THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR

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INTRODUCTION

Through my research I wish to discover the underlying causes of disruptive behaviour within the classroom context. In order to do this, I feel it necessary to view classroom behaviour through the eyes of both teachers and pupils. Through my teaching I can view situations from the teachers perspective. With the help and co-operation of my pupils I can perhaps see the other side of the teacher pupil relationship.

In order to discover the root of disruptive behaviour it will be necessary to review the literature. This will allow me to build on research already carried out. Information gathered through reviewing the literature may be found in the first chapter. The following chapter will involve reviewing teachers attitudes and expectations. In this chapter I will discuss how teachers may view pupils differently and therefore stimulate different behaviour.

Through my methodology I will further explore the teacher pupil relationship. This will involve finding the elements that create a successful teacher pupil relationship. It is through these elements that disruptive behaviour may be minimised and learning may as a result become effective. This research will be carried out through a questionnaire and case studies.

Finally I will look at ways appropriate behaviour may be encouraged. This will involve looking at the teachers behaviour and teaching skills and through this finding out how they influence pupil behaviour.

Through this body of work I aim to resolve questions that disruptive behaviour may cause teachers to ask themselves. I intend to find these answers by furthering my own understanding through the means mentioned above.

CHAPTER 1

THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR:

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Defining Behaviour

Behaviour may be described as any observable action. Disruptive behaviour in the classroom is therefore any observable action which is not appropriate to the classroom situation. This may include a pupil being argumentative, abusive, constantly talking, fiddling, lying or bullying other pupils. Any behaviour that causes the adult concern because of what the child is doing or not doing within the classroom context may be considered problem behaviour for the teacher.

There can be no absolute definition as to what constitutes disruptive behaviour, behaviour must be read in context. Appropriate behaviour at a football match would not be considered appropriate behaviour within the classroom. Individuals perceive and react differently to others behaviour. Tolerance levels amongst teachers vary, as do their reactions towards pupil behaviour. Pupils within the school situation must have the ability to modify their behaviour whenever necessary, being flexible in order to meet the expectations of various teachers. Behaviour that is considered disruptive by the maths teacher may be viewed as creative by the drama teacher. J. Lawrence, D. Steed and P. Young consider "disruption in school is behaviour out of place". (1)

Many factors may lead to disruptive behaviour, the problem may come from within the child, his/her personality traits may under certain circumstances constitute disruptive behaviour within the classroom. Living under adverse family circumstances may lead to disruptive behaviour. The school experience may also be to blame, as pupils battle to retain their self-respect and dignity within a system that does not facilitate them. The blame may also be attributed to the particular teacher. The complexities of actions and reactions may break down and damage communication. This can also cause problems.

Influential Factors Outside School

When seeking the causes of disruptive behaviour we must look at the childs' whole experience. Much of the childs' life is carried on outside school and is beyond the school's control. The child is a product of his/her own environment. Rutter through his studies links children's behaviour disorders and family circumstances.

> Disruptive pupils bring to the classroom the deleterious effects of their home backgrounds. These are frequently cold harsh environments, scarred by marital disharmony, inconsistent and unpredictable child rearing practices, overcrowding and financial problems. (2)

Adverse experiences outside school may lead to disruptive behaviour within school. However it can not be said that all pupils who live under adverse circumstances will be disruptive in school. Individuals under the same circumstances will often react differently. According to personal construct theorists Bannister and Fransella: "each individual experiences events unequally, " (3) as everyone perceives differently what is a necessity, in order to be deprived the individual must be denied a necessity.

Being denied basic necessities when living within a family struck by extreme poverty may be inevitable. Such families are limited as many choices may be denied to them. According to studies by Reid, lack of choices caused by poverty may cause parents to "adopt child rearing practices of which they themselves do not approve" (4). Parents who have to struggle to supply their children with their day-to-day needs, and not always succeeding to do so, may feel inadequate themselves. This could well lead to resentment and frustration. In extreme cases, this may cause parents to be rejecting and violent. Pupils who live under extreme adverse circumstances are faced with problems that cause them to react to situations differently, sometimes causing disruption.

Influential Factors Within the School

By the time they have reached secondary school, children who have difficulty behaving appropriately within the school may have undergone many negative experiences in school. this may be due to misreading situations and reacting in ways that were considered inappropriate by both staff and peers. Children display both positive and negative behaviour. The child's behaviour affects his/her ability to learn. Effective learning may be stunted by negative behaviour. This causes the child another problem as he/she becomes frustrated with his/her inability to keep up with his/her peers.

The first person to experience the problem is the child, as the school experience becomes increasingly difficult, and he/she struggles with work and relationships.

The child is continually in trouble and, reacting in the only way known, becomes disruptive. Paul Cooper claims that,

> those who experience failure and rejection internalise these experiences as an indication of their inadequacy and inability to succeed in the school system, and so in turn reject and subvert the institution which so demeans them. (5)

Clearly it can be seen that the pupils experiences in school effect both his/her ability to learn and his/her behaviour.

Within the school, experience and expectations are very different from values instilled at home, the pupil may become confused and intimidated. Pupils whose parents show a lack of interest in their schooling, may see school as being irrelevant as it does not relate to their lives outside the classroom.

Behaviour changes as the situation changes. Individuals react differently to each other. Pupils who are not considered disruptive at times may display disruptive behaviour. Pupils considered disruptive by some teachers are not disruptive in other teachers classes. This may be attributed to individuals tolerance levels as they vary from teacher to teacher. Behaviour considered disruptive by one teacher may be viewed as being acceptable by some of his/her colleagues. This may account for variations in teachers reports of pupil behaviour. However, it does not account for the extreme changes in behaviour some pupils exhibit. The pupil does not change personality between classes, he/she is the same person. So why is he/she behaving differently? The pupil is reacting with a different person, when the teacher changes. What does the teacher do to cause either positive or negative disruptive reactions?

Teachers Role in Causing Disruptive Behaviour

Teachers may cause disruption in their own classes. This occurs without the teacher being aware of it. When teachers seek reasons for pupils disruptive behaviour, they often focus on factors beyond their control, such as factors within the child, his/her home and family, or the child's socio-economic background. All these factors are beyond the teachers control and therefore, the teacher absolves his/herself of responsibility. This can be seen as what psychologists term Attribution Theory. It causes individuals to

> ... interpret the behaviour of others, tending to seek explanations which avoid challenges to our self image (6)

This attitude may also be seen when teachers label children as having behavioural problems or being disturbed. The teacher may view the situation as being out of his/her hands as he/she was trained to teach not to deal with disturbed children. This is for the teacher an easy way to view the situation. However, the teacher by doing this is neglecting his/her responsibility. Teachers must recognise the role they play in causing disruptive behaviour in their own classrooms and accept responsibility for solving the problem.

Pupils have their own ideas as to what constitutes a good teacher,. A teacher who is effective in the classroom, shows respect towards pupils, teaches in a clear and organised manner, gives interesting lessons, and treats the pupils as individuals yet equals. It is when teachers break these unwritten rules disruptive behaviour occurs within the classroom.

Malicious behaviour is often a device used by pupils as a means of restoring self-respect. This type of behaviour is often used when teachers demean pupils. When pupils feel they are not being treated as persons, they may react by being abusive or disrespectful. The hidden rule at work here involves what Rosser and Harré see as a principle of reciprocity, according to which "the pupils try to restore themselves as human beings in situations where they feel they are not being treated as persons". (7)

Disrespect towards teachers is often caused by teachers being disrespectful towards pupils. Therefore, good behaviour within the classroom must be earned by the teacher, and taught to the pupils by good example. Teachers who demand polite behaviour, must demonstrate polite behaviour towards pupils.

Pupils react perhaps most strongly to teachers demonstrating behaviour that they consider unfair. This includes unfair grades, wrongly placed blame and remarks considered insulting. Authority is often not considered acceptable unless it is exercised on a fair and unbiased basis. Disruptive behaviour is often a symbolic rejection of authority. It may be said that when authority is not used in a fair and productive manner, pupils may feel justified in displaying disruptive behaviour. According to Willis, research showed in a working class boys school that:

> the most basic obvious and explicit dimensions of counter-school culture is entrenched generalised and personal opposition to authority. (8)

Willis considered the rejection of school and teachers as the boys' way of obtaining status in a system that wished to demean them and rob them of their dignity.

Teachers who fail to treat pupils with respect force them to gain respect elsewhere, often pupils can gain a sort of respect from their peers by being disruptive in class. Teachers who do not follow their own rules of respecting others, cannot expect to be respected by others.

Teachers who do comply with the pupils unwritten rules are deemed by the pupils as being a "good" teacher. Studies carried out by Marsh, Rosser and Harré on children's' perceptions of a "good" teacher showed such a teacher as someone who:

> treats you as a person, knows your name, helps you learn and feel confident, takes your ideas seriously, isn't arrogant and doesn't pick on you. (9)

It is not only how teachers behave that may cause problems; the way teachers teach may also cause pupils to misbehave. Pupils rate highly the teacher who possesses good teaching skills, who is organised and creates a good work atmosphere in the class. It has been found that behaviour is best in a work-centred environment, where the teacher has plenty of time for feedback and to help with problems that arise. However, as numbers rise within the classroom, the teacher will find it necessary to be well organised and clear. This is important as he/she will not have much time to solve individual problems.

The numbers within the class play a significant role in the pupils' behaviour patterns. This was observed by Rutter in London secondary schools.

> Where numbers were large, behaviour was worse, possibly because teachers had less opportunity to deal with individual problems and felt the need to reprimand more. (10)

Disruptive behaviour may occur more often in overcrowded classrooms. However, the teacher is responsible for the education of his/her pupils. Therefore, he/she must stimulate learning by being prepared and involving the whole class in the lesson.

