secondly, as each subject has its own particular orbit of concerns, this has led to suggestions of an *entitlement* to be had therefore within the discrete bounds of individual subjects, an *entitlement* particular to that subject alone. While this may well contribute also to the whole curriculum entitlement, it need not do so.

We have seen (Chapter 2) that each of the two subject target areas of History and Science had, prior to the ERA, established certain content and practice that had increasingly come to be seen as sound and desirable, through a decade and more of professional debate and development. This had been supported in a variety of ways; for example through the GCSE boards, through professional subject organisations (eg ASE, HA), and through the published works of HMI.

By the time of the conclusion of the field research in 1993 it was certainly the case that the SATs were determining the nature of what was taught. The increasingly 'paper and pencil' SAT mode was naturally encouraging teaching strategies to accommodate the maximum pupil success possible; and the SATs were said to reflect only a narrow section of what a Science

curriculum should encompass. Even after the amendment of the vast array of attainment targets there was no increase of space in which to manoeuvre, and the research group supported criticisms recounted above (Chapter 2) that the Science curriculum now denied various possibilities that they would previously have claimed to be desirable, and even integral parts of what might be called a Science *entitlement*.

In History we have seen that teachers felt constrained, not just by the threat of SATs, but by what was taken to be a 'political' curriculum, with a euro-centric emphasis, and heavy in content. The weight of content to be covered denied space to teachers to develop a writerly approach, should they wish to. This tended to make more difficult, for example, the investigative approaches which had recently become seen as part of an *entitlement* in History. The race through the curriculum content, and also its assessment and testing requirements, led to a new, adverse, emphasis in History for these teachers.

Yet even despite these objections, both subject groups of teachers had readily conceded all the advantages of a common curriculum. It was the nature of this one that was being resisted, and especially so as implementation proceeded.

The widespread acknowledgement that *entitlement* to the whole curriculum was not yet a possibility, and in fact that moves towards this were losing momentum, can be seen as another nail in the coffin of the 'professional' curriculum. Both at Springfields in 1992, and in both groups of teachers across the six schools, whatever the rhetoric of the official documents, whatever documentary evidence existed in their school prospectuses and school development plans, and whatever school curriculum audits working parties

and planned priorities they had established, the reality as experienced and expressed by them was different. Moves towards a whole curriculum had taken a back seat to other developments by that time.

The *entitlement curriculum* elaborated upon in Chapter 5 had indeed by this time remained substantially an *entitlement* to the programmes of study. This is not to say that in the future the "themes and dimensions" might not rise to greater prominence, or that the little seeds of these referred to above might not yet grow. It is simply the case that by 1993 the perceived emphasis of implementation in this group of schools was squarely within subjects, their programmes of study, and the development of their attainment targets.

It is appropriate at this point to consider why the texts which prompted the expectation of a professional curriculum were written as they were. One of the research questions concerned the possibility of an unspoken agenda behind this proposal. We know, from the memoirs of some of those within the decision making and policy directing agencies of the government, much of the minutiae of the National Curriculum's development. Mrs Thatcher has said that from the start she supported a much slimmer version both of the curriculum, and of its testing procedures. In the case of History she had demanded that it was "based entirely on facts", and testing likewise (Graham, 1992). Duncan Graham was chair of the NCC under Secretaries of State Baker, McGregor and Clarke. He recounts the difficulties heaped upon him by "a posse of civil servants" as the NCC proceeded in 1989 to address the "themes" of the National Curriculum. He cites Baker as writing to him to urge the Council to forget about the "whole curriculum" and "get on with the real work of introducing the curriculum". There were contests, then, between those groups charged with carrying out government policy.

The main protagonist of the aim of a "whole curriculum" model was, by 1989, no longer the DES (authors of the original proposal (1987), the ERA (1988) and From Policy To Practice (1989)), but the NCC. Maw (1993) has identified the struggle of the NCC, in the face of opposition from within the DES (later DFE) and ministerial officials, to maintain the 'professional' concept of the 'whole curriculum'. She sees the DES backing off from the idea of a whole curriculum rather than a subject based one, under the influence of their political masters. Meanwhile the NCC quietly (through various support mechanisms and documents, including non-statutory advice) tried to exploit the references to a whole curriculum made in various ways in the official texts of 1987, 1988 and 1989. Thus they were attempting to reconcile the intellectually sound (for so I have argued in Chapter 5) recognition of a decade or more of debate and consensus with the immediate objectives of government; and those objectives, in Baker's words, were the implementation of the "real curriculum", the subjects.

The texts from which these expectations of a whole curriculum, or an *entitlement*, derived (beyond the circularity of a simple *entitlement* to what was on offer, and which was subject to various amendments at the instigation of successive secretaries of state for education), certainly alluded to a consensus. If it is the case that at the same time the government wished "to exclude certain voices from the policy process" (Bowe et al, 1992, p.8), then an explanation of its inclusion in the original specification merits closer consideration. Indeed, this research suggests that in a very practical way the idea of a 'whole curriculum' was no more than a device by now.

At the various points of implementation we have seen that an initial 'reading' of the texts by schools, and their HODs, was disturbed by the actual flow of events. This perhaps reflects the real agenda of change. Those schools which

were encouraged by the initial texts of 1987-1990 to consider the wider issues came shortly upon the brute fact of their lesser importance. Thus in their eyes, any interest that had been awakened or sustained by such readings of the texts was soon abandoned, for there was scant practical sustenance to be had in their pursuit. Instead, there were very practical matters of implementing statutory programmes of study, and public scrutiny of progress via public testing, to be considered.

