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Assumptions underlying values in a secondary school: an investigation of their effects on teaching and learning

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Abstract

This thesis considers the influence of three popular movements on values education in a secondary school: positivism, relativism and post-modernism.   The research method adopted was the 'case study'.   The terms 'moral', 'spiritual' and 'values' were examined, both from the perspective of academic authorities and from pupils and teachers. Groups of pupils were interviewed to discern how far they had been influenced by positivism, relativism and post-modernism in their perceptions and understanding of issues to do with moral and spiritual values.   Teachers from the three core curriculum subject areas (English, Mathematics and Science) and the foundation subject in the national curriculum, Religious Education, were also interviewed.   The school in the case study was looked at from three perspectives: the explicit curriculum, the implicit curriculum and the null curriculum. Consideration was given to the case for a 'value-free' approach to teaching, although this was finally rejected.   The thesis ends with recommendations for the adoption of a whole-school approach to tackling values education.

CONTENTS

0.0   INTRODUCTION

This thesis sets out to explore assumptions underlying values in a secondary school.   My first consideration was to identify popular movements which might have an influence on perceptions of both teachers and pupils.   I then interviewed groups of pupils, and teachers individually, in order to discern which, if any, of these particular movements seemed to influence their thinking.

The second area for investigation was the curriculum of the school in the study, to assess the extent to which values were either explicitly taught or implicitly referred to.   The interviews with pupils and teachers revealed a wide variety of insights into this.   I then analysed the subject departments' schemes of work, for evidence of specific references to values education.   This process led to a consideration of the concepts of the implicit, explicit and nulll curricula.

My concern next was to look at the concept of 'value free' teaching - sometimes referred to as neutrality.   Superficially an attractive solution to the difficulties of values education, I wanted to see whether or not this could present a feasible model.   After examining the evidence of a number of authorities, however, I came to the conclusion that such a stance is neither desirable nor viable.

The thesis concludes with a number of recommendations of ways in which values education could be improved, in the secondary school in the case study.

0.1   Influences of Popular Movements

After initial discussion, and some reading of the academic authorities in

the field, I came to feel that some of the prevailing popular movements, such as relativism, materialism, consumerism, secularism and post-modernism, all springing from the rather older well of scientific positivism, might account for a changing educational climate. I pursued this strand of thought, and decided to conduct interviews with groups of pupils and with individual staff, to see if any (or all) of these influences could be detected on their thinking, and what their attitudes were to the place of values education in schools. It was at this stage that the question of the possibility, and desirability, of adopting a 'value free' or 'neutral' approach to teaching and managing schools, occurred. Superficially, this seemed to present the answer to the besieged teacher, desperate to avoid the charge of 'indoctrination' and anxious to be seen to be 'politically correct'. As my reading continued and I thought more deeply about my 'evidence' (the transcripts of my interviews), I came to a conviction that the adoption of a 'value free' mode of teaching, and approach to running a school, is neither possible nor desirable. This conclusion was arrived at over the space of two years or so - it was certainly not a position which I held at the start of this work.

Over the course of my investigations, I have come to explore three popular movements in particular: positivism (as providing a base), relativism and post-modernism. I started out with a much longer list of 'isms', and indeed I do give passing consideration to consumerism, but when the need to focus my work more sharply became apparent, I decided to limit my considerations to these three in particular. I was concerned to look at organisational aspects of school life, as well as curricular implications for values education; this is because my role is a

strategic one, in addition to my also being a classroom teacher. I came to find Brenda Watson's use of the terms 'explicit', 'implicit' and 'null' curriculums very useful in defining different aspects of school life.

In chapter 1, I outline details of the research project. Chapter 2 explains in further detail the reasons for my choice of focus for this work, and examines the nature of positivism, relativism and post-modernism. I also look at what are generally understood to be moral values and spiritual values in a school context. In the next two chapters I show how pupils (chapter 3) and teachers (chapter 4) have been influenced in their thinking by positivism, relativism and post-modernism. This leads in to the next chapter (5) which shows how these influences affect what goes on in schools: explicitly, implicitly and in decisions which are made which lead to things being left out. Chapter 6 considers (and rejects) the proposition that a neutral stance is the correct position for schools and teachers to adopt, and with this in mind, the final chapter proposes strategies which could be adopted which will result in pupils having a more satisfactory opportunity to develop confidence in approaching values issues, and in teachers feeling able to handle such concepts with increased assurance.

0.2   Research Methodology

The important initial decision was to identify the research method most suited to the kind of information I was seeking. Bell quotes Cohen and Manion's description of action research as:

> *essentially an on-the-spot procedure designed to deal with*
> *a concrete problem located in an immediate situation. This*
> *means that the step-by-step process is constantly*

monitored (ideally, that is) over varying periods of time and by a variety of mechanisms (questionnaires, diaries, interviews and case studies, for example) so that the ensuing feedback may be translated into modifications, adjustments, directional changes, redefinitions, as necessary, so as to bring about lasting benefit to the ongoing process itself.   *(Bell 1993: 6)*

This technique seemed to meet my requirements for a research method which was flexible and able to accommodate developments which I might want to make after an initial examination of the evidence. Bell remarks that:

The essentially practical, problem-solving nature of action research makes this approach attractive to practioner-researchers who have identified a problem during the course of their work, see the merit of investigating it and, if possible, of improving practice.   *(Bell 1993: 7)*

This seemed to sum up my situation accurately.

Having identified action research as my preferred model, the subsequent decision was to choose the method of action research which would be most suitable for the research. The Case Study method appeared to fulfil the requirements, given that the research into values education was to take place using evidence from one particular secondary school. Bell's comments on such a process confirmed this view:

A successful study will provide the reader with a three-dimensional picture and will illustrate relationships, micropolitical issues and patterns of influences in a particular context.   *(Bell 1993: 9)*

The hypothesis in consideration was initially the fact that teachers and pupils were likely to be influenced in their thinking on values issues by prevailing popular movements (such as relativism), and in order to establish whether or not this was the case, I decided that the best method of research would be to conduct a series of interviews with pupils and teachers. I anticipated that an analysis of the interview transcripts would provide evidence for the presence or absence of such influences. I explain further about the methods used in interviewing subjects, in the next chapter.

All the transcripts of my interviews are presented in the Appendix. I quote from the transcripts throughout the thesis to illustrate the prevalence of positivist, relativist and post-modernist ideas, although clearly chapters 3 and 4 have a greater preponderance of quotations than the other chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the mechanics of the research and data collection and looks at the limitations of such methodology.

CHAPTER 1

THE RESEARCH PROJECT: A CASE STUDY

1.0   <u>The School in the Case Study</u>

The school is a rural comprehensive high school in eastern England, of around 1,000 pupils, including a Sixth Form of about 200. The catchment area consists of a small market town and surrounding villages; although the majority of children are drawn from the town and about ten villages, there are twenty different village schools from which the high school derives an intake. The school is a neighbourhood school, and the only real alternative for the majority of families would be to send their children to an independent fee paying school, although, of course, one or two children are privately transported to a high school in another town. Employment levels are relatively high, although average wages low.

The school is a comprehensive school, in the sense that children from the whole ability range attend: there is a learning support unit for children with special educational needs, and each year a small number of students are successful in obtaining Oxbridge places. Examination results are above the national average and are in the top three or four county schools.

The atmosphere in the school is, perhaps, 'traditional' - an adjective with which the Headmaster would concur. Changes tend to be implemented slowly, after careful consideration. Stress is placed on school uniform, there is a well-thought-out policy of rewards and sanctions, and there is generally a purposeful, organised air about the place. The school rarely takes part in the front line of national initiatives, preferring to adopt tried and tested practices. Relationships with parents and governors

are cordial, if, perhaps, a little perfunctory - there is a feeling that the Head and staff can be trusted to manage satisfactorily.

The curriculum is traditional, in most cases conforming to statutory requirements, although not in the case of Religious Education. A copy of the curriculum analysis can be found at the end of the Appendix. There is a thriving range of extra-curricular activities which reflect different interests, particularly in the arts.

It could, I think, properly be described as a secular school, in the sense that the organisation of the curriculum pays lip service only to statutory demands for Religious Education and collective acts of worship. Ministers of religion are occasionally invited in to take assemblies, but these are rare occurrences. Of the senior management team who regularly take school assemblies, only one person out of five is comfortable with putting over a 'Christian message'. There is, however, a concern for standards of behaviour and personal relationships which reflects an institutional consideration of moral and ethical matters. An example of a whole-school issue which was looked at from many different stand-points is that of bullying. An investigation into this was launched more than twelve months before a policy statement was agreed, procedures adopted and staff and pupil mentors trained. In extra-curricular activities, too, a concern for moral values can be identified: for two consecutive years (1995 and 1996) the school's Youth Action Panel (formerly Crime Awareness Group) won a national award from the Police and Prudential Insurance Company, for their work: in 1995 on drugs awareness and in 1996 on shoplifting. The 'Friends' of the school organise periodic information evenings, with the intention of raising awareness among parents about such issues as

youth crime, substance abuse, sexual issues and family breakdown.

1.1 Research methods and data collection

The concern of this study was to examine assumptions which underpin thinking about values, in the school in question, and I decided particularly to focus on the 'popular movements' referred to in the introduction (positivism, relativism and post-modernism), to see how far their influence could be discerned. I was equally interested in the assumptions underlying the ways in which teachers taught and in which pupils learned.

After deciding that action research would be the most appropriate method for my study, I considered a variety of methods of data collection which would enable me to acquire evidence from pupils and staff which would illustrate how far their thinking about values had been influenced by the 'popular movements'. I rejected the 'tick box' questionnaire approach, in favour of tape-recording interviews, which would, I felt, provide the opportunity in which to conduct structured conversations - in small groups, in the case of pupils, and one-to-one in the case of teachers. I felt that the questionnaire approach, whilst it might have afforded me more easily quantifiable data, would not have given me the opportunity to examine nuances of meaning, which I considered to be important when considering people's attitudes to values. I was aware that transcribing such interviews would be a time-consuming process, but I considered that it was important to be able to get down on paper everything that was said, in order for me to weigh up the significance of all the points made - in particular, perhaps, pupils' asides! When I came to transcribe the interviews, I wrote down every detail of the

conversations with the children, and a detailed summary of the dialogue with colleagues - in their case leaving out obviously extraneous material.

As a novice researcher, I had little idea of the practical difficulties of action research. In the first instance, I had planned to conduct the interviews during the summer term, concentrating on the pupils in the first half of the term and the staff in the second. My first move was to explain to each head of year what I was doing and to ask her/him to choose for me a mixture of twenty pupils in her/his year group, providing me with a good mix of backgrounds, abilities and of course, gender. I deliberately did not identify the children myself as I did not want any bias which I might have to be reflected in the selection.

When I received my list of twenty names, I initially sent each pupil in the year group on which I was currently working, a note asking them to attend a short meeting at morning break at which I would explain what I was doing and ask for their help. This was my first mistake - in thinking that anything like twenty children would attend that meeting! Those first gatherings ranged from an attendance of thirteen (year 7) to three (year 9).

Some children, I suppose, forgot to come, others may not have received their note from me; others, no doubt, were not sufficiently interested or too busy elsewhere to meet me. When I did get the groups together and explained that I was interested in moral and spiritual values and how they are dealt with in school, I immediately 'lost' one or two of the group, who had their own reasons for not wanting to proceed any further. However, in most cases I was left with a number of children who were prepared to attend a short group interview and be taped at a convenient

lunch-time, and to those I sent reminders on the morning of the agreed day.   Most years, in the end, provided me with a couple of groups to interview, with between three and seven pupils in a group.   In most years, there was a majority of girls who were prepared to participate, even though I had originally approached the same number of boys as girls. This greater cooperation from girls than boys is interesting and can possibly be explained in a number of ways: girls often seem to enjoy participating in discussions more than boys, and seem readier to be open about their more personal thoughts and feelings than boys often are.   In this school, at least, girls are more involved in all non-sporting extra-curricular activities than boys, whether it is drama, music or the science club, and sociological theories to do with the greater accessibility of schooling for girls are currently being expounded in academic circles.

I had selected the summer term as being the best time in the school year in which I should conduct the interviews, for a number of reasons: with upper sixth and year 11 pupils on examination leave from the middle of May, teachers have a less heavy teaching commitment;   the year 7 pupils have been in the school for two complete terms, and thus have a reasonable 'working knowledge' of the school;   my own work-load is lighter in the summer term than in either of the two other terms.   In the end, when I came to carry out the interviews, it was always more difficult to arrive at suitable days than I had anticipated.   I had planned to interview the year 11 pupils after those in year 7, in order to see them before they went on 'study leave'; this I managed to do - but only just - as I had to fit the interviews in during their penultimate week in school. Years 7, 8 & 9 had internal examinations and tests which I had to work

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round;   year 10 had a two week work experience period and examinations, and I never did see them during the summer term, so those pupils who had been identified in the summer term as year 10 pupils, I finally saw in the second week of the autumn term as year 11 pupils, but for the purposes of my research, I refer to them as year 10 pupils.

My original intention was to interview three groups in each year.   After completing three sessions of interviews with year 7 pupils, however, I decided that two groups from each year would give me sufficient material to analyse.   When transcribing the interviews, I did on one occasion have an 'accident' with a tape, on which were interviews with a year 9 and a year 10 group; I deferred making a decision as to whether or not to rerecord these groups, until I saw how much data I had acquired.   After transcribing all the other interviews, I felt that there was sufficient material from which to draw my evidence, and that approaching the groups a second time would be unnecessary.   The transcripts of all my interviews, in total, form an evidence base of 33,000 words.

The staff were no easier to 'pin down' than the pupils - if anything, more difficult!   The second half of the summer term saw them with heavy 'INSET' (In Service Education and Training) commitments, examination marking and report writing, and the last couple of weeks of term were generally taken up with preparations for the autumn.   In order to provide myself with a manageable programme, I decided to confine my researches to staff teaching the National Curriculum core subjects: English, Mathematics and Science, in addition to Religious Education, as it is a statutory subject.   The three core subjects are assessed in

national tests at Key Stage 3, and are obviously a bedrock of the Key Stage 4 curriculum. As such they can be seen as contributing in an important way to pupils' experiences in school. I managed to interview all the staff whom I had previously decided I wanted to see, with the exception of a mathematics teacher, who agreed to see me in the autumn term. The interview duly took place.

1.2   The limitations of the research method: pupils

As I have mentioned, I took pains to try to eliminate my personal bias from the selection of pupils by asking their Head of Year to identify a cross section of twenty for me to approach initially. It is possible that the Head of Year, knowing something of that in which I was engaged, was influenced in her/his selection by knowledge of the children; in order to try to avoid this, I specifically asked for a random cross section of children. The pupils, however, once approached, 'self-selected' themselves by agreeing or by refusing to be interviewed; I felt that I could not insist that the pupils participate, so accepted those who agreed to come to the session. This being the case, it is likely that more pupils who were either interested in the topic, or interested in taking part in the interview, came forward. In terms of the findings, I recognised that I might get more fluent participants with, perhaps, a greater confidence in talking about the concepts, than I might otherwise have done with a totally random selection of children. In reality, the groups of pupils interviewed were very different. Some were more articulate and prepared to discuss the issues than one might expect with an entirely randomly selected sample, but others had minimal ideas and an undeveloped vocabulary in discussing values issues. I felt that I interviewed a sufficiently large sample to be able to draw conclusions

from what was said.

I was anxious not to put words into people's mouths, and tried to phrase questions neutrally and unambiguously; as my programme of interviews progressed, I grew more adept at asking supplementary questions in order to tease out the real feelings of the children. Occasionally a pupil spoke so quietly that I could not identify what had been said on the tape; in the few cases where this happened, the transcript is marked accordingly. The contributions by the pupils, however, are only as pertinent as the questions posed, and there were times when I realised subsequently that if I had expressed myself more clearly, I would have given the pupils a better opportunity of saying how they really felt.

Pupils may have been anxious to try to please me by saying what they thought that I wanted them to say; I tried to be conscious of this possibility, and spent some time at the beginning of each session putting them at their ease. When one of them said something which I found surprising (or even shocking), I deliberately made a noncommittal, encouraging noise, as I did when they said something with which I agreed, or which I was expecting. As it transpired, I do not feel that any of the pupils said something which they did not really mean.

1.3   The limitations of the research method: staff

The staff approached with a view to being interviewed were in all cases helpful and cooperative. In some cases I had little prior knowledge of their attitudes to values issues, and in none of the cases were staff selected because of what I thought that they would say. I was aware of the possibility of them wanting to say what they thought that I wanted to hear, but in the event I do not feel that this was a problem. The

interviews were more of a dialogue than those with pupils, and there were times when I was conscious of us diverting and straying from the main issues.

The interviews with staff were often much longer than those with pupils, and the sample is smaller. I could not be confident that all the teachers' views are represented, but I do feel that the material gathered does represent a number of positions held by different groups of staff. I should have needed to have interviewed teachers from all curriculum areas to be sure of a complete cross-section representation, but this was beyond the scope of this study.

A transcript of all interviews is to be found in the appendix.

CHAPTER 2

THE INFLUENCE OF POSITIVISM, RELATIVISM AND POST-MODERNISM IN EDUCATION AND A CONSIDERATION OF 'MORAL', 'SPIRITUAL' AND 'VALUES' IN AN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

2.0   Introduction

Question: Do you think that there are any things [about which] people share the same opinions [about values]?
Answer: Not really.   Cos you have different people and different religions and different races and everyone thinks differently in their own personality ...

This is the kind of thing which I hear pupils saying almost whenever they get the opportunity to talk about their ideas of moral and spiritual values and their experience of coming across such ideas in school.   When I started to interview pupils, to try to find out their views about issues to do with moral and spiritual values and their attitudes to teachers tackling such matters, I was struck by the fact that there seemed to be few certainties, except the necessity to be seen as having little concern with values - particularly spiritual values. Children are very concerned about *fairness*, however, and they respond passionately to cases of injustice, prejudice or disadvantage.   They are also greatly influenced by prevailing ideologies, and if relativism is wrapped up in an anti-racist, multi-cultural package - ie it is wrong to offend people who are a different race, religion etc from oneself, then they will absorb the whole relativist ethos with enthusiasm.   This cause is also closely allied to a profoundly unfashionable attitude to formalised religion, when church-going is seen at best as irrelevant and at worst as deeply suspect, and it is from there a small step to dismiss out of hand traditional values

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perceived as being embodied by religions. Much of what the pupils said reflects this state of affairs, and in chapter 3, I explore the conclusions which can be drawn about the extent of the influence of popular movements on pupils.

2.1 The Inheritance of Positivism

This strand of thinking can be traced back to the early nineteenth century in France and from the middle of that century in Britain. Williams tells us that:

> *Positivism became in England a free-thinking and radical*
> *as well as a scientific movement ... The general meaning*
> *that came through was at first anti-dogmatic - Positivism, ie*
> *the representation of facts without any admixture of theory*
> *or mythology.*   *(Williams 1976: 200)*

Scientific theory rests on the predictability of certain laws and the ability to reproduce particular results under specified controlled conditions:

> *People who take this view - 'positivists' is a convenient*
> *label - may accordingly be found placing all their emphasis*
> *on the predictive aspect of scientific theorising.*
>   *(Pratt 1978: 74)*

It is inevitable that positivism will have influenced education theory, as it is a movement which has had a wide appeal in both last century and this. Williams, continuing in his essay on positivism, goes on to supply the argument against it having an all-pervading influence:

> *...the critique of positivism is based on what is felt to be the*
> *ambiguity of the   concept of 'observable facts', in its*
> *common limitation to facts subject to physical*
> *measurement, or repeatable and verifiable measurement.*
> *It is argued not only that this neglects the position of the*

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observer, ... but that it neglects experiences and questions which are not 'measurable' in this way... '

(Williams 1975:201)

There is a view that there is a resurgence of interest in positivism:

A more insidious idea is that revival of positivist thinking that wishes to consign all religious belief to the category of the meaningless, whilst affording science a protected status as the sole legitimate claimant to objective knowledge. (Brown 1996: 123)

Scientists have sometimes identified themselves as subscribing to a positivist view of the world, and more frequently, people with little scientific knowledge have espoused what they consider to be a positivist philosophy, mistakenly thinking it to be 'scientific'. In chapter 4, I explore the implications of the words of a Physics teacher who described his own approach to issues in a positivist light; it is important to note, however, that positivism is by no means embraced by all scientists, and many leading scientific authorities either reject the somewhat simplistic positivist analysis, or view it at best as only a partial explanation of the complexities of existence. Yearley, in considering the recent history of the contribution made to philosophical thought by science and technology, says:

Science has come to have the status of exemplary knowledge ... At earlier times in Western history other types of knowledge, such as logical deduction or legal principle, were pre-eminent. Science is held to differ from these forms of knowledge because of its empirical foundation ...'

(Yearley 1988: 2)

He goes on to acknowledge, however:

These [earlier] bodies of knowledge were rather static and tended to be conservative. Scientific knowledge is not static; scientific theories are subject to change, and scientists aim to offer new understandings of the surrounding world.

(Yearley 1988: 2&3)

A positivist attitude in the classroom does, perhaps, need to be challenged, if children are going to be influenced by it, and it is the presumption that scientific knowledge is inevitably true and that there is no room for further questioning that must be disputed: this is referred to by Yearley when he quotes from Newton-Smith, who attempted to produce a list of scientific values:

Still, we cannot accept that our beliefs at any particular time are the truth. Rather, we must accept the "pessimistic induction" that we will sooner or later abandon our current beliefs as true for, judging by the history of science, everything which we now believe is likely to turn out to be false in some regard. *(Yearley 1988: 31)*

This approach of open-minded enquiry leaves room for pupils to develop their own personal system of values without necessarily having to subscribe to a reductionist view of the world - one which reduces experience to the physically observable and tangible. It is important that the legacy of positivism should not be the only influence in the science classroom; science, after all, has the largest number of periods each week on the school timetable in the case study, for years 7 to 11, so it would be highly unlikely for children not to be influenced in their way of looking at the world by the pervading values culture in the classroom.

2.2   The Prevalence of Relativism

Relativism has as one of its forebears the intellectual movement: positivism.

There is a surge of interest in the affects of relativism in education today:

> *As the relativist sees it, everyone has a right to his or her*
> *opinion and as no one can prove they are right, however*
> *subjectively certain they feel, all opinions sincerely held by*
> *people are of equal validity and deserve an equal hearing.*
> *It is important to notice that relativism is closely bound up*
> *with positivism, scepticism and reductionism which is its*
> *matrix.*   *(Watson & Ashton 1995: 42)*

Watson and Ashton (1995) make the point that relativism contains important ideas which must be taken seriously, and that it makes a useful contribution to debate in an increasingly pluralist society; where it becomes of concern to teachers and others with an interest in education, is when <u>everything</u> is seen in a relativist light: pupils are encouraged not to make value judgments, and to accept all moral positions as being of equal validity.   To quote a twentieth century poet:

> *Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; /The best lack all*
> *conviction, while the worst/ Are full of passionate intensity.*
>   *(Yeats 1950: 210)*

Pratt describes very clearly the logic of the scientific relativist, who maintains that the only occasions in which one can try to define objective standards of truth are where these fall within the same conceptual frame- work.   He explains the view that cultural traditions are so different, that people's perception of events - even their interpretation of data - will be dependent on their own cultural background.   He then goes on to question this notion:

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> *There is more than one huge difficulty with the*
> *unreservedly relativist view we have been considering.*
> *Can one really accept the idea that truth is not something*
> *our scientific theories strive after, but rather something*
> *each <u>defines</u>, and each in its own way? Can one really*
> *accept the idea that there is no reality independent of each*
> *culture's constructed realities?*   *(Pratt 1978: 61)*

Pring recognises the fact that teachers are under a lot of pressure to adopt a relativist stance in the classroom:

> *In an atmosphere of ethical skepticism, it is difficult to argue for*
> *the promotion of one set of values rather than another ...*
>
>   *(Pring 1986: 186)*

and he helpfully continues:

> *Ethical skepticism, manifested in an indifference to different*
> *moral positions ...*   *(Pring 1986: 186)*

We are collectively fearful of appearing to indoctrinate, and the pupils pick up this fear and feed it back to us, as can be seen in this extract from an interview with a group:

> *I don't think they [teachers] should inflict their own personal*
>
> *ideas about morals or about spiritual values on the pupils;*
>
> *they should discuss the ones the pupils have, and probably*
>
> *their own as well, but not to pressurise or influence them in*
>
> *any way ...*   *(Year 11 pupils . Appendix 215)*

There is that word <u>inflict!</u> I am not sure that I have ever known a teacher <u>inflict</u> her/his views of moral issues on children - which implies an abuse of power in an aggressive fashion. I am sure that in rare cases it may happen, but to nothing like the degree that that fairly common use of the

word <u>inflict</u> would suggest. (It is an expression which one comes across quite regularly - 'inflicting views on someone... '). Of course, teachers should not indoctrinate children, but I think that more people are coming to recognise that one cannot simply teach in a vacuum. To develop a questioning attitude, a healthy respect for others' views, but also a personal sense of what is valuable in life, would appear to me to be laudable aims, and I do not see how these can be achieved without teachers and pupils actually adopting a particular moral stance.

Relativism is given a postmodernist gloss by Bauman (1992), when he considers 'the ethical paradox of postmodernity'. The essence of his argument is that the postmodern state is a direct challenge to that which has gone before - what retrospectively has been called 'modernism', and that:

> *The ethical paradox of the postmodern condition is that it restores to agents the fullness of moral choice and responsibility while simultaneously depriving them of the comfort of the universal guidance that modern self-confidence once promised.* *(Bauman 1992: xxii)*

Bauman maintains that in a postmodernist society:

> *Individuals are thrown back on their own subjectivity as the only ultimate ethical authority.* *(Bauman 1992: xxii)*

whilst at the same time being:

> *told repeatedly about the irreparable relativism of any moral code.* *(Bauman 1992: xxii)*

It is indeed a fearful prospect for teachers, as well as society at large, if this postmodern interpretation of relativism is embraced widely:

The deposition of universal reason did not reinstate a universal God. Instead, morality has been privatised; like everything else that shared this fate, ethics has become a matter of individual discretion, risk-taking, chronic uncertainty and never-placated qualms.

(Bauman 1992: xxiii)

An increasing number of the writers and commentators on current affairs deplore the growing cynicism (as they see it) in society; Lord Hapgood, in a lecture in 1995, maintained that reaction against the concept of authority can result in 'cynical contempt' towards life in general. A number of newspaper articles in 1996 continued this debate, looking at tragic events in society, and drawing the conclusion that such situations arise at least partly through a prevalence of moral relativism.

The chief executive of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, Nicholas Tate, generated almost unprecedented widespread interest in school curricular issues, when, in a keynote speech in January 1996, he talked about organising a conference on moral values: The Times on 15 January interpreted it as a, 'Call for Modern Ten Commandments', and continuing the metaphor, Charter and Sherman wrote in that same edition that: 'the rules should be agreed nationally and set in stone'. The Times Educational Supplement, in a leader at the end of the week in which Dr Tate made his much publicised speech, commented that two months previously, Dr Tate had deplored the tendency, as he saw it, 'for morality largely to be a matter of individual taste' but that this had, in the main, been ignored; the article went on to draw the conclusion that, after certain recent newsworthy events, in particular the murder of London Headteacher Philip Lawrence:

His murder, like the killing of James Bulger by two primary school boys three years ago, has fanned fears that many

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of the present generation of children, deprived of two-
parent family life and the shepherding arm of the church,
are spinning out of control.

(Times Educational Supplement 19.1.96: 18)

This view of a 'sick society' is sometimes thought to have arisen through a rise in moral relativism, often attributed to changing attitudes of schools; The Guardian's leading article on the day after Dr Tate's speech in January 1996, tried to put the situation in context:

Values are shaped by family, peer group, media, religious

leaders as well as schools. Teachers only have children

for 15 per cent of their waking time, so the role of the

school needs to be kept in perspective. Yet schools do

have a crucial role. Even early leavers will have spent

15,000 hours within school walls ...

(The Guardian 16.1.96: 12)

On the same day, The Guardian published an article by Mary Midgley who argued that the erosion of a traditional order in society has come about, not because we have become 'morally feeble', but because:

The economic reshaping of the world has simply carried

away traditional structures on its tide ...

(Midgley 1996)

Midgley sees Dr Tate's response to a concern about the teaching of values as being:

.. a kind of confused relativism which makes them

[teachers] think it "judgmental" to say that anything is

actually wrong ...

(Midgley 1996)

and her reaction is to recommend that:

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... the moral points that need to be made to children are

not, generally speaking, obscure marginal ones that differ

with cultures and raise problems about relativism...

(Midgley 1996)

An Organisation For Economic Cooperation & Development document

published in 1994 makes the connection between:

Fashionable varieties of relativism which tend to culminate
in cynicism and growing powerlessness.

(OECD 1994: 133).

Is it, perhaps, too much of a generalisation to accuse relativism of

helping to create a climate of poor behaviour in schools - the argument

being that if we are encouraging an attitude of cynicism towards

everything and everybody, then children will see no point in adopting a

positive attitude either to their studies or the environment in which they

find themselves?   The ultimate relativist irony is, of course, the point that

relativism itself is an indoctrinatory system, and many of our teachers

and pupils seem to have uncritically accepted its tenets.

.

2.3   A Look at Consumerism

My original idea included consumerism as one of the popular

movements, along with positivism, relativism and postmodernism, which

I was going to consider as an influence on classroom practice, and

indeed I do think that it exerts a powerful influence on children's

behaviour and thinking.   Part of the way through my research I decided

to narrow my focus down to the other three 'isms' in detail, although I

recognise that such ways of thinking are inter-related.   I include a short

consideration of consumerism here, as it throws light on the other

movements, particularly postmodernism.

> *The reward of productivity [post-2nd World War] was*
> *increased consumption . To be a customer was seen as*
> *the new enlightenment. Even Britain's much-vaunted*
> *Citizen's Charter turned out, on inspection, to be a*
> *customer's charter. It was not realised soon enough that*
> *too much consumption has its costs, that the freedom to*
> *drive a car, for instance, ends up too often in the freedom to*
> *sit in a traffic jam... We made consumption a measure of*
> *achievement, unwittingly creating a society of envy, in*
> *which to be poor meant to have less than the average even*
> *if the average was quite high.*
>
> *(Handy 1994: 14 & 15)*

In sociological terms, consumerism can be seen as triumphing over
Marx's ideas of production, as forming the organisational infrastructure,
at least in the second half of the twentieth century, in the western world:

> *The term 'consumerism' ... covers two concepts. The first*
> *is the idea, or ideology, which holds that maximum*
> *consumption of material goods and services is the ultimate*
> *goal of both the individual and society ...*
>
> *(Thorne 1993: 46)*

There is a view which considers that we have moved from a position
where, in our society, people have been characterised by the work
which they do, to the ways in which they spend their money:

> *Freedom is about the choice between greater and lesser*
> *satisfactions ... For the consumer system, a spending-*
> *happy consumer is a necessity; for the individual*
> *consumer, spending is a duty - perhaps the most important*
> *of duties. There is a pressure to spend ...*
>
> *(Bauman 1992: 50)*

Bauman regards this phase of consumerism as contributing in no small

part to the postmodern condition:

> *Once consumer choice has been entrenched as the point
> in which systematic reproduction, social integration and
> individual life-world are coordinated and harmonised -
> cultural variety, heterogeneity of styles and differentiation of
> belief-systems have become conditions of its success...
> The market has nothing to gain from those things the rigid
> and repressive social system of "classical" capitalism
> promoted: strict and universal rules, unambiguous criteria
> of truth, morality and beauty, indivisible authority of
> judgement.* (Bauman 1992: 52)

To consider the phenomenon of consumerism at its most obvious and basic level, shopping has become a national pass-time, with phrases such as 'shop till you drop' part of every-day discourse; there is now a type of novel for 'easy' recreational reading, colloquially known as a 'sex 'n shopping' book, and psychiatrists claim to be treating patients suffering from what is known in the vernacular as 'shopaholism' with increasing frequency. Asked to write an account of 'a day out' during a weekend or school holiday, a third of a group of year 9 pupils in an English class, in a homework assignment set in February 1993 in the school in the study, wrote about going shopping. The whole purpose of going shopping is, of course, to acquire more 'things': goods to take home for entertainment purposes, for personal adornment, to 'improve' one's standard of living (the essays produced by the previously mentioned group of pupils were not, of course, concerned with shopping for food or the basics for living). The postmodern condition refuses to make judgements about the value of shopping compared with other activities.

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I know from talking to teachers and from reading articles in the press, that there is nothing particularly unusual about local sixth form students working very long hours in the evenings and at weekends in local supermarkets, petrol stations, garden centres and the like. Before I had talked to some of the students at length about their reasons for spending such long hours in part-time employment, I assumed that most of them did it because their families depended upon the additional income which they brought in. I could not see why any seventeen year old would want to work twenty hours a week, stacking shelves in Safeway, unless out of economic necessity. Talking to many of them, however, I have had to accept the fact that very many are so engaged in order to have the money to spend on the latest fashions, CDs, a vehicle, electronic gadgetry, going to night-clubs and other forms of entertainment. (The unspoken use their money is put to, which ran through many of my conversations, is of course, drugs). It was over a year ago that I saw for the first time a sixth form student talking on her mobile phone, outside a classroom (there was a pay-phone not twenty metres away).

All this paid employment cannot help but affect their academic studies; I have several times been told how a student fell asleep in a lesson, and the pressure on sixth form students to achieve on every level (academically certainly, but also to be in possession of the 'in' things and to go to the 'in' places) is resulting in far more mental breakdowns and cases of physical/psychological illnesses such as anorexia nervosa. It may be a controversial point, but locally one is also seeing far more cases of glandular fever and myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) than anyone can previously remember, and there is a strand of opinion that

considers these illnesses to be life-style/stress related. The pressure on young people to acquire more and more 'things' arises out of a culture that rejects the notion of some things being of greater value than others and simply expounds the idea that quantity and diversity are all.

2.4 Postmodernism - A Contemporary Phenomenum

This strand of thinking is difficult to identify from people's conversation as it is so tenuous and difficult to define. As I have previously mentioned, relativism developed out of the positivist movement, and relativism has close links with postmodernism, which identifies a pluralist, 'laissez faire' attitude to morality as being desirable.

Blake (1996) describes postmodernism thus:

> *Post-modernism is currently the intellectual formation which offers the most radical challenge to a wide variety of settled assumptions concerning society, culture, the nature of the individual and questions concerning knowledge and truth.*   *(Blake 1996: 42)*

Blake goes on to 'set the scene', pointing out that there is no one easy definition of this intellectual movement:

> *...there is not one canonic 'story' of postmodernism offering privileged disciplinary access. Indeed, it is one of postmodernism's most salient intellectual characteristics to repudiate the notion of uniquely valid or valuable perspectives on itself, or on anything else.*
>
>   *(Blake 1996: 42)*

Bauman's trenchant comments on postmodernity have been previously quoted; on the 'postmodern world view' he says:

> *Postmodernity is marked by a view of the human world as*

irreducibly and irrevocably pluralistic, split into a multitude
of sovereign units and sites of authority, with no horizontal
or vertical order, either in actuality or in potency.

(Bauman 1992: 35)

There is a position which rejects the postmodernist 'world view', and which Bauman categorises as the 'society in crisis' theory. He maintains that this follows in the line of traditional social theory which, when describing society as being 'in crisis', is assuming that:

The society so described retains its identity and struggles
to perpetuate it. By the same token, the appearance of
phenomena resisting accommodation within known
regularity can be only perceived as a case of
"malfunctioning": of a society diseased and in danger.

(Bauman 1992: 43)

So the general outcries, exemplified by quotations from newspapers in recent months, against social unrest and dis-ease, are dismissed as a reluctance to embrace a postmodern interpretation of current trends.

A generally held position of the postmodern condition is essentially eclectic:

But if there is one generally acknowledged characteristic of
postmodernism, it is profound scepticism about the
universal validity of any single narrative, or theoretical
'story' concerning any human affairs.

(Blake 1996: 44)

It is this eclecticism which brings with it so many hazards for the teacher and pupil, and with it the danger of presenting a 'mix and match' approach to values: you take your pick from what is on offer at any one time, eliminating any idea that there may be universal values which are worth exploring. There is a contemporary concern that postmodernism

provides a particularly attractive values system for young people:

> *The crumbling of the modernist paradigm has led to the emergence of postmodernism as a contender for the hearts and minds of young people... What youngsters see is the failure of traditional religion or science to deliver answers that work for them... Life is to be lived on the surface, for the moment, without reference to the past and without too much hope for the future.*   *(Brown 1996: 125)*

Watson and Ashton remind us, however, that:

> *There is a lot that is positive about postmodernism. Reason and/or science have been mistakenly put on a pedestal so that everything has to be judged by them ... It is important that this pedestal be toppled.*
>
>   *(Watson & Ashton 1995: 50/51)*

They go on to point out the logical stumbling block of the postmodernists: that a philosophy which upholds the notion that no one set of beliefs or values is right, could in itself be mistaken!

2.5 What is meant by 'moral'?

My starting off point in talking with both pupils (in groups) and teachers (individually), was what their understanding of the words 'moral', 'spiritual' and 'values' was, and I look at what they say in detail in chapters 3 and 4. Before considering the ways the words are generally understood in the classroom, however, it is necessary to examine how authorities in the field use the words.`

The OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) Framework defines moral development as:

> *...[referring] to pupils' knowledge, understanding, intention,*

attitudes and behaviour in relation to what is right or

wrong.   *(Office For Standards in Education 1994: 10)*

The 1994 OFSTED Discussion Paper from which I have previously

quoted elaborates on this:

> *The word 'moral' is concerned with fundamental*
> *judgments and precepts about how we should behave and*
> *act and the reasons for such behaviour;   it includes*
> *questions of intention, motive and attitude.*
> *(Office For Standards in Education 1994: 10)*

The writers of the Paper accept the fact that questions such as 'about

what morality consists of and the nature of judgments and values' are

vital concerns of schools and 'cannot simply be ducked by

educationists'.   They acknowledge the fact that attempts to teach in a

'value-neutral' way have met with criticism, and are prepared to admit

the argument that 'value-neutral' teaching, when it comes to value

education, is a contradiction in terms, as the selection of what to teach

and what to leave out is in itself a value judgment.   What the Paper

glaringly leaves out of its consideration are the pressures from the

plethora of popular movements which influence the understanding of

pupil and teacher alike on what moral values should be covered in

schools.

Wilson (1990)   goes to considerable lengths to examine different

understandings of what morals might mean in educational terms, and

helpfully points out logical and linguistic traps into which it is easy to fall.

He argues that, 'there is such a thing as 'being educated in morality' or

'being morally educated', as it is possible to consider a person as being

'educated in science, mathematics, history, modern languages ...'   (p 3)

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He sees moral education as transcending 'any one culture, creed, country, ideology, political party or anything else' (p 4). Wilson considers the variety of ways in which the term 'moral' is used today and has been used in the past, and shows how many people have their own 'hidden agenda' (my quotation marks) in using the word. He pleads for moral education to be taken much more seriously at all levels within education and argues that what is needed is a greater understanding and usage of the skills of analytic philosophy and psychology if real moral education is to flourish.