Boredom is often the cause of disruptive behaviour, pupils who are bored often feel that their boredom is a licence to misbehave. Pupils are often expected to spend much time listening, completing exercises and copying notes. During these periods, pupils become bored and seek diversion. Pupils behave better if more effort is made to engage them in active learning, encouraging them to participate in the class. In order to maximise the learning experience, teachers need to be adaptable in their methods of teaching.

Boredom within the classroom may seriously damage the teacher-pupil relationship as teachers reprimand and pupils grow resentful. This usually results in disruptive, attention-seeking behaviour or the pupils withdrawal of attention.

Lively, extroverted pupils are often considered disruptive within the classroom situation, as sometimes their behaviour is considered inappropriate. Teachers may be reluctant to allow lively pupils to work in groups. However, such strategies may prove to be motivating. Pupils' energy should be channelled into productive learning rather than disruptive behaviour.

Pupils need teachers who are approachable. Strictness is valued by pupils, yet harshness is disliked, as is softness. Pupils respond well to teachers who have a

sense of humour. Humour may be used to relieve tension within the class or diffuse a situation. Stebbins notes how:

> Humour can function as comic relief, offering refreshing momentary respite from the efforts of lengthy group concentration.

Humour may be used as a tool to refocus concentration. However humour must never be confused with sarcasm, to do this would be extremely damaging. Sarcasm could hurt pupils and damage their self-esteem. This could lead to feelings of dislike and resentment. Humour used to relieve boredom can prove to be effective and may reduce disruptive behaviour.

Teachers must ensure that the lesson is suitable for the ability range he/she is teaching. Lyndsay Stone points out that,

> Inappropriate behaviour may occur due to inappropriate teaching. (12)

When teaching a mixed ability group, the importance of pitching the lesson correctly is crucial, as pupils who are less able quickly become frustrated, causing disruption. Lessons pitched below the ability of more able pupils often results in boredom and disruption. When teaching a mixed ability class the teacher must be flexible ensuring success for less able pupils while structuring to allow more able pupils to excel, allowing them some responsibility over their own learning. this is important as success breeds success.

Disruptive behaviour may simply be caused by a break down in communications between the teacher and certain pupils. Some children relating to teachers a problem, and react against the whole school experience. Pupils and teachers come

from such different social or ethnic backgrounds that they have little in common.

They have not undergone similar experiences. In circumstances such as these,

conscious efforts must be made to avoid misunderstandings.

Conclusion

Behaviour out of context within the classroom may be viewed as problem behaviour. Pupils usually adapt their behaviour in order that it be appropriate within the classroom. It may be the teachers tolerance levels and expectations that set standards as to what is viewed as acceptable behaviour within the classroom.

Adapting to school, may be easier for some children than for others. Children are a product of their environment and bring their whole life experience into the classroom. Adverse circumstances within the home may contribute to disruptive behaviour within school. The teacher should not dismiss such pupils as being beyond their reach. Teachers should concentrate on solving problems within the classroom and creating an atmosphere in which pupils can learn effectively.

Disruptive behaviour may stunt effective learning, this may cause a domino effect. The inability to learn may result in frustration, boredom and disruptive behaviour. The school experience may be more alien to some pupils as expectations at home and at school may differ dramatically. This may result in pupils reacting to teachers in ways they do not expect or understand.

Teachers must take responsibility for behaviour within the classroom. Problems can be avoided by positive teacher behaviour. Teachers must view pupils as persons and show sensitivity towards their feelings as otherwise pupils may use malicious behaviour to gain identity and attention. Respect must be earned, teachers who demonstrate respect towards pupils and fulfil their learning needs are likely to gain

respect. Teachers must also prove themselves to be fair as authority must be administered fairly in order that it be acceptable.

Teachers must be flexible and plan lessons taking into account, the individuals and circumstances under which they have to teach. Larger numbers will allow the teacher less time for personal attention. While mixed ability will result in the teacher having to design lessons that secure both challenge and success. This is important as pupils may become bored and boredom may be viewed as a licence to disrupt the class.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 1

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CHAPTER 2

TEACHERS ATTITUDES AND EXPECTATIONS

Interpreting Behaviour

Teachers attitudes towards the individuals within the classroom may stem from various sources. Teachers may interpret behaviour based on past experiences, personal bias or how they immediately perceive it, thus interpreting behaviour prematurely.

Teachers who have previously undergone bad experiences within the classroom may be premature in interpreting behaviour as being deviant. Teachers' anxiety can lead to a distorted view of classroom events. Feeling insecure within the classroom context will cause the teacher to view minor incidents as threatening. "It is known that many teachers report considerable tension and anxiety while engaged in teaching activities". (1)

The extent to which the teacher suffers from anxiety may be directly related to how the teacher views him/herself. The teacher who lacks self-confidence may be over concerned about how pupils perceive him/her. Teachers who feel they are incompetent and lack teaching skills, will lack self-confidence when teaching. "To be a successful teacher one has to develop technical competence and self confidence to use those skills". (2) How the teacher views the self affects how he/she will interpret behaviour. Therefore, teachers should delay interpreting behaviour until they have fully observed it, otherwise conclusions may be inaccurate.

Pupils also interpret the behaviour of their teachers, drawing conclusions and making assumptions, that have little accuracy and may even be opposed to the teachers intentions. Pupils feelings of adequacy may influence reactions to the teacher. Teaching methods used such as praise, criticism or ability grouping, may cause certain pupils to feel victimised or humiliated under certain classroom conditions. This may occur even though the teacher is well meaning and do not realise methods such as ability grouping within the class causes status differences within the class situation. Seating patterns used when ability grouping may contribute to:

> Create status differences among students and engender an attitude of inferiority in low achievers that will remove them from the mainstream of classroom life. (3)

Teachers in general do not intend to be unfair, however it may well be impossible to divide attention equally among so many people. However, the teacher must be aware that inequality exists within the classroom. Teachers should make attempts to distribute their attention equally among their pupils. It is important that the teacher is aware of the role seating plays within the classroom. The "action zone" is the name given to the seats directly within the teachers line of vision. This usually involves the front row and the middle aisle. The "action zone" is the section of the class where most teacher-pupil interaction takes place. According to Adams and Biddle, pupils seated within the action zone,

> received more opportunity to talk than others, possibly because teachers tended to stand in front, where attention was focused on the students in immediate view. (4)

Pupils seated in the action zone receive more teacher attention. This may be resolved if the teacher does not take up the same position within the room every day.

Teachers should be aware of how they distribute their time between low achievers and high achievers. Rowe states that teachers "did not realise that they were giving low achieving students less time to respond and thereby making response more difficult". (5) It has also been observed that high achieving pupils receive more praise for correct answers than their low achieving peers.

Discovering Bias

Teachers may make conscious decisions to distribute their time and attention equally once they become aware of what efforts must be made to achieve this as some pupils demand more attention. It may be far more difficult for teachers to deal with their likes and dislikes within the class, as teachers and pupils interact on a personal level. In order for the teacher to be fair, he/she must realise that the first step to fair treatment of pupils is to admit preferences exist. Teachers should however, make conscious efforts to react positively to all pupils whether they like or dislike them, they should also make sure that they interact equally often with all pupils.
According to Carew and Lightfoot,

> Teachers affective reactions towards students influence how often and under what circumstances teachers interact with students. (6)

Evidence shows that teachers possess perceptions of the ideal student, and interact more positively and frequently with individuals who fit this image. According to

Brophy, teachers view more favourably pupils who are "helpful, neat, happy, physically attractive, socially mature and unlikely to be daydreaming". (7) Denscombe has found that teachers have negative reactions towards `noisy' pupils. This is due to the teacher perceiving such behaviour within the classroom as being incompetent on their part, and fear their colleagues will also perceive it as being so. "Since their behaviour might be interpreted by other teachers as evidence of professional incompetence". (8)

Teachers ideas of the ideal pupil may make it hard for them to show equal consideration to all pupils. This may be because teachers perceptions of the ideal pupil is formed by the teachers personal bias. Such bias will undoubtedly lead teachers to misinterpret behaviour and react unfairly within the classroom. "When we become aware of our own attitudes we can control our behaviour more optimally". (9) Sharp and Green concluded that,

> While teachers display a moral concern that every child matters in practice there is a subtle process of sponsorship developing, where opportunity is being offered to some and closed off to others. Social stratification is emerging". (10)

Teachers can only treat pupils in a fair way when they become aware of their own feelings about certain pupils. It may not be possible to like all pupils equally as individuals react differently to different personality traits. However, teachers must strive to treat pupils in a way that facilitates each pupils individual needs and allows them a fair chance in succeeding and fitting into the class. This is important not only for the pupil but also for the teacher. As pupils who view a teacher as being unfair will view them unfavourably and may feel justified in becoming disruptive

and abusive. Therefore, teachers must ensure that their personal feelings never cloud their ability to observe and interpret accurately. Brophy claims that "there is probably a tendency in us all to behave not as unique individuals but to see others through our perceptual set". (11) Due to perceiving other individuals in a light coloured by our own bias, our reactions are not always fair. Therefore, teachers should make themselves aware of their own bias and although they may not be able to change how they view pupils, efforts should be made to react in a less biased manner.

Labelling

Teachers first perceptions of pupils may almost manipulate the pupils behaviour in the future.

> First impressions can lead to specific and largely accurate expectations about students even in teachers who are aware of the expectation phenomenon. (12)

This may cause first impressions and expectations to mirror further results. Teachers must remain open and flexible towards their pupils, if they fail to do so their perceptions may become distorted and will result in the teacher attributing only behaviour that they associate with that particular pupil.

Labelling may result in what is termed the self-fulfilling prophecy. This may cause the pupil to assume behaviour in order to identify further with the label. The pupil may alter his self-concept and take on the identity of the label. Becker considers in this way,

> Deviance is socially constructed since it is a response to a label the existence of which depends on the way in which the persons behaviour is interpreted. (13)

The child's acceptance or rejection of the label may depend on many factors.