Bowe et al (1992) had seen the implementation of the National Curriculum as more than just the putting of the Act into practice. On the basis of this research evidence, it seems that they may have over-stated the power or will of particular sites, schools and departments, to maintain their space.

In 1993 there was substantial evidence to suggest that space for manoeuvre was minimal. There was also evidence to show that deeply held convictions about the nature of an *entitlement curriculum*, and about preferred forms of pupil grouping in pursuit of these convictions, could easily wilt in the face of sustained political and statutory assault. The extent to which practitioners could successfully 'contest' policy texts was strictly limited. If they did not adequately prepare their children for tests, both teachers and pupils might be seen as failures. Given a choice, their teachers would rather ensure that time and space was spent sufficiently on matters which would increase their pupils' chances in areas where public comparisons could be made. It was important for teachers to be seen to be doing the best for their pupils. As a result, the children might not have experienced all that their teachers felt they ought to.

Of course there were areas in these school sites where resistance could be seen. The most striking examples of these were in the History departments of Springfields and Beechwood. Here, the History HODs were holding out

against moves to universal setting of children in their comprehensive schools, and the restricted methods of the delivery of the curriculum that had been reported by the other HODs as coming to accompany these. Those other HODs, in both Science and in History, had been sympathetic in the past to such views, and such arrangements, but now saw the context in which they operated as inimical to the continuance of these. These two History HODs suggested they might yet have to succumb to settled arrangements for teaching, not because they felt a need to come in line, but because the rest of the school had done so. They both talked of a spreading school culture of setting, and recognised that they might be caught up in this seemingly inexorable trend.

To End

As implementation proceeded, the evidence of this research failed to reveal a move towards what I argued in Chapter 5 was the broad curriculum implied by the rhetoric of the 1987 proposal and its subsequent supporting literature.

This may, of course, have simply been contingent upon various practical realities that could be expected in the implementation of an educational innovation of such considerable magnitude. Therefore, through analysis of the political context from which the proposal emerged, and an empirical investigation of support for implementation of this curriculum, I sought evidence that, nonetheless, the intentions were substantially as stated.

The research data did not support such a contention. Instead, developments are more readily accommodated within those predictions which were made at the time of the original proposal, and subsequently, that the government had a

broad political agenda within which the National Curriculum could be seen to sit quite comfortably. The wider rhetorical aims have had a troubled life, while those aspects which most closely fitted the suggested political agenda, such as testing and centrally dictated curricula in key areas, have come to pass.

There will, of course, be schools and areas resisting more strongly the pressures which I have observed in Amalgam. However, across the broad thrust of implementation observed here, the National Curriculum has not yet come to resemble the *entitlement curriculum* expressed in the official texts. Nor could it truly be said to be neutral about the matter of how to organise pupils for its demands, for setting has gathered apace during this period. Yet I have argued in this chapter that regular systematic separation of children could be seen to be contradictory to the idea of all-in schools, and ought at least to be argued for on an intellectual level before widespread adoption. This trend to separation was often reluctant, according to the HODs, at least among those moving afresh into such situations. But the motive force was the structural arrangements of the assessment and testing system. This was not accompanied by any systematic attempt to present for teachers, the implementers, any conception of a state system for all children where *entitlement* and *differentiation* naturally coexisted; nor any conception of *entitlement* that resembled the oft-claimed precursor of the HMI model.

The *differentiated entitlement curriculum* of 1987, frequently reinforced in its rhetorical form by various subsequent missives from the government, including the Education Reform Act (1988) itself, had failed to materialise. The curriculum which did emerge during this period of research fell short of the ambitions discussed in Chapter 5, ambitions based on a professional consensus derived from, and supported by, a decade and more of professional debate. I have considered the suggestion that with the National Curriculum the Conservative

Party, in government since 1979, deliberately stole the clothes of a professional lobby. Education was employed as part of an ideological agenda serving a political project, pursued over a wide cultural terrain. There is little to glean from this research study to suggest that this was not in fact the case.

In the final chapter I discuss the revisions brought in by the Dearing Report, and whether or not these amendments are likely to affect the gloomy conclusions of this research study.

Chapter Eleven

EPILOGUE

THE DEARING REVIEW: RETREAT, RELAXATION, OR RETRENCHMENT?

Introduction

Throughout the early years of implementation the National Curriculum endured, as we have seen, sustained criticism of various kinds. To the forefront of this was the question of "excessive workload", and it was around this issue that the teacher unions forced a major government re-think of the National Curriculum.

In this final chapter I first discuss the development of the Dearing Review. I then go on to consider the extent to which the proposed changes meet the needs of the teachers; and if they resolve the doubts which my research has raised about the implementation of a curriculum still said in the Final Report to "ensure that all children had access to the same educational entitlement", and to be a curriculum that is broad and balanced (SCAA, 1994a, paras 3.23; 3.26; 3.27). I suggest that although the various changes may indeed meet many of the demands of the teachers, this is no retreat. The essential thrust remains.

The Dearing Review

The first point at which teachers successfully intervened in the inexorable, albeit substantially amended, progress of the National Curriculum, was that of the introduction of the SATs. I have described the coming of the SATs,

preceded by the ten point assessment scale and its subsequent statements of attainment for each subject, as the final turning of the nuts and bolts of the National Curriculum. With them comes a uniform system of testing which makes comparisons within and between schools possible, and politically desirable, through public reporting of results and schools' league tables. This final turn was stalled by the non-cooperation of teachers in the school testing procedure. In 1993 the NAS/UWT secured support for their position from the High Court, though this was based on the key point of additional workloads for teachers, rather than any arguments about the educational value of testing, or of these particular tests (O'Kane, 1993).