If Wilson could be considered as presenting a view from one end of the continuum: that moral education can exist in schools in its own right and should be freed from a historical/cultural/political base, then Purpel and Ryan (1983) could be viewed from the other end of that continuum. Their thesis is that moral education is an inevitability in schools - 'It comes with the territory', and they cite all manner of examples of pupils debating issues which have a moral flavour within a wide variety of curricular areas:

> *A debate on abortion in a biology class; a critical analysis*
> *of the values implicit in Huckleberry Finn's relationship to*
> *Jim, a runaway slave ...*   *(Purpel and Ryan 1983: 268).*

They go on to consider the moral decisions to be found in the 'hidden curriculum' and conclude that, as moral education will be present in schools whether or not one wishes it to be, then it would be desirable if schools 'be more aware, systematic, and informed about their moral influence'. They suggest that schools choose:

> *... an approach that approximates general school and*
> *community policy on moral education' and that such a*
> *policy should 'emerge from discussions with parents,*

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students and community representatives.

(Purpel and Ryan 1983: 275)

If such a system were adopted, the school would be at the mercy of whatever popular ideologies were fashionable; certainly relativism and post-modernism would currently have a strong influence in many schools. Many people would consider it to be preposterous if decisions as to what to teach in History or Science were to be handed over to parents and the 'community'; indeed, the recent history of the National Curriculum shows the unsettling effects which interest groups can have when they try directly to influence curriculum content: all the pressure which has been applied in different directions by lobbies for different views of History teaching is a case in point. What is seen as deeply suspect for other curricular areas is deemed to be desirable for the far more thorny question of morals!

Hemming (1994) outlines the 'schizoid values' to be found in schools, such as the emphasis on 'getting to the top', passing examinations and personal achievement at any price:

> *This is doubly damaging to the attainment of moral maturity. It means that the most able are trained to value themselves in terms of competitive accomplishment alone, while the least able feel rejected and inferior ...*
>
> *(Hemming 1994: 35)*

Hemming goes on to point out the surely familiar case to all teachers of the adolescent who, feeling that s/he is a failure, 'is tempted to snatch at phony self-esteem by showing off to his mates in some form of antisocial behaviour. This leads to a vicious circle of spoiled relationships.' (Hemming 1994: 35) There is much concern, both in schools and in society at large, about poor levels of children's behaviour; it is, sadly, all

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too often addressed by punishment and sanctions rather than by directing attention to the underlying problem. If schools saw moral values as being of central concern, rather than as the all too familiar side issue, then 'failure' would not always be seen as negative and pejorative, and 'success' not as the only significant achievement; I am convinced that, as a consequence, poor behaviour would improve.

There is a profound case to be made for a fundamental and genuine concern for the teaching of moral values to be at the heart of every curricular area in the secondary school. Many schools consider that such delicate issues are best left to the 'specialist' offices of the Religious Education department - a double irony as many Religious Education departments contain one 'specialist' teacher, at best, which is the case in the school in my study. This is usually an excuse for the majority of teachers to abdicate responsibility for challenging children properly to think about moral issues, as is evidenced from my findings in interviewing teachers quoted later; this argument is the frequent 'fall-back' position of senior managers when asked to identify where such coverage takes place in their school. Watson (1993), when considering the uniqueness which can be offered by Religious Education teaching, firmly addresses this point:

> *'The induction into beliefs and values separated from all that is religiously controversial or ill-fitting in a secularist, pluralist world, ... is performing a valuable educational service, but it is one which can and should be shared by the school as a whole, and every subject in it.'*
>
> *(Watson 1993: 43)*

2.6   What is meant by 'spiritual'?

This is perhaps the most controversial area in education today. It is a

word about which a significant number of teachers are frightened, and concerning which children are either totally ignorant or else they view it as something deeply suspicious, worthy of jokes, taunts and ridicule. OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) defines it thus:

> *Spiritual development relates to that aspect of inner life through which pupils acquire insights into their personal existence which are of enduring worth. It is characterised by reflection, the attribution of meaning to experience, valuing a non-material dimension to life and intimations of an enduring reality. 'Spiritual' is not synonymous with 'religious'; all areas of the curriculum may contribute to a pupil's spiritual development.*
>
> *(Office For Standards in Education 1994: 8)*

It is helpful that OFSTED so firmly roots the responsibility for spiritual education across the curriculum, 'as well as in activities outside the curriculum'. The recommendations in the 1994 Paper are for developing spirituality through open-ended enquiry, and it says that it should:

> *...concentrate[s] particularly on the **process of exploring** [OFSTED's bold type] such issues.*
>
> *(Office For Standards in Education 1994: 9)*

The problems of assessing a school's success in this area are admitted, but a number of evaluation criteria are identified:

> *through the values and attitudes the school identifies, upholds and fosters;*
> *through the contribution made by the whole curriculum;*
> *through religious education, acts of collective worship and other assemblies;*
> *through extra-curricular activity, together with the general ethos and climate of the school.*
>
> *(Office For Standards in Education 1994: 9)*

Watson (1993) spends a chapter considering what is meant by 'spiritual' and how such understanding can inform teachers' work:

> *Spirituality concerns a quality of life which transcends the*
> *natural plane and resists what may be called the unnatural,*
> *evil, or demonic...*   *(Watson 1993: 81)*

And she goes on to identify four qualities which would normally be present in spiritual experience:

> *inclusiveness ... assurance ... inspiration ... acceptance of*
> *mystery ...*   *(Watson 1993: 82)*

It becomes apparent that the term 'spiritual' cannot be neatly summarised in a sentence, and the way in which schools tackle the education of spiritual values is a question which needs very careful thought and attention. If moral values are often sidelined as being the responsibility of the Religious Education department, then how much more so are spiritual values?

Some educationists choose to dismiss the notion of spiritual values entirely, finding the expression too nebulous to be helpful:

> *Definitions of spirituality are notoriously difficult to pin*
> *down, and I am already of the opinion that 'spiritual values'*
> *as a concept takes us nowhere ...*   *(Marfleet 1995: 45)*

Marfleet does go on to acknowledge, however, that, 'I am still of the opinion that spiritual development is a proper part of education', and he sees the education of such 'development' as taking part in different areas of the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities, just as much as in Religious Education lessons.

Carr (1995), tries to tease out what is meant by the term 'spiritual' as distinct from 'religious' and 'moral'; he endeavours to show that there is

a particular kind of knowledge or understanding which can be identified as being discrete from other areas. He does not see it as sensible to try to teach spiritual values in all areas of the curriculum, and he identifies Religious Education and the Arts as being the natural homes of such concepts. He examines the notion of 'spirit' (in the sense of 'the spirit of the times': summing up a particular culture or historical era, and spirit also in the sense of a particular personal quality: a spirited child or horse) and traces the development of understanding of the term through Plato's and Aristotle's usage to various New Testament writers. In articulating what one could define 'spiritual' as being, Carr writes:

> *First, it would appear that spirituality is a function of appreciation or reflection upon ideals or goals which are both apt for positive moral evaluation and concerned with those aspects of human experience which attempt to reach beyond the mundane and the material towards what is transcendent and eternal. Second, it would seem that any education in spirituality ... should concern not only the promotion of values of the relevant sort but also the cultivation of positive dispositions for the successful pursuit of values of this sort.* (Carr 1995: 90)

We do not, however, learn what Carr means by the 'relevant sort' of values: relevancy as an idea has to apply to a context, and we need to know who is defining the context and relevancy, what their criteria are and how meaningful to a school's organisation such a definition would be. If 'relevant sort' of values are to do with respect for others, then a school can organise itself in such a way as to make such respect predominate; if the 'relevant sort' of values are to do with the market place, then a school's organisation would need to be very different. Carr acknowledges that if schools are going to be engaged in spiritual

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education, then it would be reasonable to be able to say what content one would expect to be covered, in just such a way as one can point to a body of knowledge in Mathematics or History and say <u>what</u> is taught. He makes a conceivable case for saying that:

> *It is quite plausible to maintain that there are indeed judgments of a distinctively transcendent or spiritual kind which express truths about human life and experience which would not appear to be readily reducible to either morality or religion.*   *(Carr 1995: 91)*

and goes on to give as an example 'what doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?' Whilst I am at least partly persuaded by Carr's argument, I do not see it as progressing the practical difficulties of school curriculum managers who are trying to ensure that spiritual values are adequately dealt with centrally in school and are not 'hived off' to the fringes of Religious Education. To quote the example 'what doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?' is only going to provide ammunition to those who see a concern for souls as being the exclusive preserve of the Religious Education department. There are distressingly too few specialist Religious Education teachers and too little time in the school week devoted to Religious Education for something as important as spiritual values to remain within the confines of that subject, even if that were deemed theoretically desirable. Watson, on the other hand, argues for 'promote[ing] spiritual awareness across the whole curriculum' (Watson 1993).

2.7   What is meant by 'values'?

The term 'values' can be confusing: the <u>Fontana Dictionary of Modern</u>

Thought has sections on *'Theory of Value', 'Value Analysis', 'Value Freedom' and 'Value Judgment',* as well as referring the reader to the section on *'Axiology'* for *'Value Theory' (Bullock, Stallybrass and Trombley 1988: 890-892).* The 1988 Education Act, previously quoted at the beginning of this chapter, linked 'spiritual, moral. cultural, mental and physical development', but, perhaps wisely, omitted referring to 'values'. It was the National Curriculum Council which rose to the challenge of attempting to define what it meant when it said:

> *Schools should be expected to uphold those values which*
> *contain moral absolutes.*
> *(Office For Standards in Education 1993: 2),*

by going on to list those moral absolutes with which it considered schools should be concerned, and which, in turn, was quoted by OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) the following year in its discussion paper. The OFSTED framework document currently links spiritual, moral, social and cultural values, and schools are assessed under those headings when they are inspected by OFSTED. 'Values', then, are not assessed in isolation (by OFSTED), and whilst 'a school's values' are commonly referred to, both in schools and by society at large, when one breaks down what is meant by the phrase, it is usually possible to categorise the values by using OFSTED's own headings: spiritual, moral, social and cultural.

The OFSTED discussion paper previously referred to in this chapter does not, unlike the terms 'moral development' and 'spiritual development', attempt to define what it means by 'values'. It does list, however, those:

> *personal values in relation to the self ... relationships with*
> *others and local, national and world issues.*

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Such values listed are:

> *self-awareness; self-confidence; self-esteem; self-control;*
> *self-reliance; self-respect; self-discipline; responsibility.*
> *tolerance; respect for persons and property; truthfulness;*
> *compassion; cooperativeness; sensitivity; love.*
> *the individual and the community - rights, duties and*
> *responsibilities; war and peace; human rights;*
> *exploitation and aid; medical ethics; environmental*
> *issues; equal opportunities (sex, race, disability, class).*
> *and* **the disposition to act and behave** *{the paper's*
> *bold type] in accordance with such values, including the*
> *skills of making moral decisions and forming moral*
> *judgments.*
>
> *(Office For Standards in Education 1994: 13 & 14)*

Schools should find this list helpful when making curricular decisions, and teachers from all different subject disciplines must be able to find concepts which apply to their subjects; indeed, in chapter 5, I comment on the values explicitly referred to in the department handbooks and schemes of work from the school in the study. Almost all make explicit references to some of OFSTED's listed values.

Watson and Ashton make the point that:

> *From our assumptions arise our values - what we regard*
> *as inviolably important and/or desirable.*
>
> *(Watson & Ashton 1995: Preface)*

They go on to recognise the fact that it is often difficult to make the connection between values and assumptions, but they then go on to give examples of children talking where such a connection can be seen. Their examples echo my own findings in talking to children: the

following pieces of dialogue serving as illustration to the point:

> *Things like value, if you don't learn about things like*
> *friendship, you treat your friends like dirt and you end up*
> *with no friends.* (Year 7 Appendix 145)
> *...friends are meant to last for ever, but money and things*
> *you borrow with your money don't affect anyone else for*
> *ages ... you don't need that much money really ... you need*
> *more friends than money.* (Year 7 Appendix 148)

Both these pupils illustrate the value which they subscribe to friendship very clearly through their assumptions: the first speaker making the connection that if one does not positively learn about friendship then one may unwittingly do something to spoil a friendship, the second rating friendship more highly than money.

Mary Warnock asserts that:

> *What we value is what we either like or dislike ... the crucial*
> *word in this definition is we. In speaking of values, there*
> *is a presumption that humans ... share the preferences so*
> *designated.* (Warnock 1996: 46)

A page later, however, and Warnock is differentiating between 'the things that we value' and things which are intrinsically valuable, and is citing postmodernism as corrupting values among the 'educated'. A couple of pages even further on, and teachers are being told that:

> *School should be the breeding ground of the individual*
> *conscience, simply because it is, more than the home, a*
> *society, and it is within society that the shared values which*
> *inform the conscience are predominantly exercised.*
> (Warnock 1996: 49)

Warnock is placing the duty to teach society's morals very firmly at the

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door of schools, writing trenchantly of the sovereignty of law, respect for the constitution and that the prevailing cynicism about politics should be challenged. There seems to be no place in this philosophy for the pupil and teacher to set off on a path of genuinely open-minded mutual discovery about fundamental values.

Halstead (1995) defines 'values' as:

> *They are the principles, ideals and fundamental convictions which act as general guides to behaviour, as points of reference in decision making and as standards by which beliefs and actions can be evaluated.*
>
> *(Halstead 1995: 5)*

He analyses the relationship between education and values as being threefold: the values which are held by a school as an institution; the inevitability of schools reflecting and embodying society's values; those values held by individual teachers, parents and family members which influence developing children. Such categorisation may well be helpful to teachers when they try to work out their own contribution to values education, in the classroom.

2.8   Conclusion

The above provides an outline of the rationales of the intellectual movements selected for the purpose of this study. Consideration has been given to what is meant by the terms 'moral', 'spiritual' and 'values'. I now go on to examine how the pupils (chapter 3) and the teachers (chapter 4) see such values in regard to education, and I will trace influences of the intellectual movements on their thinking.

CHAPTER 3

THE PUPILS' VIEWS ON VALUES EDUCATION: DATA

3.0 Introduction

I was interested to see how pupils themselves defined the terms 'moral', 'spiritual' and 'values'. My original idea had been solely to examine their words for evidence that the children had been unwittingly influenced by the popular movements with which my study is concerned, with a view then to trying to demonstrate that schools should develop strategies to counteract these influences. When, however, I looked at what the pupils said, I discovered much wider implications of the pupils' experiences for those of us involved in teaching and managing schools, and I consider these alongside the evidence for the influence of the popular movements: positivism, relativism and post-modernism.

3.1 Perceptions of Morality

My interviews with pupils usually began by my asking what they understood the term 'moral' to mean. It was the word with which they were least familiar - responses to the words 'spiritual' and 'values' were given with greater confidence.

One notion which was mentioned independently by pupils in years 7, 9 and 10, is the idea of the moral teaching in a fable or story: *Like the moral of a story.* This was a year seven pupil who, when encouraged to enlarge on her point, said that it was *to teach you a lesson* and that such things might arise in an English lesson. The idea of a moral in a story was mentioned again by a year nine pupil, *the underlying story of what you should do* and by a year ten pupil, *a story, the meaning of it'.*

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The phrase 'a story's moral' is obviously one which children hear from time to time, particularly perhaps with references to fables, but it is not clear whether or not the pupils view such stories as being concerned with universal ways of living one's life, or as teachers' somewhat random and disconnected whims.

The term 'moral' was also used by a year eleven pupil to describe his experience of school assemblies, when he and a friend mentioned that their Head of Year 'always, at the end ... adds little comments ... like some moral ...' (Appendix 210).   Interestingly, both the pupil, and perhaps the teacher herself in the situation, felt the necessity to diffuse the effect created by what had just been said: 'She [the Head of Year] keeps going on about how she says, it's good to be like that but you don't have to because I am not ...' (Appendix 210 & 211] and general laughter from members of the group follows.   This aside is very revealing, not only of the pupil who appears to be feeling uncomfortable by the implications of the serious nature of what is said in assemblies, but it also neatly illustrates the teacher's reluctance to be 'preachy' - to hold herself up as a model to the pupils.

A year seven boy said that, *A moral is a standard (Appendix 145)*, although felt unable to give any examples to illustrate what he had in mind.   A year ten girl volunteered that *morals is like what's right'* *(Appendix 195)*, but said it so quietly initially that she had to be asked to repeat it more loudly - whether this illustrates a lack of confidence in her idea or a naturally quiet voice, it is not easy to say.

The notion of 'moral support' came up in a discussion among year eight pupils, *Moral support ... it's when you want people to come along with you, to support you and your ideas'* (Appendix 172) and in another year

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eight group 'moral support' was mentioned, although not enlarged upon. Like the idea of the 'moral of a story', 'moral support' is a phrase which many children will have heard and about which they will have a concept in their minds; I suspect that in a 'stream of consciousness' sort of way, it gets caught up and confused in the minds of some children with 'morals'.

There was the notion that morals are to do with good behaviour:

> *It's like someone's done something wrong and they say you shouldn't have done that, that's down to your morals.*
>
> *Year 8 pupil (Appendix 181)*

> *Moral is sort of what you should be doing.*
>
> *(Year 9 pupil Appendix 189)*

A year nine pupil used the term 'morals' as a synonym for 'guidance', when asked about whether or not it would be a good idea to be taught values in school:

> *A lot of people don't seem to, like we don't know what things mean, and that, so it might be a nice idea ... like kind of guidance, morals ... things to do.* *(Appendix 190)*

All the pupils were at a loss to give concrete examples of moral issues. Year eleven pupils began to ascribe the definition of morals to society:

> *Morals are a set of standards, of your own choosing or society chooses ... They are the way you behave and such.*
>
> *(Year 11 pupil Appendix 213)*

A year eleven pupil revealed a relativist outlook when saying what he understood 'moral' to mean:

> *Whether something is proper ... or not ... it should be ... it depends how you look at it.* *(Appendix 204)*

The general feeling of the pupils, when considering the meaning of the term 'moral', was one of lack of confidence in talking about the subject. Three groups declined to attempt any kind of definition at all, and others were hesitant in talking about their ideas.

3.2 Perceptions of Spirituality

The children whom I interviewed very largely equated 'spiritual' with 'supernatural' or 'religious'. When I asked them to define 'spiritual' they said:

God and Jesus and things like that.' (Year 7 Appendix 144)
What you believe in.   *(Year 7 Appendix 144)*
If you sort of really believe in Jesus or something?
      (Year 7 Appendix 163)
Spiritual's supposed to be ghosts and things like that.
      (Year 8 Appendix 172)
It's spiritual, what you feel inside about things.
      (Year 8 Appendix 172)
Supernatural activity.   *(Year 8 Appendix 181)*

Paranormal.   *(Year 8 Appendix 181)*

The kinds of things people believe in, sort of base their ideas on, like believe in certain spirits ...
      (Year 8 Appendix 181)

With religions and different beliefs.
      (Year 9 Appendix 189)
Something to do with God. Or religion.
      (Year 11 Appendix 204)
How things affect you if you believe in certain things.
      (Year 11 Appendix 204)
Spiritual can be how you feel about religion.
      (Year 11 Appendix 213)

This preoccupation with the supernatural is worrying. Watson asserts that:

> *Spirituality concerns a quality of life which transcends the natural plane and resists what may be called the unnatural, evil, or demonic...*   *(Watson 1993: 81)*

If this is the case, then we are clearly not succeeding in helping children in our schools to resist such pernicious forces. What became apparent in conversations with pupils, particularly in the younger years, is the fact that they see affirmation of religious beliefs as likely to make them vulnerable:

> *Because if you say you believe in God some people get teased about it.*   *(Year 7 Appendix 155)*
> *Mostly other pupils making fun of other people if they say someone said what their values were half the class would probably burst out laughing ...*   *(Year 8 Appendix 174)*
> *[People feel] on their own, lonely. Because if you've got a different religion from everyone else, then you stick out ...*
> *(Year 8 Appendix 185)*
> *Some people might take it seriously, but others, they're just going to laugh ... some of them, even teachers, if they're not comfortable in the lesson, they're going to make a joke of it*
> *(Year 9 Appendix 191)*

Older pupils articulated the 'uncool' approach to such concepts:

> *Some people immediately are going to turn off...because they're going to immediately think it's to do with God, and there's something in the lower school, and perhaps the upper school too, ... unfashionable to believe in God...*
> *(Year 11 Appendix 214)*
> *RE [is seen] as just, almost a free period, to sit down and listen if you want to, or you can just switch off ...*
> *(Year 11 Appendix 218)*

Pupils were divided in how far they considered spiritual values to be an appropriate issue for schools to cover.   One year eight boy, when

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asked, *Do you think that these values are important? Moral and spiritual values?* replied:

> *I think moral ones are. But not so much spiritual ... at home you can do spiritual ... religion doesn't really come into schools I don't think, because it's up to you to decide on your own religion ...*   *(Appendix 41)*

It is not possible to discern whether or not this boy has arrived at his opinion through the attitude of his family or through teachers and friends. When he says that 'it's up to you to decide on your own religion', he might, of course, be expressing a perfectly proper view that religion is a personal and deeply considered issue, but he could also be expressing the post-modernist approach that it's entirely up to the individual and that 'anything goes'.

There was, however, an interest expressed by some in having an opportunity to explore spiritual matters. The following quotation comes from some dialogue among a group of year eleven pupils in which, in a thoroughly post-modernist fashion, one argues that if people want to find out about religious/spiritual matters then 'it's up to them', they will do it if they wish, whilst another puts the point that :

> *If they don't know about it they don't know what they want to find out so it doesn't bother them anyway ... because you can't find out about anything you haven't heard and therefore what you can't know can't hurt you or, or affect you ...*   *(Year 11 Appendix 62)*

to which another replies:

> *You never know, they could be searching for something ... searching for a meaning to life?*
>
>   *(Year 11 Appendix 205, 206)*

It is clear that some pupils feel the school has either given them a minimal opportunity to consider such issues, or none at all; to the question 'Do you enjoy discussing and thinking about such things?' one year eight boy replied:

> *Well we haven't. I haven't actually done much about that*
> *sort of thing so I don't really know yet ...*
>
> *(Year 8 Appendix 185)*

and another boy replied to the question 'Are there any other [moral or spiritual] issues that you think the school should tackle?'

> *They could bring it up about if you believe in God or not*
> *because it doesn't even though they cover it in RE or they*
> *don't sort of cover sort of saying do you or not believe in*
> *God and stuff like that ...   (Year 7 Appendix 155)*

A year nine girl said the following, in reply to the question 'Do you think that students ought to learn about such things in school?':

> *It could be a good thing.   Because you don't really get*
> *taught about it at the moment, or anything, and you don't*
> *really know what they mean, ... at least if you were taught*
> *you'd know what they'd mean.*
>
> *(Year 9 Appendix 189)*

It seems clear that the school is ignoring the needs of their pupils to develop a confident spiritual awareness, and not responding to an (admittedly sometimes unconscious or not expressed) interest in the spiritual.

3.3   Perceptions of values

Given the different connotations of the word 'value' (quality, price, appraise, appreciate), it is hardly surprising that the pupils whom I

talked to came up with a fairly eclectic set of definitions of 'values':

Values of food. (Year 7 Appendix 144)

The price of stuff. (Year 7 Appendix 144)

How much you value things yourself, like friendship or something like that. (Year 7 Appendix 144)

In Maths we do place values. (Year 7 Appendix 157)

I've got bad values ... like watching telly.

(Year 7 Appendix 163)

What you think's important. Quite valuable to you.

(Year 8 Appendix 172)

Opinions. (Year 8 Appendix 182)

What you hold in regard. What you believe in.

(Year 9 Appendix 189)

Well it can mean two things, the value of some things, the price, or something that you ... value, that you ... sentimental value. (Year 10 Appendix 195)

What things mean to you. (Year 11 Appendix 204)

How precious they are to you. (Year 11 Appendix 204)

What you personally believe is right,

(Year 11 Appendix 213)

The term 'values' is obviously confusing, particularly to younger pupils, who more generally associate the word with money and merchandise than with human behaviour or principles. They are familiar with a mathematical concept of values, and, indeed, a year seven girl volunteered mathematics as the subject in which she would expect to learn about values. In the same discussion group, another girl suggested that she would expect to learn about values in Religious Education, and English, although she made it clear that she was associating values in English with stories and their morals. The group continued to talk about specific lessons in which these topics had been covered, and PSE (Personal and Social Education) was cited, with an

example given: *'We've just been doing things about friends and things like that'.* A little later, when I was trying to enquire further to ascertain what values they thought were more important than others, there was the following dialogue:

> *Question: Families ... to do with maybe telling the truth, being honest, relationships with people, justice, those sorts of ideas ... do you think that these kinds of values are important in any way?*
> *Several voices: Yes.*
> *Question: Do you think that they are less important or more important than things like getting good value for money?*
> *Boy 1 + others: More.*
> *Question: Why do you think that?*
> *Girl 1: Because money isn't everything.*
> *Question: Money isn't everything?*
> *Girl 1: If you have loads of money ... you won't have any friends ...*
> *Girl 2: Yes, because friends are meant to last for ever, but money and things you borrow with your money don't affect anyone else for ages and ages and ages ...*
> *Girl 3: You don't need that much money really ... you need more friends than money ...*
>
> *(Appendix 147, 148)*

This illustrates that this group at least had well thought out ideas about the relative importance of friendship and money.

Another year seven group were grappling with the concept of good and bad values:

> *Girl 1: I've got bad values [laughter] ... like watching telly ...*
> *Girl 2: So's my brother ... he watches the telly all the time ... and mum says ... he keeps watching the telly all the time .. he doesn't stop ...*

Question: Right, okay, so you think that's something to do with values?

Girl 1: Someone could have good values doing things at school like technology and that ...

Girl 2: And swimming ...

Question: And how would you know they've got good values?

Girl 3: Because if they done it well or got a certificate or something ...'   *(Appendix163, 164)*

These children associate the term 'values' with behaviour 'like watching telly' or with achievement - the swimming certificate. They go on to show that their understanding of 'values' is equated with success:

Well, I'm just absolutely rubbish at CDT [Craft Design & Technology], I can't do it, that's my bad values ...

Like in English we have spelling tests, erm, it's sort of bad values if you get a low mark, but it's okay to get a low mark

.   *(Appendix 164)*

This idea was reiterated when they agreed that values is about 'getting good marks and good grades'. It is unsurprising that the pupils make this association, as achievement - academic, sporting, artistic - is highly prized in school, and, indeed, is quoted by several speakers when they were asked what they thought that school assemblies were concerned with: congratulating and celebrating achievement, and exhorting the backsliders to making more effort.

A year eight group, when asked whether or not they thought that it would ever be possible to test or assess a pupil's values, said:

Girl 2: It would be difficult because everyone has different values ...

Girl 4: Everyone would just say 'that's the right one - if you've got a different one then it's wrong' ... it's people's

opinions what they think ...

Girl 5: Everyone has different opinions .

<div align="right">*(Appendix 177)*</div>

These pupils are showing that they have been influenced by a relativist way of looking at the world: everyone's opinions would appear to be equally valid.

The older pupils are beginning to arrive at Halstead's *'principles, ideals and fundamental convictions'* , although they were not able, in very many cases, to give me examples of values in terms of a personal creed ('friendship' was the most frequently quoted example). A year ten girl was trying to put into words the values which were looked at in a history lesson:

> *In History we did, ... I don't know if this has anything to do with it, hyper inflation in Germany and the money value there, and what people thought of it, and why they voted for Hitler, and why they voted for someone else ...*

<div align="right">*(Appendix 196)*</div>

Although it may be the idea of 'money value' and Germany's hyper inflation which triggered off her idea, she shows that she has made a connection between the notion of 'values' and people's political views.

This group went on to talk about an English lesson in which they had discussed abortion:

> *Question: Do you think anything to do with people's moral values came out at all in that?*
>
> *Girl 3: It did, yes because everyone had different ideas and different morals really ...*
>
> *Question: Do you think you can ever be right or wrong when it comes to things like that?*
>
> *Voice: No.*
>
> *Girl 4: I think it's your own opinion ... You think you're right*

<div align="center">53</div>

and you think someone else is wrong, that person who you think is wrong thinks that they're right and you're wrong [laughter] ...

Girl 1: Everyone has their different opinions about everything.

Question: Do you think that there are any things that people share to do with values?

Girl 1" Not everybody. ... Because you have different people and different religions and different races and everyone thinks differently in their own personality ...

(Appendix 197)

These pupils show both a relativist attitude - no one person's idea is any better or worse than anyone else's - and a post-modern tendency for people to choose an approach which appeals most to the individual.

3.4   Other pupil perceptions

I was interested in the pupils' views of what they thought should be taught in schools, and in their experiences in the classroom: how they found that teachers dealt with values issues - with confidence or embarrassment, thoroughly or cursorily. Much of what I learned of this nature is dealt with in chapters 5 and 6, when I look at issues to do with the explicit, implicit and nulll curriculums and teaching styles which both promote and inhibit successful values education. Some of the pupils' comments, however, expand their views on the definitions of 'moral', 'spiritual' and 'values' and reveal relativist and post-modernist ways of looking at the world:

Question: Do you think that students ought to learn about these things [values] in school?

Girl 3: Yes.

Girl 1: No, because they're so many different cultures and

stuff that I don't think that they can all be taught and people's opinions vary so much you can't, I don't think you can, sort of satisfy everyone's needs ...

(Year 11 Appendix 204, 205)

It seems that the message which the pupils are getting, is that issues to do with values are so culturally determinated and relative, and there are so many different cultures, that any attempt to learn about them will be doomed to failure, so that there is not much point in even starting. This is a depressing notion, but one which teachers express from time to time, and one which is used to justify ignoring certain aspects of the curriculum.

This same group, quoted earlier in this chapter (in the section on spiritual values) talking about people searching for a meaning to life, continued their discussion in the following way:

Boy 2: Like what - searching for what?

Girl 3: Searching for a meaning to life?

Boy 2: D'you need a meaning to life?

Girl 1: They might.

Boy 2: I mean, they've gone through it for what, twelve or fifteen years now already, what's the point in searching now? I mean to say, things are going to change yes, but you've still got to basically go on living, same routines, you get up, you get dressed ...

Girl 3: But if they don't have any ... if you're not taught anything about, about religion and how their life can change, then there's, they ...

Boy 2: Maybe they don't want to be told how something's changed, like these missionaries, you know, they go out to these people in Africa or the Eskimoes up there, and preach about Christianity, and they've really got no right to do that ...

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> *Girl 2: They've got the right to be aware of other things ...*
>
> *Boy 2: Bit if they're not aware, let's face it, it doesn't matter.* *(Appendix 206)*

The boy speaking was expressing a post-modernist view when he said , *What's the point in searching now ...* He was accepting that things change, but his point was that it is the individual's routine that matters, not a quest for significance in life. His 'cultural imperialism' argument is a common one, heard often as an explanation for not 'interfering' in the lives of others. The girl, arguing with him, was trying to articulate a more open attitude to values and beliefs. It is interesting to note, however, her lack of confidence in arguing at a personal level; when the boy asks the question: *'D'you need a meaning to life?'* she replies in the third person: *'They might.'* It is more comfortable to conduct debate in the third person, particularly when trying to express only partly thought out, difficult ideas.

Another year eleven group felt strongly that values are a personal matter, and were anxious that they should be dealt with sensitively in school:

> *Girl 3: I think it's [values are] a bit more personal, it's what you personally believe is right.*
> *Girl 1: I think it's more personal, perhaps, you know, than morals.*
> *Question : D'you think that students ought to learn about these sorts of things in school? [Pause]*
> *Girl 2: Yes, but I think a lot of them have their own ideas about it.*
> *Girl 1: I don't think it should be forced upon us.*
> *Girl 3: They should be shown certain things but should make their own mind up.* *(Appendix213)*

There is a definite anxiety, referred to in chapter 1 (page 5), about teachers **forcing** values upon pupils.   There is an acceptance that schools have a right to introduce pupils to values issues, but an insistence that they must not express a view about what pupils should think.   My view is that this worry stems from a lack of confidence in debate and an undeveloped personal set of values.   This suggests that the school has not given the pupils the opportunity to test out their own set of values and to practise expressing their views in an atmosphere which is positively supportive.

I shall return to the importance of creating the right kind of framework in the classroom for creating genuine discussion and encouraging meaningful consideration of values, in chapters 5, 6 and 7.   In the next chapter I analyse the views expressed by the teachers on what 'moral', 'spiritual' and 'values' mean, and the influences of popular movements on their thinking.

CHAPTER 4

THE TEACHERS' VIEWS ON VALUES EDUCATION: DATA

4.0   Perceptions of Morality

The teachers whom I interviewed expressed diverse definitions of 'moral':

> *Those deep and fundamental truths which are immutable in time or circumstance.   (Physics teacher   Appendix 220)*

> *To do with relationships: relationships with oneself and others.   (RE and PSE teacher   Appendix 96)*
> *Moral, I tend to think of - not so much good manners - but rules of living: standards.Standards of behaviour. Socially acceptable standards.   (English teacher   Appendix 244)*
> *Moral values are concerned with relationships with others: fairness, equality, those sorts of things.*

> *(Senior manager   Appendix 234)*
> *I guess that moral values must have to do with the way we live together, the way that human, and I suppose other animals too, see themselves living with others.*

> *(English and drama teacher   Appendix 251)*
> *Morals I see as being some sort of human code.*

> *(Mathematics teacher   Appendix 248)*

The majority view among the teachers is that moral values are societal, to do with a person's relationships and interaction with others.

The first teacher quoted (*those deep and fundamental truths which are immutable in time or circumstance*) expresses trenchant views on the place of the school in values education, as can be seen when he talks about spiritual values (Appendix 220).

It is clear from reading his developing ideas about moral values in education, that this teacher sees values as being only of proper concern

in science teaching:

> *I think that science is the lead department in such teaching ... the pupils, and I suspect a lot of staff, have a misunderstanding of the process that's going on ... science is about truth, or more exactly, the removal of falsehood, and since it is, it has as its fundamental value the idea of knowledge, understanding, truth; that is underlined in everything which is taught in science; whatever other discussions are going on in the school, are not morally valid unless they are based on knowledge, truth. So, I think that science is the ultimate department - all other subjects are derivations from it - we teach a respect for fact, reality, logic, rationality .. we frequently find ourselves fighting the rest of the school in so doing; the pupils we have to fight as well of course, because they are encouraged to 'free-wheel' through their ignorance, which I personally would disapprove of. (Appendix 220, 221)*

The legacy of scientific positivism is very apparent here, in the view that knowledge has to be 'truth' which is 'real, logical. rational'.

When enlarging on his own teaching philosophy, we are told:

> *All my teaching is concerned with morality, all my teaching is concerned with truth being superior to falsehood, it's always concerned with how you establish truth, with objectivity as superior to subjectivity, with argument being invalid unless you are arguing about an exterior truth, not an attempt to batter down the opposition by clever words. My entire bent, whenever I get an opportunity, and whenever they're quiet enough to listen is, to deliver that message. The rest of it is simply a vehicle for so doing... A scientist must, if he is incapable of [making a judgment], must refuse to do so; you can not come down on one side or another if the evidence doesn't warrant it,*

and to do so is wrong.... the training of scientists is that you
must not make arbitrary decisions which are wrong.   The
whole point of science isn't to accumulate lots of things, the
whole point is to rule out other things which cannot be true.
You must stick to the truth.   You must not ever allow your
personal feelings to run away with you so that you adopt a
particular position and then argue from that position, that is
wrong.   You should be arguing from the position of the
reality which you want to establish.

(Appendix 221)

I have quoted this particular passage at length, because it is the
repetition and stresses which make it so striking.   This is the message of
an evangelist for scientific positivism, with words like *fundamental, truth,*
entire bent, it is wrong, these words admit no place for uncertainty; no
place for a personal response from the individual.   If it is not an
observable truth, then there is no place for it in the classroom - more,
such ideas should be prohibited, banished.

The senior manager quoted also happens to be a physics teacher, but
he takes a much more utilitarian, pragmatic stance:

... we need to try and show them [the pupils] that there is a

range of behaviour, some of which is more acceptable,

more moral, - more valued than others.

(Appendix 234)

This is the view that moral behaviour is determined by society and that
the role of the school is to try to mould pupils to fit in with society's
requirements.   He expresses caution of a teacher committing
him/herself to a moral stance:

I think you would be on dodgy ground with the teacher

standing up at the front of the classroom saying, 'This is the moral way to look at this....'   (Appendix 235)

This indicates a relativist position: the individual teacher must not come down on one side or the other - the implication being that the teacher presents the pupils with a number of versions and the pupils pick the one they prefer. It is interesting that few teachers would accept this way of teaching their specialist subject, but it is commonly found when values are being considered.

The notion of values somehow being for the good of society is quite evident in the teachers quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The English teacher who said:

Moral, I tend to think of - not so much good manners - but rules of living: standards.Standards of behaviour. Socially acceptable standards. *(English teacher Appendix 244)*

went on to talk about schools' commitment to society:

I think that secondary schools should be teaching children to go out into society, they're not teaching discrete subjects, they're teaching children to mature and become part of the society as adults and that includes having a knowledge and understanding and perhaps almost paying allegiance to these moral and spiritual values. If someone doesn't do it, then we say there's something wrong with them. Therefore our job must be to equip them so that they do conform. *(Appendix 244)*

People are frequently accusing schools of being responsible for society's problems, and I look at some of the current demands on schools to provide education in values in order to counteract modern trends in crime, deviancy and immorality, in the next chapter. Teachers

have clearly got the message that one of their jobs is *to equip them [pupils] so that they do conform ...* and some teachers at least are content to accept this particular role.

A colleague of the previous teacher in the English and drama departments, takes up the idea of educating children to fit into society:

> *... There are ways which are more or less acceptable for the individual to fit in to a group within society ... morality is possibly a way of saying, 'There are ways in which we ought to behave which will have a beneficial or a detrimental effect on the people around'.*
>
> *(Appendix 251)*

This view seems to be supporting a utilitarian approach which says that the happiness of the greatest number in society should be the basis for decision making. No specific moral principle is followed - perhaps the modern relativist approach comes close, taking as it does its rationale: it depends on circumstances/situation/culture.

4.1 Perceptions of Spirituality

The teachers' definitions of 'spiritual' were as varied as their definitions of 'moral'. The physics teacher quoted earlier:

> *... spiritual - refers to an emergent property, consciousness, and that is, because we think we exist we cannot conceive of ourselves not existing therefore we invent this thing called a spirit...* *(Appendix 220)*

This teacher goes on to stress his view that the job of the teacher is:

> *To deliver to the pupils truth. We are not here to indulge in fantasies ... in weird and wonderful attitudes ... they should be outlawed, not encouraged.* *(Appendix 223)*

And later in the conversation he soundly rounds on the very idea of teaching religious concepts:

> I see all religion as evil (to use a religious term). It's the antithesis of rational thought, and therefore something that ought to be, not just omitted, but held up to ridicule in schools. ... you should never under any circumstances allow any validity to accrue [to religious studies] that would be to mislead the pupil and to lead them to potentially dangerous water ... belief is bad and belief ought to be removed ... The purpose of education is in fact to remove religion and all religious feeling... that is what constitutes an educated person. *(Appendix 225)*

Not all of his colleagues in the science department, of course, take such an extreme view, but it is significant that science statutorily has twenty per cent of curriculum time at Key Stage 4, and is the subject which has most timetabled time in year seven. It is inevitable that the inheritance of scientific positivism is going to flavour pupils' understanding and moral development.