Hargreaves attributes the degree of acceptance to four factors.

> The frequency of the labelling, the extent to which the child sees the adult who labels as significant to him, the degree to which the label is supported by other adults and friends and the publicity surrounding the label. (14)

Negative labelling increases the risk of deviant behaviour as pupils may come to view themselves and their peers in a new way. It may become attractive to certain pupils to earn a bad reputation as they may gain status among their peers for doing so. According to Emler "for some people conforming to a negative label enables them to be distinctive, for being bad is being somebody". (15)

This form of status may be extremely attractive to pupils who have no other means of gaining status or being noticed. They may use such negative attention to increase their popularity and gain friends. Such pupils may have an underlying feeling of inadequacy, and a low self-concept as they feel people would not be attracted to them if they were being themselves.

> When pupils feel that they are denied status, they may seek to attain it through strategies that challenge the teachers authority and lead to confrontation. (16)

Under these circumstances, the teacher should be sensitive and firm, viewing the pupil as not being him/herself may be advisable, and tackling the behaviour rather than the person may cause the least damage.

Teachers often work in situations that are less than ideal. According to Rogers, they develop perceptions of their pupils as ways of coping with situations which may at times be hostile and trying.

> More often than not, teachers perceptions of their pupils develop as ways of coping with the situations in which they are required to work. Teachers do not set out deliberately to bring about negative effects in their pupils. Those effects are best understood as the unintended consequences of teacher attempts to deal with realities of their working lives. (17)

Teachers however should be aware of the harm they may be doing to pupils through negative labelling. Negative labelling may also make teaching a harder job than it needs to be, as negative labelling may serve to reinforce negative disruptive behaviour.

> If the teacher takes on rigid attitudes towards the child, behaviour may become more and more a reflection of the label. The expectation of adults who provide the label, thus effectively prevent the child from acting otherwise. (18)

Teachers should try to break the cycle as Hargreaves, Hestor and Mellor claim.

> The outcome of such negative labelling is that the teacher adopts an attitude towards the pupil that is different from that adopted towards any "normal pupils", he is "guarded, suspicious, wary, cautious, apprehensive and even fearful". (19)

Labelling may even cause teachers to maintain opinions of pupils which are inaccurate and damaging, both to the individual and others working within the environment as feelings of resentment within the class will make it impossible to have a good work atmosphere and a comfortable classroom climate. The teacher will become less effective, learning will suffer, and behaviour will become

disruptive. The individual child may suffer most of all, he/she is forced into a mould

that they can not break.

> The adverse effects of labelling probably arise when the child's mind is
> dominated by the persistent derogatory comments made by adults in
> authority, who hold fixed expectations while doing little constructive to help.
> (20)

Conclusion

Teachers anxiety levels affect how the teacher views behaviour. Negative past experiences may cause teachers to view innocent pupil behaviour as threatening. The teacher due to negative past experiences may feel less competent as a teacher and may over react in order to protect the self and maintain confidence.

Pupils' feelings about the self may also affect the classroom climate as it colours their reactions. Feelings of inadequacy at an academic level may cause pupils to gain status in the classroom by challenging the teacher with deviant behaviour. This may in turn lead the teacher to label this child as being deviant, resulting in the self-fulfilling prophecy, perpetuating disruptive behaviour.

Feelings of inadequacy may be minimised by the teacher, if care is taken not to create an underlying status system within the class. This may be achieved by allowing both high and low achieving pupils to succeed through careful planning, and equal attention.

Pupils deserve to be treated fairly, teachers should work to meet their individual needs when necessary. Equal consideration should be shown to all pupils, as a biased view will lead teachers to misinterpret behaviour. Teachers and pupils under these circumstances may lose sight of the people underneath the roles they play within the classroom.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 2

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CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF METHODOLOGY:

Organisation of Methodology

Through my methodology, my aim was to discover pupils' attitudes towards themselves, their peers and their teachers. I was anxious to find the essence of a good teacher-pupil relationship through which learning can become most effective.

In order to achieve these aims, I studied pupil behaviour within the first and fifth year classes I had been assigned. My intention to carry out case studies came to an abrupt end due to circumstances beyond my control. I shall further explain these circumstances in the following chapter. My studies were completed with a questionnaire and open discussion with a fifth and first year group. This proved to be beneficial as pupils responded in an open and honest manner.

In order to carry out my studies, it was necessary to request permission from the principal. This resulted in an informal interview, through which the school ethos was discussed. It was also agreed that I should interview members of the staff. Such interviews were carried out the next week following my second interview with the principal.

Background Information on the School

In order to place my research in context, I feel it is necessary to describe the school in which the studies took place. The school is situated bordering a working and middle class area. This is, however, of little relevance as the majority of pupils travel to attend this school. This is because the school caters for the non-Catholic minority. The school is multi-denominational and is attended by pupils of many different religions. The school is under Protestant management and caters first to this community, accepting them first, followed by pupils from the project schools. The pupils who attend locally are in the minority. It is, therefore, not surprising that social class backgrounds vary dramatically.

The school curriculum works towards the Junior Certificate and the Leaving Certificate examinations. It also offers a transition year and work experience. Pupils may continue to undertake work experience throughout the senior cycle at assigned times and in their own personal time.

The school caters to a wide range of abilities. There is a remedial teacher who specialises in learning difficulties due to dyslexia. Pupils with physical handicaps can enter mainstream education at this school. Interest has also been shown by the principal to attract the specially gifted pupil. Research carried out within the school recently showed that already the school is catering to the needs of many pupils who are significantly above average.

The school benefits from the work of a dedicated guidance councillor who deals with the many day-to-day problems of the pupils. The principal expresses great interest in the pupils as individuals and feels all pupils would feel comfortable approaching her for advice.

The school, due to its ethos which places great emphasis on individuality, has no school uniform. However, a dress code is in operation. This code stresses personal hygiene and a responsible attitude towards personal appearance.

The school has specific aims in regard to its code of discipline:

- The efficient operation of a worthwhile effective and stimulating learning programme for all pupils.

- The following of self-discipline and training in good behaviour patterns.

- The encouragement of personal responsibility.

- The maintenance of good order throughout the school and respect for the environment.

- The involvement and co-operation of parents/guardians in supporting the code and the operation of sanctions.

- The understanding and acceptance of the rules governing behaviour within the school.

The above aims are designed to ensure respect, courtesy and consideration towards others at all times. This code benefits the teacher-pupil relationship as expectations are clear and it is accepted that a breach of this code will merit punishment.
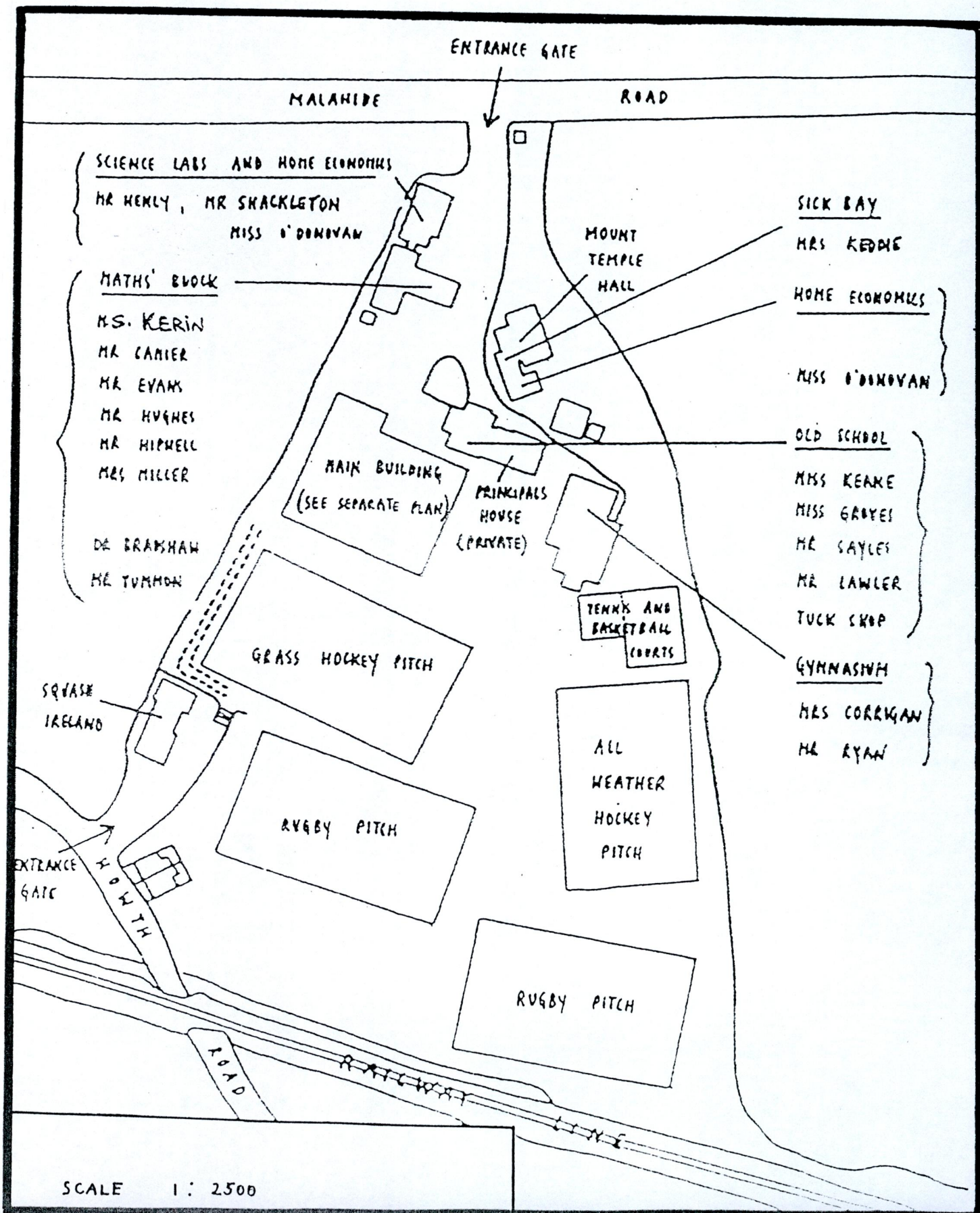
Description of the Art Department

The Art Department is provided with two spacious studios, with facilities for many activities including, drawing, painting, printing, clay modelling and throwing, photography and various other forms of 2D and 3D work. There are two full-time art teachers. Art is a popular subject within the school and a large number of pupils choose to take art at both Junior and Senior levels. This results in large class groups, with the maximum allowed in a class group being twenty-four.