Sir Ron Dearing's Review was commissioned in April 1993 in the face of continuing teacher opposition to a curriculum that was claimed to be overloaded, overprescriptive and overtested (ibid). An initial brief period of consultation by Sir Ron led to an interim recommendation in July 1993. This was accepted by the government, and a further period of consultation, followed by cogitation, ensued. The Final Report was accepted in full in the following January (DFE, 1994), and SCAA was given the next task, that of preparing the suggested amendments through the various working parties that were now to be set up. Missing among these, as in the initial stages of implementation of the National Curriculum, were those issues which, as we have seen, might be said to be concerned with the wider issues of the whole curriculum.

The terms of reference of the Review were to investigate:

- i) the scope for slimming down the curriculum;
- ii) how the central administration of the National Curriculum and testing arrangements could be improved;

- iii) how the testing arrangements might be simplified; and
- iv) the future of the ten-level scale for recognising children's achievement.

(SCAA, December 1994a, para 1.1)

Its main recommendations can be summarised thus:

- * the National Curriculum (PoS) to be scaled down to 80% of 1993 requirements; 60% in key stage 4;
- * attainment targets and statements of attainment should be reduced;
- * slimming down to be concentrated in the non-core subjects;
- * at KS4 only English, Maths, single Science, P.E. and short courses in a modern foreign language and technology should be mandatory. History and Geography now optional;
- * General National Vocational Qualifications and NVQ options to be developed at KS4;
- * SCAA should continue the simplification of tests, and a reduction of the time needed to take them;

- * the ten point scale to be abandoned at KS4 in favour of GCSE A*-G; at other stages to be retained but modified;
- * moderated teacher assessment should underpin standards, but not in a burdensome or bureaucratic way.

(source: TES, 7/1/1994)

Working to a very tight deadline, SCAA set up the necessary advisory groups to produce consultation draft proposals for the Secretary of State by April 1994. Upon his acceptance of these the proposals were published for public consultation between May and July. Following this process, the new orders for all ten National Curriculum subjects were published in November 1994. The revised curriculum would be introduced in September 1995 for key stages 1-3, and from 1996 for key stage 4.

The subject revisions

History

History had by now lost its place in the foundation curriculum at KS4. In addition, as with other foundation subjects it had to be slimmed down. The slimming down had also to accommodate additional twentieth century topics in KS3 to compensate for their removal from KS4. The new proposals would "ensure a predominant emphasis on British history" (SCAA, 1994b, p iii). This might not assuage the fears of one member of the advisory group, Mr Chris McGovern, who feared that traditional approaches to History had been neglected (TES 13/ 5/1994). The Daily Mail had earlier (5/5/1994) carried a half page story entitled This history is bunk, in which Mr

McGovern's fears for British History were prominently expressed. The Daily Mail article carried a sub-headline which announced that Alfred the Great would have to give way in the new curriculum to "the Black Peoples of the Americas". The Secretary of State intervened to amend the order, to state explicitly that British History should be taught at KS1 (SCAA, 1994b). History, it seemed, was able to retain this aspect of its political character even through these latest amendments.

Also, the possibility of History providing what the History Working Group (DES, 1990) had described as its "distinctive" (para. 11.1) or "vital" (para. 11.31) contribution to the rest of the curriculum, areas such as "citizenship" or "political education", subsumed under the "preparation for adult life" specified in the ERA (1988, section 1), was therefore now lost in KS4.

The new "level descriptions", replacing the statements of attainment, now specified that the demonstration of factual knowledge and dates were important parts of assessment in History.

However, if these developments can be seen as consistent in spirit with what had passed before, namely the political heritage curriculum of which I wrote in Chapter 2, the slimming of the curriculum opened up the possibility of 'space' once more. Teachers were to choose two 'supplementary units' in KS3: a turning point in European history and a study of a non-European society. These were to occupy less time than the core units. Teachers were to have discretion to choose their areas of study under these two broad headings. Here lay the possibility of 'space'; and in the final publication (SCAA, 1994d) the distinction between core and supplementary units was removed, ostensibly to "create a simpler system" (TES 11/11/1994).

Science

Science retained its core position, and had in any case recently undergone revision. Slimming was therefore less radical an exercise than elsewhere.

SCAA seemed at this stage to bow to professional criticism of the previous situation in two areas. AT1, concerned with the practical and investigative aspects of Science, was revised "to reflect a broader range of experimental and investigative work" (TES 13/5/1994). We have seen (chapters 2, 6,7,8 and 9) that the treatment of AT1 in previous amendments had been a cause of some concern, and there were suggestions that therein lay a substantial part of what might be called an entitlement *within* the Science curriculum.

Similarly, the relationship of Science and its forms of enquiry to life and the environment has been recognised as important, and Science teachers were enjoined to make these relationships clear. There were criticisms before among my research group that these elements had been lacking in favour of the acquisition of facts.

At KS4 only single Science was still compulsory for all children.

Other matters

New "level descriptions" were introduced, as a more easily applied mechanism to provide summative assessments of children. These were described as "an overarching description of the key elements", replacing the "present plethora of detailed statements of attainment" (SCAA, 1994b, p.i). The following example is from the new History level descriptions:

Level 5

Pupils demonstrate factual knowledge of a range of people, events and developments in the history of Britain and other countries drawn from the appropriate programmes of study. They describe different aspects of past societies and periods they have studied and begin to make connections between them. They show why and how things changed. They produce structured accounts of historical events, making use of dates and relevant terms. They begin to offer explanations of events and developments. They know that some events have been interpreted in different ways and suggest reasons for this. Drawing on their historical knowledge, pupils identify and are beginning to evaluate sources of information for particular tasks.