Several teachers saw 'spiritual' as a synonym for 'other-worldly': the senior manager whom I interviewed said that:

> Spiritual is concerned with religious - things which are not necessarily just of this place on earth, but the feeling as to whether or not there is more to life ...
>
> *(Appendix 234)*

A mathematics teacher saw spiritual as the idea that there is:

> ... something special and magic about life which is spiritual ... a spirituality which engenders wonder, the feeling that there is something there ... I think that that is really important. *(Appendix 258)*

This teacher came over strongly as feeling that good and successful

teaching can bring out the response: 'Isn't this amazing!' from pupils, when considering the complexities of the universe.

The other end of the spectrum is taken, unsurprisingly, by the head of religious education, who defines 'spiritual' as:

> *to do with relationships with God or with the non-material,*
> *the super-natural.*   *(Appendix 239)*

He goes on to express a conviction that spiritual issues are of a proper concern for secondary schools, and affirms that for he himself:

> *The moral and spiritual, the values side of life is more*
> *important to me than, say, the vocational, or the job, or the*
> *earning money side of life.*   *(Appendix 239)*

and that schools are:

> *about education, which is about leading people to develop,*
> *and to bringing out and encouraging the values which are*
> *within...*   *(Appendix 239)*

It is salutary to be reminded that, at the time of writing, this teacher is the only specialist Religious Education teacher on the staff, and that at Key Stage 3 the subject receives 2.5 per cent time on the timetable, whilst at Key Stage 4 it gets less than that. It would not seem realistic for the scientific positivist message to be significantly dented from this curriculum area.

An English teacher says that when she hears the word 'spiritual':

> *I tend to think religious and I tend to think Christian values -*
> *which again comes slightly into the realms of behaviour,*
> *because some of our morals are linked to spiritual values.*
>   *(Appendix 244)*

And a colleague in her department regards:

> *... a spiritual dimension - we're talking more about*

metaphysics aren't we? The relationship between Man and something which is outside the scope of his normal perception, some kind of super-natural system.

(Appendix 251)

He sees moral and spiritual issues as being found across the curriculum, and can identify points in his own teaching where these arise, both in English and drama lessons. He recognises that when good teaching is taking place, then:

The process, the whole business of students having to interact with each other, taking into account each others' views and account for themselves -   make their own stand .. that's important.   (Appendix 252, 253)

This goes some way to representing Carr's previously quoted:

cultivation of positive dispositions for the successful pursuit of values...   (Carr 1995: 90)

Yet another view is expressed by the English teacher quoted on the previous page, who considers that:

By missing out on a traditional spiritual upbringing, they're [the pupils] missing out on understanding [literary references].   (Appendix 247)

She sees the pursuit of spiritual values as initiation into the culture of society.   She considers that the school does not emphasise such concepts:

I don't feel that there is a push with spiritual values in the school ... I don't think that spiritual values come through [the code of rules] .   (Appendix 248)

All the way through the interviews with pupils and staff alike, it became

apparent that not only is there no clearly understood shared comprehension about what we understand 'spiritual' to mean, but that many of us even lack a vocabulary to talk with any confidence about such fundamental things. There is a considerable degree of tentativeness when the teachers are talking about 'spiritual':

> *I tend to think religious and I tend to think Christian values*
> *(Appendix 244)*

> *...we're talking more about metaphysics aren't we?*
> *(Appendix 251))*

The sentences are rather fractured, as the speakers are groping for words to describe how they think and feel; this is more evident when listening to the tape than in reading the transcript, which tries to show the pauses by either a dash [-] or by a series of three dots [...]. It is difficult to express oneself coherently on a topic like 'what do we mean by spiritual?' This is not a topic of general conversation and the words which we use are not always familiar; if, however, such an important subject, about which we would like our pupils to think deeply and talk confidently, is to be tackled by teachers, then perhaps they need help to clarify their ideas and express themselves with more assurance?

4.2   Perceptions of Values

The term 'values', like 'moral' and 'spiritual', was perceived in different ways:

> *I suppose [it] is a matter of a league table of different*
> *statements of important things which you put into some sort*
> *of list ...*   *(Physics teacher Appendix 220)*
> *I think that values you live by, or you try to live by.*
>   *(Chemistry teacher Appendix 228)*
> *Values - those things, beliefs, which we hold in high*

regard, which we think are important.

(RE teacher Appendix 239)

Values ... we should teach that there are these accepted
expectations ...   (English teacher Appendix 244)

There is a general consensus among those teachers who made a distinction between moral and spiritual values and 'values' as a concept on its own, of values being important and relevant to schools, but there is a disparity between those who saw values as being personal to the individual and those who saw them as being geared to society's expectations.

I asked the teachers whether or not they could identify any values with which they felt the school was most closely associated.   The majority view was that what the school stresses most is good behaviour and hard work, although the institutional values were not clearly discernible.   The physics teacher from whom I quoted at length about his views on 'spiritual', expressed himself robustly about this question:

Social values are the predominant values that occur in this
school.   ... I feel that my standards ... for my belief in
science, my belief in academic excellence and truth and so
on, have long since disappeared.   By the way I'm not
having a go at [the school in the study] all schools in
England are in the same state.   That's a sad thought, isn't
it?   Beyond social values ... perhaps the values of the
individual, very much humanistically orientated ...

...there are all sorts of values that are implicit in this school,
and some of them are very explicitly stated, as well.   ...
however, I don't approve of 'implicit moral standards' I
would prefer to have 'explicit moral standards'.   I feel that
such things should be brought into the light of day and
examined, rather that slid in without question, which is
what too frequently occurs.   (Appendix 225, 226)

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This disapproval of *implicitly stated* values, and the metaphor of *bring[ing] such things into the light of day and examined* is revealing the scientific positivism which has been explored earlier.

The Religious Education teacher, when asked which values he felt the school as a whole was concerned with, replied in the first instance, *Work!* He then went on to qualify this:

> *I think that the school is concerned about consideration of others and courtesy and caring for others, although I think that there is often a prime concern about getting things done - efficiency.*   *(Appendix 242)*

The English teacher said that:

> *I think that the school is concerned with behavioural values, and conforming. Although our aims say that everyone should have regard for other people, I don't think that it feels like that. I think that it feels like 'Here's a set of rules - these are the ways you should behave in school', and although at the basis of them there is respect for others, and for yourself, I don't think that's the feel that comes over.*   *(Appendix 248)*

This identification of a difference between what is explicitly stated in the school's aims, and what it <u>feels</u> like to work in the school, is telling. Everyone might benefit if the school's aims were examined and discussed, and an attempt was made to agree on how the school would <u>feel</u> if the aims were met - and to how to effect that change.

The teacher of English and drama saw the school's values as, *buried pretty deeply in some ways.* He felt that the community's aims did not particularly impinge on the pupils:

> *.. it's much more expediency ... for some kids 'What can I*

get away with?' Others, perhaps the majority, What can I

get out of this?   I think that the formalised structure of the

school's aims and so on and the stated moral values of the

school are - well I don't know that they're irrelevant

because I suppose that you have to have them - but I think

that they're a long way from most people's conscious

decision making.   *(Appendix 254)*

The mathematics teacher did not feel able to articulate how he saw the school's values; he was in his second year at the school, and said that, although his feelings had changed from his initial impression, he was still unclear about the ethos.   He did not discern a shared understanding among the staff as to values or priorities.

4.3   Conclusion

There is great disparity in the approaches taken by teachers in the study to teaching values.   All the teachers whom I spoke to, however, felt that values education of some sort is an appropriate concern of schools. This is a positive response, given the differing views of the nature of values which should be taught.   When asked if they could identify support or training which would help to improve values teaching in school, teachers suggested a range of measures, some of which are considered in the suggestions which I make in the last chapter.

First, though, in chapter 5, I consider the degree of ease experienced by both pupils and teachers when these issues arise in school.   I then go on to look at the values education that already takes place in the school, through an analysis of the curriculum.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA ON VALUES EDUCATION

5.0   Introductory Remarks

I have shown, through analysing transcripts of taped interviews with pupils (chapter 3) and with teachers (chapter 4), that positivism, relativism and post-modernism have had a discernible affect on how moral and spiritual values in education are viewed by those two groups of people in my study.   I have illustrated that there is no consensus among teachers as to what should be covered in lessons, a lack of confidence in talking about the issues, and a lack of clarity about what we should be doing, and how.   I have also demonstrated that pupils' experience is variable and that few of them talk about the topic with any degree of assurance.

There is, however, a general consensus that this is a valid area for schools, and given the fact that values education is both a statutory necessity and a desirable activity, then I was concerned to examine the areas of the curriculum in which such education currently takes place and how it could be expanded and improved.

5.1   Presentation of data: the pupils

I questioned the groups of pupils about their perceptions of their teachers' handling of values issues in lessons, by asking them whether or not they felt comfortable when such matters were raised, and how comfortable they thought that their teachers were in such situations.   In the groups in which the question was put:

> *Do you feel comfortable about teachers raising these sorts*
> *of issues?*

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the answers were as follows:

Yes.   *(Year 7 Appendix147)*

[Yes]... comfortable.   *(Year 7 Appendix 158)*

It's important for people to know about it ...

                                             (Year 8 Appendix 174)

You sort of need to be taught it so they should bring it up quite a lot.   *(Year 8 Appendix 183)*

Depending on how certain teachers taught it ...

                                             (Year 9 Appendix 190)

I think that it's good that they [teachers] talk about it...

                                             (Year 10 Appendix 198)

It is good to be treated like an adult, to have adult discussions ...   *(Year 10 Appendix 198)*

It's good to be able to talk.   *(Year 11 Appendix 207)*

I think that they should, but ... I don't think that they should inflict their own personal ideas about morals or about spiritual values on pupils ...   *(Year 11 Appendix 215)*

The overwhelming view from the pupils was that they welcomed the opportunity to discuss such values in lessons and they recognised their importance.

When I came to ask the pupils:

> *Do you think that teachers themselves feel comfortable when discussing such things?*

The answers were more equivocal:

> *Some teachers do.*   *(Year 7 Appendix 147)*
>
> *I don't know.*   *(Year 7 Appendix 158)*
>
> *Some of the teachers do feel uncomfortable if they don't believe in Jesus and whatever, but other teachers ... wouldn't mind ...*   *(Year 7 Appendix 166)*
>
> *Mrs Z, she's actually ... her husband is the priest ... so I don't think she thinks anything uncomfortable about it, but*

another, Mrs X ... feels a bit iffy about it ...

(Year 7   Appendix 167)

I think it does depend on what their values are.

(Year 8   Appendix 174)

It depends if they believe in those things themselves because they'd probably feel that if they were teaching stuff they didn't believe in ...   *(Year 8 Appendix 183)*

... depending on what teachers they are; some are much more comfortable, some are not.   (Year 9 Appendix 191)

... if they're not really comfortable they tend to just say 'this is it', and they don't really go deep into anything.

(Year 9   Appendix 191)

They [the teachers] might [be uncomfortable] because when they were born, they might not have the same sort of things around as what we do...

(Year 10   Appendix 198)

I don't think they'd discuss them if they didn't feel comfortable ..   *(Year 11 Appendix 208)*

Some will just let pupils get on and discuss it, just observe, really ...   *(Year 11   Appendix 208)*

I think some of them don't feel particularly comfortable, others, it depends what the actual issue is ...

(Year 11   Appendix 215)

The pupils clearly feel that their teachers' level of ease in dealing with moral and spiritual values in the classroom is dependent on the topic which is being considered and the teacher's own personal belief or attitude to the question being debated.   A year nine girl said:

They get agitated as well ... and if you ask questions they seem to just say what they've just said and they don't really answer properly.   *(Appendix 191)*

The pupils' experience of values education is evidently affected by how

the teacher feels; the pupils identify teachers' embarrassment as resulting in a superficial and sometimes hasty coverage of the topic. Teachers who have been influenced by relativism and post-modernism will be uncertain as to the values to commend to pupils, and may lack classroom techniques to tackle such questions unambiguously. An important issue for those who train teachers must be to help each prospective teacher to acquire a confidence in dealing with values issues professionally, so that they do not get 'agitated' or engage in avoidance tactics. Existing teachers could be helped through in-service education and training to develop strategies for coping in such situations.

5.2   Presentation of data: the teachers

The teachers themselves expressed a range of views about their confidence in dealing with moral and spiritual values in their teaching:

> *I feel comfortable in the sense that yes I can handle the ideas ... that's not a problem ... but I don't feel comfortable in the sense that I don't feel a lot of them should be in schools ...*   *(Physics teacher   Appendix 224)*
>
> *It depends how much I know and how strongly I feel about an issue ... I tend not to [come down on one side or another in debate].   I think really the whole point is that they [the children] decide.   I think that if somebody said something to me that I felt was wrong, I would challenge it ...*
>
> *(Chemistry teacher   Appendix 230)*
>
> *I can't remember a time when I haven't felt comfortable ...*
>
> *(RE & PSE teacher   Appendix 240)*
>
> *I'm quite happy dealing with them; I worry sometimes that the children are just giving me back what they think I expect to hear ...*   *(English teacher   Appendix 246)*

I find it very difficult to put into words exactly what my own morality is ... but I know in any particular situation I've got a clear idea of what I think is morally right, so I don't have problems with it ... whether that's what the school would agree with as being morally right is another matter.

(Maths teacher   Appendix 262)

The teachers interviewed largely felt confident about their own abilities to handle values issues in the classroom, although there was serious disquiet expressed about the legitimacy of schools covering certain moral and spiritual issues from the physics teacher quoted: he quite clearly considers scientific positivism to be the appropriate philosophy for school curriculum advisers.

The chemistry teacher quoted above was somewhat equivocal in voicing what his contribution would be to a class discussion; the view that *I think really the whole point is that they [the children] decide* is to be found fairly frequently among teachers, who take a pride in not disclosing their own views, if they have any.   This strategy in the classroom has the effect of encouraging the pupils in adopting a relativist or post-modernist approach: either 'we all have different views which are equally valid' or 'whatever you want to do is acceptable'.   I am not making a case for teachers dogmatically instructing pupils in values;   what I would suggest, however, is that an open-minded, questioning attitude which allows for the possibility of one viewpoint being more valuable than another - an anathema to some teachers - should be encouraged.

Teachers made suggestions as to the kind of support or training they would like, in helping to equip them better to handle these issues in class.   These suggestions ranged from having the opportunity to

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discuss with colleagues matters of concern, to finding out how values issues are covered in other curriculum areas, to having visiting speakers organised centrally. I shall examine these ideas in more detail in the last chapter.

5.3   Curriculum analysis: the explicit curriculum

> *The explicit curriculum refers to what is openly expressed*
> *as the intention of the school, and to what is actually taught*
> *- the content per se which is put across. ...*
>
> *(Watson 1993: 18 - 20)*

The 'explicit curriculum' is what is covered by subject departments and is referred to in schemes of work, examination syllabuses, lesson plans and other formal documents.   The curriculum for Key Stages 3 and 4 is now largely prescribed by the National Curriculum, although schools do still have a limited opportunity to offer other subjects (such as business studies or drama at GCSE); there are, however, critical decisions to be taken by managers and governors regarding the 'weighting' of subjects on the timetable and resourcing of departments. I undertook a 'curriculum mapping exercise' of the existing schemes of work of all departments in the school, in order to examine explicit references to what could be even loosely described as moral or spiritual values:

The <u>Art Department</u>, at Key Stage 3, mentions that the intention of the course is to develop the pupils' appreciation of aesthetics; topics at Key Stage 4 exist which could be used to develop pupils' values, for example 'Celebration', 'Myself and Contrasts', although no specific reference is made to initiating discussion in this field.

The only opportunity which seemed to be presented in the <u>Craft, Design</u>

and Technology Department, was the fact that in year seven pupils work on the theme of Christmas; there was no advice, however, about introducing a spiritual dimension in to the work.

In Careers education, pupils explore such themes as: self awareness; decision making; opportunity awareness; transition. The aims of the department include: 'the development of maturing self-awareness and the development of independence'. These topics suggest that the consideration of moral values could fit easily in to the programme of work, although no reference is made explicitly to such a practice.

The Drama Department includes in its aims: 'the development of personal awareness; the development of personal relationships; the promotion of an awareness of the world we live in'. Examples of work given are from 'The Taming of the Shrew': 'exploration of gender stereotyping and exploration of tensions in family relationships'. The drama scheme of work mentions that an important concept for the department is the establishment of confidence and trust. The staff who teach drama who were interviewed for my research indicated that they were aware of opportunities presented by the subject for raising moral and spiritual values:

> *... drama is engaging in a process in which an individual*
> *has to take into account what other people are doing, and*
> *therefore, even in the process there is a moral dimension.*
> *But also, in the subject matter, there is very often going to*
> *be a moral and ... also a spiritual dimension too,*
> *sometimes... I think that they do come up in drama [moral*
> *values], because we do a lot of 'issues'-related work ...*
> *(Teacher of English and drama Appendix p 109)*

The English Department handbook includes references to the study of

literature extending pupils' understanding of a range of moral issues:

> *The Mouse and His Child by Russell Hoban is a story about*
> *toys and their adventures. It is also about mythology,*
> *human greed and cruelty, love conquering evil, and*
> *contains many adult concepts about responsibility. In fact it*
> *works on many different levels.*
>
> *(The English department handbook p 4.)*

A poem is quoted as a piece of exemplar material for use at Key Stage 3, which raises deep questions about mankind using the products from whales for trivial commercial products; the recommendations for work in the classroom include:

> *Areas of discussion may be: the reason for its shape, the*
> *relevance of the accompanying photograph, the pictures it*
> *paints, the words it uses, its ecological message, how they*
> *feel about whale-hunting, the reasons for whale-hunting,*
> *man's relationship with animals, other animal poems they*
> *know, other animal stories they have read, their feelings*
> *about them. The class may be asked to do a talk to the*
> *rest of their friends about their pets or whale-hunting or*
> *blood-sports or other loosely related topic...*
>
> *The teacher may ask the class to do some research about*
> *whales and hunting, or write a newspaper article about the*
> *subject, or write a story or a poem about animals , or find*
> *poems and stories about endangered species, or research*
> *organisations which seek either to exploit or protect*
> *whales, or devise posters advertising their own concern*
> *about whale-hunting.*
>
> *(The English department handbook pp 5 - 7.)*

There is a lot of rich material here with which to generate both oral and written work which would give pupils genuine opportunities to explore

fundamental questions. Similarly powerful suggestions are made for work at Key Stage 4, with exemplar material from Macbeth.

In Geography, the Department's aims include the following:

> *To create an understanding of the environment and man's interaction with it.*
>
> *To promote a sensitive understanding of regional differences and variations.*
>
> *To create a positive and harmonious approach to problem solving.*

At Key Stage 3, there is obviously scope for developing discussions on moral issues to do with the environment and planning issues - eg in year nine, 'Migration and the Developing World' is a topic, as is 'Development and Trade' (including comparative levels of economic and welfare developments, the concept of global interdependence and differences in world wealth).

The History Department has a lot of scope for tackling issues to do with values; its handbook mentions the following topics: 'feudalism and hierarchy; noble rights; changes in kingship (end of absolutism); religion and beliefs in mediaeval society - Christendom - the Crusades; architecture (cathedrals); religious functions (monastic, secular, bishops); church and state (Thomas Beckett)' - year seven.

Students in year eight cover: 'the French Revolution; the American War of Independence; revolution (ideals and change); Rights of Man (economic, ecclesiastical, political, legal, human rights reforms); the Roman Empire; society in 1500 - 1750 (including religion - Catholic, Reformation, Protestant, Puritans)'. The department sees an opportunity in year eight to contribute to the cross curricular theme of 'Citizenship'.

Suggestions are made of different teaching methods, including a recommendation for 'hot-seating' (putting someone in the 'hot seat' and firing questions at him/her in role) on the theme of religion.

In year nine, students study issues to do with indigenous peoples of North America. The department handbook says:

> *It is hoped that there will be scope for a variety of teaching and learning styles; essays on the role of women, court cases on Wounded Knee, debates on polygamy and exposure...This is one area of the syllabus where there is obvious potential for implementing the departmental aim of increasing the pupils' awareness and understanding of other cultures.*

This is also the year in which the scheme of work looks at 'Expansion Trade and Industry: Britain 1750 - 1900'. This topic includes 'Reform and Protest' (popular protest, parliamentary reform and religious reform). Also in year nine students cover 'The Era of the Second World War', focusing on the 1930s and developing conflict between democracies and dictatorships in Europe, the impact of war on soldiers and civilians and post-war reconstruction. The department handbook makes the point that:

> *There should be scope for a variety of teaching and learning styles: hot-seating on wartime leaders, essays on anti-semitism, poster work on propaganda, newspapers on Manchuria ... There is also scope for contributing to the cross curricular theme of citizenship in work on slavery or parliamentary reform.*

It is interesting to note that although the history scheme of work contains many topics which lend themselves to the exploration of values among

pupils, it was not a subject which was identified by pupils as one in which they felt such topics were introduced; it is perhaps necessary for teachers to make more explicit the work in this area with children and to take more opportunities to draw out their views.

The Home Economics Department handbook lists themes with which the subject is concerned; these include: 'values, aesthetics and environment'. At Key Stage 3 pupils work in modules of six weeks at a time. The modules look at:

> *Health and safety issues; influences on health; alcohol (use/abuse); drugs (use/abuse); sex education/contraception/responsibilities.*

At Key Stage 4, pupils have the option of selecting one from three GCSE courses: Child Development, Textiles and Food. The child development course looks at: 'relationships, reproduction, contraception and parental responsibilities.' This course clearly covers questions of morality and could introduce spiritual issues if the teachers were confident in doing so.

At the time of writing, the Languages Department was undergoing considerable changes in personnel; there was little paper-work to examine, although there was a list of aims which included:

> *To develop tolerance and friendly attitudes.*

The Mathematics Department was in a similar position, and I could find no issues to do with moral or spiritual values in its scheme of work.

One of the aims of the Music Department for Key Stage 3 is: 'to foster an open-minded attitude'. The department handbook recognises the importance of liaison with other subjects where appropriate, eg religious education, drama and Languages. In the department's list of objectives,

it contains:

> *... giving students opportunities to see music as a medium for sharing and transmitting cultural affinities within a community.*

In year eight, pupils take part in an 'Easter Meditation' (a whole-school activity) in which the music department plays a key role. In year nine, pupils are encouraged:

> *To explore the emotions through creative music in different situations and through listening.*

There are clearly many opportunities for the music department to explore issues which have a spiritual dimension, and their handbook would suggest that they are aware of those opportunities; whether or not they are able to seize these chances, is partly dependent on practical matters to which I shall refer in chapter seven.

One of the aims of the <u>Physical Education Department</u> is to:

> *Engender self-confidence, aesthetic awareness and positive personal and social skills such as tolerance and perseverance.*

It is interesting to note that this was one of the subjects to which teachers whom I interviewed referred, when citing subjects which they felt lent themselves to the tackling of values issues - the ideas were to do with fostering a sense of 'team spirit' and 'sportsmanship'.

<u>Personal and Social Education</u> is particularly associated with the exploration of moral values, although there is also clearly scope for introducing spiritual considerations, too. The handbook outlines the following aims:

> *To develop moral values, to foster self-discipline and*

respect, consideration for others and an awareness of human rights and responsibilities.

The department handbook makes explicit reference to the pupil needing to understand the various social pressures in school, for instance:

... codes and levels of behaviour - violence, the care of the environment, politeness, etc... the form or group should be developed as a caring community to which all members have a sense of belonging.

The content of the course includes at Key Stage 3:

Being aware of and coping with such feelings as anger, fear and hurt; learning positive strategies for handling conflict and solving problems in relationships with others; exercises to encourage empathy; strengthening family relationships; various types of life paths; loss/decision making; crime, law and society; awareness of environmental issues.

At Key Stage 4 the handbook refers to:

The self (physically, psychologically and sexually); prejudice - peace and war; racism; attitudes to the elderly; sexism; attitudes to the handicapped; religious prejudice; the causes of war; nuclear weapons and their effects; how can peace be established and maintained; family life and parenthood; legal awareness; relationships; political awareness.

It is reassuring to note that personal and social education was one area in particular to which pupils interviewed referred, when giving examples of work done in the classroom on values issues.

The <u>Religious Studies department</u> declares a concern for moral and

spiritual values as being at its heart. The department handbook quotes from The National Curriculum Council's Discussion Paper from April 1993:

> *The potential for spiritual development is open to everyone*
> *... The term needs to be seen as applying to something*
> *fundamental in the human condition ... It has to do with*
> *relationships with other people and, for believers, with God.*
> *It has to do with the universal search for individual identity -*
> *with our responses to challenging experiences ... It is to do*
> *with the search for meaning and purpose in life and for*
> *values by which to live.*   *(NCC 1993)*

The scheme of work is constructed on a topic basis and teachers are encouraged to foster values such as tolerance and empathy in the light of the issues covered. At Key Stage 3 the following topics are covered: 'Great religious leaders (excluding Jesus); Jesus of Nazareth; Places of Worship; Inside the Family (significant events such as birth, rites of passage, marriage, death); Worship; Holy Books; The Early Christian Church; Persecution and Prejudice' , these last three being specifically aimed at year nine pupils.

Religious education is not taught as a discrete subject at Key Stage 4, except with the small pre-vocational group.

Religious education is perceived by the pupils as being the subject which most frequently tackles spiritual values; it is not, however, a 'high status' subject in the eyes of both pupils and staff, for reasons to which I shall refer later in chapter seven.

In year seven in <u>Science</u>, pupils are taught human reproduction, pregnancy, birth and early life, but the scheme of work makes no reference to a discussion of moral values arising out of such study;

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indeed, talking to colleagues, it would appear that such a development is actively discouraged.

The scheme of work for year eight includes reference to sensitivity to drugs and solvent abuse. This topic is only designed to last for two lessons, however, so it is doubtful that much time could be given to consideration of moral values, even if the curriculum encouraged it (which it does not).

In year nine, three lessons are prescribed for covering the topic of air pollution and the car, thus giving a modest opportunity for discussion. Later in the year, students spend a lesson looking at distinguishing between biodegradable and non-biodegradable products - recycling.

At Key Stage 4, pupils cover 'Processes of Life' over the two years, including: mammalian reproduction; different human characteristics and their causes; inherited medical conditions; the effect of the environment on the individual; genetic/selective breeding in plants and animals; controlling the characteristics of living things, the ethical and social issues.

In the section of the syllabus entitled 'Ecosystems', students cover, among other topics: factors affecting the size and type of population; the benefits and problems created by the use of chemicals and fertilisers; pollution and waste management.

In 'Earth and Space' students consider a variety of topics including: the origin of the earth, solar system and universe.

In the module 'Electricity and Magnetism', the final heading is: 'the implications of information technology and control technology for every day life'.

As has already been made clear in a previous chapter, members of the

science department are divided in their attitudes towards covering moral and spiritual issues; there is, however, a very strong feeling running throughout the handbook that the concern of the subject should be to present objective, quantifiable, factual evidence in the light of a scientific positivist tradition.

5.4 Interpretation of data: the explicit curriculum

There is increasing concern that the development of values should be tackled right across the curriculum. Chris Price, writing in the Times Educational Supplement, offers the following advice to David Blunkett, if he should find himself as Secretary of State for Education under a new Labour government:

> *He should use these [National Curriculum] Orders to reinstate a holistic curriculum. He should link the 'knowledge skills and understanding' which they require to be taught in the programmes of study, with the moral and cultural development specified in section 1 (2); he should insist, as many religious voluntary schools have always done, that a moral and cultural dimension is relevant to every subject, whether it be maths, science, English or history.* (Price 1995: 19)

After examining these schemes of work, I am convinced that there is a lot of scope for making values issues much more explicit in the classroom. It is interesting to note that when the pupils were asked if they could think of examples of specific lessons in which values issues had been covered, they only quoted from a very few - discussions in English and religious education and personal and social education, place values in maths and a history lesson about hyper inflation in Germany in the

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1930s. The teachers, however, have a lot of scope for exploring moral and spiritual values through their existing curricula, and there is work to be done in looking at how they could be extending their current teaching methods and topics a little more.

5.5   Interpretation of data: the implicit curriculum

> *The implicit curriculum is what is received through the total impact of what actually happens in school. It covers attitudes, relationships, behaviour, selection of content, manner of teaching, way of speaking to pupils, and so forth. ...*   *(Watson 1993: 18 - 20)*

A school's management, by which I mean the Headteacher, senior management team, Governing Body, and any other group within the school which is in a decision making capacity when it comes to curriculum issues, has the responsibility for not only approving the 'explicit curriculum' but also decides on issues which are reflected in both the 'implicit curriculum' and the 'nulll curriculum'.

The 'implicit curriculum' of the school in the study can be seen through such things as recent and current whole-school initiatives: for example, in the last eighteen months, working parties have been formed to consider: assessment; anti-bullying strategies; discipline - rewards and sanctions; multi-cultural education. These have made some impact on the perceptions of the pupils: one pupil showed an awareness of the anti-bullying work when she said:

> *Because when they brought up the bullying thing, they didn't really say much about ... if they got bullied about religion and stuff like that ..*   *(Year 7 Appendix 155)*

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This pupil also makes an incidental comment about something which the school has left out - a neat illustration of the 'null curriculum'.

The 'implicit curriculum' can be discerned in the way in which pupils treat one another in corridors, behave in the dining hall, show care (or lack of it) for the physical environment of the school, and a host of other ways of behaving. The way a school's management tackles the 'implicit curriculum' can partly be charted through examination of policy documents, school rules and guidelines, the allocation of rewards and sanctions and the developmental targets to which all schools should address themselves these days. I write '**partly** be charted' deliberately: however many policy statements a school possesses, if they are pieces of paper to which pupils and staff pay merely lip-service, then they will have little impact on the life of the school.

One example of a change in policy implemented by the school in the study, is the change in its arrangements for the supervision of pupils at lunch time, which has taken place within the last two years. This initiative arose out of the observation that gangs of children were running round, causing greater or lesser degrees of havoc. A working party was formed which consisted of pupils, lunch-time supervisors and teachers who made recommendations which have resulted in a 'cooling-off room', a change in the rota in which pupils go in to lunch, and a reallocation of outdoor and indoor spaces for different year groups; the result is a much calmer lunch time environment.

For the purposes of this study, I want to confine myself largely to curricular issues which can be discerned by examination of the 'implicit curriculum'; I do this whilst recognising that pupils' behaviour both inside and outside the classroom affects children's learning profoundly.

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I have previously mentioned decisions such as the 'weighting' given to different subjects in the curriculum, and the way financial resources are distributed. This leads on to considerations of the 'implicit curriculum' - for example attitudes of pupils, staff and parents can be considerably affected by the hidden messages which are put across when a department does not have specialist teachers or dedicated rooms. The ethos of a school is very much reflected by the relationships between all who work in it: courtesy, respect for others, consideration and sensitivity are conveyed just as much by staff in their professional relationships, as are standards of behaviour by the pupils in the corridors.

When I asked pupils if they could think of times in school, other than in classes, when values issues were raised, there was quite a lot of puzzlement. This may have been because I was expressing myself poorly, but I think that it was partly at least due to the fact that the possibility of values being tackled outside of lessons was a new idea. There were a lot of blank faces, and I had sometimes to make suggestions of times when this might happen - such as in assemblies - for the pupils to respond at all. Here is a selection of some of their points:

> *Sometimes talk in the playground. (Year 7 Appendix 150)*
>
> *He [the Headmaster] thinks that your assessments are good because if you get all fourteen goods he'll send a letter to you ... and then he'll write a letter to your parents saying that he thinks it's really good and he's really pleased with you ...*   *(Year 7 Appendix 153)*
>
>
> *People's assessment grades ... [are raised in assemblies].*

(Year 7   Appendix 161)

There has been the vicar come in, I think ... It just goes on a bit, but he makes you understand things ...

(Year 7   Appendix 161)

School Council meetings, in tutor periods ... you know, that was a really big issue at school [bullying] ... we spent quite a long time on it .   . (Year 7   Appendix 169)

In assembly they do try and show the school's values like, you know like saying how they're impressed by what you've done and how they're pleased like a year group's done something good ... and that's what they think's important.   (Year 8   Appendix 178)

All you hear in assemblies is like your head of year turn round and saying I've had bad reports on this class! Something about a mess one class left ...

(Year 8   Appendix 179)

In assembly ... sometimes we get read stories, that are written by a writer, and then if he's written something, sometimes it could be his view, and his values, and that comes across to you in the story.

(Year 8   Appendix 187)

They don't really bring it up in assembly or anything.

(Year 9   Appendix 193)

Sometimes when you're with your friends and discussing things that you do, and that's right or that's wrong to do. So, yes, it comes up with your friends, not particularly inside the classroom.   (Year 9   Appendix 193)

Wasn't that Youth Action Group ... was it outside school ... that's sort of values ?   (Year 10   Appendix 200)

I think when the person who comes and does assemblies, when they read out poems and stories and things, they usually have a moral sort of hidden ...   I think people already know sort of what's right and wrong, it's just pointing out ..   (Year 10   Appendix 200, 201)

Well, it's in assemblies though, isn't it? That's when the
teachers get up there and do their big moral thing ...

(Year 11 Appendix 209)

[The Headmaster] has accepted views towards traditional
values ... about what's right and wrong ... but I've never
known him to actually express them as such to us, to me,
it's just the feeling that I get from, say, assemblies ...

(Year 11 Appendix 217)

As previously mentioned, I raised the question of the pupils' experience
of assemblies if they seemed unforthcoming. In some schools,
assemblies could be regarded as part of the 'explicit curriculum'. In the
school in the study, no particular attempt is made to define learning
objectives or to monitor the standard of 'delivery'. When the rota (largely
of senior teachers in the school) is drawn up, weekly themes are
suggested; there is no compulsion on behalf of the assembly taker to
adhere to the week's themes. This 'low key' approach to assemblies,
agreed by the school's management, in my opinion makes the pupils'
experience part of the 'implicit curriculum'.

It is interesting, although not necessarily significant in such a small
sample, that the younger children tended to focus on academic
achievement *(assessment grades)* as being the most important value
which they had perceived, with good behaviour also frequently
mentioned, whilst the older ones saw that assemblies were an attempt to
express certain moral and spiritual values, albeit sometimes expressed
rather cynically: *That's when the teachers get up there and do their big*
moral thing ... Pupils in the school in the study have either one or two
assemblies each week; one is usually taken by a senior manager, or,
occasionally, a visiting speaker or the head of religious education; the
other, if they have it, is taken by their head of year, and is usually to

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convey information. Because of pressure on the school hall, years seven and eight alternate fortnightly in having assemblies taken by the senior management team or visitors. This being the case, and the fact that during examinations the hall is unavailable for assemblies, it is possible that the pupils in years seven and eight had not experienced very many assemblies, and those that they had may well have been at least a fortnight apart. This might explain the failure of the assemblies to make much of an impact on values education for them.

Other school events were quoted as being occasions in which pupils saw an attempt at values education taking place, including the tutor programme, (a weekly lesson which revolves around the timetable, and in which the pupils, in tutor groups, follow a programme designed by their Head of Year), the School Council, the Youth Action Group and talking informally with friends. A lot of these ideas, however, did not come easily to the pupils, which might signify that moral and spiritual values are not easily discernable in the implicit curriculum - are not highlighted for the pupils, and opportunities for individuals to consider, for example, their role within a community, are not taken up.

When I talked to the teachers about the implicit curriculum (usually phrased *What values do you feel the school as a whole is concerned with?* and/or a question about the school's organisation and management), social values and academic success predominated:

> *Social values are the predominant values that occur in this*
> *school. ... Beyond social values ... perhaps the values of*
> *the individual, very much humanistically orientated ...*
> > *(Physics teacher   Appendix 225, 226)*
> *I don't really know ... it's not a strong feeling that I have*
> *about the school as a whole, that it makes judgments about*

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how people should be or what they should believe, and I'm not sure that it necessarily should. I'm just trying to think about the assemblies that I've been to ... [laughter] I don't think there's a lot of moral 'push' ..

(Chemistry teacher Appendix 231)

I suppose if you think about how many people are involved in pastoral work and how many are involved in academic work, that may say something. I think it may say that the school is trying to care for the children, that more importance is put on the pastoral side.

(Chemistry teacher Appendix 231)

We would like to see a school where all the well-worn phrases apply: everybody is judged on their value to the community as a whole, irrespective of ability ... everyone has a place and is of equal value ... that even those who are sometimes less than cooperative do get their chance, get a fair hearing - that people aren't labelled ... and this is evidenced through things like the discipline policy and the work on bullying.

(Senior manager Appendix 236)

From the point of view of a teacher, if I'm good at my job, is there a way in which the school encourages, recognises it? There's a kind of monitoring mechanism which is called appraisal, and there is the day to day thanks that one gets from doing a specific task, but it's hardly built in to the management and structure of the school - the idea that being good at one's job is recognised. Whether it could be, or one would necessarily want it ... but I'm not sure that the school encourages teachers to perform well ... I'm not sure that inherent within the management structure of the school is the recognition of moral values ...

(English and drama teacher Appendix 255, 256)

.. the Head says that this isn't on, or whatever. I do think that the morality of the school, the values of the school, do come down from the Head, whichever Head, and there

may be conflict, there may be some of the staff who are not
wanting to go in that direction, but in the end; I mean at
[previous school] the whole ethos was definitely dictated by
this slightly liberal, patrician figure. The Head here, I think,
is pragmatic; which means that you don't get the same
feeling of some underlying moral ... basis. There are rules
which are pragmatically useful, for making sure the school
runs well; ... Implicitly, I'd say that possibly the school XXX

(Mathematics teacher Appendix 263, 264)

The different ways of interpreting the question are interesting: the
chemistry teacher touches on school assemblies, not seeing them as
contributing much towards values education, although he did go on to
cite a couple of examples of specific assemblies which he felt had been
'interesting'. The senior manager refers to both the school's discipline
policy and anti bullying programme as contributing to values education.
It is to be expected that someone close to the school's central
management should be aware of such developments. Is it also
significant that, with the exception of one other, none of the teachers
whom I talked to mentioned either of these initiatives? The English and
drama teacher took the question as 'being valued as a teacher' - not an
irrelevant concept, given that a school's ethos is determined largely by
inter-personal relationships, and the mathematics teacher saw the
implicit values of the school as being defined by the Headmaster.

A way in which we can see the 'implicit curriculum' contribute to the
collective experience in a school, is through timetabling decisions which
are made. In the case of the school in the study, the place of Religious
Education is very tenuous within the curriculum, despite statutory
government requirements for weekly religious education for all pupils.