Although the school has a library, there are few books available to the pupils that are relevant to, Art History. This may be seen as a disadvantage to pupils at Senior level.

Pupils frequently apply to third level to further their studies in Art and Design. A substantial number are successful and the school can boast of past pupils now successful in the visual arts. Although art may not have the high status within the school that some of the other academic subjects enjoy, it is by no means overlooked. Art education is seen as being important and pupils of all abilities who choose to do art are facilitated when possible. This creates much variety and energy within the art room.

MOUNT TEMPLE
SCHOOL GROUNDS

ENTRANCE GATE

MALAHIDE ROAD

SCIENCE LABS AND HOME ECONOMICS

MR HENLY, MR SHACKLETON
MISS O'DONOVAN

MATHS' BLOCK

MS. KERIN
MR CAMIER
MR EVANS
MR HUGHES
MR HIGNELL
MRS MILLER

DR BRADSHAW
MR TUMMON

SQUASH
IRELAND

MAIN BUILDING
(SEE SEPARATE PLAN)

GRASS HOCKEY PITCH

ENTRANCE
GATE

HOWTH

RUGBY PITCH

MOUNT TEMPLE HALL

PRINCIPALS HOUSE
(PRIVATE)

TENNIS AND BASKETBALL COURTS

ALL WEATHER HOCKEY PITCH

RUGBY PITCH

ROAD

RAILWAY LINE

SICK BAY

MRS KEDDIE

HOME ECONOMICS

MISS O'DONOVAN

OLD SCHOOL

MRS KEANE
MISS GROVES
MR SAYLES
MR LAWLER
TUCK SHOP

GYMNASIUM

MRS CORRIGAN
MR RYAN

SCALE 1 : 2500

PLAN OF MOUNT TEMPLE

MAIN BUILDING

ART ROOMS

MR BYRNE

MS McNAMARA

VIDEO ROOM | MR. SAYLES

MR KEOGH | MISS PERRY

MR MARTIN

FIRST YR BOYS' TOILET

MR VAUGHAN | MR MACKENZIE

GREEN CORRIDOR

DEMO ROOM | 2+3 GIRLS' TOILETS

MISS CRAIG | MR JOHNSON | MISS MOORE | 2+3 BOYS' TOILETS

SEN. BOYS' TOILETS | MS ROCHE | MRS McEVOY

SEN. GIRLS' TOILETS | FIRST YR. GIRLS' LOCKERS | GUIDANCE ROOM | MR BUXWORTH

M A L L

PURPLE CORRIDOR

MS McCONNELL | MS. MANNING

MR CASEY | MR TURLEY | MR LAWLER

FIRST YEAR GIRLS' TOILETS | MR MOCHAM | MR MOORE

MS CAYLE | FIRST YEAR BOYS' TOILET | MRS BUCKLEY | MRS MOHAN

YELLOW CORRIDOR

MISS HENDERSON

MRS LYNCH

MAIN OFFICE
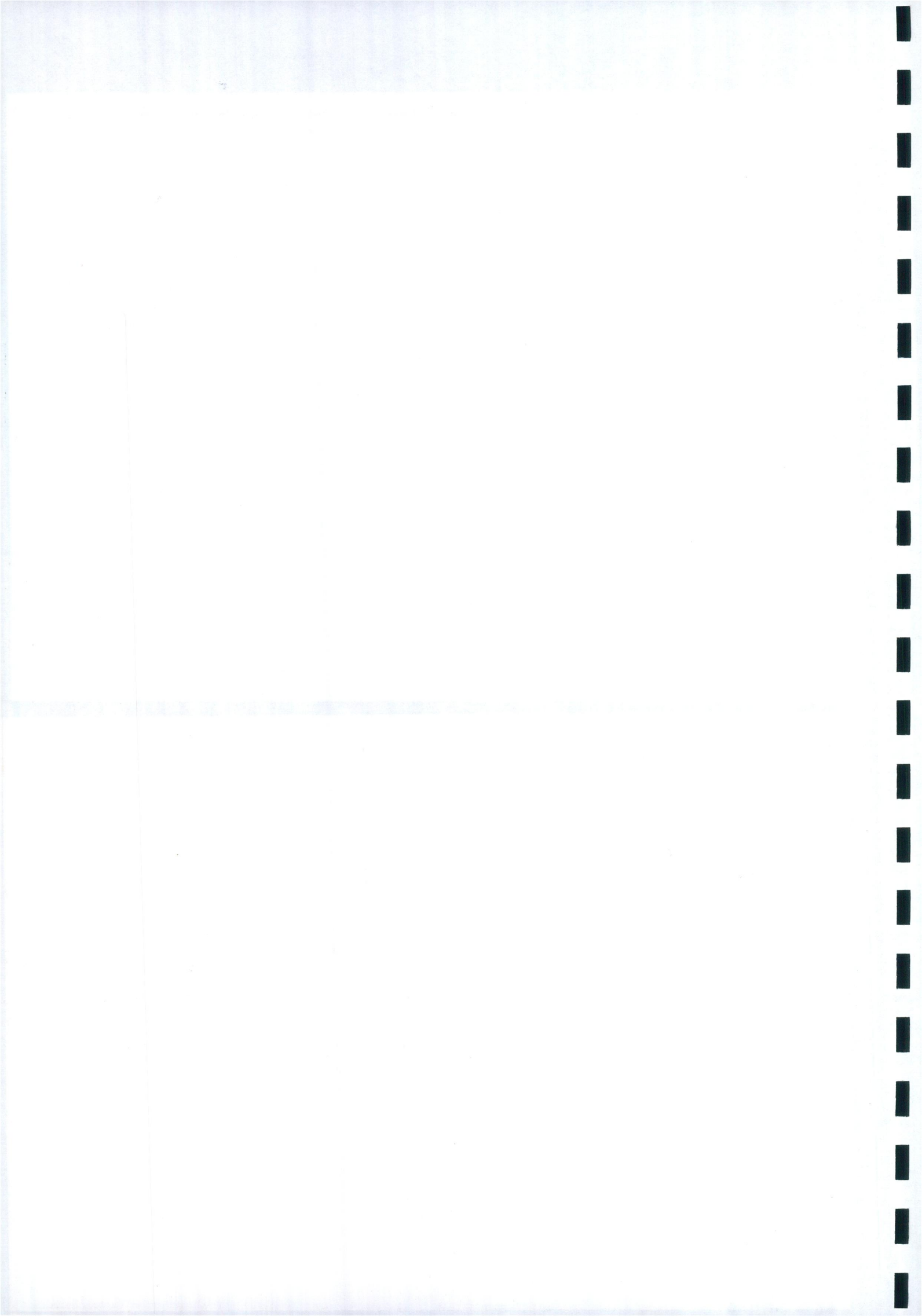
LANGUAGE LAB

INTERVIEW ROOM

MR MANWELL

LIBRARY
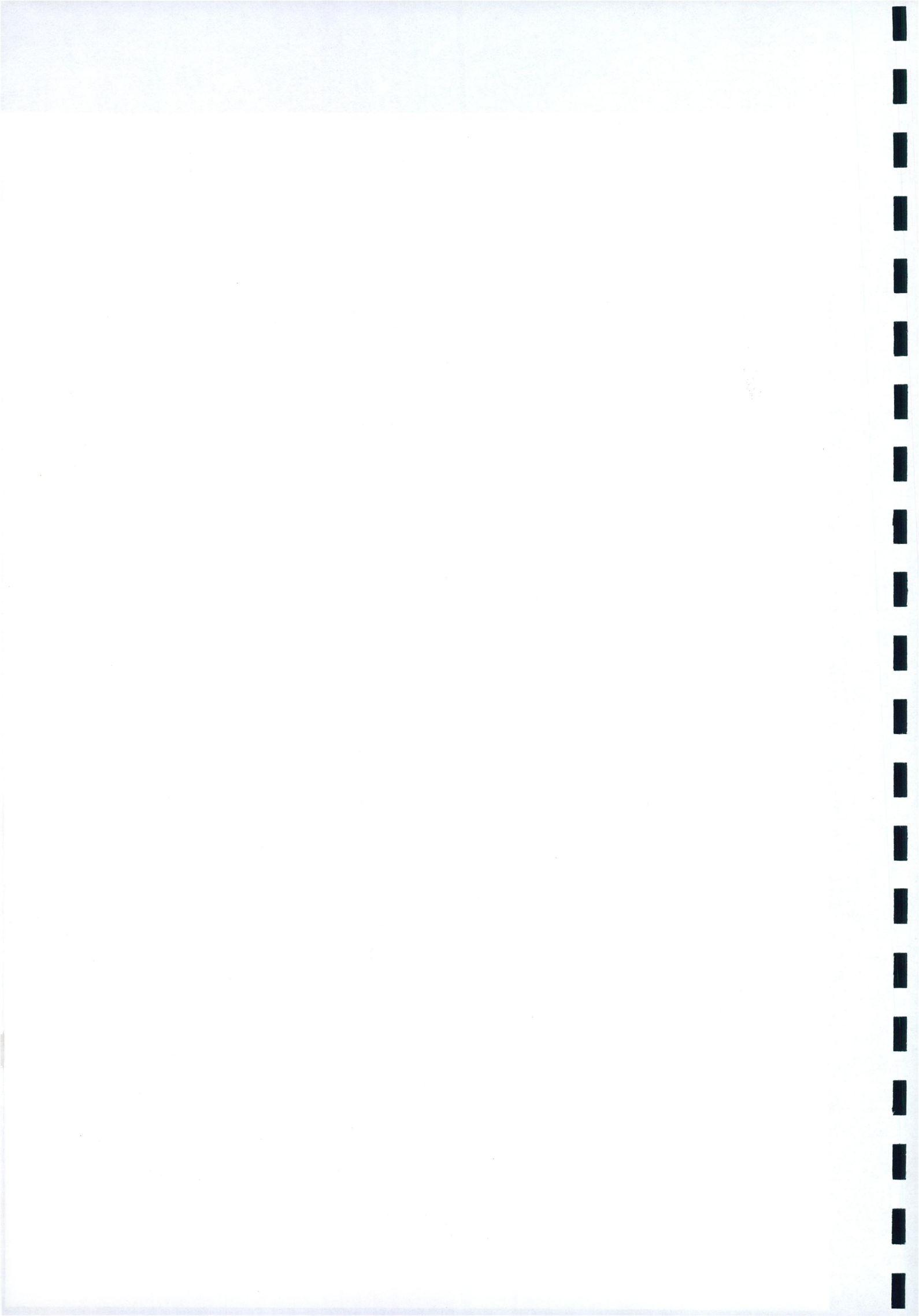
STAFF ROOM

DINING ROOM

T A R M A C

SCALE (APPROX) :- 1 CM. TO 3.3 METRES (1 INCH TO 27 FEET)

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY RESULTS

Interview with the Principal

In order to gain access to pupils to study, it was necessary to seek permission from
the principal. In the process of doing so, an informal interview was also agreed to.
The main issue to be discussed was the school ethos. The principal felt that the
school encouraged individuality and personal responsibility.

The principal felt that personal responsibility was of great importance, as it
encouraged pupils to consider their own actions and the consequences that might
result. Allowing pupils to take responsibility involved giving the pupils more
freedom and developing trust between staff and pupils.

The school, in accepting a wide range of pupils, who vary in backgrounds, ability
and attitude towards education, feel it necessary that tolerance be shown towards
pupils. Individuals problems are given time and consideration by the principal.
Pupils are encouraged to feel free to discuss problems that may arise with the
principal. This may serve to diffuse minor problems before they escalate.

Interviews with the Staff

Having discussed my aims with the principal, it was agreed that I should interview members of staff informally. This was necessary as I sought to discover how they viewed the pupils attending the school, in relation to pupils attending schools where they had previously taught.

Staff felt that the pupils they were currently teaching were far more confident. This could be observed in their eagerness to participate in class discussions. Pupils also felt confident enough to be individuals. Staff considered that the lack of uniform allowed pupils another facet through which they could express their individuality. It became obvious to me at this point, that pupils are allowed to be who they are. Guidance is always close at hand, however pupils choices were important. They are not expected to conform to stereo-typical roles or surpress their ideas or opinions. They are however, expected to be polite and tolerant towards others.

Issuing the Questionnaire

Having interviewed the staff, my next step was to issue a questionnaire to fifth and first year pupils. This involved twenty four fifth years and twenty four first year pupils. The questionnaire allowed pupils to express their opinions and feelings without revealing their identity. I sought to discover how the pupils felt about themselves as pupils, their feelings about their own behaviour, their reactions towards teachers' behaviour and how more acceptable behaviour could be encouraged.

Results of the Questionnaire

Pupils having been asked to describe themselves all saw themselves as being of average ability. This surprised me as it indicated that pupils who clearly achieved results that far surpassed an average standard saw themselves as being of average ability. This shows that the way a pupil sees themselves may vary from the way their teachers see them. Through discussion with the class afterwards, I found that pupils viewed themselves as average seeing pupils with less ability as being below average and those with greater ability as being above average.

Pupils when asked to describe their attitude, no pupil claimed that they aimed to be disruptive, although they did describe disruptive behaviour that they had exhibited. I feel that it is important that teachers make the same distinction between disruptive people and disruptive behaviour. This answering pattern was consistent in both fifth and first year responses.

When pupils were asked how their teachers might describe them, fifth years felt that most teachers saw them as being lazy and not fulfilling their full potential. They did however feel that teachers appreciated their positive characteristics, such as politeness and co-operation. First year pupils tend to feel that teachers have a low opinion of them seeing them at times as being disruptive and lazy, while they see themselves as being co-operative.

Pupils when asked if teachers opinions formed about them were accurate, responded with both yes and no answers. Fifth year pupils feeling about how teachers label them vary, as pupils who feel teachers view them negatively also feel teachers are

inaccurate in their opinions. Fifth year pupils do however have a better understanding of how and why teachers form both positive and negative opinions of them. First year pupils feel that their teachers do not know them well enough and view their teachers opinions as being inaccurate. A minority of first years feel that the teacher must be right by the mere fact that they are teachers. First years form their opinions on this matter by teachers remarks in their report cards as they view this as being concrete proof.