(SCAA, 1994e, p.14)

Previously, pupils had been required to be assessed against the three separate sets of criterion statements for each of the three attainment targets: Knowledge and Understanding; Interpretations of History; Use of Historical Sources. These had now been combined into one attainment target called *History*, and one set of criterion statements, the ten level descriptions.

Similar action across all the NC subjects had reduced 966 statements of attainment to 200 level descriptions. These would allow teachers to use "professional judgement" rather than "elaborate tick lists and a mechanical rule" (ibid).

The new level descriptions were suggested in order to rationalise the complexity of the old statements of attainment. Sir Ron's response was

presented as a common sense, but principled, mopping up of a previous (well intentioned) mess. He had listened to the teachers:

We are on schedule to deliver the comprehensive and urgent change teachers have requested.

(SCAA, 1994b, introductory letter)

Mixed with the need for rationalisation came some political adjustment. The teachers on the English advisory group issued a statement following the publication of the draft proposals for consultation. They welcomed the opportunity to have participated in the process; but they lamented the unseemly haste. They welcomed what they saw as the return of teacher involvement in pupil assessment. And they regretted what they saw as their advice in the report "changed out of recognition" (TES 13/5/1994). English, as with History, had retained a prominent political dimension. However, with the publication of the authorised revised version of November 1994 came the news that SCAA had responded to this criticism, and the five points made in their public letter of criticism (ibid) had been substantially conceded. Yet still a Guardian editorial (11/11/94) judged that

Standards for English have been tightened, with more emphasis on grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Also of note for this research project was the case of Information Technology. I have pointed out previously that matters that might be said to be the concern of the whole curriculum carried no statutory orders, and this might affect schools' decisions when they come to prioritise their curriculum planning and implementation.

Through the years of the National Curriculum thoughts on the status of IT, the repository of a range of skills, had vacillated between seeing it as being an adjunct of Design and Technology, being a subject in its own right, and being an essential element of the processes of the whole curriculum. And now here it reappeared, separate from Design and Technology, with a separate programme of study, and an order that specified its intended outcomes. It would partly be directly taught (KS1-3), and partly taught through other subjects (KS4). This demonstrated that it was not only the specified subjects which could have programmes of study, level descriptions, and recommendations of where they might be found in schools' curricula. It was perfectly possible to do so for cross-curricular areas too.

Various mapping exercises had been suggested over the years of the National Curriculum to accommodate the whole curriculum intentions within the subject-framed structure(eg DES, 1989, ch. 4; NCC,1990, part 2). These exercises had invariably exhorted curriculum planners and auditors to explore natural links between the themes and dimensions and the subjects, in order to realise the full curriculum first envisaged in 1987. As we have seen, the whole curriculum seemed often to have been accorded a different status (non-statutory advice, contrasted with statutory advice) and to have attracted a different priority in the moves to implementation.

The Dearing Review did not change this situation. It was acknowledged in the Final Report , in a brief paragraph in a section headed The Educational Challenge, that there is a requirement that the Curriculum should aspire to be more than the sum of its component subject parts, ie to what I have called the whole curriculum, as intended in the 1987 proposal:

*Education is not concerned only with equipping students
with the knowledge and skills they need to earn a living.*

It must help our young people to: use leisure time creatively; have respect for other people, other cultures and other beliefs; become good citizens; think things out for themselves; pursue a healthy life-style; and, not least, value themselves and their achievements. It should develop an appreciation of the richness of our cultural heritage and of the spiritual and moral dimensions to life. It must, moreover, be concerned to serve all our children well, whatever their background, sex, creed, ethnicity or talent.

(SCAA, 1994a, para 3.11)

However, a few paragraphs later the emphasis is back on the subjects as the report considers targets in education, and how to realise them:

The levels of achievement underlying these targets will be realised only if we can ensure that all pupils master the knowledge, understanding and skills required by the National Curriculum Orders for the core subjects and develop a basic competence in the use of information technology. These are the foundations of progress in education and training, and a continuing theme in this Report.

(ibid. para 3.15)

SCAA chose to inform teachers of the changes through their newsletter (SCAA, 1994c). The six page document contained a two page summary of subject changes. There was a full page on testing in 1994. Two pages introduced the changes, and detailed the timetable and mechanism for distributing further information to schools.

The remaining page dealt with "issues to do with the curriculum as a whole" (p.5). The only references which followed to the whole curriculum at key stages

3 and 4 were concerned with the use the new flexibility might be put to by schools as they considered progression from 14-19, and how to accommodate the possibility of diversity in the KS4 curriculum. Both references included mention of NCVQ at this point, a generous hint perhaps that the flexibility and potential for diversity were to be deployed in the opportunities for vocational education.

There was no mention of how the new arrangements might promote those matters referred to by Sir Ron Dearing in paragraph 3.11 (above) of his Final Report. Nor were any of the themes and dimensions of the 1987 proposal, subsequently reflected in statute law in section 1 of the ERA (1988), considered.

There was, however, a reference to methodology, if only once more to pass responsibility for this on to schools:

In the new Orders, what should be taught is defined; how is for schools to decide.