At Key Stage 3, all pupils have one thirty-five minutes lesson timetabled a week, and the likelihood is that it will be taught by a non-specialist teacher. At Key Stage 4, religious education is practically non-existent, occurring only in a half-termly 'module', sandwiched between careers, health and industry education. The subject is often taught in non-specialist rooms, as is music - one of the few subjects which actually acknowledges in its scheme of work that one of its aims is the sharing of cultural affinities and exploring emotions. It is difficult for the most dedicated teachers to teach successfully in a run-down mobile classroom with little room for movement and a very small budget for renewing books and other teaching aids - with which problems both music and religious education teachers have to contend in the school in the study.

A senior manager within the school who has curriculum responsibility commented on the likelihood of OFSTED's reaction to the timetabling of religious education:

> *I think that they will say that there appears to be insufficient*
> *time, certainly for RE ... They'd certainly comment about*
> *Year 10 because it's not there!*   *(Appendix 237)*

Curriculum planning and the management of resources was mentioned by teachers as implying the school's priorities, and, implicitly, values. The senior manager, when asked to talk about the development of the curriculum over the next few years, recognised that religious education was a timetabling problem:

> *...there is a dual value, almost, in society which pays lip*
> *service to religious education being on the timetable, but*
> *when it comes down to it they're not actually all that*
> *bothered about it. If it's at the expense of other things, then*

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*I'm not sure what pressure there'd be ... certainly, I think we
need a new look at RE within the school to bring that about
... somebody who could give it the time and energy and
enthusiasm that it needs. Something that worries me as
much as anything else is what OFSTED would say about
the head of religious education only teaching the subject
two periods a week! Is it really getting a fair crack of the
whip? We've really got to somehow or other try to create a
genuine head of religious education. Who may then give it
the impetus to establish it in such a way that GCSE or A
level took off, which would give it that bit of status, at least
with those pupils who did it. And also it would then be
seen as a subject in its own right.*

(Appendix 237, 238)

It is the expression of a kind of postmodernism laissez-faire approach to
timetabling, where you select from a range of goods (subjects) on offer
those that you happen to fancy at the time, whilst rejecting those for
which you care less. The teacher quoted recognises the oddness of the
situation in which the head of religious education only teaches two
periods per week, but is concerned primarily from the point of view of
what OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) inspectors would say
about such a timetabling decision, rather than the effect on the pupils of
so few children having access to specialist teaching. He does go on to
add that a new teaching appointment would be desirable, as would the
establishment of GCSE and A level religious education (at the time of
writing absent from the timetable), but sees the desirability of such a
development to be to do with examination courses for what would
certainly be a limited few pupils, rather than as a contribution of values
education to the whole school.

The head of religious education himself raised the issues of timetabling

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and funding the subject, and remarked that:

> *I found that there was tremendous difference when we had*
> *years 7 & 8 for RE for two periods a week - I am sure that*
> *the subject had a lot more kudos amongst the pupils - it*
> *was a lot easier then.*   *(Appendix 242)*

The English teacher whom I interviewed mentioned that she did not think that *'the staff accord PSE (Personal and Social Education) a very high profile'* and she went on to say that she felt it unhelpful when *'so many people [teachers] get odd lessons of RE and PSE'.* She enlarged on her view of the lack of respect given to these subjects:

> *.. for example, you never know whether you're going to*
> *get any PSE or RE reports, and when you get them, I'm*
> *sure that the teachers and the children and the parents*
> *don't accord as much importance to them as others.*
>   *(Appendix 249,)*

The question of the importance of religious education and personal and social education in a school - the respect given to them, which is made up of indicators like specialist classrooms and trained teachers, time on the timetable and funding, contributes to the success or otherwise in one important way: because these, along with English, are the subjects in which the pupils themselves identify the bulk of values education taking place. I have shown, earlier in this chapter, that there is plenty of scope for raising issues to do with moral and spiritual values across the curriculum, but until wider opportunities are grasped by all teachers, then subjects such as religious education and personal and social education will continue to make a large contribution, hindered however by low status in the eyes of the majority of pupils and teachers, and this low status will continue to colour how pupils see those very values

which teachers of these subjects try to raise.

5.6   Interpretation of data: the nulll curriculum

> *The nulll curriculum exists by reason of the fact that it does*
> *not exist - it is what is conveyed by omission, avoidance,*
> *bypassing, as well as by ridiculing, criticising, and putting-*
> *down.*   *(Watson 1993: 18 - 20)*

Identifying the 'nulll curriculum', by definition, is an attempt to distinguish the absence of certain things. In my interviews with both pupils and staff I did question them as to whether or not there were gaps in their experience of school, to do with values, which they would like to see addressed. This is a selection of pupils' comments:

> *[issues to do with] ... ouija boards and stuff ... if you did do*
> *something like that you'd have to be really careful because*
> *of the people that get scared ...*   *(Year 7 Appendix 154)*
> *They could bring up about if you believe in God or not*
> *because it doesn't even though they cover it in RE they*
> *don't sort of cover ... saying do you or do you not believe in*
> *God and stuff like that ...*   *(Year 7 Appendix 155)*
> *You could be told about other religions because you get*
> *told in RE lessons but not much about them ...*
> *   (Year 7 Appendix 155l*
> *I'd like to do satanism. It's sort of spiritual, slightly... It's a*
> *view from the other side. Instead of being the ones that*
> *are religious it's ones that aren't.   (Year 8 Appendix 187)*
> *There aren't many sort of moral things but I don't know*
> *exactly what kind of moral things you could talk about ... but*
> *yes there is a lack of sort of that kind of thing you hardly get*
> *any kind of teaching on that ...*
> *   (Year 9 Appendix 193, 194)*
> *I think other religions because, well certainly in my RE*
> *lessons as far as I can remember, we did about Christianity*
> *and ... I think other things should be covered as well so that*

There is a clearly expressed wish by pupils from the whole age range to have more opportunities to explore moral and spiritual issues further. This sometimes takes the form of an interest in the supernatural, a very difficult matter which I personally feel that schools should probably leave well alone; it is also seen in a concern to know more about religious faiths other than Christianity, and to explore in an open fashion questions of personal belief. Where we lack the vocabulary to talk about something, we often lack the concepts as well, and the year nine pupil is speaking a profound truth when she says, *I don't know exactly what kind of moral things you could talk about.* If you have not experienced something you do not know what it is that you have not experienced.

The teachers interviewed did not express many concerns about many gaps in current provision; one teacher of religious education identified stress as being a very real problem, and linked the coping with stress to:

> *There needs to be an atmosphere of complete trust, so that*
> *people can bear their souls, bear their weaknesses, without*
> *feeling exposed and vulnerable.*   *(Appendix 243)*

The mathematics teacher interviewed, when asked if he could identify any specific classroom support which he would find useful in developing values among the pupils, brought up the question of a whole-school approach:

> *I suppose that within the school, from the point of view of*
> *establishing a common moral code amongst the staff - not a*
> *discipline code, but a common moral code, about what's*
> *acceptable ... not in the classroom but just in general ...*

Multi-cultural issues were mentioned by two teachers as being an area which they felt the school needed to develop, but otherwise the status quo was considered to be satisfactory.

It is possible that secondary school teachers, who so much more lack an overview of the school curriculum than do their primary colleagues, work in such a compartmentalised fashion that they automatically assume that educational issues which they do not cover themselves are addressed by other teachers in different curriculum areas. I am not aware that anyone outside the school's management body has read all the department handbooks, so it would be hard for them to have an overview of even the 'explicit curriculum', let alone the far more problematic areas of the 'implicit curriculum' and the 'nulll curriculum'. The next chapter deals with the desirability or otherwise of the adoption of a neutral stance by the teacher.

CHAPTER 6

NEUTRALITY: A MODEL FOR VALUES EDUCATION?

6.0 The attraction of a 'value-free' approach to teaching

It might seem, on the surface, that the way around the complex difficulties associated with teaching values in schools, is for the teacher to try to maintain a balanced, neutral position, when raising such issues with pupils. The teacher, whilst recognising the importance of pupils being exposed to a variety of beliefs and opinions, structures the lessons in such a way that 'both sides of the argument' are expressed, and that an attempt is made to give the same amount of time and seriousness to all points of view. The teacher him/herself refrains from taking 'sides' or expressing a personal opinion, in the belief that to do so might be to influence the pupils unacceptably. This is an attractive position for the teacher; s/he cannot be accused of 'indoctrinating' the pupils; parents are unlikely to telephone the Headteacher with complaints of their son or daughter 'being told what to believe' or 'how to vote'. Moreover, the teacher is obviously being scrupulously 'fair' - a very important notion to children, and is not put in the vulnerable position of having to express personal views. Yet another attraction of this stance in the classroom, is the fact that to adopt this lofty position leaves the teacher in a superior state of seeming to 'look down' on those inferior to him or her - in this case, the pupils; the teacher is in the position which is most comfortable - s/he has the most power. From many points of view, then, this would seem to be an ideal teaching method with which to tackle values issues. With mature reflection, however, it becomes apparent that this position will not do. Not only is it

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educationally undesirable, for reasons which I go on to explore in this chapter, but it is also untenable; instead of the teacher being 'fair', in reality s/he could be accused of hypocrisy and bias of a different kind. This chapter is concerned to explore issues of neutrality in the classroom, and to review my interviews with pupils and staff to see whether or not there is evidence of neutral positions being held, in the school in my study.

6.1 Views of Expert Practioners on a 'Value-free Approach to Teaching

Abercrombie, Hill and Turner deal straightforwardly with a sociologist's perspective on the desirability or otherwise of adopting a value free position; firstly they put forward the classic arguments in favour of neutrality (empirical research does not dictate what ought to be done; teachers should not try to influence their students with their own opinions); they then cite the main objections to such a stance:

> *(1) Despite personal declarations of neutrality, values may unwittingly obtrude in research. (2) It is not clear that neutrality, even in principle, is possible. (3) It is not always evident that value neutrality is desirable; on some questions nobody should be neutral.*
>
> *(Abercrombie, Hill and Turner 1988: 263 & 264)*

Wilson, looking philosophically at the same problem, sees teachers' *justifiable* (in the sense of the 'political pressure on teachers in a pluralist society') *concern for neutrality* as leading to a failure to recognise the inherent problems of such an approach:

> *Educators in most liberal societies, at least recently, have been so anxious to avoid the charge of indoctrination that they have, generally speaking,, failed even to confront*

these problems, let alone make a serious effort to solve
them.   *(Wilson 1990: 14)*

He goes on to make the point that:

> *In this way they have received much support from a*
> *relativistic climate of opinion which would deny any sense*
> *to the idea of a pupil's becoming more reasonable or*
> *perceptive, or well-educated in X, as those terms are*
> *normally used.*   *(Wilson 1990: 14)*

The relativist approach to values is one of the most important *raisons*
d'etre of those advocating a neutral mode of teaching: if no moral,
cultural, political or religious tenet is seen to be more desirable (or more
right) than any other, then far be it for the teacher to express any
preference in front of pupils. What this ultimately results in, of course, is
a recycling of collective ignorance, with the teacher along with the pupils
floundering in a morass where equal weight is given to the good, the
bad and the downright silly.

Hulmes (1979), tackles the question of neutrality in the teaching
profession. Although Hulmes' concern is largely with Religious
Education, much of what he writes can equally well apply to all other
subjects. His arguments are sensible and subtle, and deserve more
than passing reference.

One of the currently fashionable defences of a supposedly value free
pedagogy, is that of the demands of living in a pluralist society. Hulmes
considers what actually is meant by 'pluralist society' in some detail, and
questions the basis for Britain being described as such; he also shows
how misguided some considerations of pluralism can be, by gently 'de-
bunking' the view that it is necessary to give 'prominence ... in ...

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teaching ... world religions' because of the large numbers of cultural and religious traditions represented in an inner city classroom:

> *Back in their respective homes, immigrant children, when speaking to their Muslim, Sikh, Jewish, Hindu, or Christian parents, are unable to explain that their teacher's own assumptions result in a programme of teaching which, though perfectly consistent with western secularism, denies the children the philosophical pluralism to which the presence of their various faiths seem to point.*
>
> *(Hulmes 1979: 10)*

He then goes on to point out that the very selection of 'neutrality' as a position to adopt with these pupils, is in itself a dominating educational philosophy. This point is so important, and made by Hulmes a number of times in his book in different ways, that it is worth expanding. On the question of *'How neutral is openness?'* Hulmes writes:

> *Every teacher brings a personal commitment to bear in teaching, to the selection of material, to the time devoted to its preparation and presentation, and in the type of assignments and exercises given to children. The only sensible way forward is to accept this limitation as inescapable, and not to insist on a neutrality which is unattainable.* *(Hulmes 1979: 48)*

This also neatly encapsulates the dilemmas referred to in previous chapters, in trying to adopt either relativism or post-modernism as a philosophy: that by either maintaining that no values can be seen as being 'better' than any others, or by asserting a 'whatever you fancy at any one time' ideology, one is denying the possibility that some values can be in some ways 'better' than others. Watson also reminds us that:

> *Value-free teaching is not possible in any subject.*

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Teachers cannot operate without promoting some values and discouraging others. (*Watson 1993: 176*)

Hulmes offers teachers advice concerning ways of bringing about an atmosphere of genuine openness and sensitive enquiry in the classroom, without being side-tracked by the spuriousness of 'neutrality'; I shall touch on some of his recommendations in the next chapter.

This question of the advisability of neutrality is dealt with by Carrington and Troyna, who quote from an Inner London Education Authority's Inspectors' Report where recommendations are made for controversial issues in the classroom to be tackled in a 'balanced' fashion. They also refer to an argument made by Harwood, for the teacher to take the 'Impartial Chairperson's' role (also called the 'Neutral-Chair approach'). Carrington and Troyna go on, however, to present the counter arguments for such a teaching method:

> *To begin with, it can result in a weak relativistic ethic being espoused in the classroom; an ethic informed by the conviction that all opinions are equally valid and that 'anything and everything goes.*
>
> (*Carrington and Troyna 1988: 4*)

They go on to criticise in particular the 'Neutral-Chair approach':

> *.. criticisms of the relativist ethic enshrined in the neutral-chair stance suggest that it is necessary for teachers to indicate their own position (and give reasons for it) if they are to avoid the problems associated with this form of non-partisanship. In other words, it may be more appropriate to give primacy to truth and justice rather than neutrality.*
>
> (*Carrington and Troyna 1988: 4*)

Later in the same book, Carrington and Troyna address the question of the 'aims of neutral teaching'. They concede that some educationists

are in favour of that stance for such reasons as:

> *... a means of developing the autonomy of pupils and thereby avoiding indoctrinating them into the values, morals or beliefs of the teacher or of society.*
>
> *(Carrington and Troyna 1988: 93)*

They do, however, take issue with this as a practical proposition for a teacher to adopt, finding little research evidence to support the conviction that such 'procedural neutrality' actually works. Indeed, they seem to support the view expressed in the Schools Council's Moral Education Project that:

> *The easy identification of teachers' value positions is a good thing from the pupils' point of view and not something to be regretted.*
>
> *(Carrington and Troyna 1988: 95)*

Warnock (1996), previously quoted in chapter two, looks at the question of teacher neutrality. Whilst her stand against such a position is staunchly held, I would suggest that not only is she asking a lot from teachers (probably rightly), but she is perhaps placing an intolerable burden on some:

> *But, whatever may be true of political neutrality, in matters of classroom morality, it would be fatal if teachers remained neutral. They have to be definite, judgmental, authoritarian and convinced, ready, as I have said, to use strong and unambiguously moral language.*
>
> *(Warnock 1996: 50)*

There appears to be little of Hulmes' sympathetic understanding of the pressures under which teachers operate; he adopts a more gentle, encouraging, positive approach to persuade teachers away from

adopting neutrality, than Mary Warnock's robust, no nonsense stridency.

6.2   The case for neutrality in different curriculum areas

In considering overt references in the previous chapter to values education in the various departments' schemes of work of the school in the study, the question of the teacher adopting a neutral position in the classroom is never specifically referred to.   The drama, music, personal and social education and history departments come closest to inferring that the teacher might be actively involved in classroom debate, as they advocate teaching and learning techniques which try to lead pupils to making informed decisions about ethical and spiritual issues.   In drama I know from observing and participating in lessons that the teacher often works in role, alongside the pupils, and such celebrated practitioners as Dorothy Heathcote regularly explore issues through drama, learning with the pupils or students. In music, the department seeks *to foster an open-minded attitude,* and it is difficult to see how this could be achieved without the teacher 'joining in' the debate.   Personal and social education is in many schools rather different from national curriculum subjects, and when taught by sensitive experts, provides the pupils with opportunities to test out their own moral actions and beliefs. The history department recognises in its handbook that *there should be scope for a variety of teaching and learning styles* and the technique of 'hot-seating' previously referred to in chapter five, if including the teacher, allows him or her to express views and test out hypotheses with the pupils.

Tomlinson and Quinton put together a series of essays by various writers who consider the opportunities for exploring values issues in

different areas of the secondary school curriculum.   Allison, writing in the chapter <u>Values in Art and Design Education</u> concludes:

> *There is no aspect of the diversity of art and design activities ... which could truly be described as 'value free '.*
>
> *(Allison 1986: 12)*

He recognises that often teachers, when questioned by pupils about their own preferences and judgments, turn the question back to the pupil: 'Well, what do you think?'   The teacher in the role of neutral by-stander is avoiding the issue, and Allison implies criticism of this stance. In the chapter <u>Values in the Teaching of English and Drama</u>, Hollindale makes critical reference to a recent model of English teaching as promoting a 'value-free' concept of language, and this in turn displacing the prominence given to the study of literature.   When considering the role of the English teacher, he writes:

> *The teacher who has formulated his own values into some unifying pattern is more likely to avoid the aimlessness and fragmentation which undercut so much teaching of English*
> ...   *(Hollindale 1986: 49)*

The suggestion which Hollindale is making is surely that the teacher, as well as 'formulating his own values' is also prepared to articulate them. The question of whether or not geography teaching should be neutral is considered in Wiegand's chapter: <u>Values in Geographical Education</u>. He is of the opinion that, at the time of writing, the examination boards were putting over the message that:

> *... geographical research can be objective and value free.*
>
> *(Wiegand 1986: 62)*

Wiegand himself seems to be supporting a different approach:

Fien and Slater suggest a values probing procedure in which these deeper personal beliefs about, for example, human dignity, justice, equality and self interest versus the greater good may be explored. *(Wiegand 1986: 67)*

and he quotes activities in the classroom designed to establish empathy as being suitable for achieving these ends. Empathy is a contentious educational goal in some quarters, but if it is going to be used, it can hardly be really effective if the teacher fails to enter into the spirit of the occasion, but insists on adopting the 'neutral-chair' role.

Smith, in his chapter on <u>Values in History and Social Studies</u> quotes Fenton:

> *We must not teach that democracy is better than totalitarianism, that religion is a good thing, that the family is the basis of society, or that money is more important than anything else.* *(Smith 1986: 82)*

Smith goes on to make a robust challenge to Fenton's argument:

> *But the commitment to fair play ... can look to students remarkably like a cluster of substantive values ... For example, it is not hard to guess what such a teacher would think about media censorship, or apartheid, or gender discrimination: all issues which he would of course handle impartially in his fair-minded classroom..*
>
> *(Smith 1986: 83)*

Smith seems to favour the teacher sometimes being partial and expressing opinions.

In a different publication, Bishop considers mathematics teaching in the context of Christian values, and asserts:

> *... mathematics is based in created reality. It is not neutral: beliefs shape mathematical theories.*

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He makes a whole-hearted plea for mathematics teachers to teach from a very particular, Christian, point of view. He is challenging the often received view that mathematics is the subject which most lends itself to adjectives like 'abstract', 'objective' and 'unchanging'. This is the attitude that the teaching style most appropriate to such a subject is often felt to be one where the teacher, in an elevated position as being the one with the knowledge, looks down, and imparts the knowledge, showing no preference or bias, as such conditions are deemed 'inappropriate'.

6.3 Evidence from the pupils

In one of my interviews with a group of pupils, a girl in year eight, to the question, 'Do you think it's important that the students know what the teachers' values are, or not?' replied:

> *It might stop them making fun of other people's...*
>
> *(Year 8 Appendix 174)*

and the dialogue continued:

> *RH: It might stop teachers making fun ...?*
> *Girl 1: Well mostly other pupils making fun of other people*
> *if they say like, someone said what their values were half*
> *the class would probably burst out laughing ... and if the*
> *teacher's Istraight with them in the first place and says 'No*
> *laughing, here's mine you know ' ...*
>
> *(Year 8 Appendix 174))*

This seems to me to be a most persuasive case for teachers 'coming off the fence'. Later in the same discussion, the pupils were talking of the interest that they found in hearing other people's beliefs and ideas; the transcript does not indicate whether or not they are talking exclusively about their peers, but the sentiments could well apply to their teachers,

too:

> *RH: If the opportunity arises do you like to talk to other*
> *people about their views and your views?*
> *Girl 3: Yes because, I mean their views, they might*
> *sometimes influence you or they can explain something*
> *better than what you could so it changes it your mind.*
> *Girl 2: It's interesting to know what they think.*
>
> *(Year 8 Appendix 175)*

In another year eight discussion, a boy clearly expressed a desire for his teachers to be confident and assured themselves, when raising values issues in lessons:

> *RH: How do you feel about teachers raising these issues*
> *in class?*
> *Boy 2: They should really know about it themselves before*
> *they try to tell other people about it.*
>
> *(Year 8 Appendix 183))*

The same group denied any knowledge of what the Headmaster's values are, when they were asked whether these had been made explicit in any assemblies, although they did feel that they knew where their head of year stood on such issues. (Appendix 186, 187))) At the end of this discussion, there was a convincing plea for the pupils to hear from some genuinely committed people:

> *...you'd have to get different views off different people*
> *about their different religious beliefs; say if you're a*
> *Christian, then if you just say like, this lot of religious*
> *people believe this, then they're not going to really*
> *understand it unless they actually talk to the people who*
> *are in this religious group , and then they might get a better*
> *idea and they could be able to teach it better ...'*
>
> *(Year 8 Appendix 188)*

The year nine discussion group, previously quoted in chapter five, observed that when certain members of staff are embarrassed and 'get agitated':

> *If you ask questions they seem to just say what they've just said and they don't really answer properly.*
>
> *(Year 9 Appendix 191)*

The implication is that the pupils do want their questions answered by someone prepared to be open about their own views. A little later in that particular interview, a girl expressed the desire to hear 'real life experiences' and not just working from text books or worksheets. A year ten girl said that she appreciated the occasions in which her teachers expressed their own views and treated the pupils *like an adult ... having adult conversations. (Appendix 198)*

A year eleven pupil astutely observed, about some of her teachers:

> *Some [teachers] will just let pupils get on and discuss it, just observe, really.*　　　　*(Year 11　Appendix p 65)*

6.4   Evidence from the staff

The physics teacher, quoted in previous chapters, clearly takes every opportunity to espouse a positivist stance in the classroom:

> *My entire bent, whenever I get an opportunity, and whenever they're quiet enough to listen is, to deliver that message.　A scientist must ... you cannot come down on one side or another if the evidence doesn't warrant it, and to do so is wrong ... You must never allow your personal feelings to run away with you so that you adopt a particular position and then argue from that position, that is wrong.*
>
> *(Appendix 221)*

When asked what his attitude would be if a pupil questioned him about his personal beliefs:

> *Oh, privately, yes. That's not a problem. But I would make*
> *it very clear that this comes with a big health warning.*
>
> *(Appendix 222)*

A little later on, the same teacher gives an example of where he sees the boundaries being drawn, in his own subject:

> *We can by all means discuss the reality of, say, the fish*
> *stocks in the North Sea; we should not , then, go across*
> *that line and start giving opinions or allowing the pupils in*
> *their ignorance to have opinions.* *(Appendix 223)*

It could be argued that this teacher is taking the neutral stance to extremes. Nobody is allowed any opinions in his classroom, unless s/he can validate them with objective, provable evidence. It is not, of course, a real neutral stance, as positivism is the defining philosophy and nothing else is tolerated.

A colleague of the physicist, also in the science department, a chemist, held a very different view, and was prepared to share an attitude of open questioning with the pupils:

> *I don't feel that we can tell them the answers - I'm not sure*
> *that we know the answers ...* *(Appendix 230)*

He followed on by saying, however, that he was reluctant to express his own views to the pupils:

> *I tend not to. I think really the whole point is that they [the*
> *pupils] decide; I think if somebody said to me something*
> *that I felt was wrong, I would challenge it ...*
> *RH: If the facts were wrong?*

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A: Yes.

RH: Supposing one of them asked you what your view was when you'd presented both sides of the case ...?

A: I think that would be okay. I don't think that they're that easily influenced by what you think ... *(Appendix 230)*

I have discussed in chapter four the views of the senior manager whom I interviewed, and who was reluctant to argue for teachers taking a particular moral stance:

> *I think you would be on dodgy ground with the teacher standing up at the front of the classroom saying 'This is the moral way to look at this ...'* *(Appendix 235)*

Even when pressed on whether he thought that there ever is a place for a teacher to express his or her own personal views, he appeared to agree, and then equivocated:

> *RH: Do you think it's appropriate at all for teachers themselves to come down on one side or another in discussion?*
>
> *A; Yes, I think that as a school or as a teacher we've got to ... the school's ethos is based on moral values: everybody's got a right to enjoy themselves, in a safe and secure environment ... but the nitty gritty of anything is very often not quite as black and white as it might appear superficially ...* *(Appendix 241)*

The religious education teacher interviewed was not questioned specifically about his attitude to neutrality in the classroom, but the implication came across clearly:

> *Perhaps most of all these values are 'caught' rather than 'taught', but I think that there is a place for attempting to teach them, in the sense of not just saying what other*

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people's values are, but encouraging the children to think about their own values and to explore the moral and spiritual side ... *(Appendix 239)*

If he thinks that values are 'caught' rather than 'taught', then almost by implication he must believe that his attitude must have an influence in what the pupils 'catch'. The English teacher interviewed held a pragmatic view that her job was:

...teaching children to mature and become part of the society as adults ... therefore our job must be to equip them so that they do conform. *(Appendix 244)*

She seemed to indicate that, on occasions when values issues arose in her lessons, she did not herself feel it appropriate to express her own views:

But I don't think you actually discuss it at the time - you say 'I want you to write about [such and such], I want your views, you must have a balanced opinion, you must give both sides of the argument' but we never actually come back to them and say 'Your idea is this ... and I don't agree with you.' We want them to do the piece of writing, but I don't think that we actually convey any approbation of their ideas ... *(Appendix 245)*

She continued:

...when I come to mark it - I don't mind what the view is that they put down - it's the techniques which they've used that I'm looking at ... Even in discussion work ... you will discuss with them and you're pleased to get ideas going, but at the end you might say, 'Well, I don't agree with you', but you're more likely to say, 'That was a good piece of discussion work', and talk about their oral skills, rather than the

content of what they've actually said.   *(Appendix 246)*

I have quoted fairly extensively from this speaker, because she illustrates what is quite a widespread view among teachers: the belief that, in a skills based subject like English, it is the expertise of the skill in which the teacher is interested, and not the values expressed, which matters. I find this a rather contradictory stance, as the content with which an English teacher is dealing on a daily basis - literature - surely explores the deepest human values, emotions and beliefs, and requires sophisticated appreciation of sensitivity and empathy in order to get the maximum from its reading. For an English teacher to relegate pupils' own expressed opinions and values to such an extent must be sending the pupil contrary messages. This insistence on always providing two points of view in a discursive essay or a classroom debate, does not give the pupil the opportunity to work out for him/herself the position which s/he wants to make her/his own. One does, of course, need to teach pupils techniques of criticism and awareness of bias, and this comes about through the ability to see that most situations have several viewpoints, but an insistence on **always** providing what is often a spurious balance, must be damaging to the pupils' ability to formulate their own convictions and beliefs.

In the interview with a colleague of the previous teacher, the drama teacher expressed the desire to see pupils expressing definite opinions, and felt strongly that drama had a lot to contribute:

> *I do think that some subjects, though, do challenge*
> *children more than others: just to step back and ask how it*
> *is we live like this.*   *(Appendix 252)*

He also identified the dramatic process as having a moral dimension:

...anybody who engages in drama is engaging in a process
in which an individual has to take into account what other
people are doing ...   *(Appendix 252)*

He did not explicitly talk about the involvement of the teacher in the lesson, but in describing the dramatic process, I feel that the participation of the teacher is implied.

The mathematics teacher, previously quoted in chapter four, said that:

> *... a number of times I say, 'Isn't this amazing!' and the kids*
> *say ugh! ... they don't see it at all! ... but I think it's*
> *something that comes from good teachers ...*
>
> *(Appendix 258)*

This particular teacher is not afraid of expressing his feelings of wonder when encountering certain mathematical solutions (he himself uses the term 'wonder'), and by doing so is firmly aligning himself on the side of the teachers who believe it necessary to disclose their own views.

6.5   Conclusion

I have shown that pupils largely appreciate the moments when teachers communicate their own beliefs, values, convictions or ideas, and find such occasions helpful in making up their own minds.   I have also shown that there is quite a diversity in attitude and practice among the staff of the school in the study to including such moments in their own lessons.   I started this chapter by mentioning a number of justifications which people put forward to adopting a neutral position in the classroom.   Often these are for very understandable reasons, and include such matters with which all teachers can sympathise: fear of exposing one's very personal ideas to an unsympathetic audience;

anxiety at being accused of indoctrination; the sheer quantity of material which one has to get through in very limited time. I do feel, however, that teachers should be encouraged to disclose where they themselves stand on a particular issue, from time to time, in order to give pupils the opportunity to see that to believe in some ideal is acceptable, normal, even, and that to have firmly held values on a range of matters is part of the human condition. In this way, they are able to test out their own views in a supportive environment. The good teacher does not **inflict** her/his views on the pupils, but rather encourages open discussion and a questioning attitude; not the 'Neutral-Chair' but rather the involved participant.

In the next chapter I go on to look at the implications for individual teachers and a school's management, if pupils are to experience the opportunity to develop confidence in thinking about, developing and articulating their own values.

CHAPTER 7

VALUES EDUCATION: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOOD PRACTICE

7.0 Introductory Remarks

I have shown that the adoption of a neutral position by a teacher in a classroom does not help in developing pupils' capacity to think about and discuss moral and spiritual values. As has been explored in chapters five and six, all subjects in the secondary school curriculum lend themselves to encouraging education in values, although admittedly subjects which are concerned with the development of emotion and empathy might more easily suggest 'ways in' for the teacher.

In this chapter I look at considerations which school managements might choose to address, if they are concerned to improve the quality of experience which the pupils are getting in the field of values, together with various suggestions for classroom practice which teachers might explore.

7.1 Management issues

There is a bold statement made by the editors of a book published in 1994 which examines the values education in the Australian school system:

> *The Australian National Goals and State Educational Goals both state that those working with students should help them develop their own coherent system of values and beliefs ... Students have the right to know that no topic in any subject is value-free.*
>
> *(Lemin, Potts & Welsford 1994: 1)*

It is an assertion which many school managers would choose to ignore, if they could, as it implies curriculum decisions in the distribution of staffing and resources and in timetabling which are difficult to make and to implement. If the development of pupils' *own coherent system of values and beliefs* is to be taken seriously, then there are implications for staff development and training (INSET). The way that financial resources are distributed, too, becomes increasingly significant, if those very subjects which are perceived by the pupils as playing a large part in values education (religious education and personal and social education) are marginalised, have little time devoted to them on the timetable, take place in unsatisfactory classrooms (for example, mobile classrooms in poor conditions and not particularly close to the departments' books and stationery), and whose low status is compounded in the eyes of pupils and their parents by the fact that these are not 'examination' subjects. These problems were referred to in chapter four, where it was pointed out the tiny amount of time devoted to religious education at the school in the study, compared with the demands of science, and in chapter five, where the English teacher quoted commented on the fact that she did not think that pupils or staff *'accord PSE [personal and social education] a very high profile'* and went on to point out the undeniable point that *'so many people [teachers] get 'odd' lessons to teach of RE and PSE'*. To be found on the same page as the earlier quotation from a book looking at the goals of the Australian education system, is:

> *Across the school the allocation of resources (time and money) is based on what is seen as important.*
>
> *(Lemin, Potts & Welsford 1994: 1)*

This is as important a truth in British schools as in Australian schools.

7.2   Management solutions

There are institutions which have chosen to put time and resources into developing a coherent and consistent programme of values education, and one model to which I shall particularly refer, is Alverno College, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.   This college is described in the introduction to a handbook outlining its programme of values education for all, as:

> *...a Catholic liberal arts college for women, with major professional programs in nursing, management, music and education... Our mission includes a commitment to serve women from the working-class neighbourhoods where we are located, and 75% of our students receive financial aid.*
>
> *(Earley, Mentkowski and Schafer 1980: 2)*

This college has developed a sophisticated programme for teaching 'valuing', and is at pains to point out that this is a continuously growing and developing process.   The writers of the handbook explore the debate which took place before the programme was designed, and as a rationale, they say:

> *We are attempting to meet this challenge [of helping the student to develop the ability to discern and analyse values] because we have come to recognise valuing as an intrinsic and universal human activity.   Situations demanding moral and ethical decisions, aesthetic and practical responses, confront each of us daily.   How we value involves every area of our lives.*
>
> *(Earley, Mentkowski and Schafer 1980: 4)*

All the courses at Alverno College have built into them different levels of 'valuing' education, and after two years' consideration, they found

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themselves able to define eight general areas in which all students on all courses were involved:

- *communications*

- *analysis*

- *problem solving*

- *valuing*

- *social interaction*

- *effectiveness in individual/environment relationships*

- *involvement in the contemporary world*

- *aesthetic response*

Different teaching and learning techniques are encouraged, in order to facilitate valuing in decision making - a particular focus of the programme:

> *We have ... developed simulations, moral dilemma discussions, role-taking and other active classroom techniques for a wide variety of subjects and settings.*
> *We also take seriously the students' opportunities to work in laboratory, studio and rehearsal settings that bring "real world" constraints to bear under controlled conditions.*
> *(Earley, Mentkowski and Schafer 1980: 7)*

The Alverno programme is ambitious, and takes a high level of commitment from students and teachers, and has obvious implications for all their courses. It can, however, offer suggestions to British secondary schools, even if such a whole-scale policy is unrealistic. The acceptance that values education has a place in all subject areas, and that such a process can be built into all schemes of work, may be somewhat daunting, but all schools have had to address revisions to

their teaching methods and curriculum content in areas such as equal opportunities and racism awareness, in the past twenty years. Why should similar demands not be made for consideration of moral and spiritual values across the curriculum? Like all successful initiatives, such developments would need the firm commitment of a school's management, adequate opportunities for staff reflection and discussion, and the provision of appropriate financial resources.

Watson, distinguishes at least three different ways in which:

> *what happens in the curriculum as a whole affects every*
> *subject : attitudes, assumptions and outcomes.*
>
> *(Watson 1993: 175*

She illustrates in diagrammatic fashion how these three concepts pervade the whole curriculum, and uses examples from recent national curriculum developments in subjects such as geography and history, to show that *opinions or attitudes or beliefs* are to be found in all subjects.

Everard and Morris, when analysing the role and responsibilities of school management, point out that there are several different ethical considerations, in addition to the content of the curriculum, which school managers cannot ignore:

> *As teachers we already play an important and influential*
> *role in the lives of our pupils. As managers we become,*
> *additionally, one of the most important influences on the*
> *working lives of the staff who report directly or indirectly to*
> *us. As heads we fashion the value system of the school*
> *...Every manager should constantly reflect on the ethics of*
> *his or her conduct.   (Everard & Morris 1990: 8 & 9)*

Everard and Morris are surely suggesting that managers play an

important part in shaping, not only the explicit curriculum, but also the implicit and nulll curricula, and that attention should be paid as to how this influences the values of the institution.   Starratt expounds on this:

> It *is impossible to run an ethically neutral school. Day in*
>
> *and day out students are picking up ethical influences,*
>
> *whether it be the example of the adults and peers in the*
>
> *schools, the way the school handles discipline, the*
>
> *implied moral lessons in much of the curriculum, the*
>
> *ethical lessons learned on the playing field and in other*
>
> *extra curricular activities*   *(Starratt 1994: 11)*

If school managements still need to be convinced that it is the totality of the school which influences the development of values, then Watson and Ashton provide a viable model of 'an ideal school' *(Watson & Ashton 1995: 146 & 149)*.   Their matrix has six headings:

> *Appearance, Atmosphere, Integrity;   Staff, Head, Pupils;*
> *Methods of Teaching, Organisation, Discipline.*
>   *(Watson & Ashton 1993: 149)*

They anticipate three possible reactions to such an ideal model, including the response that it is unrealistic and thus ludicrous, and that it does not reflect what real pupils are like. The third reaction, however, is the one which I should prefer school managements to adopt:

> *...it must happen - or be approached - if schools are to*
> *become truly educational establishments.*
>   *(Watson & Ashton 1993: 148)*

Schools should be the places for the best kinds of aspirations, the highest goals, and managements which are not prepared to aim for their

schools to be 'ideal' are not serving their pupils properly.

A school's management, if it takes seriously the responsibility of educating the pupils in moral and spiritual values, should have a precise understanding of which subjects explicitly teach values issues, and at what stages this takes plac. This is possible with a curriculum mapping exercise. Such an analysis will inevitably show gaps in the opportunities which are presented to pupils, and the management should ensure that these gaps are addressed.

Before the arrival of inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), comes the inevitable production, or updating, of whole-school policy documents, and departments examine schemes of work and other forms of documentation, in order to be able to provide written proof that they have strategies for coping with issues like assessment, special needs education and anti-racism. Policy documents, like whole-school aims and 'mission statements' are notoriously a heady mix of soaring aspirations and statements of the obvious. All too often they have little or no effect on what goes on in the school. It is with this in mind that I, somewhat tentatively, put forward a case for schools having yet another policy statement - one on values education. Despite prevailing cynicism about 'policies', I do think that, when used properly, they can provide a valuable focus for staff collectively to address an issue, and to achieve at least a partial consensus about the way forward on a particular matter. Policies are ineffective if imposed on staff and pupils, because they have no sense of personally possessing the idea - the modern jargon word is 'ownership'. Whole-school policies are only of use if they bring about changed behaviour in some way, and in the case of having a policy on values

education, those changes would be expected to be seen in all aspects of school life: the explicit, implicit and nulll curricula. Such an ambitious aim cannot be achieved overnight, and I would suggest that the time-scale for thinking about, then agreeing and implementing such a whole-school policy, could not be much under a year, and may even be a little longer.

Everard and Morris (1990) assert the following:

> *The important task for the educational institution is the reconciliation of values systems so as to achieve a clear statement of aims and beliefs to which a large majority of the stake-holders can subscribe and to which they feel commitment because they are satisfied that the process through which the aims have been defined has taken account of the main streams of fact and opinion. The statement of aims and beliefs should not of course be a watered-down compromise trying to be all things to all men, but one which clearly states priorities and commits itself to behavioural objectives ...*
>
> *(Everard & Morris 1990: 197)*

Marfleet, writing a chapter on school mission statements , addresses the rise in popularity of these documents, which try to sum up a school's ethos, as well as addressing more practical considerations. He identifies the tension between two differing types of 'mission statement':

> *Is the finished statement a fair reflection of the school's ethos, summarising what the school stands for, or is it intended to be an aspiration, an ideal towards which the school is moving?*   *(Marfleet 1996: 165)*

Whilst school managers clearly need to recognise that there are different

possible approaches, I do not see that there is necessarily a conflict, if both are tackled. A policy statement can both describe organisational structures which are in place to facilitate successful values education, in addition to aspirations for relationships and attitudes among all who work in the school (pupils and staff).