When asked to list qualities that makes a good teacher, fifth and first year responses were consistent. The ability to teach was the most important quality. This quality involved the ability to motivate the class and make learning interesting and having a good knowledge of their subject. The ability to relate to pupils, being able to relax within the classroom and having a sense of humour were also rated as key qualities. Pupils also value the ability to keep order. This involved fair treatment of pupils, consistency, respect for pupils and understanding.

Pupils when asked how they behave in the class of a "good" teacher, maintain that they behave and work well. This involves showing respect for the teacher and completing assigned work and homework. Pupils cooperate with the "good" teacher behaving in ways that allow learning to be effective. Fifth year pupils due to greater understanding supplied me with more informative answers. First year pupils answered that they would be good, do their work and stay quiet.

Pupils when asked to list offences that they considered extreme bad behaviour considered abusive treatment of the teacher, for example cursing and threatening violence. Moderate bad behaviour was listed as persistent talking and messing,

disregard for the teachers' authority, throwing objects and shouting in class. Such offences as talking in class and not doing homework were considered to be mild misconduct.

Pupils ideas on the degrees of disruptive behaviour varied. However, it became evident that pupils judged the behaviour by its intention. When behaviour is malicious, it is at its most destructive, as its intention is to insult the teacher on a personal level. This damages the classroom climate disallowing effective learning. Moderate bad behaviour although it hinders learning, it is not planned or premeditated. It is not aimed to be a personal assault on the teacher or peers. Mild misconduct is not consistent bad behaviour. There is no malice involved and it has little effect on the class as a whole. However, it does hinder the person or persons involved and their learning.

Pupils when asked under what circumstances they might misbehave listed the influence of peers and boredom most often. Other circumstances included lack of teacher awareness and poor teaching skills. Fifth year pupils also listed teachers showing lack of respect towards pupils and overreacting to situations. They also included more personal reasons such as feeling they are not benefiting from the class, personal dislike of the teacher and feelings of stress or tiredness.

Pupils views of other pupils who misbehave depended on who was misbehaving and under what circumstances. Their reaction to disruptive behaviour depended on whether they considered it an annoyance or a diversion. This often depended on how they felt about the subject and the person who was misbehaving.

Pupils reactions to disruptive behaviour varied as some claimed that they would join in while others claimed that they would stay out of it. First year pupils were more likely to join in, while fifth year pupils were more likely to ignore or even reprimand the offending pupil.

Pupils when asked how they behaved when work is too easy, claimed that they would complete the work quickly then if left to their own devices, their behaviour varied. Ensuing boredom leads to disruption or day dreaming, however, it is more often leads to the former. Pupils behaviour when work was too difficult caused them to ask questions, copy other peoples work and finally to misbehave.

Feelings towards difficult work mirrored the pupils insecurities as they felt stupid and afraid peers might find out. Feelings of challenge turned to feelings of resent or even anger towards the teacher.

Fifth year pupils tended to judge themselves in relation to their peers. They often rely on their peers for advice and sometimes for help. They worry about how their peers will view both their success and failure. First years rely far more on the teacher. They seek the teachers advice more often and place blame on the teacher when they run into difficulty.

Pupils were asked if they felt teachers liked them. Fifth year pupils replied that teachers in general did like them. However, first year pupils were less sure. Some first year pupils felt that teachers disliked them. It must be taken into account that first year pupils feel that teachers have inaccurate opinions formed about them due to not knowing them as individuals. This illustrates to me that the teacher pupil

relationship may take time. First year pupils may have difficulty adapting to second level school and may find it hard to adjust to having more than one teacher and developing trust on a less permanent basis.

Pupils when questioned about taking responsibility for their own behaviour generally responded that they felt that they were responsible for their own behaviour. However a minority of fifth years feel that under certain circumstances their judgement may be impaired. First year pupils felt less responsible for their own behaviour as they place blame on their friends and other pupils.

The question of personal responsibility for behaviour participated in was of particular interest to me. The principal placed great emphasis on developing a responsible attitude in pupils. I feel that the response mirrored a development of personal responsibility. Development of personal responsibility is necessary as Biehler and Snowman claim,

> Students resent the impersonal nature of schooling and the feeling that they have no control over what happens in school (1).

Through discussion with the pupils I found that pupils who perceived teachers as trying to control their lives often voiced opinions that teachers were purposely persecuting them. Pupils who took responsibility for their own behaviour saw teachers as being a trusted guide rather than a guard.

Feelings towards praise were positive. Fifth year pupils answered that praise made them feel good about themselves and encouraged them to continue working. However, this could turn to embarrassment if the teacher praised too obviously often

or if the praise is not genuine. First year pupils feel less embarrassed. However, their answers are consistent with fifth year answering.

Pupils claim that praise has little or no effect on their behaviour. However while some pupils feel confident and assured, other pupils, wishing to prevent further embarrassment caused by praise, describe behaving badly or how they stop working.