(op cit)

The summer of 1993 may be seen as a triumph for teachers and common sense over an unfeeling bureaucracy set clumsily in motion by ideological motives back in the dim mists of over half a decade past. Yet these mooted changes, in response to a sustained protest, do not yet substantially detract from the validity of those early analyses which suggested that the National Curriculum was part of a broad political programme, and this fact would characterise its development. A succession of ministers of state and a new prime minister have not substantially deflected either the force of testing, or the subject based nature of the reformed curriculum. Changes underway might be

seen as marginal. They aim, for example, to make testing easier, not abolish testing.

It can be argued that the "slimmed down" curriculum in many areas will see a slimming that reflects the early ideological need to control what is to be taught. There is no tangible concession visible to what has been styled the 'professional' lobby beyond the slimming down to make the processes less onerous, more efficient. Even the language of revision contains the original commitment and the same appeal to common sense, to the key words of the debate, without conceding very much. As with Fullan's (1992) 'Ready Fire Aim' analogy, the main hit has been achieved, and the reforms can afford the pause of minor revision.

Indeed, the language employed at the publication of the Dearing revision by the fifth Education Secretary to preside over the National Curriculum, Gillian Shephard, would not have been out of place in 1987 at the time of the original 1987 launch:

We have insisted on more emphasis of the basics,. More emphasis on grammar, punctuation and spelling in English. More emphasis on arithmetic and mental arithmetic in maths. More emphasis on British history in history. We want our children to be well-equipped.

(reported in the Evening Standard, 10/11/1994)

Through 1990-1993. it could be argued that the National Curriculum reflected Lawton's metaphor of a tightening grip. Prima facie, the Dearing revisions turn back the great curriculum steamroller of 1988. The content of subjects has been lessened, and the testing and assessment of them also. There is an

apparent response to the criticisms aimed by teachers at the lengthy and unwieldy processes. Two explanations of that change's bureaucratic rather than professional character suggest themselves.

One is that for all the rhetoric of change, there is little evidence from Dearing that he really had understood the language of the curriculum as well as he understood the need to reduce workload. The space he has created, a concession to the professionals' needs to exercise their 'professionalism', is a very woolly idea as expressed in the Report, and might be seen almost as an accidental result of pruning. What is to be done with it? It is to be given back to schools. For what purpose? That is to be determined, although at KS4 one possibility is frequently mentioned, that of vocational education, and this is discussed extensively in Chapter 5 of the Final Report. Otherwise, the time released:

provides scope for the school to draw upon particular strengths in its teaching staff; to take advantage of learning opportunities provided by the local environment; and to respond to the needs and enthusiasms of particular children.

(SCAA, 1994, para.3.24)

It might be argued that it is a peculiar reversal of planning a curriculum to decide first upon the resources available (teachers, the particular environment, particular children's needs and enthusiasms) and then derive from that a curriculum. In the past such matters of delivery of the curriculum have followed deliberations upon the nature of knowledge and learning and society, and what children ought to learn and be entitled to learn. This indeed was the thrust of the HMI (and "others") planning, to which the National Curriculum authors acknowledged a large debt.

A second explanation is that the Final Report may be seen as a conciliatory

gesture, for conciliation may offer some respite for the government. This can be seen in the common sense sweeping away of many of the bureaucratic demands of the programmes of study, and the assessment system, with its multitude of attainment targets; concessions to the charge of overload.

However, It is difficult to discern a tangible substantial retreat. When Mr Chris McGovern launched a personal counterblast to his colleagues on the History Group, accusing them of still selling old fashioned virtues short, the response of that group was to assert their solid conservative credentials, demonstrating the amount of dates and events, especially British ones, still lodged in the programmes of study (TES, 14/1/1994; Sweetman, 1994).

It might be said that the changes indicate that the industrial lobby within the Conservative Party has increased its influence over the current revisions. This is reflected both in the detailed discussion in the Final Report on the expanding possibilities for vocational education in the restructured curriculum, and the keynote introductory paragraph to the report:

"Upon the education of the people of this country, the future of this country depends."

If this was true when Disraeli spoke these words in 1874 when Britain was at the height of its economic power, it is even more so today. In a highly competitive world there is nowhere to hide.....Our future as a nation depends upon the improvements we can make to our education system.

This emphasis on the needs of industry in the current revisions was seen by some to carry the likely effect of leading towards separation of children, albeit

in the final stage of compulsory education. A discussion in the TES of the published proposals (TES, 11/11/1994) included an account of the ways in which the GNVQs might be adapted by SCAA to provide vocational options for KS4. It was reported that "sources close" to SCAA had expressed worries that plans for different level assessments for GNVQ at the foundation and intermediate levels (ie at those levels targeted for 14-16 year olds) might "lead to pupils being split into sheep and goats". Foundation level (equivalent to GCSE grades D-G) and intermediate level (equivalent to GCSE grades A-C) would have substantially different content, and therefore different assessment. The differentiated assessment patterns would lead naturally to a separation of pupils, requiring setting arrangements at this level. This would be an automatic implication of such developments. How to decide upon such a separation might lead back to the SATs. A series of formal tests at 14, just prior to exercising what choices schools offer at KS4, might provide the evidence schools need upon which to base their decisions to separate pupils, should they wish to do so.

Conclusion

In the Dearing proposals there is less prescription through the programmes of study, but prescription there still is. There is now space, but it is unclear what is to be done with it. There are still tests, and they will operate on slimmed down subjects, making testing easier.

There will still be public reporting of tests, and hence league tables of success. The curriculum is still to be broad, an *entitlement*, and enable access to it for all. The *space* within subjects offers an opportunity to teachers for the "exercise of professional judgement" (Dearing, in the TES, 24/09/1993).