Halstead, points out the fact that:

> *Where there is no systematic discussion of values and value issues in the classroom,children may be more likely to develop haphazardly, and indeed it is not uncommon for the values which pupils develop in school to be different from those the school intends.* *(Halstead 1996: 4)*

The key word for school managers here, is **systematic**. It is important that, when considerations are given to values education in different subjects, the people who have a strategic overview of the curriculum know that **all** pupils will have the opportunity to develop their ideas about values. Otherwise it is very easy for groups of pupils to fall through the net, for such reasons, for example, as that their particular teachers believe in 'leaving it to others' to tackle, or that a history teacher thinks that an English teacher is covering a particular issue, and the English teacher is sure that her history colleague is doing it: the vital ingredient in getting this right is communication.

I would suggest that the following questions need to be tackled when a school's management comes to consider the adoption of a whole-school policy statement on the development of values:

Are moral and spiritual values of concern:

- just in religious education lessons

- in selected curriculum areas

(eg religious education, English

and the arts)

- in all curriculum areas?

Although my preference is definitely for values to be tackled in all curriculum areas, I nevertheless feel that these are legitimate questions. When a decision has been made, this should be communicated to all staff, pupils, parents and the Governing Body; this will result in everyone having the same shared understanding and removes questions of uncertainty or ambiguity.

Clear communication needs to be followed by the necessary professional development for staff, and provision should be made for appropriate evaluation and review, as takes place for all school initiatives.

If these straightforward considerations are given, then the children's experience of values education would inevitably be less ad hoc, more comprehensive, and the opportunities given to explore the sorts of questions which are crucial to everyone.

7.3   Individual teacher solutions

Once the question of fostering pupils' confidence and assurance in exploring moral and spiritual values has been considered by a school, and agreement arrived at, that this will be a responsibility for all teachers (or, indeed, if the decision is made that it will be the province of particular subjects), then the individual teacher is not without sources of good advice in helping him/her develop appropriate techniques. Perhaps the first necessary response, needs to be the recognition that all teachers bring with them their personal 'baggage':

Every teacher brings a personal commitment to bear in teaching, to the selection of material, to the time devoted to its preparation and presentation, and in the type of assignments and exercises given to children. The only sensible way is to accept this limitation as inescapable, and not to insist on a neutrality which is unattainable.

(Hulmes 1979: 48)

Hulmes makes a persuasive case for teachers to embrace *commitment* and *openness* as part of their individual style, and although he is specifically addressing religious education teachers, such qualities would help all subject teachers to find a comfortable position in the classroom:

The aim is not to press for decision, but to facilitate commitment in the light of their Life-experience. It is to make commitment more self-aware, and here the teacher, as the exemplar, must be seen to act as he speaks. The aim is to insist that commitment and openness are not exclusive and that long after school is over, the quest, with all its frustration, disappointment, intimacy, vulnerability and joy, is almost just beginning.

(Hulmes 1979: 11)

Hulmes makes this approach sound exciting. It challenges teachers to form a relationship with pupils which is mutually respectful; the challenge takes on the nature of a quest, and teaching begins to sound like a genuinely stimulating and inspiring activity. Hulmes reminds us that teachers and pupils are 'in it together':

Answers are not handed down to children, not least because teachers do not (or even should not) have them. If there is any emphasis on commitment it is on commitment to the search. *(Hulmes 1979: 43)*

Watson's argument that:

> *..a quality of five-fold respect, namely for oneself - a proper*
>
> *self-affirmation; for all other people as persons like oneself;*
>
> *for the total environment in which we find ourselves, both*
>
> *natural and cultural; for beauty, delighting in experiencing a*
>
> *sense of awe and wonder; and finally respect for truth*
>
> *which, however difficult to attain, needs to be like a beacon*
>
> *beckoning us forward. These constitute, so to speak, the*
>
> *raw materials for effective education.*
>
> *(Watson 1993: 2)*

provides a touchstone for the teacher, attempting to encourage pupils to develop an awareness of values issues. It is interesting to note that the mathematics teacher, quoted in chapter four, used the word *'wonder'* *(something special and magic about life which is spiritual ... a spirituality which engenders wonder, the feeling that there is something there ... I think that that is really important)* to describe a quality which he tried to get pupils to recognise in his teaching - particularly interesting, as mathematics is not the subject which is most readily associated with wonder.

The 'valuing' programme, mentioned earlier in this chapter, at Alverno College, includes raising the awareness of teachers about a 'spiral learning' model, where one builds on what one has learned in previous situations:

> *As we plan and teach, assess and evaluate, ... we gain a*
> *clearer and clearer vision of the valuing process itself. And*
> *each time we think we have gained something in*
> *understanding we 'plow it back' into practice, putting it to*
> *the test in classrooms and field settings, seminars and*

laboratories . This constant dialectic loop, from action to reflective understanding to testing in new action, closely resembles the experiential learning cycle ...

(Earley, Mentkowski and Schafer 1980: 82)

Teachers are encouraged to reflect on times when they succeed, perhaps, in setting the scene for a discussion in which all who take part do so thoughtfully and with sensitivity to others in the group, and then try with another class to recreate the same climate; if one fails (which is always a possibility), then the teacher needs to ask him/herself questions as to why the same techniques used with one group did not work with the second.   It should be integral to good teaching that one is constantly searching for ways to make the teaching and learning experience deeper.   Individual teachers at Alverno College ask themselves questions about their own discipline and teaching methods:

Given that valuing is intrinsic to my discipline, how exactly
does it appear? How can I focus it, make it explicit? How
can I create learning situations that allow the student to
encounter and deal with valuing ...

(Earley, Mentkowski and Schafer 1980: 17)

They go on to explain that existing courses do not need to be radically reformed, rather that emphases are reshaped:

Thus, a survey course on 'American Music' has not
become 'Valuing in American Music', nor does the
syllabus appear greatly changed... What the instructor has
altered is how he states the goals of the course and how
he focuses the student's efforts on building toward them.

(Earley, Mentkowski and Schafer 1980: 18)

Teachers do, of course, need opportunities to discuss their ideas with others and to hear from teachers who are successfully employing

different techniques to foster education in values. Teachers cannot be expected to change their practice immediately, and without help, and school managements need to provide such staff development.

Watson and Ashton provide sub-headings of:

> *Requirements for effective learning.*
> *Affirming pupils as persons ... Ensuring pupils have a sense of achievement and fulfilment ... Promoting self-assessment ... Giving space to pupils ...Providing a stimulating environment with sufficient structure and discipline to promote attentiveness ... Concern for appropriate self-expression ... Abandoning a concern for uniformity ... Listening to pupils and respecting their concerns and ideas ... Modelling.*
>
> *(Watson & Ashton 1995: 87 - 89)*

These sub-headings would provide a valuable basis for teachers' discussion groups, and could be a useful series of focuses for paired observation and teaching.

Lemin, Potts and Welsford, writing in an Australian publication mentioned earlier in this chapter, provide a range of practical suggestions to teachers for covering values issues in different subjects. They write early on:

> *If students are to develop the confidence to risk openly expressing their views we need to ensure that we: know the group dynamics of the class ... encourage students to listen to one another ... encourage students to identify prejudice ... ensure that challenges to views deal with issues and argument and do not attack the person ... deal with inappropriate responses in a positive way.*
>
> *(Lemin, Potts & Welsford 1994: 2)*

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This is good advice for teaching anything, of course, and ensures that the atmosphere in the classroom is positive and supportive and affirms minority as well as majority views. The writers go on to pose a series of questions for teachers to answer, if they are raising values issues in lessons, and offer specific subject breakdowns of values issues which might lend themselves more easily to one subject than another, and even give practical suggestions for individual lessons, in each curriculum area, which tackle such concepts.

7.4   Conclusion

I have shown that successful values education is a shared responsibility, between school managements and individual teachers.   I have offered illustrative examples of the areas which need to be tackled - both as whole-school issues (the explicit, implicit and nulll curricula) and considerations for classroom practice.   This is a vitally important area for schools today to address, and if improvements are going to be made, for example, in the school in the study, then a significant amount of time must be given for the consideration and adoption of a whole-school policy, and appropriate attention given to improving the organisational structures of the school.

CONCLUSION

8.0   Values education: recent developments

As I outlined in the introduction, I started this study because of my
growing concern about schools being ineffective in properly introducing
pupils to considerations of moral and spiritual values.   During the
period of my research, the British media has had surges of interest in
values education, and Dr Nick Tate has concluded his investigations for
the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, producing, I suppose
inevitably, given the wide-ranging interests served on his committee, a
fairly unadventurous series of recommendations, with which it would be
hard to disagree.   (The publication: Education for adult life: the spiritual
and moral development of young people (1996), came out of a
conference convened by the Schools Curriculum and Assessment
Authority (SCAA) in January 1996, and in the autumn of 1996 it
produced a series of recommendations about morals education, which,
at the time of writing, are with the Secretary of State for Education for
consideration.)

Various notable figures have extended the debate, not least the
Archbishop of Canterbury, who moved a motion in the House of Lords in
July 1996:

> *To call attention to the importance of society's moral and*
> *spiritual well-being, and in particular to the responsibility of*
> *schools.*   *(Carey 1996: 11)*

Quite what will be the long-term outcomes from these flurries of activity, it
is still too soon to say.   Certainly practice in schools will not change,
until teachers themselves see that their pupils will benefit in very real

ways, from being able increasingly to express themselves with confidence and assurance about values issues.

8.1   Data analysis and interpretation: a summary

During the course of my study, I have tried to show that moral and spiritual values **are** of interest to pupils, and that their current experience of such education in the school in the study, is partial and variable, where it occurs at all.   I have indicated times when I could detect, through analysis of the transcripts of my interviews, examples of the influence of positivism, relativism and postmodernism on their thinking.   I have demonstrated, through referring to the pupils' own words, that they find their teachers sometimes embarrassed when such issues arise in class, and that there are few subjects in which they can recognise such discussion taking place.   The pupils could rarely identify occasions outside the explicit curriculum in which the school appeared to be concerned with values issues, and very often they lacked the vocabulary or ideas, when asked to articulate ways in which they felt that the situation could be improved. The pupils did, however, on the whole feel that they would appreciate more opportunities to talk about these kinds of issues, in a supportive framework in lessons.

The staff interviewed demonstrated a range of influences on their understanding of moral and spiritual values, and I have shown positivist, relativist and postmodernist tendencies being apparent when they talk about moral and spiritual values.   There was a great divergence in views about values education - much more so than I would have anticipated when I started my investigations.   What was very clear was that few teachers appear to know either the content or teaching methods

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employed by members of other departments, and often assume that everyone else thinks as they do. There is a clear need for teachers in secondary schools to be more aware of the totality of the pupils' experience. There was no universal understanding of what values education might consist of, and certainly no consistency of practice. This reinforces the pupils' points that their experience is extremely variable - even among teachers in the same department.

I considered, and rejected, the idea that to adopt a neutral approach to teaching would be the most satisfactory solution to tackling values in the classroom.

One of my major concerns has been to demonstrate that it is the totality of a pupil's experience at school which goes to make up any education s/he might have in values, and that schools should consider carefully the contributions which the implicit curriculum is making to the transmission of values, and what is being left out, both organisationally and in terms of ethos. It is only when the explicit, implicit and nulll curricula are taken together, that we can reach a proper understanding of the values education process. I have addressed the roles of both the school management and the individual teacher, and the vital contribution which each plays in what the pupil experiences.

8.2   Recommendations: a summary

Finally, I conclude with a summary of suggestions for improving the quality of education in moral and spiritual values which the pupils get; this applies first and foremost to the school in the study, but could, I believe, have use in other secondary schools:

  - Raise awareness among staff of values issues -

through staff development (a presentation by an outside speaker ?) and discussion groups.

- Initiate discussion on the influences which we are all under, and an understanding of how these can affect our teaching.

- Undertake the writing and adoption of a whole-school policy statement on values education.

- Attempt as wide a consensus as possible of subjects (all of them?) in which values issues will be covered. Share ideas of good practice.

- Encourage a developing understanding of the total experience of the secondary school pupil - facilitate teachers crossing subject disciplines and undertaking team teaching and paired observation.

- Devise a method (a series of presentations?) which will enable teachers to get an overview of the curriculum.

- Obtain agreement on means of consulting pupils and evaluating success in this field, so that the school may go from strength to strength.

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APPENDIX

Transcriptions of interviews with pupils

Year 7 Group 1   3 girls and 2 boys

RH   The first thing for us to think about are three words - 'moral' and 'spiritual' and 'values' - what do you understand any of those words to mean?   Anybody?
[Pause} Hard isn't it?   [Pause]   What do you think 'morals' mean?

Girl 1 Well, like the moral of a story.

RH   Good, the moral of a story.   Tell me about that.

Girl 1 Well, if you tell a story ... something ... to teach you a lesson.

RH   To teach you a lesson, yes?   Pause.   What about the word spiritual, what do you think that means?

Girl 2 God and Jesus and things like that.

RH   God and Jesus.

Girl 3 What you believe in.

RH   What you believe in [Pause] Okay ... and just the word 'values' in itself ... any idea of what that means?

Girl 2 Values of food?

RH   Values of food.

Girl 1 The price of stuff.

RH   The price of stuff.

Girl 1 And how much you value things yourself, like friendship or something like that.

RH   Right, how much you value friends and friendship.

[Pause as two late-comers arrive ...]

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RH　We're talking about the words 'moral' and 'spiritual' - do you have any idea what those words mean?　Either of you two?

Boy 1 A moral is a standard.

RH　A moral is a standard?　Right.　Can you think of any example?

Boy 1 Erm, no.

RH　Any idea about the word spiritual?　[Long pause].　No?　Well, getting on to values, and I think that you were just saying about the importance of friendship?

Girl 1　Yes, and things like that.

RH　Right.　Anyone else want to say anything about that?

Girl 2　You can pay so much and then you can say that 'I've got good value'.

RH　Right, 'I've got good value' when you've paid something for something.　Do you think that students ought to learn about these sorts of things in school?

Several pupils　　Yes [general agreement].

Girl 1 'Cos things like value, if you don't learn about things like friendship, you treat your friends like dirt and you end up with no friends.

RH　The value of friendship.　[Pause]　What sorts of subjects would you expect to learn about these things in?

Girl 2　Maths.

RH　Tell me about maths.

Girl 2　Cos the value of money and that, ... the value of things.

Girl 2　Prices and stuff.

RH　Okay ...

Girl 3　RE ... spiritual ...

RH   So you'd learn something about values in RE...?

Girl 3 And, erm, English.

RH   English?

Girl 3 Morals in English cos they tell you stories ... morals ...

RH   So that's the moral of a story?

Girl 3 Yes.

RH   Right ... Any other subjects you think might touch on these things?
[Pause]

Girl 2 PSE.

RH   How might you expect to see it in PSE?

Girl 2 Like, friends.

Girl 1 Friendship ... it's normal ... getting on with people [general
laughter].

RH   Friendship, getting on with people, you'd expect to do in PSE?

Several voices   Yes   [general agreement].

RH   Can anyone think of any lessons you've actually experienced
when any of these values might have been covered?   Or touched on?

Girl 1 Erm, we have a bit in PSE.

RH   Tell me about that.

Girl 1 We've just been doing things about friends and things like that.

Girl 2 Yes.   Giving compliments.

RH   Right, would that be to do with valuing friends?

Several voices   Yes.

Girl 3 And in PSE we've done some stuff about, erm, friendship, and

giving comments ...

Girl 1 We did some stuff about different religions and spiritual in RE.

RH Mmm hmm...

Girl 3 Ghosts ...

RH Ghosts? Do you think ghosts have anything to do with values?

General laughter.

RH It's possible? Mmm. Erm, do you feel comfortable about teachers raising these sorts of issues?

Several voices Yes.

RH Erm, do you think that teachers themselves feel comfortable, or do you think they feel a bit uncomfortable about discussing such things?

Girl 3 Some teachers do ...

RH Do you think the ones who don't feel very comfortable, d'you think they might be tempted to, just to ignore it, or...

Several voices Yes.

RH Right ... if you think that some people would say that values are to do with the things in life that you think are important... now I know you've mentioned friendship ...

Girl 2 And the family ...

RH Families ...To do with maybe telling the truth, being honest, erm, relationships with people, justice, those sorts of ideas ... do you think that these kinds of values are important in any way?

Several voices Yes.

RH Do you think that they are less important or more important than things like getting good value for money ... ?

Boy 1 + others   More.

RH   Why d'you think that?

Girl 1 Cos money isn't everything.

RH   Money isn't everything?

Girl 1 If you have loads of money ... [inaudible] ... you won't have any friends ...

Girl 2 Yes, cos friends are meant to last for ever, but money and things you borrow with your money don't affect anyone else for ages and ages.

Girl 3 You don't need that much money really ... you need more friends than money ...

Girl 2 Money can't buy everything ...

RH   Mmm ...

Girl 2 Can't buy friends ...

RH   D'you enjoy thinking about and discussing this sort of thing?

Several voices   Yes.

RH   D'you think you've ever been sort of assessed ... I know in class you get tested on things don't you ... spelling tests and maths tests and I don't know, writing an essay in English or something ...

General agreement.

RH   D'you know if you've ever been assessed on this sort of topic ... it would be a hard thing to do, wouldn't it?

Several voices   Yes.

Boy 2 I think sort of right and wrong and sort of answers for it, your opinion on it ...

RH   D'you think there's ever a right and a wrong answer in these

questions, or do you think it's always a matter of opinion?

Girl 1 Erm, sometimes there's a right and wrong ...

RH   Can you think of any examples?

Boy 1 Well, like say you buy some food or something, erm, it's worth a certain amount and some people will charge higher and some will charge lower, but really it's only worth the amount ...

RH   Okay ... anyone else think of any situation where some things are right or wrong? Regardless.

Girl 1 Well, you might say you don't need any money at all, but you've got to be practical ...

RH   Right, so money is important?

Girl 1 Yes, but it's not everything.

RH   Not everything ... supposing, erm, I don't know, supposing you have some kind of spiritual belief, would you think that was as important as how much things cost?

Several voices   Yes.

RH   And, is it important for all time or does it sometimes sort of change ...? [Pause]

Laughter

RH   A difficult question, isn't it? Let me try and think of another example ... Do you believe it's a good idea to tell the truth?

Several voices   Yes.

RH   Okay, erm, do you think one should always tell the truth or do you think there are some circumstances when it doesn't matter if you don't tell the truth?

Girl 1 There are some ... well you should always all the time, ... but say

you've not done something or done something wrong, or been pressurised to do something, then you should tell the truth but also say who else made you do it, or whatever ...

Girl 2 Sometimes though if it's something really serious, sometimes you've got to protect ... from someone...

RH   Mmm ... Do you think our school thinks that these sorts of issues are important?

Girl 1 Erm ... we haven't really done much about it ...

RH   No ...

Girl 1 I think they think it's important but they just don't really know what sort of things to do ...

RH   No ...

Boy 2 They feel uncomfortable doing that sort of thing in class, they'd rather do things which they're comfortable about teaching ...

RH   Is there any time other than in lessons when these sorts of issues are raised?   [Pause]

Girl 2 Sometimes at home.

RH   Mmm hmm.

Girl 3 Sometimes talk in the playground.

RH   Sometimes talk in the playground, sometimes at home ... any ...

Girl 3 Maybe an argument ...

Girl 1 Yes, if you have an argument you tend to bring up things that happened a while ago and it might be not telling the truth or something like that ...

RH   So really what you say to each other in the playground or in the corridor or whatever, they may well have things to do with values ...?

Several voices   Yes.

RH   Thinking ...

Boy 1 Things like getting things wrong, like if you lose friends because you've been speaking badly, then you'll learn to treat them better ...

Girl 2 Learn by your mistakes ...

RH   That's a good idea.   Erm, d'you think [pause] ... I'm just trying to think of in the school now, as a sort of body, an institution, we've talked a bit about it in class, and some lessons might lend themselves to learning about values more than others, erm, d'you think there's anything that people ever say to you, anybody in the school, that is sort of reinforcing the idea of values or is reinforcing or mentioning what values the school thinks are important?   [Pause]   Not just in subject lessons but in other aspects of school life?   [Pause]   What about in assemblies?   [Pause] Do you get an impression of the sorts of things the school thinks are important through assemblies?

Several voices   Yes.

Girl 1 Sometimes.

RH   Sometimes?

Boy 1 Like we have done a thing with the Wymondham, erm, a hospice.

Girl   Quidenham.

RH   The Quidenham Hospice?

Boy 1 Yes, and erm, the school seem, we heard them talk about it, they seem to think it was important and so you can know from what other people think about it ...

RH   Right ... that's a nice example, anyone else think of any example?

Girl 2 When we had to make a video and show what the school was like to other schools ...

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Girl 2 And it shows some of the school bits are good and others are not.

RH   Okay ...

Girl 3 We did ... didn't we do some stuff on racism?

Several voices   Yes.

RH   Racism? Where did you cover that?

Girl 3 In, erm, English ...

Girl 2 In tutor period ...

RH   In tutor period and English?

Girl 2 PSE

RH   And in PSE?

Boy 2 Assembly ...

RH   And in assembly ...

Girl 2 And bullying in drama ...

RH   Right ... okay ... so you've done bullying in drama, and in PSE?

Several voices   Yes.

RH   Mmm hmm, and in the tutor period?

Several voices   Yes.

RH   Right. Do things that your tutors or your head of year say to you, d'you think they say anything about what values the school thinks are important?

Girl 1 Erm, yeh, sometimes ...

RH   Go on ...

Boy 1 About how you sort of behave ... I think that they think it's important if you behave good but if you sort of behave badly sort of erm, let down the school ...

RH   Let down the school ...

Girl 3 Marks ...

RH   Pardon?

Girl 3 Marks, assessments ...

RH   Marks ... good ... behaviour and marks ... [Pause]
Can anyone else think of anything?   Your tutors and your head of year think that behaviour and marks are important?

Several voices   Yes.

RH   What about the Head, the Headmaster?

Girl 2 Well he thinks that your assessments are good because if you get all fourteen goods he'll send a letter to you, or thirteen goods like that, and then he'll write a letter to you or your parents saying that he thinks it's really good and he's really pleased with you...

Girl 1 He probably thinks also that the school runs smoothly if people get on with ... and don't have too many fights and arguments ...

RH   So you think the Headmaster thinks it's important for the school to run smoothly?

Girl 1 Yes.

RH   Okay.   Erm, d'you think there are any more or spiritual values which you don't think are tackled in school but that you'd like to see the school dealing with?

Girl 3 Erm, I don't know, some people, they talk a lot about ghosts and things like that, and then some people, they make up all these different facts so people get really scared and I think that they should just do, I don't know, a tutor programme for a couple of weeks just to get the facts straight so people won't get so scared or something like that.

RH   To do with the supernatural?

Several voices   Yes.

Girl 1 Cos otherwise cos really you can't have your eye on everyone and there's often lots of groups talking about ghosts and that, people get so freaked out...

RH   Mmm ... so d'you think the question of ghosts is important?

Several voices: Yes.

Girl 3 It's bound to go on in the school ...

Girl 2 Cos some people, they bring er Ouija boards and cards and stuff.

RH   D'you think that should be allowed?

Several voices   No.

Girl 3 If they want to scare other people they should do it in their own time ...

Girl 2 Yeh, they bring cards into school ...

Girl 1 And their parents are going to phone up the school and complain.

RH   Mmm ... So you think that's something that should be tackled? That's interesting ... how would you see it being tackled?   Through a subject or through the tutoring programme ...?

Several voices   Tutoring.

Girl 2 Tutoring and RE.

Girl 3 And PSE.

Boy 1 Things could be done in tutor because it doesn't go into the other things you don't really get much time in tutor...

Girl 1 If you do it in tutor and in RE then you sort of have an hour on it a week.

Quiet voice   Assembly.

RH   Assembly.

Girl 1 If you did do something like that you'd have to be really careful because of the people that get scared and you might have to send a note home to sort of check that it'd be all right.

RH   Right.

Boy 2 Because quite a few people get scared.

Girl 2 And they go and tell their mums and their little brothers and sisters here and they go and spread it round the primary schools and then they'll all get scared.

RH   Mmm.   Any other issue that you think the school should tackle apart from ghosts?   [Pause]   Any religious issues or moral issues?

Boy 2 They could bring up about if you believe in God or not because it doesn't even though they cover it in RE they don't sort of cover sort of saying do you or not believe in God and stuff like that ... it shouldn't sort of matter to people if they do or not ...

Girl 2 Because if you say believe in God some people get teased about it, about going to church and that ...

Boy 2 You could be told about the other religions, you get told in RE lessons but not much about them because in our RE lesson we just watch videos and they don't get hardly any work done because they're always mucking about and our RE teacher doesn't do much about it.

RH   I think you mentioned erm that some people who believe in God and maybe go to church, they get teased?

Several voices   Yes.

RH   Should the school do something about it?

Several voices   Yes.

Girl 2 Because when they brought up the bullying thing, they didn't

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really say much about erm if they got bullied about religion and stuff like that.

RH   Mmm.   And you think that is an issue that people get bullied about?

Boy 1 Even if it doesn't really matter they still get teased about it if they don't or do because they're different to them.

RH   Right.

Boy 1 They call them 'bible bashers'.

RH   Bible bashers?

Girl 2 That's everyone going on in RE lessons, bible bashers and bash the bibles on the table.   [Pause}

RH   Do you think the teacher should stop them doing that?

Several voices   Yes.

Girl 1 Cos the people who are religious can be quite upset.

RH   Hmm.

Girl 3 But I don't think anyone in our RE lessons is religious, do you? [Pause]

RH   Perhaps they'd be too frightened to say if they were, would they? [Pause]   Do any of you have anything else you want to say about any of these sorts of issues?   [Pause]   No?   Well, you've been very helpful, thank you.

Year 7 Group 2   3 girls (one of whom does not speak)

RH   Now then, do you know what the word moral means, either of you?   [Pause] No?   Have you heard it before?

Children shake their heads.

RH   D'you know the word spiritual?   [Pause]

Girl 1 No, I've heard of it but I don't know what it means.

RH   Erm, no idea, you wouldn't sort of have a stab at it?   [Pause] No?   What about the words values?   If someone said, oh, 'I don't like so and so's values', do you know what they might be meaning?

Girl 2 In maths we do place values.

RH   Place values in maths?

Girl 2 Yes.

RH   Right.   Erm, often people say that values are to do with what you think are important, so the things that you value are the things that you think are important.   D'you think that students ought to learn about these sorts of things in school?

Girl 1 Yes.

RH   Yes?   And which subject would you expect to learn about things like values in?

Girl 2 English?

Girl 1 English.

RH   English.   Can you think of any lessons that you've actually had where these kinds of topics were covered?

Girls No.

RH   No?   Let's get back to the word 'morals'.   People would say that moral means if you know that something's right or wrong.   So, a lot of

people would agree that it's a good thing to tell the truth, to be honest and people might say that's a moral decision, to tell the truth and to be honest. Can you think of anything else that you might describe as a moral action?

Girl 1 No.

RH   No? Can you think of any other subjects or an English lesson, indeed, where you might have covered that sort of thing? [Pause] Something you might have read about? Or a discussion or something?

Girl 1 We've discussed Chaucer.

RH   Chaucer? And d'you think there's anything to do with moral issues in Chaucer?

Girl 1 Kind of.

RH   Kind of? Right. And that would be in an English lesson? Okay. [Pause] How do you feel about teachers raising these sorts of issues in class? [Pause] Does it make you feel uncomfortable or do you feel perfectly comfortable?

Girl 2 Comfortable.

RH   Comfortable. Do you think the teachers themselves feel comfortable with those sorts of issues?

Girl 2 I don't know.

RH   Mmm hmm.

Girl 2 (whispering) I don't know really.

RH   You wouldn't think so but you don't know. [Pause] Do you enjoy discussing or thinking about these sorts of issues? [Pause]

Girl 2 (quietly) I don't know.

RH   You don't know?

Girl 2 Depends on my mood.

RH   Depends on your mood?   Right.   Let's think for a moment about spiritual matters.   Erm, spiritual has to do with religion, with religious ideas.   And it sometimes, sometimes you come across it in class, don't you, these sorts of issues, and other times you don't ... Can you think of any particular lessons religious or spiritual matters might have been discussed or raised?

Girl 1 In RE?

RH   You think they're covered in RE?

Girl 1 Mmm.

RH   And do you enjoy thinking about those sorts of issues?

Girl 2 Sometimes.

RH   Sometimes?   [Pause]   In some subjects you get assessed or tested and things, don't you, you might have a spelling test or a test in maths.   D'you ever recall being tested on issues to do with values or moral or spiritual issues?

Girl 1 No.

RH   No, right.   [Pause]   Do you think that our school thinks that these issues are important?

Girl 1 Er, not all the time.

RH   Not all the time.   How do you know?

Girl 1 Cos it's not very often like mentioned.

RH   It's not very often mentioned.   Okay.   Can you think of times when maybe it is mentioned outside of lessons?

Girl 1 No, not outside lessons.

RH   Not outside lessons.   You wouldn't ever hear your tutor or your Head of Year or anybody talking about things like this?

RH   What about if we think that values are to do with the way we behave to one another?   People might say that if we are kind to one another and sympathetic and understanding then that's a value, we're valuing someone else, we're thinking that other people are important. So to do with behaviour.   D'you think that the school thinks that behaviour's important?

Both   Yes.

RH   How d'you know that?

Girl 2 If some people misbehave ...

RH   Can you say that a bit louder?

Girl 2 If they're often naughty and the teacher shouted at them...

RH   If they're often naughty and the teacher shouts at them ... right. Bad behaviour's punished?

Girl 2 Yes.

RH   Mmm hmm.   Do people d'you think ever get encouraged to behave well?

Girl 1 Yes.

RH   How?

Girl 1 I don't know, they just are.   People tell them to ...

RH   What sort of people?

Girl 1 Teachers, parents, people like that ...

RH   Okay ...

Girl 2 ... if they concentrate on their work, not mess about ...

RH   They want to concentrate on their work not mess about ... What about in assemblies?   Do you think these sorts of issues are ever raised in assemblies?

Girl 1 No.

RH   No.   What sort of things do you think are raised in assemblies?

Girl 2 People's assessment grades?

RH   People's assessment grades ...

Girl 1 Where you are allowed and where you're not.

RH   The parts of the school where you're allowed?   Right, where you're allowed and where you're not.

Girl 1 Sometimes things about what's happening in PE and things like that.   What you do and things.

RH   Right ... you can't remember an assembly where, that someone took maybe, where there was an idea of values, or moral or spiritual issues?

Girl 2 There has been the vicar come in, I think.

RH   And he's talked about this sort of thing, has he?

Both Yes.

RH   What d'you think about that?   [Pause]   Be honest!   (Laughs)

Girl 1 It's okay, ...

RH   Mmm hmm ...

Girl 1 It just goes on a bit. like, but he makes you understand things, but sometimes if he brings up one subject he'll tell you all about it and everything and then he goes on a bit ... goes on a bit ...

RH   Goes on a bit ...   Do you think the sorts of things that he raises should be raised in school, should be mentioned in school?

Both Yes.

RH   You do.

Girl 1 Yes.

RH   So d'you think there's a bit of a gap at the moment in our school?

Girl 1 Not much of a gap.

RH   Not much of a gap ... [Pause]   Erm, right, have you got any other opinions or ideas about this sort of thing?   Would you expect to find out about or discuss values in subjects other than English and RE?

Girl 2 PSE?

RH   PSE?   Mmm hmm.   [Pause]   Not in anything else?   Okay, I think that's it!   Lovely.   Thanks very much girls.

Year 7 Group 3   3 girls

RH   First question is do any of you know what the words moral or spiritual mean?   What do you understand by those words?

Girl 1   Er, spiritual ... if you sort of really believe in Jesus or something.

RH   If you really believe in Jesus or something?

Girl 1   Pray every day ... sort of like if you believe in a different religion, Jewish or something, or erm you have a similar book ... er, like this lady she had this sort of worshipping place near her washing machine and er sort of different religions pray in different ways really ...

RH   So that's what spiritual means?

Girl 1   Yeh.

RH   Do the rest of you have any idea about the word spiritual (that's a really good answer by the way)?

Girl 2 (quietly)   No.

RH   No?   What about the word moral?   Do any of you know what that word might mean?   [Pause]   Is it a word you've come across?

Girl 3   I just can't think of it.

RH   The other word I'm interested in is values ... if you say someone has got, erm, values that you think are good or bad values ... would you know what that might mean?   [Pause]

Girl 3   Sort of, well ...

Girl 1   I've got bad values [laughter] ... like watching telly ...

RH   You've got bad values?

Girl 1   Yeh ...

Girl 2   So's my brother ... he watches the telly all the time ... and mum says that ...[inaudible] ... he keeps watching the telly all the time ... he

doesn't stop ...

RH   Right, okay, so you think that's something to do with values?

Girl 1 Someone could have good values doing things at school like technology and that ...

Girl 2 And swimming ...

RH   Right ... and how would you know they've got good values?

Girl 3 Because if they done it well or got a certificate or something ...

RH   Good, that's interesting. thank you. Do you think that students ought to learn about these things at school?

Several voices: Yes.

RH   Yes? In which subjects would you expect to learn about values?

Girl 3 Maths?

RH   Maths?

Girl 1 Lots of different lessons ...

RH   Go on ...

Girl 1 Well, I'm just absolutely rubbish at CDT, I can't do it, that's my bad values, but erm ...

Girl 2 Erm, just doing things wrong like I get things wrong all the time ...

Girl 1 Yes.

RH   You get things wrong all the time?

Girl 2 Sometimes I do ...

Girl 1 Like in English we have spelling tests, erm, it's sort of bad values if you get a low mark, but erm it's okay to get a low mark ...

RH   Mmm hmm ...

Girl 1 If you like them, but ...

RH   So you would expect to learn about values in lots of different subjects?

General agreement.

RH   And it would be to do with getting good marks and good grades, would it?

Several voices   Yes.

RH   Might it be, erm, might you have discussions in different subjects at school about values, do you think?   [Pause]   Have any of you ever been in a lesson that's talked about spiritual or moral matters?

Girl 1   Yes well I've been in RE, and we've read this book about sort of ... Christianity, Jewish, different religions, that's sort of spiritual really ...

RH   Spiritual?

Girl 1   Yeh.   Going to church...

RH   In school do you ever talk about what, erm things that you might believe in or what your friends might believe in?   Spiritual matters?

Girl 2   No.

Girl 1   Erm, my friend, she spoke to me once cos something was bothering her, you see she kept on hearing this voice ...

RH   Mmm hmm ...

Girl 1   And she was getting really freaked out about it, she came to see me about it, what was wrong, there was this voice, it was really bugging her, making her really scared about it, and erm at her house, erm she started to scream and I said what's wrong?   And she said I've heard the voice again, and I listened and I couldn't hear it ... she was getting really freaked out about it and a couple of days afterwards it just stopped even though perhaps something happened ... but I don't know ... you know, she got really scared about it ...

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RH   She got scared about it?

Girl 1   I know it sounds a bit silly, but it can be sort of like the devil ...

RH   D'you think children ought to do these things in school, these ideas ...?

Girl 1   Well I think there should sort of be like a problem thing at dinner times, like in RE something like that ...

RH   A sort of ... an opportunity for people to get together to talk about these things if they're worried about them?

Girl 1   Yes, if you get really scared ...

RH   Mmm that's interesting.   How do you feel about teachers raising these sorts of things in class?   D'you think that the teachers feel comfortable or uncomfortable about it?

Girl 1   In English, there's lots of people don't believe in ... Jesus and erm some people, this hasn't happened to me, but some people mention about sort of Jesus and they think oh yeh who the XXX is he, you know... But I mean. you know there is something called Jesus and he's God but some of the teachers do feel uncomfortable if they don't believe in Jesus and whatever, but other teachers, wouldn't mind ...

RH   Mmm.

Girl 1   And I doubt if it'd make them feel uncomfortable.

RH   No.

Girl 1   I wouldn't anyway.

RH   Do you think people get teased if they are known to believe in God in schools?

Girl 2   If they go to church ...

RH   They get teased about it?

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Girl 1 They sort of try and say oh I don't go to church, but so what ... you go to church if you want to, it's your religion, erm I go to church, I go to Sunday school , but I don't care what other people think ...

RH   What about you?

Girl 3 Well, my friend that I'm taking to the cathedral has got a friend who's living in America at the moment, teaching erm different beliefs, and I think she's feeling as a teacher a bit uncomfortable cos she doesn't know about their beliefs so she only really knows about the Christian belief which is her belief and she's trying to get on to everybody else's beliefs in the American school.

RH   That's interesting. D'you think your teachers at school feel comfortable about discussing these sorts of things?

Girl 3 Well I think probably our teachers are quite old if I may say so [general laughter], and Mrs Z, she's actually, erm her husband is the priest and she plays the organ so like I don't think she thinks anything uncomfortable about it, but another, Mrs X our other teacher feels a bit iffy about it.

RH   A bit iffy? Mmm. Do you personally think that these values are important, values to do with, spiritual values and moral values? [General agreement]   And do you enjoy discussing and thinking about these sorts of things?

Girl 3 Well I do with my, the people I know who go to church and that, the same, they believe in Jesus, so I'll discuss it with Sara because she goes to another Sunday School, but I won't discuss it with other people, like Wayne and people who don't go ...

Girl 1 Erm, I feel uncomfortable sort of speaking about Jesus always, because I, you know what boys are like, about 11 or 12, they're really pathetic, I mean I talk to them, sort of like to people who go to church and I have quite a good time at Sunday School so I learn quite a lot, but I mean I feel happy sort of speaking to people who go to church and

uncomfortable with other people who don't go to church.

RH   Okay, good. Thank you. In some lessons you've already mentioned that you get tested on things, don't you?

Several voices   Yes.

RH   D'you think you've ever been tested or assessed on issues to do with values, in school?

Girl 3 No.

Girl 1 Just sort of learn about Christians ... we've never been tested on God ...

RH   No. Now d'you think that the school thinks that these issues are important?

Several voices: Yes.

RH   How d'you know that?

Girl 1 Well, er, with RE teachers ... I suppose everyone's got values, really ...

RH   Some people would say that moral values are to do with what you believe is right or wrong or good behaviour, the right way to lead your life ... d'you think the school thinks that those sorts of issues are important?

Girl 2 Yes.

RH   Can you think of any times when they're ever raised outside of lessons?

Girl 2 Bullying.

RH   Bullying. Where was bullying raised?

Girl 1 School council meetings, erm, in tutor periods ... you know, that was a really big issue at school ... we spent quite a long time on it ...

RH   Do you agree with spending a long time on it?