Respect is necessary within the classroom. Respect for the environment, pupils showing each other respect, and teachers and pupils forming mutual respect. Teachers who gain respect from their pupils will find them co-operative and willing to participate in class. Teachers who fail to earn pupils respect, may be behaving in a way that pupils interpret wrongly.

Pupils when asked how does a teacher gain your respect answered that this is obtained by having good teaching skills. This included the ability to stimulate interest, answering questions and offering help and assistance when needed. Pupils were also concerned with the teachers attitude towards them. The pupils felt that they should be viewed positively and treated fairly.

Fifth year pupils are more concerned with the teachers attitude towards them. They feel teachers should treat them with respect and they will in turn treat teachers with respect. First year pupils are more concerned with the teachers actions towards them. They feel teachers should show patience and understanding. First year pupils are also more likely to respect the teacher just for being a teacher. First and fifth year pupils were consistent in many of their answers. Both groups felt that teachers

who were friendly and used humour had the respect of their pupils while authoritarian teachers caused their pupils to feel resentful.

Pupils when questioned on how they gained respect from friends and teachers showed in their answering that often there is a conflict. Methods used to gain respect from their peers may earn the disrespect of their teachers.

Pupils gained respect from their peers by being themselves, having a laugh and being helpful. First year pupils were more likely to do what everyone else is doing in order to gain respect. First year pupils were also more likely to talk back to teachers and refuse to work in order to gain respect from their peers.

Pupils felt that respect could be gained from their teachers by having a positive attitude. This involved showing interest and participating in class. Pupils also believed that in order to gain respect from the teacher they must be respectful towards the teacher.

Pupils when asked about how mutual respect could be formed within the classroom answered that boundaries must be set as to what behaviour is acceptable. Communication and trust must be developed between teachers and pupils. Pupils felt that teachers and pupils should develop a positive attitude towards each other. Pupils should understand that the teacher is a person who is helping them and teachers should allow pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils felt that pupils and teachers should be supportive of each other and of their roles. Pupils when asked to list punishments they considered effective answered very differently at junior and senior level. Fifth year pupils felt punishment had little

effect on pupil behaviour. However they felt effective punishment would involve extra work that is relevant to the subject, not being allowed to partake in certain activities and informing parents. First year pupils felt detention, suspension, lines and informing parents to be effective punishments.

Through the questionnaire pupils supplied many informative answers. Differences in fifth and first year answering mirror their maturity. First year pupils are still adapting to second level education. Their behaviour may often be linked to their search for identity within a new environment and class group.

Case Studies

In monitoring pupil behaviour, I felt it necessary to focus my attention on particular pupils. I decided to carry out three case studies. I particularly observed how pupils attempted to attract attention or avoid attention, and the behaviour that resulted. I also observed the effects success and failure had on pupils behaviour. Pupils reactions to peers and class standards were also noted through this study.

Pupil A - First Year Pupil, 12 years

Pupil proved himself to be very able. His drawings were spontaneous and he grasped immediately the principle of drawing what you see. This resulted in the pupil achieving high standards almost immediately. This success caused the pupil to become bored. Boredom caused the pupil to become distracted and to distract others. He took praise as licence not to work. This resulted in the pupils progression being stunted.

This pupil continued to behave in this manner. His behaviour distracted and annoyed other pupils. The pupil soon became aware of standards being reached by his peers and became dissatisfied with his own work. This resulted in the pupil being less vocal and putting more effort into his own work. The pupils behaviour fluctuated and his own work often mirrored his behaviour.

The pupil achieved a B grade. He was dissatisfied but it was the grade that his work merited. I explained that having potential did not mean automatically gaining high grades. Work and evidence of work was also necessary.

The pupil did not show any significant improvement. He lacks self control. A short attention span limits the pupil as he finds it difficult to complete work. Attention seeking behaviour serves only to annoy peers and further hinder the pupil.

The pupil does little work in his other classes. He has been on report three times this year. He is unconcerned about his behaviour and his teachers reactions to it. I have found no effective method of altering this pupils behaviour, as he persists without the encouragement or attention of his peers. His behaviour serves to entertain no-one but himself.

Pupil B - Fifth Year Pupil, 16 years

Pupil showed signs of being hyper active. He seemed to have an inability to sit still or to concentrate for any length of time. He was easily distracted and often disruptive. His work failed to convey the class learning objective. The pupil was discontent with his own work and this resulted in constant movement around the room, attempts to distract others and continuous attention seeking behaviour which included the pupil shouting remarks and comments.

This behaviour changed in the third week. This was due to the pupil creating a drawing that was to his own satisfaction.

The pupils behaviour did not change completely. He did become conscientious about his own work. This resulted in him spending more time working than he previously had, and in turn he received a better result.
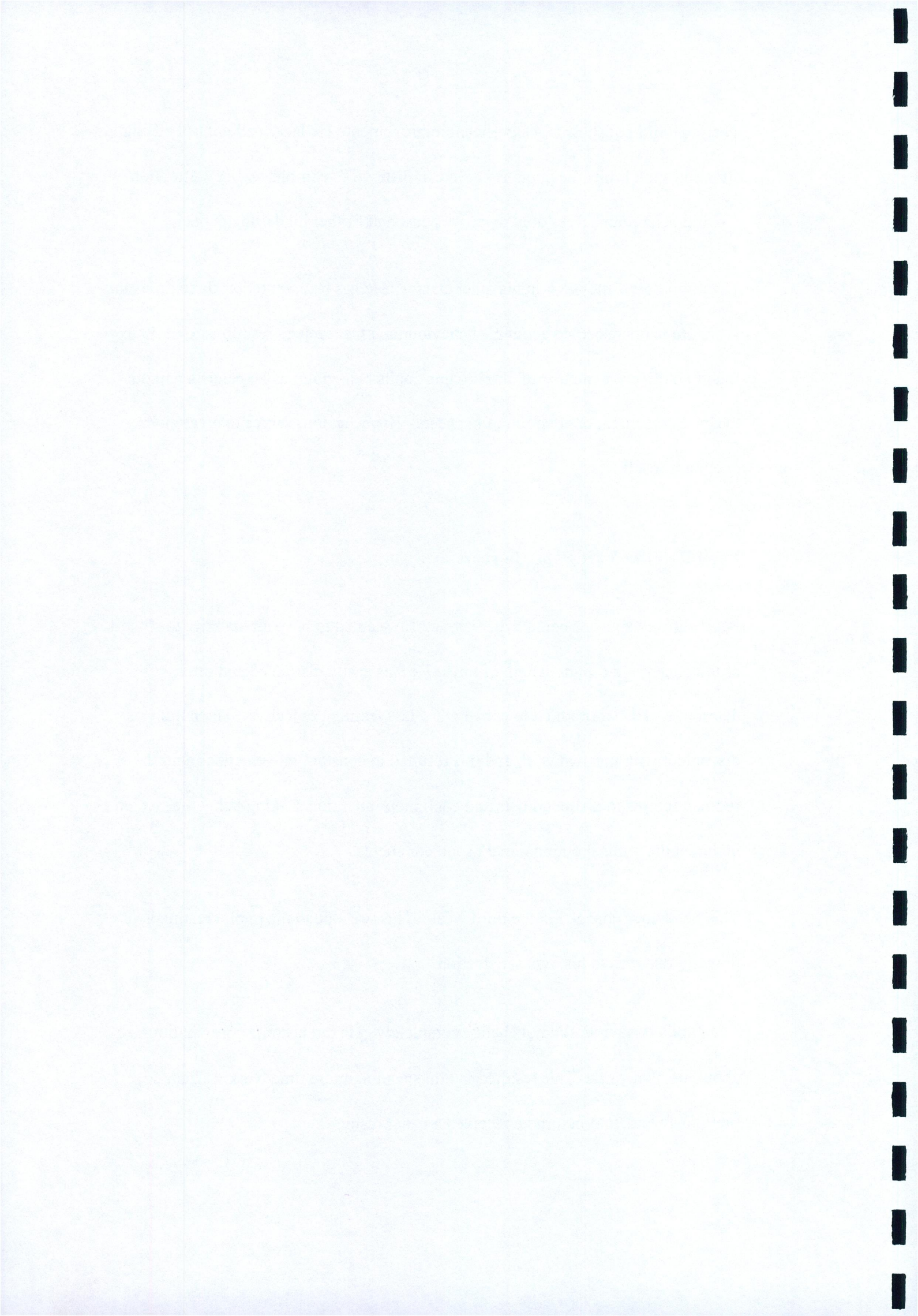
The pupils work made steady progress. I did notice small set backs could leave the pupil distracted and discontented for the remainder of the class. However he gained enough confidence to return to class and work achieving good results.

This pupils behaviour and attitude changed dramatically. I feel that this was due to tolerance and understanding on my part. I found that the pupils sense of achievement stemmed from surpassing his own standards rather than standards I set. Further progress was made and the pupil worked throughout the entire class and lunchtimes in order to complete work to the standard he wished to attain.

This study was cut short due to an incident which caused the pupils expulsion. I later discovered that the dramatic change in behaviour I had witnessed did not occur in the pupils other classes. This pupil had shown behaviour problems throughout second level education and had been allowed to return to school on probation.

Pupil C - Fifth Year, 16 years

Pupil showed little ability. His efforts fail to achieve adequate results. The pupil progresses without causing any disturbance. He ridicules his own work and keeps a low profile. The pupil groups himself with other pupils of low ability and seems comfortable in this setting.

The pupil starts to show signs of discontent when his peers achieve some level of success. This first becomes evident as the pupil begins to move around the room, almost disassociating from his own work. Continued attempts also result in failure. Attempts to simplify the exercise also fail. Lack of success causes the pupil to

become frustrated and behaviour becomes disruptive. Further attempts to simplify the scheme result in some degree of success. This results in an improvement in behaviour.