If we refer back to the original proposal, and its stated intentions in these respects, we might yet observe that, with reservations, this slimmed down subject curriculum has the potential to accommodate the full original prescription of a curriculum with themes and dimensions. It offers space, and breadth and *entitlement* and access. Yet only time will tell, and the reservations are many.

The Dearing version of the National Curriculum, following the various amendments of a number of secretaries of state for education, retains the rhetoric of the original while moving yet further from its claimed roots. When Dearing talks of *entitlement*, and breadth, and access, the words can no longer be seen to retain any connotation that harks back to the idea of *entitlement* as outlined by HMI. Yet this was the origin of the concept of *entitlement* embraced by the National Curriculum in the 1987 proposal.

Dearing has at times expressed the need for the curriculum to retain these aspects, but the substance generated by his review can be seen to have been removed yet another step from this.

The over-arching structure of the original is still in place, essentially an organising (and political) vision rather than a conceptual one. There are subjects, and they are to be tested. Statute law places legal requirements upon schools to fulfill their obligations in these respects. Cross curricular issues, such as those I outlined in Chapter 5, are not accorded the same elaborate mechanisms and urgency given to these core needs, just as they were not in the original specification.

The Dearing Review had a remit established by the politicians who commissioned it. What was *not* commissioned was a review of the whole

curriculum and its aims. And so the changes which are taking place are happening in a kind of aimless conceptual vacuum, each subject party working individually to meet its own remit from SCAA.

This confusion, combined with continued use of the key words of curriculum design, could be detected in Sir Ron's introduction to the second round of consultation:

At key stage 3, how can a commitment to principles of breadth, entitlement and access, be balanced with the challenge of providing a curriculum which can motivate pupils who are becoming more independent and more aware of their individual interests and learning needs?

(Dearing, in the TES, 24/09/1993)

The challenge of "motivation" at key stage three was, then, to be a design consideration rather than one of methodology or delivery. And this for children aged 11-14. It is perhaps not surprising then that History and Geography and Music were removed subsequently from the KS4 curriculum, while this curriculum could continue to be described thus:

Equally, it is clear that some elements of the curriculum must continue to be prescribed as an entitlement for all children.

(ibid, my emphasis)

Clearly, subjects were to be individually selected and deselected, and any concept of a whole curriculum within which they might play their part was not to be discussed as such. The obvious point of comparison here is that the original 1987 specification stated clearly a debt to HMI among others, and in the

subsequent assemblage of subjects each could be seen to derive its justification for inclusion in part as it individually contributed to the "areas of experience" outlined by HMI. With no reference point beyond the 1987 specification, *entitlement* no longer needs more than to be asserted. No arguments need be adduced for the lack of a mandatory requirement to include aesthetic or human areas of experience in the *entitlement* of pupils between the ages of 14-16. Their exclusion can rest on criteria such as provision of motivation, or vocational needs, or the needs of teachers to exercise "professional judgement". These are not unwelcome considerations, but nor have they in the recent past acquired the status of overriding criteria in the design of the curriculum.

The wider aspects of a whole curriculum were scantily dealt with by Dearing. There are references to Careers and Sex Education (SCAA, 1994a, para 4.47) as matters of legal requirement, but the full range of matters hitherto referred to as the essential matters described by HMI, and incorporated in the themes and dimensions of the National Curriculum (NCC, 1990), are scarcely discussed. These, when employed appropriately, as well as the subjects of the 1987 proposal, comprise the curricular balance and breadth and relevance that were suggested in that original proposal to be an *entitlement* for all pupils of compulsory schooling age.

This *entitlement* was to be achieved for all pupils through the appropriate *differentiation* of the curriculum as children's needs and aptitudes required. I suggested in my conclusion to the empirical findings of the research, that such a worthy intention would be best served through planning that entertained separation of pupils as a potentially necessary but only last resort of curriculum planning; and certainly not as a first or blanket resort, as in banding or streaming.

We have seen that the assessment procedures introduced as an accompaniment to the National Curriculum led, naturally, to moves to set children. This trend was reinforced by the introduction of the SATs, and the importance they acquired through, among other aspects, published league tables of pupil achievement, and the need for teachers and schools to be seen to be doing well in relation to these. We have seen now that the tests will remain in substantially as powerful a form. And we have seen further developments in the latter stage of education that might tend naturally to lead to the "separation of the sheep from the goats". The future of a curriculum for all seems as confused as ever it was.

Thus the possibility for moving closer to the specification I outlined in Chapter 5 for the *entitlement* curriculum comes from the *space* released through slimming down the curriculum. The inertia encouraged by the absence of parity of statutory specification and requirement for the themes was observed at the 1993 meeting of the Secondary Heads Association (SHA), and the response from SCAA, summarised by the TES, underlined this situation:

A spokeswoman from SCAA said the themes were not compulsory, but the whole curriculum was greater than the statutory orders.

(TES, 25/2/1994)

It has been variously observed that, when given space to exercise their professional wisdom, teachers seize that and hence establish some form of ownership of the innovation. The Dearing review has suggested that at the stages predominantly under scrutiny in this research, KS3 and KS4, more time will be handed back to the schools to dispense as they see fit. It will be an interesting reflection on this development to see how that space is employed.

A natural follow-up research project to this thesis, therefore, would be an investigation of the use of that space. The proposition could be simply stated:

Will the Dearing space be recovered by teachers to extend their view of pupil *entitlement*, or will it be appropriated to the need to perform as well as possible within the narrowly defined parameters of the testing system?