Girl 1 Yeh, I do, cos personally I've had that experience in my old school when I was in Year 3, that was at Z Junior, this boy, he was in Year 5 he erm, shouted ... asked me for money ... got me really freaked out, it was really scary ... and I tried being nice to him but no luck ... he just, he was weird ...

RH   What about the others, do you think these issues are raised in school?

Girl 3 Well sometimes, but it depends which teachers it is, because when I had Mrs Y we used to have RE with Mrs W, now she's gone, after she'd gone, all Mrs X used to say was I wish we could have her back, I like her, and now she does RE and she does us with stories ... it isn't really about anything Christian ...

RH   I see ...Do any of you have these sorts of values raised, say in assemblies?

Several voices   Yes.

RH   Do you think there are any moral or spiritual values which you can't see being tackled in school but which you would like to see the school dealing with?
I know that's a difficult question ...

Girl 1 Oh yeh, there's this teacher at our school called Mrs V, and I'd like somebody to sort her out, because, erm, sorry Mrs V, but she forced one of my friends to do PE when they'd got a note, and they fell off the beam and broke her wrist ... and I'd just like her to accept that if you've got a note you can't do PE. The other PE teachers don't force you to do PE if you've got a note.

RH   No ... So, you think the school ...

Girl 1 The school should find out about what happened and they should do something about it ... sack her or giver her another chance or a

warning ... because it's not, you know, fair ...

RH   Do you think the school has double standards for students and for staff? [Pause]   If students misbehave, they get punished...

Girl 1 Yeh, they do ...

RH   And, d'you think the same thing should happen to staff then?

Girl 1 Yes, they should either get a warning or if it's happened before, they should get sacked.

RH   Right...

Girl 1 Erm, I mean, it's not fair on the students, they get punished and the teachers don't ... I know they're adults ...[laughter]

RH   Good ... any other points about these things?   [Pause]

Girl 1 Smoking out of school.

RH   Smoking out of school, did you say?

Girl 1 Cos you've just left the school gates and people are smoking, and the teachers see it but don't do anything about it ... I'm a passive smoker every time I walk past that and I ... smoke out of their mouth, and erm, took a breath and I got some smoke in my lungs and I had a sore throat for the rest of the day, so why can't, you know, you just do something about it?

RH   Again, you think the school as an institution should do something about it?

Girl 1 Yeh, they should, because everybody walks past and passive smoking ...

RH   Do you get any impression of the views of the Headmaster, in school?

Girl 1 I never see him!   Apart from school council meetings.

RH   You never see him!

Girl 1 He's quite a nice bloke really, but I mean I think he should do more, sort of smoking, but he does a lot, I mean he is the Headmaster ... I went to him once cos these boys once, they shoved a cream cake in my face ...

RH   A cream cake?

Girl 1 Yes [laugh]   I reported him and he didn't do anything about it ... you know, that wasn't very nice, like the the third day there so I was pretty cross about that ...[Pause]

RH   Right ...

Girl 1 He could do more but he does quite a lot so I'm happy with what he does.

RH   You're happy with what he does?   Does anyone have anything else they want to add about all these points?   [Pause]

Year 8 Group 1   6 girls

RH   Okay, what do you understand by the terms 'moral' or 'spiritual' - any of you have any ideas?

Girl 1 Spiritual's supposed to be ghosts and things like that.

RH   Ghosts ... right, good.

Girl 2 It's erm, spiritual, what you feel inside about things.

Girl 3 Moral, erm, I don't know ...

RH   What you think inside about things?

Girl 2 Yeah.

RH   Yes, okay. Any other ideas? Have you heard the term 'moral' before?

Girl 4 Moral support?

RH   Mmm hmm.

Girl 4 It's when you want people to come along with you, to support you and your ideas ...

RH   Mmm hmm. Any one else heard the word before? [Pause]

Girl 1 I've heard it before but only about what Tracy said.

RH   Moral support? Mmm. What about the word 'values'? What do you think that means?

Girl 2 What you think's important. Quite valuable to you.

RH   Good. Any other ideas? [Pause] Okay, d'you think that students ought to learn about these things in school?

Girl 4 Yeah cos they're going to like, encounter them and learn about them when they get older, so if they learn about them at school then they'll understand them more ... how to express what they feel.

RH   Do you think that it's important, expressing how you feel?

Girl 1 Yes. [Pause]

RH   In which subjects would you expect to learn about such values?

Several voices   PSE.

RH   Any other subject?

Girl 2 There's nothing else it would fit in to ...

Girl 5 Perhaps RE ... Religious Education.

RH   Mmm hmm. [Pause]   Any other lessons that you might have done? [Pause]

Girl 1 Maybe it could be in group discussion ... a separate lesson all together ...

Girl 2 Tutor time, or something ...

RH   Tutor time? Right. So that's PSE, RE and tutor time, possibly, er, group discussions out of lessons completely ... any other lessons where you might discuss or write about or read about things ...

Girl 4 English ...

RH   Can any of you think about any particular lessons of any subject which has covered such values?   [Pause]

Girl 3 In PSE we do quite a lot of discussing like that, don't we, but that's it ...

Girl 3 That's about it.

RH   What sort of topics have you discussed about values in PSE?

Girl 3 Well, at the moment we're doing about, er, the law and stuff ...

Girl 1 Yeah, we did a bit on, erm, about people stealing things and what we thought was justice ...

[Inaudible voice]

Girl 4 Friendship ...

Girl 2 Friendship.

RH   You're in different PSE groups, are you?

Several voices   Yeah.

RH   Some of you mentioned English just now, have you, can you think of any particular lessons where you might have talked about or read about any sorts of values? [Pause] Or RE Lessons, someone mentioned? [Pause] No? That's okay. How do you feel about teachers raising these issues in class? [Pause]

Girl 1 Well they have to, like, do it properly to encourage people to say what they feel, and not like push their views on other people ...

Girl 2 It's important for people to, like, know about it ...

RH   D'you think it's important that the students know what the teachers' values are, or not?

Girl 1 It might stop them making fun of other people ... and like that ...

RH   It might stop teachers making fun ...?

Girl 1 Well mostly other pupils making fun of other people if they say like, someone said what their values were half the class would probably burst out laughing ... and if the teacher's like straight with them in the first place and says, 'No laughing, here's mine' you know ...

RH   Do you think teachers, generally speaking feel comfortable or do you think they feel rather uncomfortable talking about these sorts of things in class? [Pause]

Girl 3 I think it does depend on what their values are.

RH   D'you think you know the values of your different teachers, does it sort of come across in any way?

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Girl 2 Not all the time.

RH   Do you think these values are important? Moral and spiritual values? [Pause]

Girl 3 Yeah, I think they are.

Girl 4 I haven't really thought about it.

Girl 5 I think they're pretty important.

RH   D'you enjoy discussing or thinking about these sorts of things?

Girl 1 I do cos then you can find out what other people think and then like see things in a different light and help you understand them more.

RH   So you find it interesting?

Girl 1 Yes.

RH   Anyone else? You said you don't think about it?

Girl 4 No, not a lot. I don't have a chance to.

RH   No. If the opportunity arises do you like to talk to other people about their views and your views?

Girl 3 Yeah cos I mean their views, they might sometimes influence you or they can explain something better than what you could so it changes your mind.

Girl 2 It's interesting to know what they think.

Girl 5 I don't really know.

RH   A little while ago, you said that some people in the classroom might tease other people ...

Voice Yeah.

Girl 1 I imagine that the people who tease them are probably the ones that think it's like rubbish or don't have nothing to it at all.

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RH   Do you think that's a common view?

Voice Probably.

Girl 4 It happens all the time in our class.

RH   In your tutor group or in your subject lessons?

Girl 4   In the subject class.

Girl 3 And tutor group.

Girl 4 And tutor group, yes.

RH   D'you think that the teachers ought to deal with that more than they do?

Girl 3 Yes, I think that they should.

Girl 2 Otherwise people might become afraid to express their values ... be like embarrassed about what they think.

RH   What advice would you give to teachers in dealing with people who tease other people?

Girl 2 Maybe those ones should be taken out of a lesson and have it in a separate room on their own.   Sometimes it can be a cry for attention cos the teacher's talking to the whole class and not just them, so if they were taught separately the only things they could laugh at then would be themselves and not the rest of the class.

Girl 3 But that can happen when you grow up... nobody can pay special attention to you then ...

Girl 2 No they'd have to get used to it ... not having attention all the time.

Girl 3 Most people probably laugh at other people if they don't really understand what it's about and explain to them properly ...

RH   Do you think that people ever laugh out of embarrassment?

Several voices   Yes.

RH   Do you think some people feel anxious enough about being teased that they wouldn't express their own views, they'd keep quiet?

Girl 4 Some probably.

Girl 3   Yeah, in PSE, some people don't like saying anything cos everyone laughs at them.   [Pause]

RH   Have you ever been assessed or tested on these sorts of issues in a lesson?

Several voices   No.

RH   D'you think it would ever be possible to test values?

Girl 2 It would be difficult because everyone has different values ...

Girl 4 Everyone would just say 'that's the right one - if you've got a different one then it's wrong ... '   it's people's opinions, what they think ...

Girl 5 Everyone has different opinions.

RH   Do you think there are any sort of universal values that are the same for everybody?   [Pause]   Or do you think it always changes and depends on people's own opinion?

Several voices   Yes.

RH   Do you think that our school thinks that these issues are important?   [Pause]   You shook your head then!   I can't get a head shake on the tape!   [General laughter]   You don't.

Girl 1 Not everyone takes it seriously.

Girl 2 I think there's a sheet up in the form saying about sort of moral values ...
RH   Is there?

Girl 2 Yes there is, isn't there?

Girl 4 Yes, something about that.

RH   Oh, that's interesting.

Girl 3 I think if the school really took it seriously, then like what you're doing, you're trying to think about how you can teach it to people ... so maybe the school does take it seriously and are trying to do something about it ...

RH   [Laughs] That's a good point! [Pause] Can you think of any ways which the school deals with moral and spiritual values outside of subject lessons? [Pause] You talked earlier about RE and English and PSE being subjects where you might cover issues to do with values, erm, can you think of anything that's not actually a subject, or anything to do with the organisation of the school?

Girl 3 Erm, cos we're like in tutor groups, they sort of bring you together with other people who have different values, then you get to know them and what they think.

Girl 2 And we have done these booklets in the first year when you sort of say, said what you think about things ...

RH   Mmm hmm. What about in assemblies - d'you think the values that the school thinks are important ever come through?

Girl 1 I think it depends on who's taking the assembly, cos I mean it would be that person's values not the school's ...

Girl 3 In assembly they do try and show the school's values like, you know like saying how they're impressed by what you've done and how they're pleased like a year group's done something good ... and that's what they think's important.

RH   So you think the school thinks that academic achievement's important?
Girl 3 Erm, yes, I think that they do sometimes ... perhaps they don't express it enough, it's not just like ...[inaudible]

RH   Mmm.

Girl 2 All you hear in assemblies is like your head of year turn round and saying, 'I've had bad reports on this class!' Something about a mess one class left ... a lot of the time you get a bad report ...

RH   Would that be bad reports about academic achievement or behaviour?

Several voices   Behaviour.

Girl 2 It's more behaviour than it is academic.

RH   So you think the school thinks that good behaviour is important?

Girl 3 If you've got good behaviour then it helps ... you get on with your work and it helps the other children get on with their work in class ...

Girl 1 If you've got a load of people who are misbehaving and then a couple of people who want to get on with their work they can't because the teacher's repeating his or herself loads of times ...

RH   Mmm.

Girl 1 And you just can't get on with your work.

Girl 2 There's a lot of us like that in my classes.

RH   So behaviour's important for you to get any work done?

Several voices   Yes.

Girl 1 I think top sets, they behave better ... the teachers don't take any nonsense from them.

RH   Just to get back to assembly for a moment, do you ever get the feeling that the school thinks that moral and spiritual values, perhaps spiritual in particular, are important, through assemblies?   [Pause]

Girl 2 I suppose you do sometimes, but not that much really.

RH   Do any of you ever get the impression of what the Headmaster thinks is important?

Girl 3 When he takes our assemblies, it's a bit like that, because he reads a few bits then tells us about things ...

Girl 2 Sometimes other teachers do as well. I suppose it's his idea, his values are there ...

Girl 1 I think when they were doing bullying week, or something like that, I mean he got across ... that he didn't like it ... and he was like trying to like tell the whole school not to do it because it's not a good value to have..

RH   Mmm. Are there any moral and or spiritual values which you don't think are tackled in school but which you would like to see the school dealing with? [Pause]
Can't think of any?   [Pause] Any other points any of you would like to make about anything to do with all this? [Pause] No? Well thank you, you've been very helpful.

Year 8 Group 2   5 boys

RH   What do you understand by the terms 'moral' and 'spiritual'?
Anybody?

[General laughter]

RH   What does the word 'moral' mean?

Boy 1 It's like what you're supposed to do ...

RH   Mmm ... Anything else? [Pause]   Do you know the word moral?
Have you heard it before?

Several voices   Yes.

RH   You have.   What sort of context have you heard it in?

Boy 1 It's like someone's done something wrong and they say you
shouldn't have done that, that's down to your morals, you shouldn't have
done that ...

Boy 2 Moral support.

RH   Moral support.   Okay.   What about the word 'spiritual'?   D'you
know that word?

Boy 3 Supernatural activity.

[General laughter]

RH   Mmm hmm...

Boy 4 Paranormal.

[General laughter]

RH   Anything else?

Boy 2 The kind of things people believe in, sort of base their ideas on,
like believe in certain spirits ...

RH   Mmm hmm.   And what about the word 'values'?   If people

comment about other peoples values, what do you think they mean?

Boy 4 Opinions.

Boy 2 Things that they want and stuff ...

Boy 3 What they want ...

RH   Give me an example of things that they might want ...

Boy 1 Changes.

RH   Changes.

[Voice unintelligible]

RH   Do you think that students ought to learn about these sorts of things in school?

Several voices   Yes.

Boy 2 Because we don't know anything about them ... If everyone knew about it, it would be alright ...

RH   In what subjects would you expect to learn about moral and spiritual values?

Boy 1 RE.

Boy 2 PSE.   That sort of thing.

Boy 4 The spiritual bit I think would be RE.

RH   Mmm hmm.

Boy 2 Or maybe PSE.

RH   Any other subjects?

Boy 5 English.

RH   English?   Can any of you think of any lessons which you've been in in which these issues have been covered?   [Pause]

Boy 5 Tutor period?

RH   Tutor period?

Boy 2 We talk about morals but not about spiritual.

RH   What sort of morals have you talked about in the tutor period?

Boy 2 Erm, like how er, exams and what we felt about our exams and what we'd achieved and how we were going to set our goals and things...

RH   Mmm. Good. Anyone else been in a lesson in which these sorts of values have been covered?

Boy 3 No.

RH   How d'you feel about teachers raising these issues in class?

Boy 2 They should really know about it themselves before they try to tell other people about it.

Boy 3 You sort of need to be taught it so they should bring it up quite a lot.

RH   What subjects would you want it to be brought up in?

Boy 2 RE. And PSE.

RH   But not in other areas of the curriculum ...

Voice No

Boy 3 [indecipherable]...you might as well bring it up, but you can't really see it coming up in maths ...

RH   Mmm hmm. [Pause]   D'you think that teachers feel comfortable or feel uncomfortable in, say, talking about values?

Boy 1 It depends if they believe in those things themselves because they'd probably feel that if they were teaching stuff they didn't believe in...

RH   D'you think that happens sometimes?

Boy 1 Could be, er, I got a substitute teacher in RE, and they don't really believe in all this stuff, but they're trying to tell these kids that it's right ...

Boy 4 It might be offending other people's beliefs.

RH   Do you think that's a danger?

Several voices   Yes.

Boy 1 If you're, say, a religious person, your parents will be telling you one thing but at school you could be being taught another thing ...

RH   Can you give me an example of that? [Pause]

Boy 1 Well, if you're like a member of a religion, and say you're er a Jew and you had certain morals that you are taught in that Jewish religion, erm like say you had to pray once a day or something, well on that same moral subject you said you went to RE and they said, well real religious people are supposed to pray three times a day and said well hang on my religion's telling me one thing and I'm being taught another in RE.

RH   Do you think there could be a conflict?

Boy 1 Yes.

RH   Mmm hmm. That's interesting. [Pause] Do you think that these values are important?   Moral and spiritual values.

Boy 2 I think moral ones are.   But not so much spiritual.

Boy 3 Not so much spiritual.

Boy 2 Cos you can ... erm at home you can do spiritual... religion doesn't really come in to schools I don't think, cos it's up to you to decide on your own religion ...

RH   Mmm hmm.

Boy 2 Not for schools to make you believe.

Boy 2 I'm non religious anyway.

RH   Mmm. [Pause] Do you enjoy discussing and thinking about such things?

Boy 1 Well, we haven't, I haven't actually done much about that sort of thing so I don't really know yet ...

RH   D'you think you might enjoy it if you had the opportunity?

Boy 1 Morals could be interesting ...

RH   D'you think people, erm, are reluctant to discuss spiritual matters because, I don't know, they feel embarrassed or they think they might be teased or they'll feel uncomfortable ...

Several voices   Yes.

Boy 2 Because other people will tell you it's wrong, that their religion's right and not yours ...

RH   So people might feel - how?

Boy 2 Er, on their own, lonely. Because if you've got a different religion from everyone else, then you stick out, well, people'll think that you stick out and that you're a different person, but you're no different from they are just because you have a different religion.

RH   Mmm. So, d'you think that sort of embarrassment might stop people discussing such issues when really they're quite interested in them?

Several voices   Yes.

RH   D'you know of people who have been teased? Because of, erm, values that they hold? [Pause] Not personally?

Voice No.

RH   Have you ever been assessed or tested on these issues in class?

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Several voices   No.

RH   Do you think it would ever be appropriate to be tested?

Boy 1 No because I think if you have your own belief you can't be assessed by someone else ...

Boy 3 Ditto.

RH   Do you think that this school thinks that these issues are important?

Boy 2 I don't know really.

Boy 3 No. We hardly ever do anything about them.

Boy 2 If they did we'd have done it by now.

RH   Mmm hmm. [Pause] Can you think of any ways in which values are raised outside of subject lessons?

Boy 1 Well maybe if some people went to church they'd get them outside school, but not actually in the school outside the subjects, no.

RH   It's only when you go to lessons that you stand a chance?

Boy 1 Yes.

RH   What about, say in assemblies, d'you think the school's values ever come through?

Boy 2 Erm, sometimes.

Boy 1 Sometimes in behaviour, but not really.   [Pause]

RH   D'you think you know the values, say of the Headmaster or the head of year?

Voice No.

Boy 2 Well, we know the head of year if she does our assemblies.

RH   So you get a view of what she thinks ...

Boy 2 Yes.

RH ... she thinks is important?

Boy 4 She says, she goes on about behaviour, so she always wants good behaviour in our year.

RH And good behaviour could include behaving in a moral way to people, could it?

Several voices Yes. [Pause]

RH Do you ever get a sense of anyone else's values? Say through assemblies or, er, tutor period , or something?

Boy 2 In assembly we do. Sometimes we get read stories, erm that are written by a writer, and then if he's written something, sometimes it could be his view, and his values, and that comes across to you in the story.

RH Mmm hmm.

Boy 2 You kind of get his values from the story.

RH Right ... There's nothing to do with the way the school is organised say ... that it gives you a sense of the school's values? No? Okay. Are there any moral and/or spiritual values which you don't think the school tackles now but which you would be interested in exploring?

Boy 3 I'd like to do satanism. It's sort of spiritual, slightly.

RH Why?

Boy 3 Because it's like a different view on things that should be done.

Boy 2 It's a view from the other side. Instead of being the ones that are religious it's ones that aren't.

Boy 3 Yes. Instead of 'Oh, do this' because it's right and you'll go to heaven, and stuff ...

RH Mmm ... anyone else? [Pause] You can't think of any? [Pause].

Any other points at all?   That relate to this topic?   [Pause]   ....

Boy 1 You should be taught right really, if it's being taught, because if it's put across in a boring way, no one'll listen to it.   But if it's like made more interesting, I'm not sure how, then maybe it'd get across more.

RH   Mmm.

Boy 4 I think, instead of erm, being taught how people worship and things like this, it should be just being taught to learn to respect other peoples' religious views.   Instead of, erm ...

RH   Have you any idea how one could go about teaching that sort of respect?

Boy 4 No, but you'd have to get different views off different people about their different religious beliefs;   say if you're a Christian, erm, then if you just say like, this lot of religious people believe this, then they're not going to really understand it unless they actually talk to the people who are in this religious group or something, and then they might get a better idea and they could be able to teach it better instead of what they think.

RH   Mmm hmm.   Thank you.   Any other points at all?   No?

Year 9 Group 1   3 girls

RH   What do you understand by either the word 'moral' or 'spiritual'? What do you think that they mean?

Girl 1 Moral is like things that you do, the underlining story of what you should do; er, spiritual, it's all different things, really.   It can be anything, religion ...

RH   Good! Any ideas?

Girl 2 I don't really know! Moral is sort of what you <u>should</u> be doing.

RH   You've come across the words before?

Several voices   Yes.

RH   So it's got something to do with what you should be doing? Moral?   And spiritual's got something to do with ...

Girl 3 Well, with religions and different beliefs.

RH   Good. Do you know the word 'values'?   [Pause]

Girl 1 Yes.

RH   What do you think that means?

Girl 3 What you hold in regard.   What you believe in.

RH   Do you think that students ought to learn about such things in school?

Girl 2 It could be a good thing.   Because you don't really get taught about it at the moment,or anything, and you don't really know what they mean,or anything ... at least if you were taught you'd know what they'd mean.

RH   Right.   Any other opinions?   Do you think it would be a good idea?

Several voices   Yes.

Girl 1 A lot of people don't seem to, like we don't know what things mean, and that, so it might be a nice idea.

Girl 3 It would be helpful for other students as well.

Girl 1 Like kind of guidance, morals ... things to do.

RH   In which subjects would you expect to learn about such values?

Girl 3 PSE? RE?

RH   Mmm hmm. Any other subjects?

Girl 2 It could be a bit in English, we do a bit in English.

RH   Can you think of any lessons which you've actually been to where any of these issues were covered at all, specific lessons?

Several voices   No, not really.

RH   No? I mean, you mentioned RE and PSE and possibly English ...

Girl 2 In RE, you sort of, like when they teach you about things, they fit it in, like when you learn about other peoples' lives, but they don't really teach you it, like saying, this is ... things like that, they just sort of, they do it, they weave it into other things ...

RH   Mmm. Right. How do you feel about teachers raising these issues in class?

Girl 1 Depending on how certain teachers taught it.   ...[inaudible] ... actually just writing down on the board, but actually using examples ...

RH   Right.

Girl 1 Explaining it ...[inaudible] ... that would be a good idea, really explaining it, not just saying, 'Well this is the thing' ... really getting down to how it all fits together ...

RH   Quite deep-lying things?

Girl 1 Mmm.

RH   D'you think that teachers feel comfortable, or do you think that they feel uncomfortable when they're tackling these kinds of issues?

Girl 1 It could do, depending on what teachers they are; some are much more comfortable, some are not.

RH   Is it easy to tell?

Girl 1 Mmm, because if they're not really comfortable they tend to just say 'this is it', and they don't really go deep into anything.

Girl 3 They get agitated as well ... and if you ask questions they seem to just say what they've just said and they don't really answer properly.

RH   Mmm.   Do you think that these values are important, moral and spiritual values?

Girl 3 Yeah.   Especially on the moral side.   It can teach you a lot, sort of like about yourself and everything else ...

RH   I think that some people, students and staff, feel a bit embarrassed about talking about spiritual matters, you know, they feel that people might laugh at them or make fun of them;   is that your experience too?

Girl 2 Yes.   Some people might take it seriously, but others, they're just going to laugh ... some of them, even teachers, if they're not comfortable in the lesson, they're going to make a joke of it ...

RH   Mmm.   I wonder if there's anything we can do about that, to improve the situation?   [Pause]   D'you enjoy discussing or thinking about such things?

Girl 1 It depends how it's being taught and how the actual lesson's going; if it's just on a piece of paper, put down ideas and think about it ... you've actually got to have, like real life experiences and things like that...

Girl 2 Actually having discussions, sometimes it can be easier ... you don't really have to think about writing it, just say what's in your head.

RH   So you think discussions are a better way of tackling these sorts of things in class?

Girl 1 Yes, it's not easy, but it's easier if you're in a discussion than if any of the teachers are picking on you; you get picked on, then you suddenly forget to say anything and you get really worried.

RH   And you enjoy discussing, do you?

Girl 3 Yes, [inaudible]

RH   Good.   Have you ever been assessed or tested on these sorts of things in lessons?

Girl 1 No.   [laughs]

RH   No?   Do you think one ever might be tested or assessed ...?

Girl 3 Not at the moment, no, because we're not really doing anything about that ... about moral or spiritual values at all ...

RH   Do you think that our school thinks that these issues are important?

Girl 3 I don't really know, because they don't really teach it ... they don't really let anyone know that it's important ...

RH   Mmm.

Girl 1 I think with the National Curriculum, when everyone sort of gets tied up in that, and forgets about other things, sort of come along ...

RH   Yes ... If someone asked you to put down on a piece of paper what values you think the school does think are important, what would you come up with, I wonder?

Girl 1 Trying to work together?

Girl 1 Having a community sort of attitude.

Girl 3 Good all round strength, and not sort of just being good at one thing ... sort of concentrate on this weakness and sort of making that equal ...

RH   Can you think of any ways in which values are raised in school outside of subject lessons?

Girl 3 What do you mean? With your friends and that?

RH   Could be with your friends, or it could be, er, in assemblies, or it could be walking down the corridor, or it could be socially ...

Girl 2 They don't really bring it up in assembly or anything.

Girl 1 Yes, sometimes when you're with your friends and discussing things that you do, and that's right or that's wrong to do. So yes, it comes up a lot with your friends, not particularly inside the classroom.

RH   No.

Girl 3 When we are out and listening to a conversation ...

RH   What do you think assemblies are most concerned with ?

Girl 3 Things that are going on around us ...

Girl 1 And sort of looking into the future ...

RH   Mmm hmm.   What sort of values do you think that the Headmaster thinks are important?   [Pause] ... It's all right, I won't tell him! [Laughter]

Girl 3 I don't know.

RH   You don't know?   No, Okay.   Are there any moral or spiritual values which you don't think are tackled in school but which you would like to see addressed in school?

Girl 1 There aren't many sort of moral things but I don't know exactly

what kind of moral things you could talk about ... but yes there is a lack of sort of that kind of thing you hardly get any kind of teaching on that ...

RH   So you think that it would be a good idea if more went on?   And where would you expect, I mean if I was to go away and organise such a thing, where would you expect to learn about them?   I know we've already said PSE and RE, English ... erm, would you expect it to be covered in those lessons?

Girl 1 I think it would be easier if it was in them lessons, cos if they're just a separate sort of thing in lunch time or anything I don't think many people would sort of like go ...

RH   Sure.

Girl 1 Cos at least if it's tackled in the lesson, people are going to take notice ... think about it more.

Girl 3 I think more people would, like, during the lunch time and that, many pupils have clubs and that, so it would get in the way from just like socialising and being with their friends and relaxing ...

RH   What about the tutor programme, I wonder?

Girl 3 Could be, mmm.   It depends if the tutor and that agree with it and it depends how they're going to teach it.

RH   Mmm. Sure. [Pause] Any other points you'd like to make about any of this? [Pause] No?

Year 10 Group 1   4 girls

RH   The words 'moral' and 'spiritual' - any idea what they mean to you?

Girl 1 Spiritual is - erm - ghosts?

RH   Spiritual is ghosts? Okay. Any other ideas?

Girl 2 No, I haven't got a clue!

Girl 3 A moral is, erm, ...

Girl 1 A story, the meaning of it.

Girl 3 Yeah, a sort of meaning of something.

RH   Okay.

Girl 4 Morals is like what's right.

RH   Say it a bit louder!   [Laughter]

Girl 4 Moral is what is right.

RH   What's right?

Girl 4 Yes.

RH   That's great.   What about the word 'values'? Does that mean anything to you?

Girl 1 Well it can mean two things, the value of some things, the price, or something that you [inaudible] that you value, that you ... sentimental value.

RH   Right.   Does anybody else want to come in on that?

Girl 3 It's hard to explain!

RH   It is hard, isn't it!   [Pause] We'll come back to it, probably.   Erm, in what sort of subjects in school would you expect to learn about such things?   Moral and spiritual values?

Girl 2 PSE.

Girl 1 And RE.

Girl 2 Yes.

RH   What would you expect to cover in RE?

Girl 2 Spiritual.

Girl 1 Spiritual... people's attitudes in those days.

RH   People's attitudes?

Girl 1 People's like, if, I don't know, if something happened, and then how they would react to it.

RH   Right. Would you expect to cover things like how you would react today, if things happened? Or is it just in the past?

Girl 3 Not in RE.

Girl 1 It's just in the past, like what happened and why things happened.

RH   Mmm hmm. Any other subjects you can think of?

Girl 2 History, I suppose would be the same.

RH   Right. In the past, why people made certain decisions?

Girl 2 Yes.

Girl 3 If you were to talk about money values, sort of thing, then you might in business studies, something like that. I don't do business studies, but I suppose that's what you do! [laughter]

RH   Can any of you think of any specific lessons you've ever done that touched on any of these issues?

Girl 1 In history we did, erm, I don't know if this has anything to do with it, hyper inflation in Germany and the money value there, and what people thought of it, and why they voted for Hitler, and why they voted for someone else ...

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RH   That's interesting ... good, thank you. Have you ever, say in an English lesson, had any discussion about things like abortion, or er...

Girl 3 Yes, we've just been doing that, actually ...

Girl 1 All about abortion ...

Girl 3 We've been doing these individual talks and two people did about abortion, one was for abortion and one was against it, and they sort of held a whole class discussion about it and things ...

RH   And did people... d'you think anything to do with people's moral values came out at all in that?

Girl 3 It did, yes, because everyone had different ideas and different morals, really, ...

RH   Mmm. Do you think you can ever be right or wrong when it comes to things like that?

Voice No.

Girl 4 I think it's your own opinion.

Girl 3 Yeah.

Girl 4 You think you're right and you think someone else is wrong, that person who you think is wrong thinks that they're right and you're wrong [laughter] ...

Girl 1 Everyone has their different opinions about everything.

RH   D'you think that there are any things that people share the same opinions about values?

Girl 1 Not everybody.

RH   Not everybody?

Girl 1 No. Not really. Cos you have different people and different

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religions and different races and everyone thinks differently in their own personality and that ...

RH   What about people's attitudes to telling the truth or what's right or wrong?   D'you think under those circumstances there might be an agreement?

Girl 2 Probably. I think so. [Pause]

RH   How do you feel when teachers raise these issues in class, d'you feel comfortable with it or do you feel uncomfortable?

Girl 3 I think it's good that they talk about it ...

Voice Yes.

Girl 1 To be treated like an adult, to have adult discussions.

Girl 2 Yes ...

RH   D'you think it's a good thing?

Girl 2 Yes, I do.

RH   D'you ever feel that your teachers might be uncomfortable when these things are raised?

Girl 4 In English it's not ... I mean no one really ...

Girl 3 They might do because when they were born, sort of thing, they might not have the same sort of things around as what we do ...

Voice Yes.

RH   Can you think of any examples?

Girl 2 Erm, my dad always used to say, he used to have to walk to school ...

Girl 3 Yes ...

Girl 2 And I have to go to the bus stop and he says in my day I used to

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have to <u>walk</u> to school ...

Girl 3 Yes, that's what my dad says as well, he says all this stuff ...

Girl 2 And, yes ...

Girl 3 Things were just different, so it might be hard for them to understand, to look at it from our point of view, that sort of thing.

Girl 2 We never had to walk, we've always had transport. [Laughter]

RH   Yes. Do you ever think you've been assessed in a lesson about values in any way?

Girl 1 Not really, no.

RH   D'you think it would ever be possible to assess people?

Girl 2 In discussions.

Girl 1 Yeah, if you have, like, our English, there's a lot ...

RH   You'd be assessing the discussion skills?

Voice Yes.

RH   Would you ever be assessing what someone's moral values are?

Girl 1 Probably. [Pause]

RH   D'you think that our school thinks that these sorts of issues are important?

Girl 1 Not very much.

Interruption on tape.

RH   Sorry, we were talking about whether the school thinks that these kinds of values are important.   You were saying not very much?

Girl 1 Well they don't, in most lessons you don't really get, it's only like in PSE ... when we were talking about discrimination, but not very often...

Girl 1 I can't remember it any of my other years.

Girl 3 It's only recently, since we've been doing these talks that that is the main sort of thing we've done in this school about that, where we've done our individual talks because we could each give our own view on things, but apart from that we've not done that much at all ...

Girl 2 I suppose when you're in year 10 you're more adult and you understand more than when you were 12 or 11 ...

Girl 3 And your opinions change about things as well, as you grow up ...

RH   Can you think of any ways outside of lessons, in which the school shows any concern for people's values?   [Pause]

Girl 2 Erm, wasn't that Youth Action Group[1] was it outside school about ... that's sort of values ... to do with ...

RH   Yes.

Girl 2 And erm ... [Pause}

RH   What about in assemblies?   D'you get any idea of what the school thinks is important through assemblies?

Girl 3 Not really, no.

Girl 2 They just want you to do well, stay out of trouble ...

RH   Mmm.

Girl 1 Well, I think when the person who comes and does assemblies, when they read out poems and stories and things, they usually have a moral sort of hidden ... I think they're aimed at these sort of things ...

RH   Mmm.   Do you think they're successful when they do that? [Pause]

Girl 1 Yes, they probably are, I suppose, sort of ... I think people already

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[1] The School's Youth Action Panel won national awards in 1995 & 1996 for work on raising awareness about drugs and shop-lifting

know sort of what's right and wrong, it's just pointing out ...

RH   Mmm. That's interesting. What do you think ... if I was asking the Headmaster what values he thought was important for the school, what do you think he would say?

Girl 2 Making every student happy and have a good, try your best in your exams, and try and do things for the school ...

Girl 3 You have to sort of learn but make it enjoyable at the same time.

RH   Right, good. [Pause] D'you think there are any moral or spiritual values which are not tackled in school but which you would like to see?

Girl 3 Yes, I think there should be more on racism. That's what I think, definitely.

RH   Why do you think think that?

Girl 3 Well, as you grow up people will probably move away and stuff, and there'll probably be more black people and stuff around ...

RH   Mmm hmm.

Girl 3 Er, round here, sort of in [name of county] we live with quite a big white population, don't we really, and I think that people should have more knowledge about other people and their racist beliefs and stuff.

RH   Right.

Voice Yes.

RH   That's interesting. Erm, we've talked a bit about moral values, if you think about spiritual values in terms of maybe what people believe in, erm whether they've got any religious beliefs or not, d'you think that the school thinks that that's an important side of life?

Girl 1 Not really, because people believe in some things [inaudible] and they're just going to take the mickey out of you, and there's going to be

loads of arguments and everyone's going to ... no, I don't think it would work.

Inaudible comment

RH   D'you think people get bullied if they have religious beliefs?

Girl 3 I don't think so, really, because, well, religious beliefs, they're not really something you talk about that much, so people don't really know ...

Girl 2 If you're in a class discussion, and they think, oh you don't believe in that, do you ...

Girl 1 Yes.

Girl 3 Yes.

RH   So it's kind of not fashionable? Or what?

Girl 3 It's sort of undercover! [General agreement and laughter]

Girl 2 You probably do have beliefs you wouldn't want to share it at school, you'd rather do it personally at home, or ...

RH   Mmm hmm. D'you think that's okay, that the school is like that?

Girl 1 I think that there should be more religion and that, not stating your own religion, just talking about different religions ...

RH   Mmm hmm. [Pause] So d'you think there's anything which we should be doing differently ... you've commented about racism ... anything else at all?

Girl 1 I think that when we had our RE lessons in years 8 and 9, no one used to listen very much ... I think that they should make it more interesting ... I don't know how, but just try ... have a more wide range of things, because people just get bored with it.

RH   D'you think the sorts of topics that are raised in PSE and RE could ever be raised in other subjects?

Girl 1 Probably.   In history.

Girl 3 It could be in history and English and things, but in maths, you wouldn't be able to really put it in to maths and things like PE and stuff, you wouldn't be able to put them into them, but I think it could be raised in some other subjects, yes.

RH   Right.   Anything at all you'd like to add?   No?   thanks, that's great.

Year 11 Group 1   4 girls and 2 boys

RH   My first question to anyone really is: what do you understand by the terms 'moral' or 'spiritual' or 'values'? Anybody. [Pause] Let's take moral first. [Pause] What do you think it means?

Boy 1 Whether something is proper? Or not or ... it should be done ... it depends how you look at it.

RH   Mmm hmm. [Pause] That's good!

Girl 1 Whether it's right or wrong ...

RH   Whether it's right or wrong.

Girl 1 Yes. [Pause]

RH   Good. What about the word 'spiritual'? What do you understand that to mean? [Pause]

Girl 2 Something to do with God.   Or religion.

Voice Yes.

Girl 3 How things affect you if you believe in certain things.

RH   Mmm hmm.

Girl 4 A waste of time. [General laughter}

RH   Good, thank you! A waste of time! And what about the word 'values'? {Pause]

Boy 1 What things mean to you.

Girl 3 How precious they are to you.

Voice Yeh. [Pause]

RH   Do you think that students ought to learn about these things in school?

Girl 3 Yes.

Girl 1 No, because they're so many different cultures and stuff that I don't think that they can all be taught and, people's opinions vary so much you can't, I don't think you can sort of satisfy everyone's needs...

RH   Mmm hmm.

Girl 3 Well, if they were taught, if they were taught every single, like if they were taught about different religions and stuff they could ...

Girl 2 Make up their own minds ...

Girl 3 Yes ... if they're not taught anything at all, then they haven't got anything to ...

Boy 2 I'm sure it's up to them if they want to find out about that sort of thing they will do ...

Girl 2 Yes.

Girl 1 But they're not going to find out about anything unless someone tells them about it ...

Girl 3 No opportunity ...

Boy 2 Well if they don't know about it they don't know what they want to find out so it doesn't bother them any way ... because you can't find out about anything you haven't heard and therefore what you don't know can't hurt you or, or affect you ...

Girl 2 Yes ...

Girl 3 You never know, they could be searching for something ...

Boy 2 Who could be searching for what?

Girl 3 Pupils.

Boy 2 Pupils.

Girl 3 Yes.

Boy 2 Like what - searching for what?

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Girl 3 Searching for a meaning to life?

Boy 2 D'you need a meaning to life?

Girl 1 They might.

[Several voices at once]

Boy 2 I mean, they've gone through it for what, twelve or fifteen years now already, what's the point in searching now? I mean to say, things are going to change yes, but you've still got to basically go on living, same routines, you get up, you get dressed ...

Girl 3 But if they don't have any er, if you're not taught anything about, about religion and how their life can change, then there's, they ...

Boy 2 Maybe they don't want to be told how something's changed, like these missionaries, you know, they go out to these people in Africa or the Eskimoes up there, and preach about Christianity, and they've really got no right to do that ...