This study was cut short as the pupil left school due to an offer of employment. The opinion of the staff was that the pupil was achieving little or no academic success and was becoming increasingly difficult to control. Concern was mounting in regards to the effect his behaviour was having on others, as it became increasingly disruptive and prevented learning.

Conclusion

Through my studies I found that the teacher pupil relationship is of great importance. Disruptive behaviour may almost be seen as a malfunction in the relationship. Pupils opinions and views about the self may also contribute to disruptive behaviour as pupils who feel they cannot succeed will seek diversion. As Biehler and Snowman state, "misbehaviour of high school students may reveal lack of positive identity" (2).

I feel that teachers should be especially sensitive towards pupils who have developed low self esteem through poor success. Guidance should be given in helping pupils to achieve short term goals, thus allowing them to experience success. This will reduce feelings of resentment and embarrassment, diffusing disruptive behaviour. Respect and trust are important elements in the teacher pupil relationship. Mutual respect within the classroom stimulates co-operation and participation in class. Trust allows for more freedom within the classroom. Pupils who have earned trust will work to maintain their teachers trust. Freedom allows pupils to be more responsive and creative, as Biehler and Snowman state,

> If you permit students to let off steam in constructive ways, they may not feel impelled to seek their own methods to release tension. (3)

Disruptive behaviour destroys effective teaching. However, poor teaching skills cause disruptive behaviour. Therefore, disruptive behaviour may be blamed on both the teacher and the pupil. It is therefore necessary to work together in order to maximise learning. Treating others with respect and being sensitive towards each others feelings in order to avoid offence being taken.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 4

1. Robert F. Biehler and Jack Snowman, <u>Psychology Applied to Teaching,</u> (5th Edition), (Boston, Houghton Miffin Company, 1986), p.623.
2. Ibid., p.621.
3. Ibid., p.622.

CHAPTER 5

HOW CAN APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR BE ENCOURAGED

Teacher Awareness

Classrooms are busy places and teachers may find it hard to be aware if the many interpersonal exchanges that they engage in within each given day according to Jackson "In a single day a teacher may engage in more than 1000 interpersonal exchanges with students". (1) Teachers are often not aware of what goes on in their classrooms, perhaps due to overcrowding or busy schedules. However, teachers should make steps to become aware of their own behaviour as they may be perceived differently by their pupils, causing the pupils to react to them in undesired ways. "Not only do teachers have many interactions with students they also have to interpret complex classroom behaviour on the spot". (2)

Teachers at times even when aware of their own behaviour may be unaware of its effects. Lack of awareness may seriously interfere with the teacher's effectiveness therefore, teachers must develop insight into their own behaviour. If they fail to do so they may "not be sufficiently sensitive to the way in which their own actions are being perceived by the pupils". (3) Teachers should also be aware of their behaviour at all times, not only because of the way pupils may interpret it. Pupils may adopt aspects of the teachers behaviour through modelling.

Modelling

Social Learning theorists believe that learning can take place through observation "people can learn vicariously". (4) The learner need only witness the behaviour and thus form an ability to imitate it. The person who first demonstrates the behaviour is called the model, and the form of learning carried out is known as modelling.

Albert Bandura believes that learning occurs through observation. He found that "learners often master entire sequences of behaviour without reinforcement". (5) Modelling may be used as a "matching tool" as pupils may gain understanding of their assigned work through observation and imitation. This is obvious in the art room as pupils benefit from practical demonstration.

Modelling may be also used as a tool in adapting pupil behaviour. Bryan and Walbek found that "Children's' behaviour was affected much more by what the adults did than by what they said". (6) This shows us that pupils will be more influenced by what we do than by what we say, therefore, within the classroom setting, actions speak louder than words. This becomes evident when teachers do not say what they mean, or do not act upon their own rules. Pupils will behave as the teacher allows them. Therefore rules and regulations must be acted on, especially if they outline appropriate classroom behaviour.

Teachers must always be aware of their own behaviour within the classroom, as modelling may take place at any point or time. It can not be controlled to happen when the teacher intends it to. Pupils may model their behaviour on positive or negative traits displayed by the teacher. Teachers must accept responsibility for

their own behaviour by being aware of their roles as models. They therefore must ensure that what pupils learn from observation is beneficial and positive.

The teachers behaviour may affect the classroom climate as well as the individual. Teachers' responses to certain pupils and to situations that arise within the classroom may affect how the class group as a whole reacts. Negative behaviour such as teasing and bullying may be caused by teachers using sarcasm or displaying insensitive behaviour.

> Unfortunately unplanned and sometimes undesirable imitation also occurs. Students will often copy distinctive expressions, speech patterns or gestures that their teachers use. (7)

The teacher must be aware of how to act and react in situations, as the class will take their cue from the teacher and mirror their response.

The model being observed by the pupils may influence their behaviour through what is known as incidental learning. This causes the pupil to make assumptions about the teacher. Interpreting their behaviour to draw their own conclusions about the teachers personality, values, attitudes and beliefs. This form of learning conveys messages that the teacher is not consciously imparting. This may have both positive and negative effects as

> One reason why teacher-pupil relationships can break down is that insufficient attention is paid to the perceptions and expectations teachers and pupils have of each other and themselves. (8)

Incidental learning provides the pupils with information as to what is permissible within a specific teachers class, what behaviour receives rewards and what behaviour merits punishment.

Teachers socialise their pupils through active modelling as they may demonstrate positive attitudes and values about behaviour. Teachers who model positive traits such as politeness, good manners and respect, will witness the same traits within their class group interaction. Negative personality traits such as hostility and sarcasm may also be imparted. this may damage the teacher-pupil relationship and the classroom climate.

Classroom Management

The best form of classroom management should eliminate all discipline problems, by preventing them to occur. The teacher should expect to be obeyed. When establishing rules, the teacher should ensure that they are fair and appropriate. In enforcing rules, the teacher should ensure that they are consistent, saying what they mean and allowing the pupil to know where they stand. The Plowden Committee found that it is important for children developing in school that they "know where they stand and what to expect". (9)

Inconsistency and unwillingness to carry out threats undermines the teachers credibility and damages their ability to command obedience. Teachers should strive to be consistent and decisive yet open and ready to listen. By behaving in this way, pupils will view the teacher as being fair and serious in their expectation to be obeyed.

Bandura claims that trying to control behaviour through emphasis on punishment is tackling the situation backwards and that the result is "ineffective and usually counter productive". (10) He suggests that

It is much more effective to focus on desirable behaviour using management techniques that prevent problems from emerging, than it is to try to deal with problems after they emerge. (11)

The teacher should prevent trouble by eliminating its causes and by being aware of what is happening within the classroom at all times. They should deal with incidents at their early stages, before they become seriously disruptive. With-it-ness is a term used to describe a teaching technique used by some teachers observing what is going on within the classroom. It involves constant monitoring and awareness, throughout all activities. this minimises inappropriate behaviour as pupils soon become aware that the teacher is aware of their actions at all times.

When disruption is kept to the minimum it is then possible to create a good working atmosphere. This allows pupils to spend more time involved in the assigned activity uninterrupted thus gaining maximum benefit from the experience. The key therefore is minimising the frequency of disruption.

Preparation is essential for good classroom management. Lessons should be well prepared in advance so the teacher may then work through the class without causing disruption due to stopping and starting. The class should flow almost without effort. Constantly needing to refer to textbooks and to find necessary props or information is disruption as it breaks the flow and momentum of the lesson. Pupils who are left without focus while the teacher is otherwise engaged may indulge in disruptive behaviour. The longer or the more frequently continuity within the lesson is broken, the more likely problems are to occur and escalate.

Good classroom management involves forming routines and procedures. In order for such procedures to be effective, they should be introduced at the start of the year,

and adhered to throughout the year. Teachers must strive to maximise time for instruction and developing the pupils' understanding of the content. This prevents pupils from becoming bored and disruptive. When teachers expect high standards of efficiency their class runs smoothly. "The key to successful classroom management is preventing problems before they occur". (12)

For a teacher to be effective within the classroom they must be sensitive and attentive towards the pupils. They must watch for signs of confusion and inattention in their pupils and remedy these problems quickly and efficiently. Teachers must be consistent in enforcing their rules and procedures as inconsistency causes confusion.

Teachers cannot develop good relationships with their pupils and subsequently positive behaviour within the classroom context through rules and planning alone. A mutual respect should develop between teacher and pupil, however this is something that has to be earned. Teachers should have faith in their pupils and view them positively. Pupils who are trusted will make efforts not to break the trust, as pupils who like and respect the teacher will want to please the teacher. Pupils are also more likely to model their behaviour on teachers they admire in this way the teacher may encourage positive attitudes towards work and develop a good work atmosphere within the class.

> Rather than adopt an impersonal approach in which all the communication is formal and between the teacher and the pupils, The teacher should start off by encouraging a general discussion in which pupils thoughts and feelings are shared. This would demonstrate the teacher's belief that the pupils opinions matter to her, and that the class does not consist of anonymous members, but persons.

The teacher must value learning and encourage the pupils to do so. The pupils must feel that their being in the classroom serves a purpose, that it is to their advantage to

be there. The teacher must therefore maximise the effectiveness of their teaching.

This involves assuming responsibility for the pupils learning by ensuring the lesson

is clear, interesting and informative.

The teacher should reinforce desired behaviour by the use of positive language

instructing the pupils in what they are to do rather than in what they are not to do.

The teacher should minimise negative remarks, when they are necessary they should

be followed by a positive statement that clearly informs the pupils as to the correct

course of action. When the teacher wishes to enforce desired behaviour they should

address the class or pupil using language that is specific and positive. Positive

language helps the pupil to react in the way the teacher desires him to, confusion

about what the teacher means him to do is eliminated.