ABBREVIATIONS

APU	Assessment of Performance Unit
ASE	Association for Science Education
AT	Attainment Target
CPS	Centre for Policy Studies
DES	Department of Education and Science
DFE	Department for Education
ERA	Education Reform Act 1988
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
HOD	Head of Department
HSU	History Study Unit
INSET	In-service Training
KS	Key Stage, as in KS3
LEA	Local Education Authority
LAPP	Lower Attaining Pupils Programme
NC	National Curriculum
NCC	National Curriculum Council
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PC	Profile Component
PoS	Programmes of Study
PSE	Personal and Social Education
SAT	Standard Assessment Task
SBU	School Based Unit (used by History teachers to refer to the option HSUs in the 1991 <u>Final Report</u>)
SCAA	School Curriculum and Assessment Authority
SCHP	Schools Council History Project
SEAC	School Examinations and Assessment Council
SEG	Southern Examining Group
TES	Times Educational Supplement
TGAT	Task Group on Assessment and Testing
TVEI	Technical and Vocational Education Initiative
WO	Welsh Office

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix A

ORGANISATION OF CLASSES

1. Does the school have a general philosophy about pupil grouping?

broad banding ☐ streaming ☐ department autonomy ☐
mixed ability ☐ setting ☐

2. In what ways will your classes be organised in year 8?

broad banding ☐ streamed ☐ mixed ability ☐
set by department ☐ set by timetable link with others ☐

3. What class sizes will you have in year 8 ?

4. In what ways will your classes be organised in year 9?

broad banding ☐ streamed ☐ mixed ability ☐
set by department ☐ set by timetable link with others ☐

5. What class sizes will you have in year 9 ?

6. In what ways will your classes be organised in year 10 ?

broad banding ☐ streamed ☐ mixed ability ☐
set by department ☐ set by timetable link with others ☐

7. What class sizes will you have in year 10 ?

8. In what ways will your classes be organised in year 11 ?

broad banding ☐ streamed ☐ mixed ability ☐
set by department ☐ set by timetable link with others ☐

9. What class sizes will you have in year 11 ?

10. In your opinion, for implementing the National Curriculum, are

these class sizes :	favourable	<input type="checkbox"/>
	satisfactory	<input type="checkbox"/>
	unsatisfactory	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. In your opinion, do these class sizes allow teachers to attend to the individual needs of all the children in the group ?

	favourably	<input type="checkbox"/>
	satisfactorily	<input type="checkbox"/>
	unsatisfactorily	<input type="checkbox"/>

ASSESSMENT

12. How much are you aware of current plans for testing at 14 and 16 ?

	a good deal	<input type="checkbox"/>
	a bit	<input type="checkbox"/>
	very little	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUPPORT AND PREPARATION FOR THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

13. How easy has it been/is it to prepare for the National Curriculum in your area ?

	quite easy	<input type="checkbox"/>
	O.K.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	quite difficult	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. Have you been able to buy the books and equipment that you need to implement the National Curriculum?

	plentifully	<input type="checkbox"/>
	well resourced	<input type="checkbox"/>
	as needed	<input type="checkbox"/>
	some	<input type="checkbox"/>
	quite inadequate	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUPPORT AND PREPARATION FOR THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

15. Do you feel INSET support has been available to you as and when
you needed it ?

plentifully ☐

quite a bit ☐

as needed ☐

some-not enough ☐

quite inadequate ☐

16. Has the content of INSET been right for you in your preparation
for the National Curriculum ?

very much so ☐

some ☐

not much so ☐

IMPLEMENTING SCIENCE

17. What level of technical support do you have in school for Science?
Please express in terms of full time staff, and say whether qualified
or not.

number qualified ☐

number unqualified ☐

18. What do you consider to be the minimum level of technician support
needed to implement the proposals effectively in your school?

number qualified ☐

number unqualified ☐

IMPLEMENTING SCIENCE

19. Do you think you have sufficient technician support to implement the National Curriculum?

seriously under-resourced	<input type="checkbox"/>
somewhat under-resourced	<input type="checkbox"/>
adequately resourced	<input type="checkbox"/>
well resourced	<input type="checkbox"/>
very well resourced	<input type="checkbox"/>

YOUR ATTITUDE TO THE PROPOSALS

20. What would you say your attitude to the proposals was for your subject at this point in their development ?

very positive	<input type="checkbox"/>
positive	<input type="checkbox"/>
neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>
unfavourable	<input type="checkbox"/>
very negative	<input type="checkbox"/>

THANK YOU

APPENDIX B

BEECHWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

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OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



SCHOOL PROSPECTUS 1990-1991

APPENDIX B

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SCHOOL PROSPECTUS 1990-1991

APPENDIX B

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SCHOOL PROSPECTUS 1990-1991

What are the School's Aims?

The School aims to bring about effective learning in a disciplined yet caring environment, in which our main concern is to meet the academic and pastoral needs of the individual. The curriculum is designed to cater for students' needs in the modern world. It is intended to fit them for employment, to encourage an active pursuit of knowledge and to provide a range of skills, interests and insights which will help them lead a full, interesting and useful life.

What is the School's Curriculum?

The Government's decision to introduce the National Curriculum is a major initiative which is designed to ensure that all students have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Its aims are in line with those that the School has always held and development work in the School to meet its requirements is already well advanced.