Girl 2 They've got the right to be aware of other things...

Boy 2 But if they're not aware, let's face it, it doesn't matter ...

RH   Can I ask those of you who think that this is an appropriate topic to be taught in school, in which subject areas you would expect to find this sort of information?

Girl 1 RE. PSE.

RH   Mmm hmm. Any other areas of the curriculum? [Pause]

Girl 1 No I don't think so.

Girl 2 There isn't really any ...

RH   Can you think of any subjects which you've actually sat through, any lessons that you've heard where any of these topics to do with values, moral or spiritual values were touched on ?

Girl 1 English. For about a term.

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Girl 2 PSE.

Girl 3 When?

Girl 1 When we were doing about talks ...

Girl 2 Talks.

Boy 1 Talks. Oh, what when ...[inaudible]

RH   And people talked about things to do with values?

Girl 1 Yes, for ages. It went on for about a term.

[inaudible comment, laughter]

RH   And you said PSE, one or two of you. Can you think of any particular lessons you've been in when these areas were covered? Any topics?

Boy 2 In year 9, we had to go through these books and find out about what these people did ... that was all about spiritual and how they did such great things ... Christianity ... helped people, preached to people and went round just being annoying ...

[Laughter]

RH   How d'you feel about teachers raising these issues in class?

Girl 1 It's good to be able to talk.

Girl2   It gets people to talk.

Boy 2 Good for an argument. You get two people who both agree it's not ...

[Laughter]

RH   D'you feel the teachers themselves feel comfortable or uncomfortable with these sorts of topics?

Boy 2 I don't think they'd discuss them if they didn't feel comfortable ...

Girl 4 They have to, don't they?

Girl 1 It depends what the actual subject is.

Boy 2 They don't have much choice ...

RH   They don't have any choice?

Girl 4 Some will just let pupils get on and discuss it, just observe, really. [Pause]

RH   Do you yourseves think that these values are important, I've asked you whether you think they ought to be covered in school ... in terms of your own sense of identity do you think these values are important?

Boy 2 What personally?

RH   Mmm.

Boy 2 Not hysterically, no.   I mean everyone needs some morals, to keep you er, from going too far astray ... getting too erm ... I don't know what I mean ...getting too...

Girl 4 Liberal?

RH   Too?

Girl 4 Liberal

Boy 2 Liberal.   Yes.   But the spiritual ones, that's entirely up to whoever.

Voice Yes.

Boy 2 I'm sure everyone has some morals, but they don't want to er, upset people too much, to get involved with things too much ... they have their own views, don't they...

Voice Yes.

RH   Do you enjoy discussing and thinking about such things?

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Boy 1 I enjoy discussing.

Girl 1 Yes. [Laughter]

Girl 4 Definitely.

Girl 2 Well, yeh, it's quite interesting, I suppose ... other people's views ... like even your own friends, you'd sometimes be surprised at the difference between their views.

RH   Hmm. [Pause] Have you ever been assessed or tested on these sorts of topics in class?

Several voices   No.

Boy 2 I don't think it's right to test someone on these things, anyway.

Girl 3 Not written tests, or anything. [Pause] When we had those talks, people would give talks on something contraversial and then you'd kind of argue and you'd ask a question about it and you had to stand up and say what you believed, what your morals were ... that's quite testing ...

RH   Yes, it's a difficult situation to be in, isn't it? [Pause] Do you think that this school thinks that these issues are important?

Girl 4 It doesn't seem to. [Pause] I mean for example in RE, you don't learn anything about morals or values or anything like that .. it's just colouring in pictures of ... in the first and second years we were colouring in pictures and getting marked on how well we coloured them in!

Boy 2 Well, it's in assemblies though isn't it?   That's when the teachers get up there and do their big moral thing ...

[General agreement]

Girl 4 Yes, that's good.

Boy 2 It's not though, it's annoying.   They're standing up there and saying, 'Ah, you must be like this ...' and trying to be like this, it seems so

hypocritical as well ..

RH   Were you wanting to add something?

Girl 3 They don't actualy, if you actually listen they don't say, 'You must do this ... you've got to be like that ...'

Boy 2 No, that's not what I meant ...

Girl 3 They give examples of people who are like it and it just gives you something to think about.

Boy 2 Like hinting ... you know ...'Try ...   [Laughter]   It might be a good idea ...'

Girl 3 Yes, yes but they're not ...

Girl 4 There's a difference ...[Pause]

RH   So, you think through assemblies you're getting certain messages about the values that the school thinks are important?

[General agreement]

Girl 3 Yes, or like the teacher that stands up and does the assembly, their sort of opinion, aren't you.

RH   Do you have any idea of the sorts of values say of the Head or, your Head of Year?   Do their values come across in any way?

Boy 2 Mrs V always, at the end ...

Girl 4 Yes, she always adds little comments ...

Boy 2 Like some moral ...

Girl 4 She's not very, erm, spiritually sort of moral, ...

Girl 3 No, she keeps going on about how erm, she says, you know, it's good to be like that but you don't have to because I am not ...[Laughter].

Girl 1 Mr [the Headmaster] doesn't really talk about things like that, does he?

Voice No.

Girl 4 It's mainly about, I don't know, books or something ...

Voice Yes ...[Laughter]

Girl 3 A lot of things to do in your school holiday ...{Laughter]

RH   Are there any moral or spiritual values which you don't think are tackled in school but which you would like to see the school dealing with?

Girl 4 I think other religions because, well certainly in my RE lessons as far as I can remember, we did about Christianity, and I think that erm, although it's good to learn about it, I think other things should be covered as well so that you've got the choice to, erm, ...

RH   I think that lower down the school now the children do learn about major faiths, there's been quite a radical change in the syllabus since ...

Girl 4 But we don't have RE lessons in the fourth and fifth year, then ...

RH   Do you think you should?

Girl 4 Erm,

Girl 1 I don't.

Girl 2 No.

Boy 2 I don't ...

Several voices.

Girl 4 It's up to you, by then, whether you want to go into it any further.

Boy 2 Yes, because when you're young, you're brought up by your parents and the way they do things, you know ... I used to go to church with my parents ... I didn't have a say in it, but now, now I wouldn't go ...

Girl 4 Well, well I think that in the fourth and fifth year you are mature enough to have discussions ... good discussions about religion ...

Girl 1 Yes, but not everyone likes discussing things do they, they prefer to ...

Several voices

Girl 1 Sit and just listen ...

RH As a matter of interest, do you know, by law all the pupils in school should have RE lessons ...

Girl 4 What, all pupils?

RH Did you know that? And in the Sixth Form, even.

Voice Really? Gosh! This school's illegal! [Laughter]

Girl 4 No, because we still have erm, prejudice and stuff, that's sort of ...

Girl 1 That's really...

Boy 2 Prejudice ... [inaudible]

RH Does anyone have any other points that they'd like to make? About any of these issues? [Pause] No, well that's been helpful, thank you.

Year 11 Group 2   3 girls

RH   What do you understand by the terms 'moral' and 'spiritual'? What d'you think they mean?

Girl 1 Morals are a set of standards, of your own choosing or society chooses.

RH   Mmm hmm.

Girl 1 They are the way you behave and such.

RH   Good.   Any other ideas, either 'moral' or 'spiritual'?   [Pause]

Girl 2 Spiritual can be how you feel about religion or what you believe in yourself, something like that.

RH   Okay.   [Pause]   What about the term 'values'?   What d'you understand that to mean?

Girl 3 I think it's a bit more personal, erm it's what you personally believe is right.

Girl 1 I think it's more personal, perhaps, you know, than morals.

RH   Mmm hmm.   Okay.   D'you think that students ought to learn about these sorts of things in school?   [Pause]

Girl 2 Yes, but I think a lot of them have their own ideas about it.

Girl 1 I don't think it should be forced upon us.

Girl 3 They should be shown certain things but should make their own mind up.

RH   Mmm hmm.   [Pause]   In which subjects would you expect to learn about such values?

Girl 2 PSE I suppose.

Girl 1 Yes.

RH   Any others?

Girl 1 I suppose RE in the lower school, but some people immediately are going to turn off ...

RH   Why's that?

Girl 1 Because they're going to immediately think it's got to do with God, and erm I don't know, there's something in the lower school, and perhaps the upper school too, yes, unfashionable to believe in God, and thus pay attention in RE lessons.

RH   Mmm hmm.   Any other subjects which you you'd expect to cover these sorts of values in?   [Pause]

Girl 2 Possibly in English as part of discussions.

RH   Mmm.

Girl 2 But I don't think it should be specifically English you can discuss these issues in ...

RH   No ... D'you have such discussions in other subjects, ever? [Pause]

Girl 3 Not really.

Girl 1 No, not very often.

RH   Not very often?

Girl 2 No.

RH   Can you think of any lessons that you've been in, in which, erm, these topics were covered?   Specific lessons, any subject at all? [Pause]   Maybe this year or in previous years.   [Pause]

Girl 1 We have done discussions in English, but they haven't been specifically about erm morals, although the topics have sort of come up.

RH   Mmm, moral issues have come up?

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Girl 1 Yes, say like prostitution, someone did a talk on prostitution then afterwards we discussed it ...

RH   Mmm ...

Girl 1 And certain views ... yes, we have sort of covered it.

RH   Okay. Any other?

Girl 3 Not really ...

RH   No? How do you feel about teachers raising these issues in class?

Girl 2 I think they should, but like Jude said, I don't think they should inflict their own personal ideas about morals or about spiritual values on the pupils, they should discuss the ones that the pupils have, and probably their own as well, but not to pressurise or influence them in any way ...

RH   Mmm hmm.

Girl 2 So just to discuss it ...

RH   Mmm hmm ... Have you experienced pressure from teachers?

Girl 2 Not from teachers, no ...

RH   D'you think that teachers feel comfortable or uncomfortable with these ideas in class?

Girl 1 I think some of them don't feel particularly comfortable, others, erm, it depends what the actual issue is ...

RH   D'you think that these values are important?   Moral and spiritual values? [Pause]

Several voices   Yes ...

Girl 2 But everybody's going to have their own ... I expect that , you know, you may disagree with someone ...

Girl 1 It's a way of sort of disciplining yourself, isn't it?

Girl 3 They shouldn't be just, say what's right or wrong, a personal thing, everyone should hold to their values ...

RH   Mmm hmm. Do you enjoy discussing and thinking about such things?

Girl 1 Personally I don't like discussing them, but I like, erm, hearing other peoples views and comparing them with mine, but I wouldn't ever put forward my own value as opposed to someone else's, I don't like arguing about it and, er, often things like that do end up in an argument...

RH   Mmm. But you enjoy thinking about the issues?

Girl 1 Well, I think that thinking about the issues is important, you have to know what you personally believe ...

RH   Mmm ... [Pause] Have you ever been assessed or tested on these sorts of things in class?

Girl 2 I don't think so ...

RH   Do you think that would be appropriate?

Girl 2 No, not really. [Pause]

RH   D'you think that this school thinks that these issues are important? [Pause]

Girl 1 I think generally there's a feeling that they are important, but it's never directly addressed. [Pause]

Girl 1 Do you agree?

Voice Mmm.

RH   Can you think of any ways, perhaps, in which such values are indirectly addressed, then? I'm thinking about outside the subject areas

now ... [Pause] Any situation in school where people either talk about these sorts of values or, erm, they're demonstrated in any way ...?

Girl 3 I've discussed them with friends in the past ...

Girl 2 In the debating society ...

RH   Debating society? [Pause] What about, say, in assembly?

Girl 2 Well, assembly tends to be, erm, more someone giving their views, whatever, and so it's not ...[inaudible] but sometimes you go and talk about things afterwards ...

RH   Mmm ... Do you, I mean do you have any idea, for example, of the sorts of values that the Headmaster thinks are important? [Pause]

Girl 2 I think he has pretty general ...

Girl 1 And accepted views towards traditional values ... about what's right and wrong ... but I've never known him to actually express them as such to us, to me, it's just the feeling I get from, say, assemblies ...

RH   So you get that feeling from assemblies ... is there anything else, maybe to do with the organisation of the school, or the experiences that are available to students, or whatever, that erm gives you any idea of what the school values, what the school thinks is important?

Girl 1 RE indicates that religion's important. And that you often find yourself discussing only one kind of religion, it's not particularly broad ... [Pause]   That's not quite true ... because I suppose in the second year we looked at some, but not in any detail, I don't think people were that interested in religions as such ...

RH   RE is treated fairly minimally on the curriculum here. D'you think that, perhaps, is the reason why it's not taken seriously by the students, or d'you think if, if there were more lessons, or the lessons carried on to years 10 and 11, that would be a big turn-off?

Girl 3 Probably, because a lot of people in our school, er, look at RE as

just, almost a free period, to sit down and listen if you want to, or you can just switch off ... it's not taken particularly seriously by the students ... erm, I don't think timetabling it on a greater scale would change that ...

RH   Mmm...

Girl 3 Especially in years 10 and 11, I think they'd just resent it too much ...

RH   Mmm.

Girl 3 With GCSEs and things, you're beginning to study the subjects you're taking for GCSEs ... [Pause]

RH   D'you think any moral or spiritual values which you can't see being tackled in school but which you think we ought to be addressing? [Long pause] No? I suppose people might consider that moral values included things like care and concern for other people, and tolerance and sympathy, erm d'you think those sorts of values are apparent in this school or not?

Girl 1 I think erm, its definitely apparent in the school, but, I mean, you're never going to stop someone being victimised for being different, it's just society, it's always going to happen ...

RH   Mmm.

Girl 1 You know, be intolerant of some groups of people.

RH   Do you think our school is sympathetic enough to people who are different; do you think students are encouraged enough to be sympathetic and understanding?

Girl 1 Yes, you're encouraged, you're encouraged a lot to be sympathetic and understanding and when you get to near the end of school you can really see, erm, it's really important to be tolerant.   But I don't know, somehow it changes, as you move up the school ...

RH   Mmm.   You couldn't put your finger on it?

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Girl 1 I can't say how it changes but ... I think it does change as you go up the school ...

RH   For the better or for the worse?

Girl 1 For the better, I think.

RH   Mmm hmm. Have any of you anything else to add? It's a difficult topic to think about, isn't it?

Synopsis of Interview with Physics Teacher

Question 1   What do you understand by the terms 'moral', 'spiritual' and 'values' - particularly with application to education?

A   I have very strong views on this ... I'm probably going to conflict very much with your ideas and with the ideas current in modern education ... 'moral' - a working definition: 'those deep and fundamental truths which are immutable in time or circumstance' .. 'spiritual' - refers to an emegent property, consciousness, and that is, becuse we think we exist we cannot conceive of ourselves not existing therefore we invent this thing called a spirit, and spiritual values are associated with that emergent concept ... 'values' - I suppose is a matter of a league table of different statements of important things which you put into some sort of list ...

Question 2   Do you think that these issues are a proper concern for secondary schools?

A   I would consider that they are perhaps <u>the</u> proper concern for secondary schools ...

Question 3   In which curricular areas would you expect such values to be 'taught'?

A   Very specifically and fundamentally in science ... in fact I think that science is <u>the</u> lead department in such teaching ... the pupils, and I suspect a lot of staff, have a misunderstanding of the process that's going on ... science is about truth, or more exactly, the removal of falsehood, and since it is, it has as its fundamental value the idea of knowledge, understanding, truth; that is underlined in everything which is taught in science; whatever other discussions are going on in the school, are not morally valid unless they are based on knowledge, truth. So, I think that science is the ultimate department - all other subjects are derivations from it - we teach a respect for fact, reality, logic, rationality .. we frequently find ourselves fighting the rest of the school in so doing;

the pupils we have to fight as well of course, because they are encouraged to 'free-wheel' through their ignorance, which I personally would disapprove of. I also find that my staff in the department indulge in this as well, and I don't approve of that, either. I feel myself in a minority of one in trying to uphold the moral standards of science; I do not feel that the majority of my staff would understand my extreme views and I certainly don't believe that the school and the education system do.

Question 4   Do you feel that you ever raise these issues in your own teaching?

A   All my teaching is concerned with morality, all my teaching is concerned with truth being superior to falsehood, it's always concerned with how you establish truth, with objectivity as superior to subjectivity, with argument being invalid unless you are arguing about an exterior truth, not an attempt to batter down the opposition by clever words. My entire bent, whenever I get an opportunity, and whenever they're quiet enough to listen is, to deliver that message. The rest of it is simply a vehicle for so doing... A scientist must, if he is incapable of [making a judgment], must refuse to do so; you can not come down on one side or another if the evidence doesn't warrant it, and to do so is wrong.... the training of scientists is that you must not make arbitary decisions which are wrong. The whole point of science isn't to accumulate lots of things, the whole point is to rule out other things which cannot be true. You must stick to the truth. You must not ever allow your personal feelings to run away with you so that you adopt a particular position and then argue from that position, that is wrong. You should be arguing from the position of the reality which you want to establish.

Question 5   Do you feel that some teaching methods are more useful in dealing with these topics in the classroom?

A   Practical is the supreme test, that is what it's about. That's why we do practicals. I would never dream of standing up at the front and pontificating unless there was a background where they could prove

independently that what I'm saying is true. The whole reason for practicals in science is to validate the concepts and the ideas; validating isn't shouting at them loudly or using clever words ...

RH   Do you ever move on from the kind of scientific, objective truth, to perhaps a 'greyer' area ... what is truth, what are absolutes, what is justice ... ? And if so, how does that happen?

A   Yes. That can only be done with academic discipline, by stepping back and analysing ... you asked 'what is justice?' for instance ... what might be seen as justice in our society might not be seen as justice in another society ... therefore you would drift towards a sociological perspective on it, but you couldn't possibly identify yourself with our society and its particular values, that would be to betray your basic training as a scientist.

RH   Would a scientist ever feel some conflict about that?

A   Of course they do, as human beings, but they certainly shouldn't be encouraging that in their pupils; that would be to indulge your own personality, which is not acceptable, you are there for the benefit of the pupils, not so that you can let it all hang out ...

RH   But if a pupil asked you a question to do with your own personal belief ... to do with justice or whatever ...

A   Oh, privately, yes. That's not a problem. But I would make it very clear that this comes with a big health warning.

RH   I think that a lot of teachers are quite frightened of exposing themselves to children, even with a health warning ...

A   I think that you'll find most science teachers, for instance if you're talking of the field of sexuality, are very uninhibited about discussing sexuality, provided they're discussing it in an objective way ... I think as a result of that they're very much more able to discuss with the students their own personal feelings in many matters. Because they can

separate the two.

RH   I know that a lot of reproduction has gone now from KS 4 ... but in the past it's been possible to develop questions of morality in science ...

A   Yes, I would reject that entirely; that has no place in a science lesson. I'm very very happy that that's gone. That should not be in education. It should not be in a science lesson. We are here to deliver to the pupils truth. We are not here to indulge in fantasies ... in weird and wonderful attitudes ... they should be outlawed, not encouraged.

RH   D'you think there is a place anywhere in the curriculum for such matters?

A   No. That's for the parents. That is not for school teachers.

RH   Do you think that there is a place anywhere in the curriculum for any other issues which society would deem 'moral'?

A   Let's take a lovely example which does arise in science ... all the 'green' issues. There is a place for providing the background information; there is no place for biasing the thinking of the young. We should be very very careful; we can by all means discuss the reality of, say, the fish stocks in the North Sea, we should not, then, go across that line and start giving opinions or allowing the pupils in their ignorance to have opinions.

RH   Why not?

A   Unless they have the information first. The trouble is that they rush from no information to opinion, without going through the information stage. It's our job to provide the information from which they may make a judgment ... but they refuse to accept that, they're much happier indulging their ignorance and coming up with opinions because it makes them feel important, rather than doing the hard work ...that's normal human behaviour, but we in school should be stopping them short and saying, 'No, you're not entitled to your opinion until you

know...'

RH   Isn't that a problem, because when can you ever say that they've got all the information to make an opinion?

A   I agree.

RH   But wouldn't we be failing if we never allowed them to come to that stage where they can make an opinion?

A   If they have inadequate information, incomplete information, which they always will have, then they'll have to make a judgement, I accept that ... but that doesn't mean that they should short-circuit the preliminary information-finding which I frequently find is encouraged in this school - and in all schools - in fact in your subject, it's the prime example of this ... where they're told to go and read something with an attitude to it, and then come and tell me if your attitude's the same ... that isn't progressing anything, that's simply herd instinct, crowd behaviour, it's not science, it's not truth, it's not reality ... it's immoral ... there's an implicit message that you don't need to know anything, you can have opinions anyway ...

RH   You obviously feel comfortable with these topics [referring to question 'How comfortable do you feel with these topics]?

A   No, absolutely not ... I feel comfortable in the sense that yes I can handle the ideas ... that's not a problem ...

RH   That's what I mean, really; I don't mean that they're not challenging topics ...

A   But I don't feel comfortable in the sense that I don't feel a lot of them should be in schools... I make a judgement about what I think education's about, and that should not be what it's about ...

RH   Would you include RE in schools?

A   Oh definitely not. In fact, if I had my way I'd make it illegal, as in

the United States, to mention religion in schools (remember I come from Ulster ...).I see all religion as evil (to use a religious term). It's the antithesis of rational thought, and therefore something that ought to be, not just omitted, but held up to ridicule in schools.

RH   Do you not think that children need to be informed, however?

A   Oh yes, you can have religious studies as an objective study of the idiosyncracy of the human mind, but you should never under any circumstances allow any validity to accrue to it, that would be to mislead the pupil and to lead them to potentially dangerous water ... belief is bad and belief ought to be removed ... that's what education is. (You're getting a very idiosyncratic view here, aren't you? [Laughter]) The purpose of education is in fact to remove religion and all religious feeling... that is what constitutes an educated person ...There may be other justifications, for instance, why do I think that truth is an ultimate moral issue? Well, perhaps I'm a utilitarian in that respect ... but that ought to be examined objectively and academically ... the idea of approval, tacit or otherwise, of irrational belief, is absolutely appalling.

RH   How do you cope with the idea of respected scientists who also hold a religious belief?

A   I hold religious beliefs, but I don't think ... my education has failed to the extent that I'm still praying to these things ...[Laughter] I'm saying I have certain standards to which I aspire, and to which I also think that schools should aspire ... I also fail! Scientists fail to aspire to the standards that they set themselves ... it does't stop them setting those standards, but they are not necessarily religious standards (although they may stem historically from them) ... if you like, people have accused science of being the 'new religion' yes, there is an aspect to it, and that's perhaps what I'm trying to express to you at the moment ...

Question 6   What values do you feel the school as a whole is concerned with?

A   Social values are the predominant values that occur in this

school. The standards of my own education have largely disappeared from the school; I feel like a fossil from a bygone age! Although I try and swim in the modern sea ... I swim in the modern comprehensive, socially orientated, pastorally lead school; I feel that my standards ... for my belief in science, my belief in academic excellence and truth and so on, have long since disappeared. By the way I'm not having a go at [named school], all schools in England are in the same state. That's a sad thought, isn't it? Beyond social values ... perhaps the values of the individual, very much humanistically orientated ...

RH   Bearing in mind that, through legislation we are required to educate children morally and spiritually, I am interested in the organisation of the school and I'm interested to know if you think that moral and spiritual values are expressed at all?

A   Actually, you know, I think that they are. Even if it is only in the rules system ... in the authority system in the school ... there are all sorts of values that are implicit in this school, and some of them are very explicitly stated, as well. I actually think it's quite well organised from that point of view; however, I don't approve of 'implicit moral standards' I would prefer to have 'explicit moral standards'. I feel that such things should be brought into the light of day and examined, rather that slid in without question, which is what too frequently occurs. However, I don't think that that's practical ... I don't think that the pupils would stand for it; just as they rebel against RE, as a generality, I think that they would rebel against any objective analysis...I suspect that we are left with an implicit rules system ...but having said that, I actually think that's quite a strength of this school compared to others ...that's where I put on my hat labelled 'pragmatist'; we've got to have some system for the school to operate ... I think we do it reasonably well - there's a lot of caring behind it, and I don't think there's any pupil in this school who thinks that the rules are there to make their life a misery, I think that they understand the purpose behind them.

Question 7   What are your thoughts on the school being

Inspected by OFSTED inspectors in the area of moral and spiritual values?

A   [Laughter]   That's an interesting question!   I haven't got a clue what they'd be looking for ... I haven't got a clue why they'd be looking for it ... I haven't got a clue what they'd accept as evidence;   I don't know what they consider to be 'moral' or 'spiritual' basically, my thoughts are: that would be interesting;   I might learn something but I don't think anybody knows what they're taliking about.   Maybe OFSTED reckon they do ... maybe they're arrogant enough to ... it'd be interesting to discuss it with them ... I'm talking my way to a conclusion ... I actually think it'd have very little value ...to anyone.

Synopsis of Interview with Chemistry Teacher

Question 1   What do you understand by the terms 'moral', 'spiritual' and 'values'?

A   I think that values you live by, or you try to live by; I think spiritual values are things that you believe more than you can prove - and I think that morals are probably the other way round - I see spiritual as being more affiliated to a religion. I'm not saying that moral values aren't part of that - I thought about this, and I did think that spiritual and peace had connections with each other - you talk about people being spiritual and think that they have a sort of 'inner glow'!

Question 2   Do you think that these issues are a proper concern for secondary schools?

A   Yes. Not just secondary schools - I don't think it's something necessarily that you teach, I think part of it is what you do as well - what they see you do and what they think you feel ...

Question 3   In which curricular areas would you expect such values to be 'taught'?

A   I think that could be anywhere, really - on the definition I'm working on, anyway.   I can't really think of anything in which some value - value judgment - is required.

Question 4   Do you think that your own subject has a contribution to make in this area?

A   I think that there are occasions when people are not always very honest in lessons - and I try to make a bit of a thing about that because I think that it is important.   I'm thinking of things like when they tell you something which you know isn't true, or they haven't done something which they ought to have done or done something which they shouldn't have done - or they take something of the school's or someone else's possessions.   I do think that one of the things about learning about

science is that it allows them to have a point of view - which won't be universally accepted. Environmental issues, for example.

RH   Have you ever taught anybody who's had a very particular creationist view? And if so, how do you, as a scientist, cope with that?

A   Mmm. He used to get his bible out. I don't know what I did ... we did earth and space ... I think really that there is an awful lot of stuff which nobody does know ... I don't know on what basis they say that the universe was created at a particular time, and that it started from a single point, etc; I think that there's a lot of stuff in the bible which is interpretation, so I don't really see that there's any conflict in the same way which some creationists do ...

Question 5   Do you feel that these issues arise in your own teaching (the science curriculum)?

RH   We do do reproduction in KS3. The last time I did it, which was this year, I did what I consider to be the 'plumbing side of it', not the moral side, not the living in a family side, not the birth control ...

RH   That seems to be the way science teachers want it to be ...?

A   Yes, I think that's probably true ... I have taught about birth control, and have talked about having children and the impact of having children on people and had discussions with them ... but it's not necessarily the best place to do it - there are a lot of pupils in a science group and that doesn't lend itself to open discussions ...I think that there are probably better ways of doing it, but I don't think the tutor programme is the place either ... it is not something that everybody can do, talking about having children, and all the things that go with it, but I think that perhaps there is more possibility for science teachers than all teachers in general, but probably not as much as for specially trained teachers.

Question 6   Do you feel that some teaching methods are more useful in dealing with these topics in the classroom?

A   Discussion ... I don't feel that we can tell them the answers - I'm not sure that we know the answers ... maybe reading, projects, but not copying stuff down ...

Question 7   How comfortable do you feel with these topics?

A   It depends how much I know and how strongly I feel about an issue ... We do radio activity, nuclear power etc, and that's an issue, isn't it?   There are lots of people who think we shouldn't have nuclear power ... I'm not sure if that's a moral issue?

RH   Presumably the children haven't necessarily been exposed to all the arguments ...?   D'you feel you should present both cases?

A   Yes.

RH   And then, are you happy to come down on one side or the other yourself?

A   I tend not to.   I think really the whole point is that they decide: I think if somebody said to me something that I felt was wrong, I would challenge it ..

RH   If the facts were wrong?

A   Yes.

RH   Supposing one of them asked you what your view was when you'd presented both sides of the case ...?

A   I think that would be okay.   I don't think that they're that easily influenced by what you think, but I think that it's more important than that ... I mean you're not really going to do that much in a lesson -

Question 8   Is there any kind of support you would welcome in tackling these issues in the classroom?

A   I think that what we do is very limited by what we are told to do

[the national curriculum] and I don't think that there are that many openings ... maybe ... I mean nuclear power's easy, you get the stuff from Nuclear Power and you can get stuff from Greenpeace or whatever. I think this oil rig issue is a very interesting one [the Brent Star oil rig] ... I don't know the whole situation and where you get the information from I don't know ... there's a nuclear submarine somewhere off Norway that was sunk with the reactor still inside it ... getting hold of the information, somewhere you could go for information would be very helpful.

Question 9   What values do you feel the school as a whole is concerned with?

A   Bullying, because we've spent quite a lot of time doing that. I don't really know ... it's a not a very strong feeling that I have about the school as a whole, that it makes judgments about how people should be or what they should believe, and I'm not sure that it necessarily should. I'm just trying to think about the assemblies I've been to ... [laughter] I don't think there's a lot of moral 'push' - I mean when [a certain teacher] does them, they are very definitely, can I say 'one-sided'? But it's a bit difficult really to pick something out;   I just thought about 'The Color Purple' which was read to us once in a Sixth Form assembly ... very interesting...

Question 9   Can you think of any examples of the organisation/ management of the school in which moral/spiritual values are either implicitly or explicitly expressed?

A   I don't know. Explicitly expressed ... I suppose that you could look at how much time they spend specifically exploring moral and spiritual values ... and I don't know what the answer to that is, but I would have thought that it's probably not much (probably not a lot different from anywhere else, mind) ... implicitly expressed ... I'm not really aware of anything ... I suppose if you think about how many people are involved in pastoral work and how many are involved in academic work, that may say something.   I think it may say that the school is trying to

care for the children, that more importance is put on the pastoral side.

RH   Would you either approve or disapprove of that emphasis?

A   I don't think children do very well at school unless they are reasonably content.   When you actually get down to it, there are an awful lot of children who have a really terrible time.   I think that if we can help them to ease those pressures, it's good.

1 t Q   **Are there any values which you would like   n   s to see addressed in school which you think are absent at the moment?**

A   None that I can think of at the moment.

Question 11   What are your thoughts on the prospect of the school being inspected by OFSTED inspectors in the area of moral and spiritual values?

A   My feeling is that I don't really know much about it, but what I think that might be seen as a problem is that we do not have religious assemblies; I don't really see that as my problem, but I can see that this would be something they would comment on, although I've not seen it really criticised in any big way.   I wouldn't have thought that what we're doing is really any different from other schools.

RH   Just as a matter of interest, do you think that RE is an appropriate subject to be taught in schools?

A   It depends what is being taught; I think the days when you 'did the bible' and you didn't do anything else are gone, and I think that is reflecting the way that people are; I don't think that there are that many parents now who would want their children brought up with a single outlook, but I think it helps people to understand each other.

RH   And are able to articulate that understanding?

A   Yes, but I don't see this area as being particularly multi-cultural,

but certainly in more multi-cultural areas it helps people to get on with one another.

[Pause]

RH   When you do 'Earth and Space' [KS 4], do children ever raise issues about God or immortality?

A   No.   We do three theories about the origins of the universe: two which are very similar and one which is rather different - the 'big bang' theory and the 'oscillating universe' [pause for explanation] and the 'steady state' theory [further explanation].   When we talk about the 'big bang' theory, I think the children believe you, but I don't think they understand it any more than I do.

RH   Are they interested in it?

A   Yes.

Synopsis of Interview with Senior Manager (responsibility for curriculum)

Question 1   I've been asking people to define the terms 'moral', 'spiritual' and 'values'. Would you like to say how you define these terms?

A   I don't suppose that I have any particularly outrageous views! 'Moral values' are concerned with relationships with others: fairness, equality, those sorts of things. "Spiritual' is concerned with religious - things which are not necessarily just of this place on earth, but the feeling as to whether or not there is more to life ...

Question 2   Do you think that these questions are a proper concern for secondary schools?

A   Yes, certainly. Because we are producing children who are successful in exams, but we are also producing children who are going to live with other people in the community, and also people who are going to be partners and parents ... and sometimes the moral and spiritual values will be nurtured and instilled in a safe and secure home background, but sadly there are huge numbers of children who don't get any sort of lead ... and somehow, through what we say, what we do, how we run the school, we need to try and show them that there is a range of behaviour, some of which is more acceptable, more moral, - more valued even, than others.

Question 3   In which curricular areas would you expect these values to be 'taught'?

A   Well clearly in PSE, RE; I would think that there must be plenty of times in English lessons when discussions of peoples' views are expressed. In geography and history where such things as conflicts between peoples are considered. In PE, actually, I can see such things as sportsmanship, teamsmanship arising. But in all other sorts of subjects, too - in science, for example, there are odd occasions where you would, in discussing the environment and in reproduction, cover

such things.

Question 4   Do you feel that some teaching methods are more useful in dealing with these topics in the classroom?

A   I would imagine that the children are most likely to be set thinking about things, when either they are involved in a fairly close discussion, like a two or three pupil discussion, or I would imagine that something else which would have a moving effect would be something like a real-life video ... followed by a discussion.   I wouldn't think that you would get them thinking too deeply in response to just text books... I think you would be on dodgy ground with the teacher standing up at the front of the classroom saying, 'This is the moral way to look at this ...'

RH   Do you think there is ever a place for that?

A   [Pause]   I don't know;   I have a feeling that the very nature of the terms 'moral' and 'spiritual', means that actually there has to be an opportunity for a range of points of view.   There are some things which are a bit more black and white than others, I suppose, like theft ... although, if you take a real socialist view (I remember seeing a child being interviewed about car theft, 'Well', he said, 'they've got the money, I haven't, what right have they to have the money, why shouldn't I have their car?') ... now that is not an opinion that most of us would go along with, but its an extreme ... that child's moral values... I have a feeling, standing up and saying 'That is a wrong value', is not actually going to change it.   The only way to try and help him see another point of view, is by a discussion rather than just, 'You are wrong'.

RH   Do you think it's appropriate at all for teachers themselves to come down on one side or another in a discussion?

A   Yes, I think that as a school or as a teacher we've got to... the school ethos is based on moral values: everybody's right to enjoy themselves, in a safe and secure environment, ... but the nitty gritty of anything is very often not quite as black and white as it might appear superficially.   As a global picture I like to think that we know what we're

aiming for - what sort of environment we're aiming for ... what sort of community we're aiming for ... but the fact is that there will always be people who don't exactly fit ... trouble spots arise for one reason or another ... and sometimes the background to those problems means that the person who, let's say on this occasion has been the aggressor, has maybe got a case because of the rest of the situation.   So, to say, 'You must never ever do that ...' it's like trying to say, 'if you ever lay hands on another pupil in school you will be excluded ...' it is not something you can have as a black and white rule.

Question 5   What values do you feel the school as a whole is concerned with and how are they expressed (organisationally)?

A   We would like to see a school where all the well-worn phrases apply: everybody is judged on their value to the community as a whole, irrespective of ability ... everyone has a place and is of equal value ... that even those who are sometimes less than cooperative do get their chance, get a fair hearing - that people aren't labelled ... and this is evidenced through things like the discipline policy and the work on bullying.   I think also that I've seen and heard of some of the things the Head does now ... some people would say that he sometimes takes a rather harsh line, but I know that actually you'll often hear him speak of the terrible background of a child ... and so there is a concern for children who get into trouble ... people bend over backwards to make sure the situation is viewed fairly.   I think our current pastoral system [the year heads take their year up through the school] is something which enhances that.

RH   What about the organisation of the curriculum?   Do you think the way we organise, say the timetabling or staffing, is sending out any messages about values?

A   I don't know, really.   No!   [Laughter]   It's [RE and PSE] part of the whole school's curriculum, and staffing arrangements etc are something which as far as I can see (maybe a completely new look is

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needed) are something we're basically stuck with.

RH   If you were to wipe the slate clean?

A   If you were to wipe the slate clean ... well, I'm not a great believer in ifs ...

RH   One of things I've been doing is interviewing children, and I think it's fair to say that they don't see RE and PSE in the same ways that they do subjects that lead to an exam ... Let me put it this way ... OFSTED will eventually come and they're going to look at the curriculum, how do you feel about that?

A   I think that they will say that there appears to be insufficient time, certainly for RE ... I'm not sure what they'd say about PSE actually, especially when we consider tutor time, as well.   They'd certainly comment about year 10 RE because it's not there!   But even in the single period [lower down the school] ...

RH   Would you see the development of the curriculum over the next few years as addressing that?

A   [Pause]   I don't know.   There's a huge job to be done by the camp that would be in favour of increasing RE time to persuade lots of people (and I suspect in many places the children and the parents) that there is the need for doubling the time.   Because there is a dual value, almost, in society which pays lip service to RE being on the timetable, but when it comes down to it they're not actually all that bothered about it.   If it's at the expense of other things, then I'm not sure what pressure there'd be ... certainly, I think we need a new look at RE within the school to bring that about ... somebody who could give it the time and energy and enthusiasm that it needs.   something that worries me as much as anything else is what OFSTED would say about the Head of RE only teaching the subject two periods a week!   Is it really getting a fair crack of the whip?   We've really got to somehow or other try to create a genuine Head of RE.   Who may then give it the impetus to establish it in such a way that GCSE or A level took off, which would give it that bit of

status, at least with those pupils who did it.   And also it would then be seen as a subject in its own right.

Question 6   Are there any values which you would like to see addressed in school which you think are absent at the moment?

A   I can't think of anything.   I suppose the one area where we are short is any appreciation of multi-racial aspects - which is equal opportunities as well, in the wider sense.   But I must admit that I don't really know how much work in this area goes on at the moment.

Question 7   Do you think that staff would appreciate any kind of support in tackling these issues in the classroom?

A   I think perhaps there is a lack of awareness of what does go on in RE and PSE to raise these issues.   It's the usual thing with cross curricular themes, but we should at least give staff as a whole the content of PSE, which is developing all the time.   There's been such a change of emphasis, that we all get left behind.   We could present to the staff the content of what happens where, as children go up the school. It's a bit of a mystery.   In some ways 'free discussion' [staff] might raise awareness and people swap information about what they do.

RH   From my observations I would say that staff are much happier dealing with things which they would call 'moral' as opposed to things which they would call 'spiritual'.

A   Yes.

RH   And the children too.   Talking to children, some of them say that they learn very quickly not to talk about religious things, even in RE lessons, because you might get laughed at and teased.   People don't like to admit that they go to church, ... perhaps that comes in to bullying and the way that people treat each other?

A   Yes. Mmm!

Synopsis of Interview with Religious Education and Personal & Social Education teacher

Question 1   What do you understand by the terms 'moral', 'spiritual' and 'values' - particularly with application to education?

A   I think that what I understand by the term 'moral' is to do with relationships: relationships with oneself and with others.   What I understand by the term 'spiritual' is to do with relationships with God or with the non-material, the super-natural.   And 'values' - those things, beliefs, which we hold in high regard, which we think are important.

Question 2   Do you think that these issues are a proper concern for secondary schools?