<div align="center">Praise</div>

Laslett and Smith maintain that "the frequent use of praise is the quickest and most

effective route to promoting a positive atmosphere in the classroom". (13) This is

true under certain circumstances however praise may be overused and result in

adverse effects. The over justification effect occurs when a reward for undertaking

an activity that had previously been enjoyed for its own sake is offered. This results

in the reward becoming the focus of attention, rather than the activity. Lepper

suggests that one possibility for the over justification effect is that,

> The promise of a reward causes children to shift their focus of attention from
> the features of the activity that makes it interesting to the hope of receiving
> the reward. (14)

This effect may occur more regularly in pupils who are able and interested in the

subject matter.

When pupils reach secondary school, grades become increasingly important and this fuels the able pupils with high extrinsic motivation. However, when this occurs intrinsic motivation decreases. Teachers spend more time praising high ability pupils than their low ability peers. If this was alternated pupils who need extrinsic motivation could possibly benefit from it.

> It has been shown that if you begin to reward people for doing what they were already doing spontaneously, you decrease their intrinsic motivation to continue the behaviour in the future. (15)

Praise must be used carefully as public praise in certain situations may serve as an embarrassment to certain pupils. Praising conforming behaviour may lead to teasing and taunting by the peer group. Reinforcement of good behaviour and conduct is not necessary if it causes the pupil embarrassment. High standards of work need not be praised verbally, as pupils grades serve as achievement will serve as motivation and reinforce this behaviour. Pupils motivation stems from many sources, The peer group and competitive situations, may stimulate the pupil to gain academic success. Praise must be used effectively and only when it is genuinely deserved. Otherwise the teacher loses credibility and trust while appearing patronising. Praise therefore should not be used as a tool to manipulate pupils, as misplaced it may backfire.

Conclusion

Classrooms are often hectic places to work in due to overcrowding and the extent of variation in individuals' abilities, attitudes and backgrounds. Teachers interact on both a personal and professional level with many individuals. Teachers in order to become aware of the needs their pupils have, must first become aware of themselves. The teacher must feel at ease in the classroom. Pupils must feel confident that their teacher is competent in order to place their trust in them. Teachers must therefore feel confident about their own teaching ability and convey this confidence in their classes.

Teachers who are competent and organised will maximise effective learning by minimising disruption. This may be achieved through careful planning and thorough preparation. The lesson must maintain continuity in order to hold the attention of the pupils as without focus, pupils will become bored and disruptive behaviour will be a tempting alternative to boredom. With-it-ness and sensitivity are necessary qualities in a teacher, as teachers should watch for signs of confusion in pupils. Good classroom management will minimise disruption and maximise effective learning.

Teachers should be aware of the example they set. Pupils may, through modelling, be influenced by positive and negative traits of the teacher. Incidental learning may cause pupils to make assumptions about the teacher interpreting their behaviour in order to find out what behaviour is permissible in class. The teacher should be consistent about what is acceptable within his/her class as inconsistency causes

confusion. Appropriate rules should be established and enforced consistently. Pupils should know where they stand and how to behave without confusion.

Teachers and pupils should work to form mutual respect, trust should be established and positive attitudes towards learning formed. Pupils must feel that it is to their own advantage to benefit from what the teacher has to offer. Therefore, the teacher must take responsibility for the pupils learning ensuring that their teaching is interesting, informative and effective.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 5

1. P. Jackson, Life in Classrooms, (New York, Holt, Reinhart and Winston 1968)
   Cited in Good and Brophy, Looking in Classrooms, p.21.

2. Ibid., p.4.

3. Docking, Control and Discipline in Schools, p.58.

4. Good and Brophy, Looking in Classrooms, p.134.

5. A. Bandura, Principles of Behaviour Modification, (New York, Holt, Reinhart
   and Winston, 1969)
   Cited in Ibid.

6. Bryan and Walbek, "Preaching and Practicing Generosity:Childrens Actions and
   reactions". Child Development 41 1970
   Cited in Ibid., p.135.

7. Ibid., p136.

8. Docking, Control and Discipline in Schools, p.58.

9. The Plowden Committee on Primary Education (C.A.C.E., 1967, paras. 738-39)
   Cited in Ibid.

10. Bandura, Principles in Behaviour Modification, (New York, Holt, Reinhart and
    Winston, 1969)
    Cited in Good and Brophy, Looking in Classrooms, p.177.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., p.81.

13. Laslett K. And Smith C., Effective Classroom Management, (London, Croom
    Helm, 1984)
    Cited in Docking, Control and Discipline in Schools

14. M.R. Lepper, Teacher and Student Perceptions:Implications for Learning. (N.J.
    Erlbaum, 1983)
    Cited in Ibid., p.101.

15. Good and Brophy, Looking in Classrooms, p.191.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout this body of work my aims were to discover the underlying causes of disruptive behaviour and its subsequent effect on learning. In doing this I felt it necessary to view classroom behaviour from both the teachers and pupils perspective. Through my research I feel I have developed an understanding of classroom interaction and the teacher pupil relationship.

Research carried out through reviewing literature proved beneficial, as it raised questions while supplying answers. I found that these can be no absolute definition as to what constitutes disruptive behaviour. Behaviour out of context within the classroom may be viewed as problem behaviour. However teachers tolerance levels and expectations set standards as to what behaviour is viewed as disruptive.

Many other factors may influence both pupil and teacher behaviour. As teachers and pupils relate to each other behaviour must be interpreted. When behaviour is interpreted wrongly a breakdown in communication may occur. Feelings about the self will influence the teacher pupil relationship, as actions may result in undesired reactions. Such reactions may be caused by pupils low self esteem. The teachers feelings of insecurity may cause them to overreact, thus interpreting behaviour wrongly. Negative past experiences may cause both teachers and pupils to interpret behaviour wrongly.

Reviewing literature allowed me to gain enough relevant information to carry out my own research. I designed a questionnaire (see appendix) that enabled me to uncover information that I considered to be of great importance to my work. I feel

that the teacher pupil relationship has a direct influence on the classroom context. I found that pupils harbour hostile feelings towards teachers who fail to view them as persons and treat them with respect. Such treatment of pupils show a lack of sensitivity on the teachers part.

Feelings of resentment towards the teacher cause pupils to become hostile and disruptive. Resentment may develop due to pupils lack of a positive identity within the school context. Pupils may also view a teacher negatively if the teacher does not measure up to their concept of a good teacher. Pupils listed the ability to teach and relate to pupils as being of great importance. Pupils claims that such teachers motivate them to work and stimulate interest in the subject matter. Pupils also valued a sense of humour and the ability to keep order. This involved fair treatment of pupils, consistency, understanding and respect for pupils.

Through my observations made in the classroom, I found that although pupils voice similar opinions about teachers and school, some pupils need special consideration in order to break out of a cycle of disruptive behaviour. Such pupils have created a negative identity for themselves within the school. Although pupils reasons for misbehaving vary the results are almost the same. Such pupils fail to form a good relationship with their teachers and eventually feel victimised. The teacher should try to keep an open mind about such pupils and make efforts to develop the pupils self esteem and trust. This may be difficult for the teacher at first however, I feel it is necessary if the teacher is to avoid labelling the pupil.

In making observations within the classroom within the art room, I was subject to much interaction with the pupils. Pupils who doubted their own ability were most

likely to become disruptive as they sought to hide their inadequacies through creating diversion. Such pupils within the art room tend to feel very insecure about their drawing skills. I found that by instructing them to forget are that they know and draw only what they see, such pupils gained satisfactory results and developed feelings of achievement and self confidence. Through using modified contour drawing and methods suggested by Bethy Edwards, pupils were free from the known images that shunted their progress.

In order to eliminate disruptive behaviour, teachers should strive to create intrinsic interest in their subject. I found that pupils in the art room need to be able to relate to their own work on a personal level. Through my studies I feel it necessary that the art teacher should always structure lesson plans to interest and motivate pupils. Lesson plans should also allow pupils of all ranges of ability to achieve some level of success and challenge.

The teacher must become aware of themselves, how they teach and whether their methods are effective. Disruptive behaviour may be the result of poor teaching skills or the failure to relate to pupils on a personal or professional level. Teachers must take responsibility for the pupils learning and work to solve problems the pupils may encounter within their class. Teachers should offer help and encouragement, give praise when it is due and show tolerance and understanding when necessary.

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Year _____   Age _____

1. How would you describe yourself as a pupil?

Ability   **Above Average** ☐   **Average** ☐   **Average** ☐

Attitude   **Motivated** ☐   **Lazy** ☐   **Cooperative** ☐

               Disruptive ☐

2. How do you think your teachers might describe you?

_____

_____

_____

3. Do you think it would be accurate?

_____

_____

_____

4. List 3 qualities that you consider makes a good teacher.

_____

_____

5. How do you behave in his/her class?

_____

_____

_____

6. What would you consider bad behaviour?

Extreme bad behaviour:_____

Moderate bad behaviour:_____

*Mild misconduct:*_____

7. Under what circumstances might you behave badly?

_____

_____

_____

8. How do you view other pupils who misbehave?

_____

_____

9. How do you behave when other pupils misbehave?

_____

_____

_____

10. How do you behave when work is

too difficult:_____

too easy:_____

11. How do you feel when work is too difficult?

    Frustrated ☐   **Stupid** ☐   **Bored** ☐

    Selfconscious ☐

In your own words:

_____

_____

_____

12. Do you think teachers in general like you? ☐

    Dislike you? ☐

13. Do you consider yourself responsible for your own behaviour?

_____

_____

14(a). How do you feel when a teacher praises you?

_____

_____

_____

14(b). How do you behave?

_____

_____

_____

15. How does a teacher gain respect?

_____

_____

_____

16. How do you gain respect within the classroom?

(a). *From your peers? (friends)*

_____

_____

_____

(b). *From your teacher?*

_____

_____

_____

17. How might teachers and pupils form mutual respect within the classroom?

_____

_____

_____

18. List punishments that you consider effective?

_____

_____

_____

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