Each student's progress through the curriculum is best thought of in two stages, the two Foundation Years, and the two years of GCSE courses. When the School moved into its new 12-16 organisation, we adopted new names for the years to reflect these stages:

12+ (Year 8)	Foundation 1
13+ (Year 9)	Foundation 2

14+ (Year 10)	Senior
15+ (Year 11)	Upper Senior

The stages are described below, and also mapped out diagrammatically.

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A Senior Class

SCHOOL PROSPECTUS 1990-1991

The

MIDTOWN

Partnership

The school aims to provide an atmosphere where pupils have the opportunity to perform to the best of their abilities.

We encourage pupils to demonstrate positive attitudes to work and expect them to display a respect for other people and the environment. This, we feel, can be best achieved in an atmosphere of good order and tension free discipline.

The school places a great deal of emphasis on equipping pupils with certain skills and attitudes. These they will need in order to play an active part in adult life.

We also recognise that none of our aims and expectations can be attempted without the support and involvement of parents and the community. Securing that support is one of the main priorities of the school.

We are proud of our school, its traditions and achievements. We warmly invite your family to become part of "The Partnership".

Our Six Specific Aims

- ☐ To seek to achieve high academic standards.
- ☐ To develop the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to equip our pupils appropriately for work, home, leisure and community.
- ☐ To give our pupils an appetite for learning and to stimulate an interest in further and higher education.
- ☐ To create a caring community and atmosphere in which our pupils feel themselves equally and sympathetically regarded. To make vigorous attempts to identify and meet their various needs
- ☐ To meet the National requirements within a broadly based curriculum and to give our pupils access to it.
- ☐ To encourage sensitivity, tolerance, compassion, flexibility and independence in all our pupils.

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THE CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is based on an accepted set of values and aims which are as follows:

Values

Our values for education include the following:

- a) awareness of the needs and aspirations of all pupils whatever their cultural background.
- b) access and entitlement for all to the full curriculum range of educational opportunities.
- c) recognition of the unique value of each individual both as a separate being and within the context of the whole community.
- d) to view learning as a life long process.

School Aims

- 1) To develop lively, enquiring minds, and the ability to question, to argue rationally and to apply themselves to tasks.
- 2) To acquire a reasoned set of attitudes, values and beliefs including a respect for and understanding of other people's religious and moral values and ways of life.
- 3) To acquire an understanding of the social, economic and political order of the world and of the inter-dependence for individuals, groups and nations.
- 4) To appreciate human achievement in the creative and expressive arts, science, technology, humanities, physical pursuits; and to experience a sense of personal achievement in some of those fields.
- 5) To develop self-awareness, a sense of self-respect, the capacity to live full lives as independent self-motivated adults with the will to contribute to the welfare of others and to society.
- 6) To appreciate the complex human interaction and interdependence with the environment system, locally and globally, and to develop a caring and responsible attitude to the environment.

7) To develop co-operative and interpersonal skills by learning to share common objectives through working in groups.

Our curriculum is wide and varied and has in many ways been a model for the National Curriculum which all schools must now follow. For the past five years we have offered core and foundation subjects which are now a legal requirement. Consequently changes to our curriculum have been minimal and achieved smoothly.

Our curriculum arrangements are designed to ensure that all pupils achieve success and reach their full potential in a wide range of subjects.

YEARS 8 AND 9

In their first two years at fields all our pupils will study the same subjects. In Year 8 boys will stay together in their tutor groups for all their lessons. This will continue into Year 9 except in Mathematics and Modern Languages where boys will be set by ability.

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APPENDIX C

AGENDA FOR AN INTERVIEW ON NATIONAL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENTS

TESTING AND ASSESSMENT: EXPERIENCES AND IMPRESSIONS

ORGANISING CHILDREN FOR LEARNING : IMPACT OF THE CHANGES

TRAINING AND INSET FOR THE PROPOSALS: ADEQUATE AND EFFECTIVE?

LINKS WITH OTHER ASPECTS OF THE CURRICULUM / THE WHOLE CURRICULUM

PURPOSE OF THE CHANGES : ENTITLEMENT, DIFFERENTIATION, RAISED STANDARDS

IMPACT OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM ON YOUR AREA

YOUR FEELINGS AND ATTITUDES ABOUT THE NEW THINGS

Appendix D

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Corrigenda

The following references have been omitted from the bibliography in error:

Demaine, J. (1988) Teachers' work, curriculum and the New Right, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 9, 3.

Giddens, A. (1979) *Central problems in social theory: action, structure and contradiction in social analysis*, London: the Macmillan Press.

Graham, D. (1992) Scapegoat for all seasons, in *Guardian Education* 13/10/1992 (extracts from *A Lesson for Us All - The Making of the National Curriculum*, London; Routledge).

Lacey, C. (1970) *Hightown Grammar*, Manchester: Manchester University Press

Also, a number of minor alterations were not carried out prior to binding.

On page 49 the reference to Knight should read (1989), not (1990).

On page 76 the reference to Lacey should be dated 1970, not 1981; and the reference there to Ball should be dated 1981, not 1983.

On page 231 the reference to HMI (1991) should read DES/HMI (1991a).

On page 277 the reference to the *Final Report* should read (SCAA, 1994), and not (DFE, 1994).

On page 279 the reference to the *TES* should read (7/1/1994), not (7/1/1993).

On page 283 the reference to (SCAA 1994d) should read (SCAA 1994e).

On page 288 the reference to (SCAA 1993) should read (SCAA 1994a).

The school brochures in the appendix are dated there 1990-1, which is the year in which they were published and distributed to prospective parents. In the text they are dated by the year to which they applied.