A   So it follows on from that that I certainly do think that these issues are of proper concern for secondary schools because from where I'm coming from, relationships are perhaps the most important aspect of life. The moral and spiritual, the values side of life is more important to me than, say, the vocational, or the job, or the earning money side of life. Schools are about education, which is about leading people to develop, and to bringing out and encouraging the values which are within, and the possibilities which are within them.   I think that there should be a greater emphasis on these issues in school.

Question 3   In which curricular areas would you expect such values to be 'taught'?

A   Perhaps most of all these values are 'caught' rather than 'taught', but I think that there is a place for attempting to teach them, in the sense of not just saying what other peoples' values are, but encouraging the children to think about their own values and to explore the moral and spiritual side [of life].   By raising their awareness, [I should want] them to come to sound (in the sense of having thought about it deeply) views.   I would expect RE and PSE to be very much at the forefront, but I would

expect it to be right across the curriculum, even in maths!

Questions 4 & 5   Do you feel that you ever raise these issues in your own teaching, and do you think that some teaching methods are more useful in dealing with these topics in the classroom?

A   I think that the actual topics that you cover dictate the methods which you use - for example, if you are studying particularly spiritual people, I think that you are going to get something of the flavour [RH ... something will rub off...? both laugh] well, if you are studying morals, there are the basic [tenets] like 'Do as you would be done by', 'Love God with all your heart, your mind, your soul and your strength', 'Love your neighbour as yourself' - these are basic attitudes and values.   Take the story of The Good Samaritan - it's a basic attitude towards other people.

RH   Clearly your teaching is inherently concerned with these values, but do you think that there are any teaching methods which are more useful than others?

A   I think that particularly with years 10 and 11 and the Sixth Form, discussion is more suitable, and often them discussing in small groups, thus gaining in confidence, then sharing their ideas with the class ...   not necessarily from cold, but using some stimulating introduction .. you can get them thinking about these issues.

RH   Do you always feel comfortable with these kind of topics?

A   [pause] Yes, I can't remember a time when I haven't felt comfortable, but that's probably more thick skin than anything ...

RH   Talking to groups of children, what has come out is their discomfort in admitting to an interest in religion or spiritual matters or going to church ... it seems as though they learn very early on that they'll be laughed at and ridiculed ... a focus of attention that they don't want, so they learn to keep quiet.

A   Yes, I think that there is peer pressure, particularly among the twelve, thirteen, fourteen years age group ... I even remember a girl coming up to me after a class because we'd had a vote on who believed in God and who didn't, and I think that particular girl had abstained, and she said afterwards to me, 'I feel really guilty, I do believe in God but I was afraid to admit it,' which is terribly sad.   I remember when I was at school that there was the same climate, in the late '50s and early '60s - it's partly to do with teenagers kicking over the traces, I think. Apparently, with regard to belief in God, ninety per cent in this country believe in God but only 10 per cent go to church, so I think that there is a basic interest in a spiritual dimension, but I think that often the image of church is such a negative image for teenagers that they are afraid to admit an interest.

RH   When I asked the children if there are any spiritual issues which are not really covered in school but which they would be interested in, on several occasions they talked about the devil and the supernatural and things which I would only describe as evil, and I felt quite disturbed when they said that ...

A   I think that there is an interest in the occult and that lots of children experiment with seances and stuff, and I think that it is important not to push it under the carpet; my own experiences when I was younger lead me to be convinced of the existence of entities beyond the realm of the physical, a certainty of a supernatural power, and this eventually lead me to becoming a Christian.   One of Jesus' ministries was the casting out of evil spirits, and I have been involved in churches when they went overboard in this way - if anyone had a problem, it was always diagnosed as being an evil spirit ... but I do believe that it's possible for people to be influenced by evil forces ...
Sometimes what I do [if pupils are particularly interested in these topics] is to share my experiences, and I know I'm treading on really dangerous ground here, but I do it, and I always come down at the end as a Christian and say that I believe that it is really wrong to get involved in any way in such practices.   It is a difficult area.

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Question 6 **Is there any kind of support which you would welcome in tackling issues to do with moral and spiritual values in the classroom, or that you think that other teachers would welcome?**

A   I'm sure I would welcome support and I think that other teachers would too, but off the top of my head I don't know what to suggest other than opportunities for groups of staff to discuss these issues, and perhaps as a result gain in confidence.

Question 7 **What values do you think that the school as a whole is concerned with?**

A   Work! I think that the school is concerned about consideration of others and courtesy and caring for others, although I think that there is often a prime concern about getting things done - efficiency - this is because we're all under so much pressure to do things to deadlines. I feel that sometimes people have been hurt unnecessarily - things are not always done as sensitively as they might be.   I don't think that it's intentional, I think that people do value other people but that external pressures sometimes get in the way of the most subtle or tactful approaches to others.

Question 8 Can you think of any examples of the organisation /management of the school in which moral/spiritual values are either implicitly or explicitly expressed?

A   I think with regard to time on the timetable and financial support for RE and PSE - it speaks volumes really!

RH   Do you think that the children get those messages?

A   Oh yes, I'm sure that they do.   I found that there was tremendous difference when we had years 7 & 8 for RE for two periods a week - I am sure that the subject had a lot more kudos amongst the pupils - it was a lot easier then.

Question 9   Are there any values which you would like to see addressed in school which you think are absent at the moment?

A   I think that the big thing on my mind at the moment is the amount of stress which people are under - professionally as well as in other ways.   This isn't a value in itself, but the feeling which I think that we should be trying to engender is one of us 'all being in this together'. There needs to be an atmosphere of complete trust, so that people can bear their souls, bear their weaknesses, without feeling exposed and vulnerable.   But how you achieve that, I don't know.

Question 10   Do you have any views on what OFSTED might say when they come to inspect the school, making reference to moral and spiritual values?

A   I think that people should be aware by now that this is not just the province of the RE department!   But even so, I think that subconsciously, teaching RE and PSE, you feel particularly vulnerable and particularly responsible.   And it's such a subjective area, it's slightly frightening! Obviously they will be concerned to examine the aims of the school and look at relationships between the staff and the children;   I am sure that there will be areas that the inspectors will be looking for which we haven't considered!

Synopsis of interview with English and Drama teacher

Question 1   What do you understand by the terms 'moral', 'spiritual' and 'values' - particularly with application to education?

A   Moral, I tend to think of rules of - not so much good manners - but rules of living: standards.   Standards of behaviour.   Socially acceptable standards.   Spiritual - I tend to think religious and I tend to think Christian values - which again comes slightly into the realms of behaviour, because some of our morals are linked to spiritual values. And values are sort of ... we should teach that there are these accepted expectations - they're the values.

Question 2   Do you think that these issues are a proper concern for secondary schools?

A   I think so, because I think that secondary schools should be teaching children to go out into society, they're not teaching discrete subjects, they're teaching children to mature and become part of the society as adults and that includes having a knowledge and understanding and perhaps almost paying allegiance to these moral and spiritual values.   If someone doesn't do it, then we say there's something wrong with them.   Therefore our job must be to equip them so that they do conform.

Question 3   In which curricular areas would you expect such values to be taught?

A   I think that they come <u>in,</u> to all areas, because I think if you're discussing things, they can arise at any time, particularly where English comes in to it.   But <u>taught</u> means that you actually set out to do it, and you think of the standards, particularly while you're talking about spiritual values - I can think of things like PSE, RE, tutor periods - because these back up the ethos of the school- so actually addressing them and putting them on the syllabus, RE and PSE;   but I think they do

come up in drama, because we do a lot of 'issues'-related work (we talk about drugs and things) and one of the moral values is that you don't take drugs, that you abide by the laws of the land, and we look at things like that. In English, things come up all the time, in discussion, so I think that we address them in drama and English, but if you want to say 'taught' on the syllabus, then it's RE and PSE. I think that they can come up anywhere.

Question 4   Can you think of any examples from an English lesson when these issues have arisen?

A   I think that it comes up all the time when you're talking about literature, and particularly period literature, because you have to teach the accepted values of that era, and say, 'Look, you've got to realise that we're not judging them by our values, we're judging them by the values of that time'. It also comes up when children are doing transactional or discursive writing - they are the topics you tend to set. But I don't think you actually discuss it at the time - you say, 'I want you to write about [such and such], I want your views, you must have a balanced opinion, you must give both sides of the argument', but we never actually come back to them and say, 'your idea is this and I don't agree with you...' We want them to do the piece of writing, but I don't think that we actually convey any approbation of their ideas ... I don't think that we even do it if they <u>do</u> stick with what society says... We don't give them a pat on the head and say, 'Good boy, you're doing what society says', and I don't think that we do it if they say, 'I think that drugs should be legalised'.

RH   And do you think that that's a pity, or do you think that that's how it should be?

A   I think that it's a pity in one way - in that we don't actually respond to their ideas, although it could come up in discussion; but then I think it's a good idea also that we don't just pat them on the head because they're conforming, we are at least giving them the chance to express their opinion. I think that the constraint of time - you get the piece of work in ...

RH   You said that if they were doing a piece of discursive writing and you'd asked them to present a balanced case ... would you ever ask them to present a partial case?

A   Oh yes.   I've asked them to write persuasive pieces, but you see, there again, what I'm looking for when I come to mark it - I don't mind what the view is that they put down - it's the techniques which they've used that I'm looking at, and that's what the piece of work is judged on. Even in discussion work - group and class discussion - you will discuss with them and you're pleased to get ideas going, but at the end you might say, 'Well. I don't agree with you', but you're more likely to say, 'That was a good piece of discussion work', and talk about their oral skills, rather than the content of what they've actually said; it's not being taught, it's part of the subject area, and [these values] are not addressed as such.

Question 5   Do you feel that some teaching methods are more useful than others in dealing with these topics in the classroom?

A   I think that you come back to PSE, where they're looking at the issue as an issue, they're not looking at it as [the process - discussing, writing etc] the lesson itself; I think that if you really want them to be looking at the issue, rather than the peripheral things, how they present their case, etc, discussion, I suppose, is the best method, because at least there you are trying to get all points of view, and every child is being subjected to the different views, even if they're not taking part they are listening, one hopes.   But to actually teach it, I think you've got to go back to PSE - this is the lesson where such issues are specifically covered.

Question 6   How comfortable do you feel with these particular topics?

A   I'm quite happy with dealing with them; I worry sometimes that the children are just giving me back what they think I expect to hear; so

if, say, they're doing a piece of work on drugs in drama, they will churn out the 'it's terribly wrong' line. What I would be particularly looking for is a bit of character analysis, why people take drugs, looking at in more depth. But I don't get embarrassed by the moral issues; the spiritual - the only time I worry about it is, that I don't feel, living in a Christian society, that my own knowledge of the Bible is as deep as it should be, and I can say, 'That's a biblical reference, isn't it?' [Laughter] And it's sometimes not picked up on. That's one thing actually, if I may digress, when I went to [a neighbouring school] they were going back to reading the Bible stories in some of their assemblies, because they said that children didn't know them. And they're quite right ... there's a generation coming up for whom it's a closed book ... if it's part of your heritage you need to <u>teach</u> it in the same way that you would teach history. That is something that I think would be a good idea ... Even if you're not teaching it for the spiritual value, you're teaching it as part of your literary heritage. By missing out on a traditional spiritual upbringing, they're missing out on understanding [literary references eg the catechism - mentioned in Butler's 'The Way Of All Flesh' a text which she had recently taught to A level].

Question 7   Is there any kind of support which you would welcome in tackling these issues in the classroom?

A   With moral issues, it would be nice if the pupils could be exposed to people with different viewpoints; several years ago, when lots of them did child development, we would ask them to give a talk, and the number who chose to talk about abortion and sited SPUC [Society For the Protection of the Unborn Child] because [a colleague] had had a speaker in; at least they had had the information. I was always saying, 'What about the other side?' and I was able to make sure that they covered the other side as they hadn't been given the other point of view. But I think that getting people in to talk does help... The children accord a certain value to what they say because they are 'from the outside'. I just haven't got the time to organise getting people in to give both sides of an argument in my English classroom.

Question 8   **What values do you feel that the school as a whole is concerned with?**

A   I don't feel that there is a push with spiritual values in the school. I think that the school is concerned with behavioural values, and conforming. Although our aims say that everyone should have regard for other people, I don't think that it <u>feels</u> like that. I think that it feels like, 'Here's a set of rules - these are the ways you should behave in school; and although at the basis of them there is respect for others, and for yourself, I don't think that's the feel that comes over. I think that schools to some extent have got to do that, I don't know how, particularly in a big school you, you foster a caring environment ... although it's what we all say we're doing.

Question 9   **Can you think of any examples of the organisation or management of the school in which moral and spiritual values come through?**

A   I think that assemblies are seen as being that, explicitly. And the code of rules, I think that the moral values come through there - I don't think that spiritual values come through though. Assemblies are where you get a bit of spiritual values! [Laughter] The moral values come through very much in assemblies. I think that we feel that we're addressing moral values in assemblies - we don't see them as merely information giving forums.

Question 10   **Are there any values which you would like to see addressed in school which you think are absent at the moment?**

A   I can't really think of anything, no. I can't think of anything that isn't addressed, at <u>some</u> level. You can think of something like AIDS, but the topic is covered when they get to years 10 and 11. The Sixth Form, too, are always very aware.

Question 11   **What are your thoughts on the prospect of**

the school being inspected by OFSTED, in the area of moral and spiritual values?

A   I think that it is the in nature of the beast that they are going to find fault with what we do.   I don't think that there is any way of actually covering it that will make everyone happy.   I think that any OFSTED report is going to convey that they do not think that moral and spiritual values are being covered as they should be, but I don't know how you actually do it.   I would feel personally, that if an OFSTED inspector asked me how I was delivering moral and spiritual values, then I would say the same sort of things about English and drama - that I'm aware of the issues and that I do feel that it's part of our subject area, implicitly if not explicitly.

RH   Is there anything more you'd like to add?

A   No, I think it's a very difficult area;   I don't think that the staff accord PSE generally a very high profile.

RH   Do you think that goes for RE as well?

A   Yes.   And I think it's not helped by the fact that you have so many people [teachers] who get 'odd' lessons of RE and PSE.   [Teacher's name]'s timetable had PSE on it this year;   she's not a PSE specialist but she was down to teach PSE, and I think there's a feeling that 'odd bods' teach it.

RH   That's an organisational, management area?

A   Yes, it's not accorded respect, I don't think.

RH   By the senior management?   By the children?   By the staff?   Or everybody?

A   Everybody, I think.   Even PSE teachers who teach it, although they feel that they've got a mission, it's a little bit of a problem.   And, for example, you never know whether you're going to get any PSE or RE reports, and when you get them, I'm sure that the teachers and the

children and the parents don't accord as much importance to them as to others.   I was in one school where RE was taught just by committed Christians, and they weren't just teaching Christianity they were teaching other religions, but it had almost an identity, that you felt it was spiritual.   But it feels wishy washy here!   I don't think that it's a very easy area to cover in school.

Synopsis of interview with English, Drama and Classics teacher

Question 1   What do you understand by the terms 'moral', 'spiritual' and 'values' - particularly with application to education?

A   I think that you can have moral values without necessarily having spiritual values ... I guess that moral values must have to do with the way we live together, the way that human, and I suppose other animals too, see themselves living with others.   There are ways which are more or less acceptable for the individual to fit in to a group within society.   I think that's how I would see it ... morality is possibly a way of saying, 'There are ways in which we ought to behave which will have a beneficial or a detrimental effect on the people around'.

Whereas, I suppose a spiritual dimension - we're talking more about metaphysics aren't we? - the relationship between Man and something which is outside the scope of his normal perception, some kind of supernatural system.   Although I suppose that you could say that, in a case like Art, Art has a spiritual dimension.   Even so, I think that it's something that you can't necessarily pin down to sociology or politics or economics, there is something essentially beyond the calculable.

Of course, the one has an effect upon the other, so that if you have spiritual values, it's almost certainly going to change your moral values and maybe inherent in a moral system is going to be a belief ... that even if you say that you believe in the good of the greater number as being more important than the good of any one individual, you're almost edging there towards spirituality.   You are saying that there is a good above the individual.

RH   Or it could be a utilitarian philosophy?

A   I suppose it could be.

Question 2   Do you think that these issues are a proper concern for secondary schools?

A   I think that they are the proper concern of <u>any</u> school.   Any group in society can't really function without at least a moral element.

Question 3 In which curricular areas would you expect such values to be 'taught'?

A   'Taught' is in inverted commas!   I don't know that there can be a curriculum area which hasn't got some kind of aspect of moral or spiritual value.   Some subjects, like maybe maths, maybe mathematicians are talking about a logic and an order, which might have some kind of reflection on morals ... even mathematics and physics and such like, because they are sciences, produced and manipulated by men, perhaps until we get a subject which is wholly driven by computers, there's always going to room for human reflection ...
There must be lots of application in most curricular areas.

Question 4   Presumably you do think that your own subjects have a contribution to make in these fields?

A   Oh yes, certainly.   If you look at it just from a nuts and bolts process point of view, I think that anybody who engages in drama is engaging in a process in which an individual has to take into account what other people are doing, and therefore, even in the <u>process</u> there is a moral dimension.   But also, in the subject matter, there is often, very often, going to be a moral and then not to say a spiritual dimension too, sometimes.   One of the first things which I get theatre students [A level] to do is to something where they have to take a room and they have to use anything, absolutely anything, to build a monument to a god.   All kinds of interesting things happen.   When they've built it, we then start to look at the similarities and differences between ceremony and drama, and sport and drama;   the way in which society seems to need frameworks in which to express itself.   Like ritual, like religious ceremonies, or like the sort of artificial, formalised battle that is a sporting event.
And in English - one is dealing with moral and spiritual issues all the time, in looking at the various texts that we do;   but also, again in the

process, in the whole business of students having to interact with each other, taking into account each others' views, express their own views and account for themselves - make their own stand - tell us where they stand on an issue. That's important. A lot of what we do in English is probably new to them, the idea that 50, 100, 500 years ago people thought differently, and just because it's different doesn't mean that it's wrong, that we are, thinking in the way that we do, that we are right. The idea that morality, that we can talk about a morality, (spirituality is probably rather different because we are more used to the idea that people for instance worship God in different ways, that's perhaps rather more familiar) but the idea that other moral systems worked in quite different ways from our present one and were seen as quite ordinary and okay, is an interesting thing. One comes across that often in English. Of course, also in classical civilisation, there probably hasn't been a lesson when we haven't in some way talked about how the Greeks viewed what was outside them and how they expressed that. I think that the spiritual dimension is more overt in that subject than in the other two. I think that one has a duty to point out that there are other ways of thinking about each other, other ways of doing things and that the Muslim fundamentalist in Iran is just as sincere about what they believe as are perhaps more liberal, more outgoing, less restrictive and we think probably better ways of doing things. It's terribly important. It's only from a point, a position of strength that one is in any kind of a position to make judgments about how one is going to live one's life. By strength I mean knowledge, I guess, and having that knowledge tested out and talking about it to other people who may have different ideas, one hopes.

RH   Do you think that it matters if children, say, are giving a talk in an English lesson, for example, and it's a very partial, one-sided view that they're putting forward?

A   No I don't. In a way I would much rather that than we all sort of agree about some amorphous common ground, and we all sort of subscribe to that and we then move on to something else ... we don't

actually get anywhere ... I think that it's much better if people express strong opinions; some pupils do. Perhaps it doesn't happen as often as it should. Perhaps of this society - we're broadly from a similar background ... I think that possibly we lose out to schools which have a better ethnic mix ... that must provoke more exchange ...

RH   Talking to younger children, they seem to be very wary and cautious about expressing any kind of religious or spiritual views; if I press them they say that they would feel exposed - be laughed at...

A   Yes, I've come across that. It's difficult that - you just have to try at least to engineer an atmosphere where they don't feel embarrassed; it rarely happens - usually they feel exposed. I wonder if perhaps in church schools people feel easier talking about such things? It easy to see why children feel reluctant to talk about it, because if somebody has a different accent they'll jump on that, so something that they perhaps feel strongly enough about like religion ... it's difficult.

Question 5   What values do you think that the school as a whole is concerned with?

A   I think that they are buried pretty deeply in some ways; you sort of enshrine them in school rules and community codes in aims and so forth, but I don't feel that they guide the behaviour of the children ... they don't live by them ... it's much more expediency ... for some kids 'What can I get away with?'. Others, perhaps the majority, 'What can I get out of this?' I think that the formalised structure of the school's aims and so on and the stated moral values of the school are - well I don't know that they're irrelevant because I suppose that you have to have them - but I think that they're a long way away from most people's conscious decision making.

RH   The children see the values with which the school is concerned as being: getting good marks in tests and behaving yourself.

A   I can believe that. Doing the right the thing is making sure that

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you stay on the right side of the teachers and also doing things which get commendation from the teachers - I think that that nuts and bolts expediency is much closer to it than a lot of people would dare to acknowledge.   I do think that some subjects, though, do challenge children more than others: just to step back and ask how is it that we live like this?   I do think that it's probably incumbent on the subjects which deal more overtly with moral and spiritual values, and I would include drama in those, to give them the opportunity to think about their own behaviour, the behaviour of other groups within the community, to others ... so that you do challenge them from time to time.   I think that if subjects like English and drama and RE don't do it, it wouldn't get done.   Or hardly happen.   I feel perfectly certain that the children do not perceive that some subjects [such as science and maths] cover moral and spiritual values.

I think that many an outsider would see that achieving the best possible exam results as being a prime concern of the school.   The Headmaster frequently quotes 'Carpe Diem' and we do try to give a value to work, for instance.   A moral statement like, 'You owe it to yourself to do as well as you possibly can', that kind of thing ... the process is very important.   The acquisition of not just knowledge, but also skills and a sense of community awareness, are all regarded as important.   To a huge extent today's values might be quite different from those which we might have pointed to 20 years ago: they are probably drawn a lot more from the wider community, from industry - the whole business of going out there and getting a job.   I think that it's probably a bit more hard-nosed and a bit less spiritual - the morality has changed and is much more the morality of, 'Do the best you can for your sake', the sake of the individual, rather than for others.   What's changed is that there is no longer any thought of the honour and glory of the school - the idea of the school as being an institution which is worth working for has gone - except perhaps exclusively in examination statistics.

Question 6   Can you think of any ways in which the school's values are expressed, either implicitly or explicitly, through the organisation and/or management?

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A   From the point of view of a teacher, if I'm good at my job, is there a way in which the school encourages, recognises it?   There's a kind of monitoring mechanism which is called appraisal, and there is the day to day thanks that one gets from doing a specific task, but it's hardly built in to the management and structure of the school - the idea that being good at one's job is recognised.   Whether it could be, or one would necessarily want it ... but I'm not sure that the school encourages teachers to perform well ... I'm not sure that inherent within the management structure of the school is the recognition of moral values ...

RH   What about a more concrete way, in terms of how the curriculum is organised or the money divided up or the timetabling done?

A   I think that's so far out of our hands as not to be relevant, really.   I mean the biggest budget is the science one - and one of the smallest is drama - but that's not because that's the way the Head sees life - it's largely imposed from without.   I think that it would be interesting if one could find some kind of formula [reference to a then current attempt within the school to agree on some kind of formula for dividing up capitation ...], the problem is that we're all too busy with the trees to look at the wood ... It would be refreshing to have some time to look at wider issues and educational matters which don't get an airing in the forums which we have in school.   And perhaps the moral and spiritual welfare of the school would be one of the most important issues with which we could concern ourselves.   The School Council tries to look at issues which have to do with this place a community, and I think to a certain extent it has had its successes, but it's a long way from most of the children's consciousness most of the time.   Perhaps we should have a Staff Council?

I think, therefore, that you could say that moral and spiritual values are explicitly expressed in one or two institutions or ideas here and there; but I do think that they are probably implicitly expressed in all manner of different ways - the idea that you have a subject structure, for instance, in school, means that people who are thinking along the same lines, support each other, that's probably very important and it's an implicitly

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expressed moral value in the school, that we should support each other in all kinds of different ways. I suppose that the discipline procedure in the school is an explicit way of looking at that ...

The whole idea of what the government would like us to do with assemblies as acts of worship is virtually ignored by the school's management system. I think that maybe it would be good to see what could be done there. A lot of work goes in to supporting charities in this school, and what is that if not a moral, and indeed a spiritual value being expressed? We seem quite happy with the notion of helping other people through charitable collections, so maybe we should do a little more to draw this out in to a moral and spiritual field ... take it a little further? A lot of energy goes in to assemblies, and I guess that most kids would not see it as a moral or spiritual act ...

Question 7   Are there any values which you would like to see addressed in school which you think are absent at the moment?

A   I think that we are cushioned here against several things that are experienced in inner towns and cities ... it would be very nice to explore multi-ethnic issues - we live in a very mono-ethnic community here, and when people see, for example Irishmen at each others' throats, or people in Bosnia fighting each other, then they hear that it's got something to do with religion, they have no idea, it's dismissed as being just the lunatic fringe, instead of considering the possibility that maybe we are on the fringes here ... it would be good if we could expand their consciousnesses just a bit ... get them out of [this county] ...

Synopsis of Interview with Mathematics Teacher

Question 1   The words: 'moral', 'spiritual' and 'values' - would you like to try a definition of them?

A   'Morals' I see as being some sort of human code; 'spiritual' implies something else, something outside humans; 'values' are things you hold to, things that are of value - it is difficult without using the word - I suppose that I see the difference between 'moral' and 'spiritual' as being whether you are seeing something else outside, not human, which is probably actually a Christian viewpoint ...there are other spiritual ... aren't there? ... other spiritual states which don't accept something outside ... (sorry, I'm waffling on ...).

Question 2   Do you think that these issues are a proper concern for secondary schools?

A   Definitely the moral, the spiritual side of things ... I suppose that everybody has their own feeling about that, depending upon what their own spirituality is, but at the very least the idea that there is something special and magic about life which is spiritual, without pinning it down ... that is probably (I am dubious about Christianity and various specific religions) ... a spirituality which engenders wonder, the feeling that there is something there ... I think that that is really important.

Question 3   And where would you see this arising on the curriculum?   This kind of work?

A   It's ever so difficult isn't it?   I think in the end it must be down to individual teachers, but how you persuade individual teachers to have that sort of feeling, to engender that feeling of wonder, and then whether they're actually able, because a number of times I say, 'Isn't this amazing!' and the kids say,: 'ugh!' ... they don't see it at all!   Or if they do, they're very cynical about letting on ... but I think it's something that comes from good teachers;   I don't think you could do it as a curriculum block, I think that it has to be part of the overall school ... whether that's something teachers have or don't have or whether it's something you

could train teachers to be more enthusiastic about ... I don't know, I'm not sure.

Exchange between interviewer and interviewee about some teachers' reluctance to become involved in specifically teaching 'religion' - people's fears of being seen as indoctrinating or proselytising ...

A   I think that I would be dubious about being seen as advocating one particular religion, both in RE and in ordinary academic life (non-spiritual subjects), but I think that if they were to come out of the lessons thinking that life has got something which is more complex and interesting ... now whether that leads on to them looking in to religion or whatever, that's not the point, but they should have the feeling that there is something more interesting ... I think that every subject can deliver that one way or another.

RH   So, that would include maths, then?

A   Oh yes.

RH   How do you think that could happen in maths?

A   Well, 'moral' I think is not specifically maths, I think that morality is to do with the school having an agreement about what's acceptable behaviour and the teachers actually being prepared not to tolerate ... I mean, if bullying and being unpleasant to people is not allowed, then that should apply in every lesson.   'Spiritual' - I think that there are aspects of maths which are 'pure' and 'neat' and touching on the weird and wonderful - that in teaching them you can spark off ... the trouble is, it's very elitist, those ideas are mainly touched on with top sets in years 10 and 11, and sixth form - that would be quite a regular part of sixth form teaching ... showing them how something fits together really neatly ...

RH   Something to do with the pattern of the universe, or is that too...?

A   No, that's how I see it.   There's numbers called 'irrational numbers' ... they can't be written as a fraction ... irrational numbers are divided into (I can't remember what one's called) transcendentals ...I

think that's marvellous ..these are irrational numbers which ... around the fringe of [maths] there's the feeling that you're dealing with something which is ... you've got pye, 3.14 and E which is 2. something ... those numbers crop up all over the place ... you start off with them being to do with a circle, but it's not long ... if you drop straws on to parallel lines the probability of them landing across the lines is controlled by a formula which has got pye in it ... that value ... there's all sorts of situations when you can be doing something and all of a sudden E will crop up, or pye ... I just find that amazing ... I think ... there's something going on in the universe.

RH   Some people say that maths is one subject in which you definitely deal with absolutes ... something is absolutely right or wrong?

A   I think that there's a danger of over-emphasising this - I think that most maths teachers see it like that; coming from a scientific background [myself] I probably see it in a slightly different way.   I think that there is a danger of making maths a very pedantic narrow subject ... I see that as almost being anti the spiritual side of it ... there is a sort of 'hippy isn't this fun, isn't this marvellous' attitude which is destroyed by the 'you've got to get it right'[approach], but yes, that is a side in maths. I found it very difficult changing from science to maths, getting used to that [precision], science is much more waffly!   You've got room either way ... you've got to be much more pedantic in maths.

Question 4   You have already indicated that you think that these topics crop up in your own subject.   You mentioned that you would expect to cover, with the top sets in years 10 and 11, some issues which could be seen as spiritual;   what about moral values, with younger children?

A   I don't think that I talk about morality in maths ... morality in the classroom, like how if you're going to understand something everyone's got to shut up ... codes of behaviour ... I do see that as being moral teaching, the discipline within the classroom is either coming directly from me, or a lot of the time I try to get them to see how everything gets

on better if you [are attentive] ... but that's not got much to do with maths. The only thing that you could probably say is that that the precision of maths makes that sort of self-discipline important. With bottom sets there's an awful lot of talking through ideas and refining things, saying, 'Let's try and say that more precisely' and concisely, as well. That involves that sort of morality of listening to what someone else has said, but I'm not sure that that's morality?

Question 5   Do you think that there are any teaching methods which are more useful in dealing with values issues?

A   The spiritual wonder - I think has largely got to be the teacher at the blackboard because on the whole you're dealing with ideas ... the weirdness of them means that kids are not likely to come across them themselves.

RH   So you're showing them on the blackboard these patterns ...?

A   Yes ... if, you said, 'Can you do it?' they'd never get there, because something like Pythagoras or Newton had to come along and do it in the first place!   There is one example: proving that the square root of 2 is irrational ... it's a proof and it's a really weird bit of reasoning ... I was going through this with a top year 10 set (they don't need to know it, I just said that it was really interesting) and at the end of it there was one lad who said, 'Can you leave it there, I want to copy it down?' and I thought that he really had got it.   I would think that's probably the main ... the more weird it gets the more it has to be teacher led.   In actual fact, they don't seem to see the oddness of it ... they're stuck in the middle of everything and it needs the teacher to stand back and say, 'Look, this is really strange ...'

RH   It's as though you are making a kind of commentary on this process?

A   It may be that they're thinking it themselves, but they don't say it ... I suppose that they wouldn't do ...

Question 6   How comfortable do you feel with these kinds of topics?

A   Moral issues - I was just thinking, there's an enormous moral area like sex education, which maths doesn't touch on, I used to touch on it from a science teaching point of view ...

RH   Are you pleased that you don't have to do that kind of thing any longer?

A   Apart from the fact that I blush ever so easily ... which is a real problem ... but I suppose that I just had to get used to it, I just made a joke of it with the kids at the beginning of the lessons ... no it never bothered me apart from that ... and ... I find it very difficult to put into words exactly what my own morality is ... but I know in any particular situation I've got a clear idea of what I think is morally right, so I don't have any problems with it; it's not like I'm sitting there thinking should I say this, or should I say that ... whether that's what the school would agree with as being morally right is another matter.

Pause for a discussion about a creationist approach - how he would respond if challenged by this viewpoint in the classroom

Question 7   Classroom support - would you welcome any classroom support, particularly in tackling values issues?

A   Not really - I suppose that within the school, from the point of view of establishing a common moral code amongst the staff - not a discipline code, but a common moral code, about what's acceptable, there is probably something that could be done ... not in the classroom but just in general.   But spiritual values, I suppose that again on a department level it would be ... if I accept that what I am saying is that the main spirituality is enthusiasm for life and what you're teaching, then you could look to make the INSET in the department veer to the 'weird and wonderful' ... actually most of the people in the maths department are not

mathematicians, they're not enthusiastic ... they're enthusiastic about teaching the kids, but they're not enthusiastic about the subject; [two teachers named] are the only two who are enthusiastic about maths. So here's probably some INSET there ...

Question 8   What values do you think the school as a whole is concerned with?

A   I don't know ... I think that now I feel much more comfortable with the school, and I'm not sure whether that's my problem of taking a long time to settle in, because I think that I do, or whether it is partly to do with the school.   One of the things at the beginning, definitely in the first year, was I didn't have any strong feeling of an ethos.   When I went to [previous school] there was very much a feeling of an old grammar school that was developing in some ways into a slightly 'refined comprehensive'.   It had that feel about it: slightly liberal ... now here, I couldn't get a fix on what it was at all, because I think that there is a sort of hard edged disciplinarian secondary mod ethos from some people. There's a very academic attitude from others ... and the buildings are not particularly inspiring ... the grounds are beautiful but the buildings are tatty; they're quite clean, but they don't create an atmosphere of age...   I know that the Head sees the school as essentially academic, and that is his emphasis; I suppose that I feel it's going in that direction ...I do feel now that it's more academic than it was when I started, but whether that's true or not I don't know ... it might just be me!

Question9   Can you think of any examples of the organisational, the management, of the school, in which values are either explicitly or implicitly expressed?

A   Only explicitly, yes.   In that the Head says that this isn't on, or whatever.   I do think that the morality of the school, the values of the school, do come down from the Head, whichever Head, and there may be conflict, there may be some of the staff who are not wanting to go in that direction, but in the end; I mean at [previous school] the whole ethos was definitely dictated by this slightly liberal, patrician figure.   The

Head here, I think, is pragmatic; which means that you don't get the same feeling of some underlying moral ... there's not the same *feeling* of there being an underlying moral basis. There are rules which are pragmatically useful, for making sure the school runs well; so, to answer the question ...

RH   You've talked about explicitly expressed ...

A   Implicitly, I'd say that possibly the school lacks that underlying feeling of where things are going.

RH   What about in things like timetabling and budgetary things ... or even maybe in the hierarchy of subject departments ...

A   Do you mean in the way that the money is actually shared out ...? What's considered of value? I could be totally wrong; yes, I agree, I think that could be a really powerful thing for generating an ethos of what is valued. Here, (I could easily be wrong) I see art as being a subject which is strongly valued; now I would see it's strongly valued because it gets good exam results, rather than it's strongly valued because art is an intrinsically valuable thing which all students should be exposed to; so there again, it's a pragmatic approach, rather than some underlying [principle]...

RH   And what reasons have you got for thinking that art is highly valued?

A   Well, the fact it's all round the school! (But that could just be [Head of art] working hard). The fact that they have a full-time technician, which seems an *extremely* expensive allocation to one department, just that overall feel. I suppose from the point of view of putting over values, I would rather see music, art, drama, the arts, as an all-encompassing thing, which all kids do.

Short discussion about the interviewee's perceptions of the art department

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I suppose from a spiritual point of view, I do think that the arts are very important. I also think from a pragmatic point of view, middle class parents like to see a school which is artistically active.

Question 10   I think that you've already touched on this question: are there any values which you would like to see addressed in the school, which you think are absent at the moment?

A   Yes, I suppose so. It's difficult to put into words! And it's something which I feel more and more here, so it may just be to do with me settling down. A sort of a feeling of 'oneness' between the staff and the students, and a sort of friendliness, a feeling that give or take all the odd little things, you're part of some larger family which is working together.

RH   You think that this does exist here?

A   I think so more now, than I did a year and a half ago, but that could be me settling in. But I don't feel perhaps as much as I did at [previous school]. I do feel that a lot of the staff here are quite sharp with the kids. Possibly necessarily.

RH   Can you think of any ways of tackling and developing the ethos that you'd like to see?

A   Well, it would be extremely unpopular! And I'm not sure that it would suit this school, but I know at [previous school] there's one of the deputy heads who is quite firm: you just don't shout at kids. (Well I did, so did everyone else, so did the Head) but the general approach was ... there was this general idea that you treated them as human beings first, and then as a bunch of 13 year olds with discipline problems second. That came from the Head; he was very idealistic; I remember having discussions with him, and he would say that all I really want to have is a school where they come in as friends, are taught by friends, and go out of the gate ... it was hopelessly idealistic but the underlying drive ... he would walk around the school and he would know large numbers of the

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kids' names, and he'd stop and say, 'How's your mum?' that sort of thing. He made a real effort at that side of things - being a human being.

RH   So, in order to work towards achieving that kind of ethos, there would have to be some kind of whole staff agreement?

A   I think probably it would have to come ... it would have to be subtle ... from my own point of view, I think that if you stood up and said, 'We're going to change things in this way', I can see fifty per cent of the staff saying this is rubbish, this is not going to work; but I think in subtle ways the hierarchy could do things which generate a different way of dealing with things. Bus queues - which is my favourite [example]! They're better now, but they are definitely treating kids as groups of animals that need to be herded around, and the first time I saw it I thought, 'I don't like this' ... the megaphone, that whole thing is ... there are things which could be slowly changed with time. The fact that they are allowed into classrooms at lunchtime - that's very nice ... there are a lot of good points.

Question 11   Well, the school had the OFSTED inspection, which seemed to suggest that spiritual values are not as highly developed as they would like them to be!   What are your views on OFSTED actually inspecting on moral and spiritual issues?

A   I don't know how they can tell. I really don't know how they could tell in maths! Where you've got something very concrete; I mean, the stupid line about kids under-achieving, and the following line saying that I was well above national average ... it didn't make any sense. 'Cos it must mean that they are making a judgment about ... [side of tape runs out] ... you judge a school, [people ask you as a teacher, how to judge a good school] I tend to say, go in to the school, and if kids smile when they open doors for you, or if they open doors for you ... in general there's a feeling of calm friendliness, then it's probably quite a good school. So perhaps that's how they judge it, but that's not really

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spiritual values, is it?

Question 12   And finally, have you got any other points that you would like to make on any aspect of this topic?

A   No, I don't think so, except that I'd be fascinated to hear what other people said!

Curriculum Analysis of the School in the Case Study

Key Stage 3

Subject	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English	12.5 %	12.5%	12.5%
Maths	10%	10%	10%
Science	15%	10%	10%
Languages	10%	15%	15%
Art	5%	5%	5%
Home Economics	5%	5%	5%
Design & Technology	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%
Geography	7.5%	7.5%	5%
History	7.5%	5%	7.5%
Music	5%	5%	5%
Personal & Social Ed.	2.5%	5%	5%
Religious Education	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Physical Education	10%	10%	10%

Key Stage 4

Subject	
English	12.5%
Maths (including IT)	15%
Science	20%
Careers	2.5%
Personal & Social Ed*	5%
Physical Education	5%
Languages	10%
Technology	10%
Free Option	10%
Free Option	10%

* Includes Religious Education